

UH 201: TEXTS AND CRITICS: INQUIRY

FALL 2011 SYLLABUS

Faculty Fellow: _____
E-mail: _____

Student Fellow: _____
E-mail: _____

Class Reading Assignments/Assemblies

UNIT 1: Inventing the University/How Do We Approach Inquiry?

8/29	Week 1	Lec 1	Assembly in Gaines Hall 101 7 PM	
		Lec 2	"Allegory of the Cave" from <u>The Republic</u> (Book VII) "What is the Socratic Method?" from <u>Socrates Café</u> "Made Up Minds"	Plato Christopher Phillips Chris Mooney
9/5	Week 2	Lec 1	Convocation with Aron Ralston, <u>127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place</u> Sept. 7, 2011 7:30 PM, Brick Breeden Field House	
		Lec 2	First and Second Meditations from <u>On First Philosophy</u> "Descartes among the Ruins"	Rene Descartes Daniel Kolak
9/12	Week 3	Lec 1	"Indians": Textualism, Morality, and the Problems of History" "The American Scholar"	Jane Tomkins Ralph Waldo Emerson
		Lec 2	"Only Connect...": The Goals of a Liberal Education" <u>The Iliad</u> : Intro, Books 1-6 (<i>Position paper and journal review in class</i>)	William Cronon Homer

Paper 1 (Due the first class meeting of the week of September 19, 2011)

Descartes claimed that *the path to* wisdom/knowledge requires that we first doubt all of our current beliefs. Plato theorized that the attainment of wisdom requires that we unchain ourselves from the cultural, personal, and historical fetters that bind us. Yet Emerson

insisted that the true scholar trusts his or her own convictions, even when others doubt them: “In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended.” Is Emerson’s thesis reconcilable with Descartes and Plato? How do you draw this line between self-doubt and self-trust? How do you reconcile self-trust with a necessary skepticism in your pursuit of knowledge? In addressing these questions, explore Emerson’s essay carefully for his exact meaning of “self-trust,” incorporating Descartes and Plato when appropriate. (1,000 words, 10% of final grade)

UNIT 2: How Do We Know What We Know? How Does Science Suggest an Understanding of Humanity?

9/19 Week 4	Lec 1	“Idols of the Mind”	Francis Bacon
	Lec 2	“Thinking Scientifically” from <u>The Canon</u>	Natalie Angier
9/26 Week 5	Lec 1	“The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”	Thomas Kuhn
		“Prisoner of the Wired World” from <u>A Sense of the Mysterious: Science and the Human Spirit</u>	Alan Lightman
	Lec 2	<u>Angels and Ages</u> Intro, Chapters 1-2,	Adam Gopnik
10/3 Week 6	Lec 1	<u>Angels and Ages</u> Chapters 3-4, Conclusion	
		<u>The Iliad</u> : Books 7-11 <i>Position paper and journal review in class</i>	

PAPER 2 (Due the first class meeting of the week of October 10, 2011)

As Angier makes clear in The Canon, thinking scientifically often involves purging ourselves of bias, erroneous presuppositions and inadequate data. Kuhn underscores the delicate balance between scientific advancement and ethical responsibility.

What do you find most surprising, most impressive, and/or least satisfying about contemporary science? Draw upon your reading of Bacon, Kuhn, Gopnik and others we have explored for this unit, as well as in-class discussions, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of scientific inquiry as applied to a current and significant issue that confronts our world. In addition, you may even offer suggestions for further inquiry that could advance human understanding in this critical area. (1,000 words, 10% of final grade)

UNIT 3: Who are We? How Do the Social Sciences Suggest an Understanding of Humanity?

10/3	Week 6 Lec 2	"The Social Sciences" from <u>Consilience</u>	E.O. Wilson
10/10	Week 7 Lec 1	<u>Cry the Beloved Country</u>	Alan Paton
10/12	Lec 2	Lessons from South Africa: Lecture, Dr. Ilse-Mari Lee	Reynolds Recital Hall, 7 PM
10/17	Week 8 Lec 1	MIDTERM REVIEWS	
	Lec 2	"Letter from a Birmingham Jail"	Martin Luther King
		"The War Prayer"	Mark Twain
10/24	Week 9 Lec 1	<u>The Sunflower</u>	Simon Wiesenthal
	Lec 2	"Bullets Stall Youthful Push for Arab Spring" from <i>The New York Times, March 2011</i>	Michael Slackman
		"Why Would Anyone Miss War?" from <i>The New York Times, July 2011</i>	Sebastian Junger

The Iliad: Books 12-18 Position paper and journal review in class

PAPER 3 (Due the second class meeting of the week of October 31, 2011)

You have read:

- Mark Twain's timeless "War Prayer",
- King's response to the collisions of cultures and forces of change as they intersect with issues of human dignity,
- Alan Paton's vivid and poetic description of the racist structures of society that would later give rise to *apartheid*,
- Wiesenthal's The Sunflower which provides a searing inquiry into guilt and forgiveness
- Essays by Michael Slackman, Adam Gopnik and Sebastian Junger

Referencing two or more of the above, compose a paper discussing a significant social issue that confronts and challenges today's society. Cite concrete examples from the texts to demonstrate how you might employ the insight gained from such literature to approach the issue with intelligent sensitivity, justice and social responsibility. (1,000 words; 10% of final grade)

Note: As you consider your essay, the following may be helpful: How do *knowledge and understanding* inspire change? Does it inspire and follow necessarily?

Unit 4: Knowledge of Our Relationship to the Natural World (Observation, Discovery and Conservation)

10/31	Week 10	Lec 1	"The Land Ethic" and "Thinking Like a Mountain" from <u>Sand County Almanac</u>	Aldo Leopold
			"The Trouble with Wilderness" from <u>Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature</u>	William Cronon
		Lec 2	"Trailhead" from <i>the New Yorker</i> , January 2010	E.O. Wilson
			"Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks" from <u>Desert Solitaire</u>	Edward Abbey
11/7	Week 11	Lec 1	"The Apple" from <u>The Botany of Desire</u>	Michael Pollan
			The Iliad: Books 19-24 <i>position paper and journal review in class</i>	
NO CLASSES		Lec 2	<i>(Nature observation during free time; explore your experience of nature, either in the field or through representation)</i>	

PAPER 4 (Due the second class of the week of November 14, 2011)

As astute observers of the natural world, writers Leopold, E.O. Wilson, Abbey, Pollan and Cronon extrapolate insights from the land through its beauty or uniqueness. Inspired by your own observations of nature, compose an essay in which you specifically and carefully describe what insights and questions, you gained from this experience. You might think of this assignment as having two parts: (1) a highly specific description of what you observed, and (2) a reflective discussion of what it means. (1,000 words; 10% of final grade)

Unit 5: Consilience/Our Interconnectedness

11/14	Week 12	Lec 1	<u>Ceremony</u>	Leslie Silko
		Lec 2	<u>Ceremony</u> continued	
11/21			Thanksgiving Holiday	No classes
11/28	Week 13	Lec 1	<u>The Poem of Force</u>	Simone Weil

Lec 2 Copenhagen performance Nov 30th Procrastinator (6:30PM or 8:30 PM)

12/5Week 14 Lec 1	Discussion of <u>Copenhagen</u>	Michael Frayn
Lec 2	"Prologue" from <u>Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman</u>	James Gleick
	Letter to President F.D. Roosevelt	Albert Einstein

In class position paper on above readings

PAPER 5 (Due Friday December 9, 2011)

You have read Homer's great epic poem, a classic text whose truly timeless story never exhausts what it has to say about our perennial encounters with the controllable and the uncontrollable, with certainty and uncertainty, with the permanent and the transitory. As an inquiry into the human condition, the *Iliad* dramatizes our desires, successes, and failures to understand the natural and social worlds and to find our collective and individual places within them. Thoughtfully select and then describe a particular scene from the text that illustrates the strengths and limitations of human inquiry, and our resultant knowledge. Then use the text as a stimulus to explore those issues of "knowing" in terms of the fundamental insights it provides into our efforts to understand the human condition today. What insights and inspirations for the expansion of inquiry, knowledge, and human understanding does Homer provide either for you individually or for society in general? (1,000 words; 10% of final grade)

12/12Week 15 FINAL REVIEWS

NB: Please do not make travel arrangements before your scheduled final.

Final examinations must be given at the times shown below. The Dean of Students may authorize an "I" grade in cases of true medical or family emergencies which require the student to be absent during the Final Exam.

<u>Regular class days:</u>	<u>Final examinations scheduled:</u>
MW 13:10-15:00	December 12, 2011 16:00-17:50
MW 14:10-16:00	December 15, 2011 18:00-19:50
MW 15:10-17:00	December 13, 2011 16:00-17:50
MW 16:10-18:00	December 15, 2011 16:00-17:50
MW 17:10-19:00	December 12, 2011 20:00-21:50
MW 18:10-20:00	December 12, 2011 20:00-21:50
MW 19:10-21:00	December 12, 2011 20:00-21:50

TR	18:10-20:00	December 13, 2011	20:00-21:50
TR	08:00-09:50	December 16, 2011	08:00-09:50
TR	10:00-11:50	December 14, 2011	12:00-13:50
TR	13:10-15:00	December 14, 2011	16:00-17:50
TR	14:10-16:00	December 12, 2011	14:00-15:50
TR	15:10-17:00	December 12, 2011	12:00-13:50
TR	16:10-18:00	December 15, 2011	20:00-21:50
TR	17:10-19:00	December 13, 2011	20:00-21:50
TR	18:10-20:00	December 13, 2011	20:00-21:50
TR	19:10-21:00	December 13, 2011	20:00-21:50
WF	08:00-09:50	December 12, 2011	08:00-09:50
WF	09:00-10:50	December 13, 2011	08:00-09:50
WF	10:00-11:50	December 14, 2011	20:00-21:50

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the theme of “inquiry” through the lens of major texts and always with an interdisciplinary focus.
2. To analyze and critically evaluate the ideas in the texts.
3. To engage in informed discussion with students and Fellows in a seminar setting.
4. To sharpen our critical thinking and listening abilities, to open ourselves to the ideas of others, and to develop new ideas of our own.
5. To construct clear and cogent written and oral arguments.

COURSE GOALS

Our goal in the Texts and Critics course is to examine and understand how we come to know what we know. It is not to provide a body of information or to emphasize any particular discipline. Knowledge emerges from inquiry, analysis, interpretation, and argument; and it is associated with conviction. It is essential to know how to defend one’s views and respect those that are diametrically opposed. Thus, a second important goal of this course is to develop and encourage civil discourse.

Our task is to develop and sharpen our critical acumen through careful thinking, listening, discussion and writing. Essentially, we will learn together and be responsible for our own learning. The Fellows have structured the focus and sequence of the course, but the

ideas will be developed as the students and Fellows discuss the readings. We will think and argue together in true collegial fashion and are collectively responsible for achieving our goals his semester. Together, we will generate rigorous class discussion which constitutes our Socratic learning community. In this sense, we are colleagues working together to navigate the difficult but exciting terrain ahead of us. To achieve these goals, please note the following requirements listed below.

ATTENDANCE

Since seminars draw their strength from probing inquiry, participants are expected to be present for every class and actively engaged in **informed** discussion throughout the semester. Students will be accountable for absences; therefore, legitimate excuses are required. Also, **classes will begin on time and will meet for the full time allotted**. Notify your Fellows well before class if you have to be absent for any reason. There are **four** evenings when all T&C sections will meet collectively in lieu of the regular class period. No more than 3 unexcused absences will be allowed to pass the course (the fourth unexcused absence will result in a F grade for the semester). Note: An *excused absence* is one that your faculty Fellow has informed you is *excused* prior to the class meeting.

Up to 2 points will be assigned to each student at each class meeting as follows:

- 0 - unexcused absence, makeup work is not allowed
- 0 - late to class and not participating after arrival
- 1 - present but not participating
- 1 - excused absence without any makeup work
- 1 - late to class but participating after arrival
- 2 - present and participating
- 2 - excused absence followed by adequate makeup work

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION

The quality of your seminar experience is directly dependent upon the attention you give to the assigned readings. It is **imperative** that each student complete the required readings **prior** to each class period. Your fellow students are counting on your active participation, which is contingent upon a careful reading and consideration of the texts. During group discussions, think about how you want to express yourself before actually doing so, and make a conscious effort to be clear and forthright. Respectfully listening to others, while attempting to actually **hear** what they are saying, is equally important. Critical thinking involves numerous skills, not the least of which is developing an awareness of differing worldviews and how these may influence an individual's position on issues.

The mechanisms by which your Fellows will encourage participation will vary from section to section, and will be addressed by your Fellows at the beginning of the semester.

CLASS FACILITATION

You must be prepared to facilitate class discussion at any time. Diligent and thoughtful preparation of questions for discussion is crucial for successful facilitation. Make a carefully considered and orchestrated list of meaningful questions/topic areas of discussion prior to class.

CLASS PROCESS

Formal facilitation normally begins with a five-minute summary of background information and some of the major issues/ideas presented in the text. This is an opportunity for facilitators to give the class a glimpse of their thoughts and reactions to the text and is intended to introduce some of the central interest areas which have surfaced as a result of reading the text. While the majority of the class session should be devoted to exploring the readings collectively, facilitators are expected to shoulder more responsibility to stimulate dialogue. In preparing initial questions for class discussion, bear in mind that it often helps to frame the question by reading an appropriate section of the text. Avoid generalizations, e.g., “What did you think of the book?” Be specific. Make sure the class understands your questions. Do not be content with responses that simply state an opinion or offer a “yes” or “no.” As a facilitator you are interested in asking *why the respondent has the opinions he/she does*. Follow up comments with questions such as, “What is the basis for such a response?” Strive to keep the discussion focused and relevant to the text. Continually ask yourself if the discussion is relevant to the topical areas presented by the text. Also ask, “What does this discussion or issue have to do with our lives? How does it impact our approach to *inquiry*?” In the final minutes of the class, facilitators should summarize the essential points of agreement and disagreement which the discussion has provided.

PAPERS

Five papers are required during the semester. Employ your ingenuity and unique creativity. Each essay **must** engage the class texts in a well-focused and thematic manner. You do not have to agree with the texts, but you must reveal your understanding of them. Remember: we are *not* looking for book reports. Rather, use a text or texts as either the *springboard* for your own creative exploration of an argument, position, or question posed by the writer(s), or as the kernel of an argument you make in response to the ideas posed by the writer(s).

- Please carefully read and refer to: Michael Harvey: The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing
- Essays are due at the beginning of class on the days noted in the syllabus.
- Proofread your essays several times.
- You are expected to revise your essays as often as necessary to achieve good organization, clear style, acceptable grammar and correct spelling.
- Read your essay out loud - to yourself and to a friend - to see if it makes sense.
- Condense, simplify and clarify, then read aloud once more. Remember, Occam's Razor.
- All essays must be typed (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font) and left-justified.
- Include your name, essay title, and date on the first page, and page numbers throughout.
- Please print two copies, and place each in a separate folder for each of your Fellows.

Each paper will be evaluated by your Fellows and assigned a numeric grade from 0 to 100, using the following metric:

30% clarity, coherence and concision,

20% response to the prompt or topic,

50% grading of the content and integration of required texts in the paper,

and: 50% deduction from the original grade for late submission.

POSITION PAPERS

Position papers will be written in class in response to a prompt that will be given at that time. Position papers will generally require comprehension of the reading material at a collegiate level.

JOURNAL

You will be expected to read The Iliad throughout the semester and to keep a journal of your reading of this work. Your journal will be reviewed and graded by your Fellows in class, e.g. Week 3, lecture 2.

MIDTERM AND FINAL REVIEWS

Midterm Reviews: You will meet individually with your Fellows for an informal but substantive discussion/review of the texts and some key ideas of the course. You should reflect on what you have gained so far from the course. You will be expected to be familiar with the texts and refer to them in your discussion. This is a graded exercise.

Final Reviews: This is an opportunity to reflect upon the entire semester. As you do so, be prepared to discuss the 3-5 most noteworthy dimensions of inquiry you have acquired throughout the seminar. Which particular texts influenced you the most? What have you learned about yourself and others throughout the semester? You will be expected to be familiar with the texts we have covered during the semester, and refer to them in your conversation with your Fellows. This is a graded exercise.

Grading: The table below indicates the percentage of your overall course grade that is represented by each graded component.

	By Mid-Term (October 14)	By Term-End (December 12)	Total
Attendance and Participation	7.5	7.5	15.0
Journal	2.5	2.5	5.0
Midterm Review	2.5		2.5
Essay 1	10.0		10.0
Essay 2	10.0		10.0
Essay 3		10.0	10.0
Essay 4		10.0	10.0
Essay 5		10.0	10.0
Position Paper 1	5.0		5.0
Position Paper 2	5.0		5.0
Position Paper 3		5.0	5.0
Position Paper 4		5.0	5.0
Position Paper 5		5.0	5.0
Final Review		2.5	2.5
Total	42.5	57.5	100.0

Access to “Electronic Reserve”

These are reading assignments that are not full or lengthy texts, which have been posted electronically for you. The MSU electronic reserves are available at <http://www.lib.montana.edu/reserves/>
 Follow the link for UH 201 Texts and Critics: Inquiry, Dr. Ilse-Mari Lee

Additional Notes

- Please do not rely on external resources in the place of the texts. CliffsNotes, SparkNotes, university or private websites, Wikipedia, etc. can be good resources, but are poor substitutes for your own active and critical reading, and scholarly interpretation of the text.
- Papers are due at the beginning of the class session indicated on the syllabus. If you are late to class, so is your paper.
- Work in this course, unless assigned as group work, must be the result of your individual effort. Individual submissions that appear to reflect other than individual work will be forwarded to the Associate Director of University Honors for his review with respect to university academic policies. It is also considered academic misconduct to turn in work in this class that you have prepared for another class, either at a University or in High School. Do not recycle work from other classes, or work you did in High School or at another University. Academic misconduct issues will be dealt with in the strictest terms allowable by university policy.

Montana State University Student Conduct Guidelines

Behavioral Expectations

Montana State University expects all students to conduct themselves as honest, responsible and law-abiding members of the academic community and to respect the rights of other students, members of the faculty and staff and the public to use, enjoy and participate in the University programs and facilities. For additional information, please refer to:

http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/student_conduct_code.htm#studentrespon

Collaboration

University policy states that, unless otherwise specified, students may not collaborate on graded material. Any exceptions to this policy will be stated explicitly for individual assignments. If you have any questions about the limits of collaboration, you are expected to ask for clarification.

Plagiarism

Paraphrasing or quoting another's work without citing the source is a form of academic misconduct. Even inadvertent or unintentional misuse or appropriation of another's work (such as relying heavily on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is considered plagiarism. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, you are expected to ask for clarification.

Academic Misconduct

Section 420 of the Student Conduct Code describes academic misconduct as including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, multiple submissions, or facilitating others' misconduct. Possible sanctions for academic misconduct range from an oral reprimand to expulsion from the university.

Section 430 of the Student Code allows the instructor to impose the following sanctions for academic misconduct: oral reprimand; written reprimand; an assignment to repeat the work or an alternate assignment; a lower or failing grade on the particular assignment or test; or a lower grade or failing grade in the course. More serious sanctions require a Conduct Board hearing.

Academic Expectations

Section 310.00 in the MSU Conduct Guidelines states that students must:

- A. be prompt and regular in attending classes;
- B. be well prepared for classes;
- C. submit required assignments in a timely manner;
- D. take exams when scheduled;
- E. act in a respectful manner toward other students and the instructor and in a way that does not detract from the learning experience; and
- F. make and keep appointments when necessary to meet with the instructor.

In addition to the above items, students are expected to meet any additional course and behavioral standards as defined by the instructor and described in the course syllabus.

Withdrawal Deadlines

The last day to withdraw from this course with a "W" grade **if** extraordinary **personal** circumstances exist, is November 18, 2011.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation(s), you are encouraged to contact your instructor and Disabled Student Services as soon as possible.

Email Policy

Please check your university email at least every two days. Go to <http://www.montana.edu/email/> for information about setting up and using MSU email. If you prefer to use a different email system, you can have your MSU email forwarded to another email address

Student Educational Records

All records related to this course are confidential and will not be shared with anyone, including parents, without a signed, written release. If you wish to have information from your records shared with others, you must provide written request/authorization to the Honors Office. Before giving such authorization, you should understand the purpose of the release and to whom and for how long the information is authorized for release.

Communication between Faculty and Students:

All official electronic correspondence will be sent to your MSU email address. You may contact your Fellows by email. Please refrain from contacting your Fellows over weekends, except in an absolute emergency. You can expect to receive a response within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. When you email your fellows, please type UH 201 in the subject area.

Grading policy:

Class Attendance and Participation	15% of course grade
Term Reviews	5% of course grade
Journal	5% of course grade
In-class position papers	25% of course grade
Papers	50% of course grade

Grades will conform to university practice. The Fellows are responsible for grading your papers, position papers, journal, class participation and midterm reviews.