Course Goals

Augustine recounts in his *Confessions* that, just before his conversion, he heard a child singing, “*Tolle lege, tolle lege,*” “Take up and read, take up and read.” Augustine did so, and by reading he was then transformed: after much personal and spiritual struggle, he was at last able to change his life. The Augustine and Culture Seminar (ACS) introduces students to great works of literature and thought that have much to teach us not only about the cultures and time periods in which they were written, but also about our own cultural heritage and ourselves, here and now. The basic idea is that, by reading great works, perhaps we too can be transformed: perhaps we too can move more deeply into ourselves, and from there move more compassionately out into our communities.

ACS seeks to help students develop a richer inner life and an appreciation for community. The seminar is founded on the belief that seeking the truth (*veritas*) with respect and love (*caritas*) toward one another leads to deep and lasting community (*unitas*). ACS thus tries to help students live the values so important to Villanova that they are on its seal: *veritas, unitas, caritas.*

One way or the other, Augustine is our model. ACS learning community students take this course not only to learn about Augustine, but more important to learn to be like him in his passionate engagement with “the higher things”: literature, history, and politics; truth and moral values; the gods and God. In the *Confessions,* Augustine speaks of himself as committed to the truth “heart and voice and pen.” The ACS learning community faculty believe that thinking deeply about what we care about, learning to articulate our thoughts clearly and persuasively, and working to write with insight not only will serve as excellent preparation for future careers, but will help us come to terms with life emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, both in the university and beyond.
The more nuts-and-bolts goals of this course are to help you make a successful transition to the expectations of college level work by developing skills that will be helpful to you both in college and in your subsequent careers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Method of assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and think critically:</td>
<td>Analyze and bring critical understanding to difficult and important classical texts and develop an appreciation of how much these texts have to teach us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write well:</td>
<td>Write clearly and persuasively, supporting your positions with argumentation and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate effectively orally:</td>
<td>Articulate your own views based on your reading and in response to the contributions of other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master co-operative learning skills:</td>
<td>Work with and learn from other members of the learning community in a climate of mutual respect and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply new perspectives, make</td>
<td>Test, refine, and make connections between your own ideas and values and the texts, and between the texts themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connections:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme of the Course**

The Modernity and Its Discontents semester of ACS focuses on materials from the Modern (post-Renaissance) World. True to the theme of this specific seminar, *Citizenship for a Diverse World*, we will focus our discussions on the central question of what it means to live an ethically grounded, socially responsible life in a world characterized by racial/ethnic, religious, national, sexual, and gender differences.

**Required texts**

Please buy the following books:

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Dover, ISBN 0486290360  

Shorter readings are available on your WebCT page.
Evaluation

Class participation

Class participation deserving of an A grade (90-100) will be strong in most categories; participation that is strong in some categories but needs development in others will receive a B (80-90); a grade of C (70-80) reflects a need for development in most categories; D work (65-69) is typically unsatisfactory in several categories; and F work, unsatisfactory in nearly all. The participation grade, which will count for 25% of your overall grade, will be determined using the following rubrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong work</th>
<th>Needs development</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor</td>
<td>Sometimes displays lack of interest in comments of others</td>
<td>Projects lack of interest or disrespect for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Arrives fully prepared with all assignments completed, and notes on reading, observations, questions</td>
<td>Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation</td>
<td>Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about assigned material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of contributions</td>
<td>Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of: assigned text(s); previous remarks of other students; and insights about assigned material</td>
<td>Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous remarks of other students</td>
<td>Comments reflect little understanding of either the assignment or previous remarks in seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on seminar</td>
<td>Comments frequently help move seminar conversation forward</td>
<td>Comments sometimes advance the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward</td>
<td>Comments do not advance the conversation or are actively harmful to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation</td>
<td>Actively participates at appropriate times</td>
<td>Sometimes participates but at other times is “tuned out”</td>
<td>Seldom participates and is generally not engaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing assignments and exams

This course is categorized as “writing intensive,” meaning that each student must do twenty to thirty pages of writing over the term. All papers must be submitted by 10 a.m. of the day they are due, and must be submitted electronically (a Word document in an e-mail attachment). They should be in Times New Roman, 12 font, double spaced, indented at the beginning of the paragraph, no spaces between paragraphs, and with 1” margins.

You will be writing the following papers, reflections, and exams:
3 papers (15% each) 4 pp. The first one, on the Enlightenment, will be due on Saturday, February 6; the second one, on Conrad and Achebe, will be due on Saturday, March 27; and the third one, on Tyson, will be due on Saturday, April 17. You are required to revise at least one of these papers and may do so for all three if you wish. This will give you the opportunity to work on your writing, and improve your grade (although the first grade will still constitute half of the total grade). All revisions must be handed in one week after receiving the graded paper. NO extensions will be granted for this, so make sure that you make an appointment with the Writing Center well in advance.

Research projects (10% of grade). In the week before the semester break, you will present research projects on issues of diversity in the United States. Individual reflection papers on your group’s topic (note, NOT your group’s process) of 1-2 pp. will be due on the same day of your group’s presentation.

Cultural event reflections (5% of grade). All Villanova Seminar students are required to attend at least three cultural events (e.g., films, museums, the theater, lectures on campus) during the course of the semester. I will give you more information about these events as they approach; see also the poster on the “All About Katharine” WebCT site. After attending the event, you must make two postings on the “All About Katharine” WebCT discussion board. The first posting must be a substantive reaction to the event of normally at least two paragraphs; the second must be a reply—germane, respectful, and normally two paragraphs again—to the posting of another Katharine resident (ideally from another of the learning communities housed in Katharine, or at least another section of our learning community). Your first posting, the substantive reaction, must be posted within three days of the event; your second posting, the reply, must be posted within a week of the event. These postings will be graded for depth of thought and clarity of expression. Those of you who do not have access to the All About Katharine site, should please inform me so that you can be given access.

Portfolio (5% of grade). You must keep all your papers (including first drafts) from both semesters in a folder. Towards the end of the semester you have to write a reflection paper on the portfolio itself (2 pp.).

Final exam (10% of grade). The final will be an oral exam (subject to change).

Important information

Students with a documented need who require accommodations for papers or the exams must register in advance with Learning Support Services in Kennedy Hall, 9-5636.

Assessing papers

An A-level paper will be strong in most categories; B papers will be strong in some but need development in others; C papers need significant development; D papers are typically unsatisfactory in most categories; and F papers reflect a serious deficiency in understanding the material and/or failure to complete the requirements. Paper grades will be determined using the following rubrics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong work</th>
<th>Needs development</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>Assumes audience is student who has read assigned texts carefully; paper uses evidence to make points rather than to summarize</td>
<td>Spends inappropriate amount of time merely summarizing text or repeating material covered in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis</strong></td>
<td>Single clear thesis that would be insightful and interesting to someone who had already studied the texts</td>
<td>Thesis is either somewhat unclear or all too obvious to most thoughtful readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory paragraph(s)</strong></td>
<td>Avoids inflated generalizations and gratuitous praise; sets brief context; introduces clear thesis</td>
<td>Extraneous generalization; connection to thesis not entirely clear; thesis statement not clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraphs in body of paper</strong></td>
<td>Strong topic sentences, supported by evidence and argumentation; topic sentences support main thesis</td>
<td>Some topic sentences do not support thesis, or are not supported by evidence in paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argument</strong></td>
<td>All necessary points in proving or developing thesis are made; makes compelling argument for thesis; paper does not assume reader agrees with author</td>
<td>Some missteps are made in proving or developing thesis; argument only compelling to someone who already agrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Argument intelligently ordered and easy to follow, reflected in order of points and paragraphs</td>
<td>Logical flow of argument needs improvement by reordering some points and/or paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Draws evidence from close reading of a variety of passages; evidence is appropriate to points being made; all quotations cited using MLA format</td>
<td>Evidence drawn from only one or two passages in text; some evidence does not support points made; citations present but not in correct format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Hints at implications, broader conclusions, or insightful ideas to think about, based on analysis so far</td>
<td>Summarizes everything that has been said so far but does not leave the reader with something further to think about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Nearly flawless grammar, spelling, and word choice; sentences read smoothly and are clear without being wordy</td>
<td>Grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and/or word economy need attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of grade distribution

Class participation: 25%.
3 papers: 15% each (45% total)
Research projects: 10%.
Cultural event discussions: 5%.
Portfolio: 5%.
Final exam: 10%.

Other requirements

Class attendance

If you are absent without a valid excuse (doctor’s note etc.) more than once, your class participation grade will drop by half a grade for each absence. If you have been absent without valid excuse more than 4 times, you will receive a failing grade for the course, in accordance with Villanova policy.

Hand work in on time

I will not grant extensions except in cases of illness (with doctor’s note) or family crisis.

Meetings with the instructor

Each student will meet with me twice during the semester.

Academic integrity

Please see http://www.vpaa.villanova.edu/academicintegrity/ to familiarize yourself with Villanova’s policies concerning plagiarism. Work found to have been plagiarized will receive an F and the offense will be reported of the dean. A first offense will be recorded on your academic record (but removed before graduation if there is no second offense), and a second offense will bring either suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Office for Academic Affairs.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday January 12
First Encounters: The Creation of Cultural Stereotypes (1450-1650)

Thursday January 14
Martin Luther King, Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Tuesday January 19
Rooftops in Tehran
Thursday January 21
John Locke, 2nd Treatise on Government (selection)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract (selection)

Tuesday January 26
Immanuel Kant, What is Enlightenment?

Thursday January 28
Wollstonecraft, Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Intro, ch. 1

Tuesday February 2
Wollstonecraft, Vindication of the Rights of Woman, ch. 2-3

Thursday February 4
Shelley, Frankenstein, Part I

Tuesday February 9
Shelley, Frankenstein, Part II

Thursday February 11
Shelley, Frankenstein, Part III

Tuesday February 16
Marx, Communist Manifesto, Part I

Thursday February 18
Marx, Communist Manifesto, Part II & IV

Group presentations

Thursday February 25
Group presentations

Spring Break

Tuesday March 9
Conrad, Heart of Darkness, ch. 1

Thursday March 11
Conrad, Heart of Darkness, ch. 2

Tuesday March 16
Conrad, Heart of Darkness, ch. 3

Thursday March 18
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, Part I (pp. 1-125)

Tuesday March 23
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, Part II (pp. 129-167)
Thursday March 25
Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Part III (pp. 171-209)

Tuesday March 30
*Easter Break*

Tuesday April 6
Timothy Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*, ch. 1-3

Thursday April 8
Timothy Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*, ch. 4-6

Tuesday April 13
Timothy Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*, ch. 7-9

Thursday April 15
Timothy Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*, ch. 10-12, epilogue

Tuesday April 20
Ghandi, Part I, sections 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Thursday April 22
Ghandi, Part II, sections 7, 11, 15, 16

Thursday April 29
Ghandi, Part II, sections 8, 21, 22, 25