Learning Community E: Policies and Procedures

The classes in the learning community are symbiotic. As the semester progresses, you will be seeing the connections between the different classes in the learning community—history lecture, composition, and first-year seminar—connections that are designed to reinforce learning and foster discussion. We will also try to identify how current issues today are connected to aspects of early American history.

Whether you are in a class of 200 or a class of 25, it is imperative that you are a respectful member of the community. Therefore, you are asked to abide by the following policies in all of the learning community classes in order to ensure everyone has a positive environment in which to learn. Follow basic University policies as outlined in your Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Late Work: **Late work will not be accepted** in any class in the learning community. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. For major assignments, you may be able to request an extension if you are unable to finish it on time. Consult your instructors/class syllabi for detailed instructions.

Attendance: Attendance in ALL learning community classes is expected and essential to success. We assume that when you signed up for these courses, that you will make the necessary arrangements to attend. If you don’t attend class, your grades in the learning community classes will be negatively impacted.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating in any form will not be tolerated by the instructors in the learning community. See the individual course syllabi for policies relating to specific course assignments. If you are still unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please make an appointment to discuss it with one of us. For disciplinary procedures pertaining to academic dishonesty, see the Student Code of Conduct.

Punctuality: Arriving late and leaving early are distracting. Please make every attempt to come to all the class sessions, to come to class on time, and to stay until the end of the meeting. If you are unavoidably late for class, please come into the room quietly and choose a seat closest to the entrance.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices: Please use electronic devices appropriately, out of respect for your learning community instructors and your peers. *There are times and places in polite society when texting or speaking on the telephone is simply not appropriate; neither habit is appropriate in the lecture hall or classroom.* Similarly, please do not use the internet in the computer classroom or on your laptop for anything other than classwork, as this distracts those around you. If you are engaging in distracting behavior, you will be asked to leave.

Acceptance of Diversity: We are one of the most diverse campuses, in terms of racial identity, in the Texas A&M system. This means that we are all meeting and working with people who are different from ourselves in terms of their identities: whether that is defined by their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and/or religion. Respecting and accepting difference is vital to your success for your professional and personal development in this class, on this campus, and in the global community.

Please read the syllabi for each class for more details on assignments and specific class policies.
Course Information:

UCCP 1101.240  MW 8:00-8:50am  CS 114  
UCCP 1101.242  MW 11:00-11:50am  BH 126

Course Description

First-Year Seminar is a two-semester course sequence required of all full-time first-year students. As the central component of a learning community, Seminar helps students achieve success, academically and socially, as they make the transition to the university. Seminar provides students with opportunities for meaningful interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters as well as timely, constructive feedback about their learning. Students are immersed in an active learning environment with a purposefully integrated and contextualized curriculum, fostering the development of transferable skills and engaging them in the academic community. In UCCP 1101, students are introduced to college level work and responsibilities, and provided with appropriate support and resources to navigate their first semester.

A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic, as well as your ability to be an active participant. I encourage all students to visit with me regularly throughout the semester, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to ask questions or express concerns. As in most courses, students should be proactive about their work and ready to discuss concepts and share examples during class. Furthermore, a professor who is familiar with their students is better able to help their students accomplish their personal goals, so make yourself known for doing good work, contributing to class discussion, pursuing your professional interests outside of the classroom, and sharing your goals, successes, and challenges with your learning community faculty is critical.

Course Objectives

The objectives of First-Year Seminar I are to advance the six intellectual and practical skills defined by the Texas Core Curriculum:

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- Teamwork
- Social Responsibility
- Personal Responsibility

Student Learning Outcomes

- Reflect and integrate learning from learning community courses, including development of critical thinking skills, social and/or personal responsibility.
- Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters through daily activities and discussions.
- Demonstrate competence of knowledge related to the learning community discipline(s) in a public forum.

Grade Distribution and Major Assignments

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE – 25%  There is nothing that we will do in class that is not important to your overall success in the learning community; therefore, attendance is imperative. Missing class will affect your grade, as will not being prepared or not participating in a meaningful way. Students are expected to contribute to class discussions and to compose thoughtful short assignments. To encourage attendance, I will take attendance each time we meet. In addition, individual and group exercises will be assigned each class meeting through which I will evaluate your performance and engagement. Simply being present in class will not earn you full points for the day. I will take into account participation, preparedness, and promptness when assigning daily participation grades. In addition, any disruptive behavior or use of electronic devices (including any use of laptops, cell phones and/or portable music devices) will be noted, resulting in a deduction of daily participation points. I reserve the right to award daily or average points to students who continually surpass classroom expectations. I also reserve the right to deduct daily or average points from students who consistently lack engagement or disregard classroom rules.
TRIAD E COMPREHENSIVE PORTFOLIO - 20% At the end of the semester, you will be asked to submit a compilation of your work that demonstrates your learning experiences in your learning community courses. The portfolio will require you to look back on the work you have completed in the learning community courses and select evidence of your learning process. Submissions of the final portfolio will begin Wed. Dec. 7th through Wednesday, Dec. 14th by 10 am. The portfolio is a shared assignment between all learning community courses, and is in essence, your final exam for both Composition, History and Seminar. Please see your individual instructors’ web pages for assignment and submission details.

HISTORY LECTURE QUIZ AND LECTURE SUPPLEMENTS – 10% As part of your learning community experience, you will take a quiz and complete lecture supplements in History. These exercises will also count for a portion of your Seminar grade because success in the entire triad is dependent on your attendance and active participation in History.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS- 15% As part of your learning community experience, you will write a critical analysis essay for History. These essays will also count for a portion of your Seminar grade because success in the entire triad is dependent on your attendance and active participation in History. The essay will be written over a selected chapter from Contending Voices. This analytical essay is a shared assignment between all your learning community courses. Please see your individual instructors’ web pages for assignment and submission details. Please see the course website and Dr. Wooster’s syllabus for more information.

LEARNING COMMUNITY PROJECT- 10% As part of your learning community experience, you will compose a history based research project in Composition. This essay will also count for a portion of your Seminar grade because success in the entire triad is dependent on your attendance and active participation in Composition and History. This project is a shared assignment between all your learning community courses. Please see the course website, your composition instructor and Dr. Wooster’s syllabus for more information.

HISTORY READING QUIZZES– 10% In order to allow you to take more ownership of your learning this semester, you will be expected to complete quizzes over selected chapters from one of your assigned HIST 1301 texts, Contending Voices. Quizzes will be announced in advance and will be administered in Seminar and will take place throughout the course of the semester.

FIRST-YEAR SYMPOSIUM– 10% All learning community students will participate in First-Year Symposium (FYS) at the end of the Fall 2016 semester. FYS is an opportunity for students to share their academic work with the campus community. FYS is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, November 30th. Please note: If you did not complete Writing Projects 2 and 3 in Composition you will not be eligible to present at FYS. Please see your Composition instructor Jen Bray’s course website and syllabus for further detail. As the semester progresses, more information will be provided in the form of class discussion and an online assignment description.

Other Information

LATE WORK I will NOT accept late daily work assignments in Seminar because those assignments are, in essence, part of your attendance and participation grade. There will be no make-ups for missed daily grades. For any major assignment, please email me at least 48 hours before the due date if there are extenuating circumstances that will cause you to miss an assignment deadline. In the email, you will need to propose a new due date that does not exceed SEVEN days (one week) past the original due date. Upon submission of the final product, documentation that proves an extension was granted must be provided. This policy includes weekends. NO ASSIGNMENTS RELATED TO TRIAD E COURSES WILL BE ACCEPTED OVER EMAIL. NO EXCEPTIONS.

OFFICE HOURS Attending office hours is a key to success in higher education, especially in writing intensive courses. Dr. Wooster, and your Composition instructor and I expect that you utilize office hours for one on one feedback on your writing, and to be able to address your learning needs on an individualized basis. Because of FERPA regulations, we cannot discuss grades in the classroom; this must be done during office hours. We want to give you feedback on your writing. In order to be fair, please abide by the following guidelines: we can’t spend more than 15 minutes with you during office hours if other students are waiting. Obviously, we are delighted to spend more time with you if our schedules permit. We are happy to answer specific questions re. Writing assignments via email. However, we will not provide any detailed feedback on your writing via email.

GRADED EVENTS: If you have questions or concerns about a grade that you earned, please follow these steps:

• Read the rubric, assignment description; did you follow all of the guidelines?
• Look on your paper for my specific, hand-written comments...do these shed any light?
• Next, come see me during office hours or schedule an appointment to see me to discuss your concerns. You must be prepared to demonstrate that you have reviewed the assignment thoroughly and have specific questions prepared.

If you are disappointed in your performance, and believe that the assignment you turned in is not representative of your best work, please come and see me as well. I am open to discussing ways to help you improve the grade you earned. You must observe a 24-hour waiting period and meet with me personally to discuss these options.
EMAIL COMMUNICATION Please consider e-mail as official correspondence. All email correspondence will be sent to your Islander email and via Blackboard. Efforts will be made to address your e-mail within 24 hours. If you do not receive an email within 24 hours, please send a follow-up email.
- No email correspondence on the day before an examination or deadline.
- E-mail communications should be about class business. E-mail is not the place for summaries of lectures, discussions, or readings. Come to see me during office hours to address such issues.
- **Emails are not text messages.** Please use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please use professional language and include your full name and a complete inquiry in the body of the message. **Unprofessional emails will result in non-response.**

Islander Email Account/ Blackboard: It is VERY IMPORTANT that you activate your Islander Email account and log onto Blackboard, as it will serve as my primary means of correspondence with you. Throughout the semester, I will be sending emails sharing important information relating to the learning community and I want to ensure that you receive this information. For quick questions or minor issues, you may contact me via e-mail. For more complicated concerns or questions, please make use of my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me. I am always ready and willing to make myself available to help you succeed in this course. I highly encourage you to come to me with your questions and concerns at any point that you need the assistance. I advise you to identify and remedy any concerns as early as you can during the semester – the more time we have to address it – the more likely it is we will be able to resolve it in a way that allows you to be successful. If you wait until the end of the semester, there is little I can usually do to help at that point.

Laptops, Cell Phones & Other Technology: Please turn off your cell phones (or iPods, laptops, etc.), or turn them to silent, and put them away, before class begins, out of respect for your peers and me. Laptops and other electronic devices will be permitted for particular activities as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in CCH 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Starfish is a software communication program used to connect you (the student) to your “Success Network” of instructors, advisors, and other academic support programs on campus. If you receive an email from starfish@tamucc.edu, this means I have raised a Starfish “communication” item useful for connecting you to campus resources and course progress guidance. Acting on these messages in a timely manner is vital to your success as a student at TAMUCC. The purpose of Starfish is to help instructors communicate information with their students, and connect students with campus resources available to them. For Starfish assistance, please call 361-825-3653 or email Starfish@tamucc.edu

Grade Appeal Process As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that his or her final grade reflects academic evaluation which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or inappropriate in view of the standards and procedures outlined in this class syllabus may appeal the grade given for the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student believes the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the student-faculty level, an appeal of the final grade in the class may be submitted, in writing, to the Chair of the Department of Undergraduate Studies. For complete details, please visit: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures. **This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate students’ and/or instructional needs. However, you will be notified of those changes as they occur. Please visit course website and view the class schedule on a regular basis to be informed of such changes.**