

Honors Humanities 105
Introduction to the Arts and Humanities
Fall 2017

Tuesday, 9:30-10:45 Edward St. Johns Learning and Teaching Center (ESJ)
Thursday: Section 0101: 9:30-10:45, Edward St. John's 2309
Thursday: Section 0102: 3:30-4:45, Anne Arundel Hall 0103
Thursday: Section 0103, 9:30-10:45, Anne Arundel Hall 0103
Thursday: Section 0104, 2:00-3:15, Anne Arundel Hall 0120

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30-5:00; Thursday, 11:00-12:30, and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Yvonne Slosarski
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-3:00 p.m. and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Khalid Long
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Office Hours: Thursday 11:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS

Please Note: We will regularly be reading and discussing these texts in class. Therefore it will be helpful for you to have a printed copy and not to rely on an online version. Also, it will be easier for us to be all on the same page if you buy the editions listed below.

1. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin) ISBN: 9780141439471.
2. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford) ISBN: 9780199213610.
3. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Dover), ISBN 9780486278070.
4. Sophocles, *Antigone* (Hackett), ISBN 9780872205710.
5. Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (HBC Trade), ISBN 9780156028356.
6. Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* (CREATSPAC), ISBN: 9781619490925.
7. A book which all of you will choose together.

Many additional readings will be provided on the course website in the form of pdf files.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A proper introduction to the arts and humanities would encompass much of the curriculum of the entire university, since our subject represents the foundation of the Western educational tradition. The syllabus of this course, however, must be selective yet seek to represent the important themes and interests of the arts and humanities across time and across cultures. The course is subtitled "Fearless Ideas in the Humanities," since Fearless Ideas serve as the University of Maryland's motto and agenda. From their beginnings, the Arts and the Humanities (in antiquity they would not have been treated as two different things, which is why our program bears the single title of "Honors Humanities") explored what it means to be human: to be born; to pursue the adventure in life which we call "growing up"; to relate to others

who are same and different, male and female; to consider how we are defined in relation to gods and animals; to ask whether this life has an end or continues in another form. In this course we will consider five fearless ideas: the wonder that is humanity, the examined life, art and self-portraiture, the unity of humankind, and speaking truth to power.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Describe the nature of the arts and humanities and articulate the ways in which they constitute a shared subject and set of methods.
2. Trace the history of the humanities and appreciate why and how they have shaped the educational curriculum in the West.
3. Utilize a variety of methods in interpreting literature, art and music.
4. Appreciate how differing historical contexts and cultural traditions affect the values and uses of the humanities.
5. Conceptualize a project which uses the arts and humanities to explore some aspect of human experience and contemporary life.
6. Construct a persuasive and articulate defense of the humanities in a time when they are under challenge.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

All of you come to this course with excellent preparation and strong motivations; we believe that you all can continue to perform at a superior level as you transition from high school to college. Success, however, must be earned and not be assumed. We aim to challenge you, to ask you to test your interests and abilities. We expect you to complete assignments, to attend and participate in classes, and in general to show a sense of curiosity and engagement in our shared work. We will encourage you to refine your ability to speak and to write, to argue and to persuade. Ultimately, we will ask you to do one of the most difficult of tasks: to come to know yourself and to recognize your capacity to become even more than you now are.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION:

1. Course Engagement: 30%

Tuesday Summaries: 10%

Discussion Leadership: 10%

Attendance and Active Involvement: 10%

2. Writing Assignments: 40%

4 x 6%= 24%

Final Essay=16%

- 3 Examinations: 30%

Two x 15%= 30%

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance and absences: your engagement in the work of this course and of this program is a vital element in your success. We will therefore expect you to attend all classes unless you have a valid reason for being absent. The University's policies on medical and other absences and on a variety of important other issues such as student conduct, sexual misconduct can be found at www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html (Links to an external site.) Absences due to religious observance are perfectly acceptable; however, it is your responsibility to notify us within the first three weeks of the course of any religious absences which will take place during the semester. When assignments or activities fall on such dates, we will schedule an equivalent experience for you at an acceptable time.

2. Academic Integrity: The student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibit students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. All of your work in this course will be covered by this Honor Code.

3. No computers, phones or tablet devices are permitted during our class meetings. I understand and have considered arguments for permitting laptop and tablet computers in the classroom. However, in my experience (and based on the research evidence) the reality is that they present an irresistible distraction and detract from the cooperative learning environment. Researchers have found that these distractions do in fact interfere with learning and active participation. For that reason, the use of computers and phones will not be permitted during class meetings (except when required for DSS accommodations). If a computer is needed to accomplish a class objective for the day I will provide it or give you advanced notice to bring one with you. I expect you to make the responsible and respectful decision to refrain from using your cellphone in class. If you have critical communication to attend to, please excuse yourself and return when you are ready. For more information about the science behind the policy watch: <http://youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk>

4. You are expected to take personal responsibility for you own learning but we are a community and we are all here to help each other. When your performance does not match your goals, seek help in doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so we encourage you to consider visiting <http://ter.ps/learn> and schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting <http://ter.ps/writing> and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <http://www.counseling.umd.edu> (Links to an external site.). We are always available to listen and help (but not to judge).

COURSE SCHEDULE

To find the full details of the schedule, you will regularly turn to this course website and select Modules from the menu on the left-hand side of the home page on Canvas.

UNIT 1: The Most Human Human

Week 1: What it Means to be Human

Tu 8/29 Plenary: What it means to be Human

Th 8/31 Discussion: *Frankenstein*, Volume I

Week 2: Humanism

Tu 9/5 Plenary: Humanism

Th 9/7 Discussion: *Frankenstein* Volume II

Essay Due: The "monster" in *Frankenstein* compares his situation to that of Adam and Eve. What are the parallels between these two situations? In what ways is the analogy NOT appropriate or accurate? What does the parallel suggest about *Frankenstein's* role? To whom would he be analogous in Adam and Eve's story? Cite from the text of *Frankenstein* any explicit connections and use at least two quotations from the text to support your arguments.

Week 3: The Humanities

Tu 9/12 Plenary: Constructing the Humanities

Th 9/14 Discussion: *Frankenstein* Volume III

UNIT 2: The Unexamined Life

Week 4: The Pursuit of Happiness

Tu 9/19 Plenary: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X

Th 9/21 Discussion: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I and II

Essay Due: Few of us would disagree with Aristotle when he says that the goal of life is happiness. His definition of happiness, however, is in most respects different from the definition we commonly use. Begin by offering your own definition of happiness and by exploring what role happiness plays in the vision you have for your life and career. Then use Aristotle's arguments to examine your own; how well does your vision of the goal of human life match up with Aristotle's? How does Aristotle define happiness and how does he connect it with virtue and activity?

Week 5: Acquiring Virtue

Tu 9/26 Plenary: Ways of Knowing

Th 9/28 Discussion: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books VI and VIII

Saturday 9/30 at 1:00 PM: Meet at the National Gallery of Art for a portrait tour by Dr. Eric Denker.

Week 6: Selfies

Tu 10/3 Plenary: Portraiture and Self-Examination

Th 10/5 Discussion: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, pp. vii-viii and 1-86, Chapters I-IX

UNIT 3: All Humans are One

Week 7: Exam #1 and Oscar Wilde

Tu 10/10 Plenary: Exam #1

Th 10/12 Discussion: Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, pp. 86-165, Chapters X-XX

Friday 10/13 at 7:30 PM: *Antigone* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center; Reception in Anne Arundel Hall at 6:00 PM

Week 8: Performing Humanity

Tu 10/17 Plenary: Three Perspectives on *Antigone*

Tu 10/19 Discussion: *Antigone* on the Page and the Stage

Week 9: A Colorful World

Tu 10/24 Plenary: Black Feminism

Th 10/26: Walker, *The Color Purple*, Letters 1-42

Book Nomination Due: The Humanities honor human agency, the potential and responsibility we all have to define ourselves and to contribute to our communities. In recognition of this tenet, we are asking you all, first as individuals, secondly as a community, to suggest a book for all of us to read and contemplate during the last two weeks of this semester. Each of you, as a writing assignment, will nominate a book that you believe we all should read together.

UNIT 4: Counter Cultures

Week 10: Alternative Communities

Tu 10/31 Plenary: Theorizing Counter Cultures

Th 11/2 Discussion: Walker, *The Color Purple*, Letter 43-End

Essay Due: By the end of the novel, Celie's life, sense of self, and her communities have changed significantly. In many ways, Celie is empowered by living a countercultural life in a countercultural community that challenges dominant norms of race, gender, class, and sexuality. What is countercultural about Celie's new life and community? What is one contextual opportunity that Celie takes advantage of to form her new community? What is one element of dominant culture that Celie's new life rejects? Which alternative people, experiences, understandings, or values does her new life privilege?

Week 11: Civil Disobedience

Tu 11/7 Plenary: Civil Disobedience as Act and Idea

Th 11/9 Discussion: Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*

Week 12: Voices Raised in Song: The Music of Protest

Tu 11/14 Plenary: Protest Music

Th 11/16 Discussion: Music and the Humanities

Week 13: Exam #2 and Thanksgiving

Tu 11/21 Plenary: Exam #2

Th 11/23 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

UNIT 5: Students' Book Choice

Week 14: Your Fearless Book and Ideas

Tu 11/28 Plenary: Arts & Humanities in *The Little Prince*

Th 11/30 Discussion: Themes in *The Little Prince*

Week 15: Reading for Meaning, Reading for Action

Tu 11/28 Plenary: Arts & Humanities in *The Little Prince*

Th 11/30 Discussion: Themes in *The Little Prince*

Final Essay Due December 14, 2017

We began the semester by asking three questions:

1. What does it mean to be human?
2. What is humanism?
3. What are the humanities?

In this final essay, we ask you to **answer** these questions based on what you have **learned** during our work together AND based on your own **personal experiences**. Your essay should have the following features:

- A. It regularly uses *The Little Prince* to reflect on **each** of these questions. That is, you should not discuss *Prince* only once in an early paragraph but should use it to explore each of these questions.
- B. It makes **connections** with and between materials and issues previously explored in the course. Your essay should **illustrate** your **knowledge** of and **engagement** with our work throughout the semester.
- C. It **explains** how questions one and two above help us to define the humanities in question three. How do the humanities (art, literature, philosophy, history, music, theater, etc.) **demonstrate** what it means to be human and **grow out** of the tenets of humanism?
- D. It cites **specific** texts and works of art in support of its arguments. You should quote short passages and make reference (by title and section) to longer ones.