

Spring 2006 MW 4-5:50 4.0 units (LS 201 is a prerequisite)

Liberal Studies 462: Senior Project II

Instructor: Deborah Meadows
Office: Bldg. 94, rm. 340 (869-4968)
Office Hours: _____

Course Texts:

Hamlet by William Shakespeare, New Penguin Shakespeare (0-14-070734-4)

Rembrandt, Michael Bockemuhl, Taschen, (3-8228-6320-3)

Looking for Spinoza, by Antonio Damasio, Harcourt, (0-15-602871-9)

Handouts from instructor

Learning Outcomes and Purpose of the Course:

The role of this course is to serve as a **capstone experience in which students synthesize knowledge across disciplines in assignments designed to demonstrate the critical thinking, research skills, presentation ability and writing ability expected of a Liberal Studies graduate.**

Students will notice that our course has extensive readings, discussions, and experiences in the upper reaches of the humanities rather than a review of intro. courses represented on your curriculum sheets.

Your instructor and classmates will assist you as you perfect a brief “think piece” and a long (10 page) essay in two parts. One, shorter “think piece” will examine how interdisciplinary thought is related to life-long learning, and, in turn, how life-long learning may, for example, render new creations, analyses, and questions that may go unattended by disciplinary methodology. Students will prepare a short paper and will also present their preliminary findings briefly to our learning community.

Our second paper (5 pages) will study a theme in Shakespeare (Further discussion and support from instructor on themes as well as a computer-workshop in our library will be provided so all can succeed in this assignment. Newcomers to Shakespeare are especially prized).

To support the second paper, oral reports for our course will be a collective effort. Our class will undertake a “Shakespeare Project” toward which each student will contribute providing a rich array of research and film-performance references.

Our third paper (5 pages) will explore an inquiry-based question on human feeling and emotion. Toward that end, we will make connections between the arts, such as Rembrandt’s portraits, and our reading, research, and discussion will include Damasio’s study of human feeling and emotion as a neuroscientist, and excerpts from other texts.

These resources work toward our shared commitment to polish students' ability to interpret art works, reason clearly, and apply ideas from literature and the performing arts, psychology, and other disciplines.

We will attend at least one theatre event or field trip (to be announced).

This curriculum will help you focus on strategies for revision in writing as well as provide opportunity to explore the relation between synthesizing knowledge and how it may yield discoveries unavailable in single-discipline approaches. Your gains in writing and reflections on your habits of mind may be enhanced, so please consider how each of us may:

- Focus on rewards of encountering challenging materials that are shared as cultural references rather than on rewards of grades.
- Focus on cooperative rather than competitive attitudes.
- Focus on creative choices rather than on formulaic responses.
- Invest deeply in the process of reading closely. Use this course as an opportunity for defining yourself as a person who knows and reflects on knowledge.
- Attend class regularly and help other class members by offering a reader's response to their essays.

Assessment and Grades:

Your in-class presentation, written work, and contributions to our discussions will be assessed in an ongoing basis by your instructor via grades, written comments on papers, feedback from observing your oral report, and from your "learner self-assessment" during an exit interview.

Your course grade is calculated from: 1. attendance and class participation, which includes an oral report, 2. one 2-2 ½ page "think piece" and two 5-page typed essays, 3. contributions to the "Shakespeare Project," 4. attendance to theatre event.

Due dates to be announced.

For Next Class: Read p. 61-96 or Act One of *Hamlet*, read as much of the introduction as possible, read and take notes as a potential essay-writer concerned with performing arts.

Next Week: Please bring in an essay to share with others in class that examines interdisciplinary thought and/or life-long learning. This discussion will help form the basis of your first, shorter paper.

Common Requirements:

1. Your essays will include five references that you will type as a “Works Cited” page. Please follow the MLA format. These references may combine both your prior classroom texts and works from our LS 462 class and project including unconventional sources such as film. Within the body of your essay, you need to refer to authors by name (mention the page number) and/or quote directly from the authors (so use quotation marks followed by your comment on the relevance of the quotation). These are ways that you can make interesting and unique applications of your reading materials.
2. Hand in your work after proofreading carefully, using spell- and grammar-check, and/or using the expert services available from the Writing Center. All essays may be revised until suitable for passing that requirement. Strong writers are picky about error-free papers that flow clearly.
3. Faculty of this course expect students to show a complexity of understanding of the sorts of questions writers and narrators in the fine and performing arts, literature, human development, and other disciplines have asked across time about such areas as the nature of human life, knowledge, justice, beauty, and love, and how these explorations are grounded in particular experiments or performances conducted at certain sociopolitical moments even though they may seem to transcend time and place, that their power often speaks to us across difference that must also be guarded from erasure or facile elision.

Discussions and oral reports:

Each class member will be responsible for presenting select materials from the readings and contributions to the “Shakespeare Project”. More details will follow; however, all of us will be responsible for reading all the works and for participating in a way that can add to the collaborative atmosphere of the class. For example, it will be very useful if we each come prepared with remarks and select passages to read that we either find interesting and/or that may be a provocative link to the required essays we will write.

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