Honors 3200: Writing in a Research University Course Syllabus
(Upper Division Communication/Writing Designation)
Fall 2020

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Course Description
The object of this course is for students to gain an understanding of what it takes to become contributing writers and thinkers both inside and outside the academic community. In fact, the signature assignment in the course, the Contribution Paper, asks that you show your understanding of the contribution process by practicing it. As a student recently said to me, “This is a tall order,” and so it is. Even so, students will be expected to explore present positions of a specific disciplinary community and 1) refute the given conclusions, 2) renew an older position that might lend fresh perspective in a contemporary context, and/or 3) innovate by adding new material that might lead to novel ways of understanding a concept or question. I’ll add here that, as an instructor, I will do everything I can to help and/or support students embarking on an Honors Thesis, a project that falls in line with the practice of contribution.

In this course we will approach writing from two particular stances. The first is designed to facilitate your thinking and writing as members of specific disciplinary communities (i.e, biology, history, psychology, etc.). The second approach we’ll call integrative. Working with subject matter that rises from the contemplative discussions at the heart of this class, we will create a document, The Final Exam, that might appeal to a generally educated community. We will also consider forms of analysis and reflection in an effort to help open us to new possibilities of discourse.

By the end of the course, the students will . . .

• understand a broad range of interconnecting issues and concepts that pertain to advanced academic research
• use the work of others to develop their own critical thinking about issues and problems
• engage in an extensive written research project that attempts to contribute to contemporary knowledge
• advance positions using various means of analysis in an effort to connect to a specific audience
• gain a deepened understanding of issues by constructing a project geared toward educating classmates on a topic of your choice
• participate as team members in the evaluation and drafting of classmates’ work
• present and respond to material in a critical and creative manner
• explore integral analysis, systems thinking, and deconstruction as tools of interpretation and innovation
• read texts focused on fleshing out ideas and concepts
• value personal experience as a guide for learning

Texts

Required:

*Intimations*, Zadie Smith

*Living Beautifully*, Pema Chodron

Other readings will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

Course Policies and Procedures

Assignments and Grades

Several assignments work toward achieving a better understanding of university and disciplinary practices. Please note that the assignments may change according to our needs throughout the term. Each assignment will be assessed by points. Your final grade will reflect the percentage of points earned.

(I will grade your major assignment, The Contribution Paper, using the Inquiry and Analysis Value Rubric and Creative Thinking Value Rubric as outlined by The Association of American Colleges and Universities.)

Thesis Reflection (5 points)
As an introduction to the Honors thesis process, we’ll examine a few Honors theses in class. During the first weeks of class I’d also like you to find a thesis in the Marriott Library that, upon reading, may help you to navigate your own thesis. (1 page, double-spaced)

Personal Borders Essay (10 points)
We’ll be spending a part of the semester discussing common patterns of thinking and how such patterns are established. The personal borders essay assignment asks you to think deeply about the various borders that you encounter across the elements of your life. Consider physical, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual borders that somehow feel established. Can you locate the origins of any given border? How might borders help us define ourselves? How might borders restrict? How might they encourage the formation of identities? This is an open personal essay that will be preceded by a group discussion.
**Contribution Paper Topic Proposal** (5 points)
The topic proposal is a one page, double-spaced description of the major topic you’d like to
explore for the Contribution Paper due later in the semester. What’s your interest in the topic? Is there a real possibility to contribute? What kind of reading do you need to complete before writing the final paper? Please make sure to point out your intended audience.

**Contribution Paper Literature Review** (15 points)
In academic research, it’s important to find texts that offer key insights from which you rehearse or build upon as you move into your own ideas. Literature reviews help researchers limit the scope of their inquiry, just as they convey the importance of studying a topic to readers. The purpose of this assignment is for you to develop the underlying theory you will use to determine the direction of your Contribution paper (see below). (4-5 pages)

**Contribution paper** (25 points)
This assignment asks you to take on authority by conducting your own research (be it in the humanities, social sciences, or sciences, etc.), constructing a position and sharing it with others. What are some of the issues or problems that you have identified about writing in a research university of your discipline that you would like to pursue? Points will be deducted for missing rough draft workshop. (15 pages)

**The Final Exam** (10 points)
A finely-crafted project that is based on notes of discussions taken throughout the semester and modeled after the personal essays found in Zadie Smith’s *Intimations*.

**All other exercises & class participation** (15 points)
Canvas with be a major means of communication throughout the semester. I’ll post a weekly discussion topic on Mondays following our class. We’ll also use Canvas to extend conversations that begin in class. Make sure to check Canvas often so as not to miss an assignment.

**Oral Presentations**
1) Dangerous Idea and Ideas That Must Die Presentations. (10 points)
2) Ways to Know/Rhapsody Presentation (5 points)

There may be added assignments that take us over 100 points—your grade will be computed by percentage regardless.

**Letter Grade Percentages**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>100-95</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>94.9-91</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.9-88</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>87.9-84</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>83.9-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>79.9-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
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Class participation and attendance is mandatory. You are allowed two unexcused absences. On every subsequent absence your grade will be lowered by a half point (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.). Of course, if you become ill or the need to quarantine arises due COVID, you will excused. It’s important that you contact me immediately if this becomes the case. In this way we can work together to make sure you remain caught up in class.

Please note that all assignments are to be handed in on time. Late papers are very hard on me, and it’s not fair that some students turn their work in on time while others don’t.

Students are encouraged to bring personal computers to class, which are to be used for note taking or other course related purposes. Computers, cell phones, tablets and other electronic media may not be used for surfing the web, emailing or other non-course related matters.

Based on CDC guidelines, the University requires everyone to wear face coverings in shared public spaces on campus, including our classroom. As a reminder, when I wear a face covering, I am protecting you. When you wear a face covering, you are protecting me and all of your classmates. If you forget your face covering, I will ask you to leave class to retrieve it. If you repeatedly fail to wear a face covering in class, I will refer you to the Dean of Students for a possible violation of the Student Code. Note that some students may qualify for accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you think you meet these criteria and desire an exception to the face covering policy, contact the Center for Disability and Access (CDA). Accommodations should be obtained prior to the first day of class so that I am notified by CDA of any students who are not required to wear a face covering.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the quarter to discuss any necessary accommodations.

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the
police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS).

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Plagiarism is using the work of someone else and calling it your own. In this class we will learn to paraphrase, or in the case where you do use someone else’s work directly, how to cite it. Plagiarism is illegal. If you are caught plagiarizing, you may fail the course and university action may be taken.

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**General Class Schedule**

(may be changed as warranted; readings will be assigned throughout the semester according to class needs and wants)

**Week 1** (Aug. 24)
- Introductions
- Reading: “Woolf’s Darkness” (Canvas)
- Topic Proposal intro
- Zoom meeting, Aug. 26, 1:25pm

**Week 2** (Aug. 31)
- The Integral Approach
- Borders
- Reading: Donna Haraway
- Living Beautifully presentations (Canvas)

**Week 3** (Sept. 7)
- Labor Day
- Borders
- Living Beautifully
- Due: Contribution Paper Topic Proposal

**Week 4** (Sept. 14)
- Systems
- Contribution Literature Review Intro
- Living Beautifully
- Due: Personal Border Essay

**Week 5** (Sept. 21)
- Living Beautifully
- Intimations
Week 6 (Sept. 28)  
Rhetorical Analysis group presentations  
Introduction Dangerous Ideas  
Due: Thesis Reflection  

Week 7 (Oct. 5)  
Systems/Dialectic  
Reading: *Beautiful World presentations*  

Week 8 (Oct. 12)  
Library Exercise (in class)  
Readings  
Due: Contribution Paper Literature Review  

Week 9 (Oct 19)  
Individual Meetings  
Readings  

Week 10 (Oct 26)  
Dangerous Ideas  
Forms of Analysis  
Creative Writing  

Week 11 (Nov. 2)  
Dangerous Idea Presentations  
Rough Draft Workshops  

Week 12 (Nov. 9)  
Due: Rough drafts  

Week 13 (Nov. 16)  
Readings, Presentations, Creative Work  

Week 14 (Nov. 23)  
**Due: Contribution Final Draft**  
Creative work  
Readings, Presentations  

Week 15 (Nov. 30)  
Final Exam  

Week 16 (Dec. 7)  
Ways to Know Presentations