Honors 1201: Cultural Traditions II

Professor Jennafer Alexander

Final Project: Persuasive Essay on the Goals of Liberal Education

In this final project, you will identify a new sequence of readings and assignments that you would like to add to a Cultural Traditions course. Your sequence can fit into either Cultural Traditions I or II (which covers everything from ancient Mesopotamia through contemporary literature). You will select **three readings** that you would like to add to the course, along with assignments or activities that could accompany those readings. In other words, you will design a Cultural Traditions unit that covers about three days of classes. You should also explain the rationale behind your approach, why these readings would be useful for students, and how the readings and assignments would contribute to the overall goals of liberal education.

Essay Content

The essay should be **about 4-5 pages** and should including the following four parts:

* Introduction of the rationale – For this section, you should give a clear overview of the problems, challenges, goals, and/or opportunities related to liberal education. Think about our discussions on literature, the literary canon, student/teacher relationships, power dynamics in the classroom, cultural literacies, the “banking” concept of education, etc. Then, present your topic/idea for a new sequence of class meetings that can help Cultural Traditions faculty achieve the goals of liberal education.
* Liberal education sources – Here, you should summarize and synthesize **at least two sources** related to liberal education. You may choose from “The Banking Concept of Education” by Paulo Freire, “Liberal Education” by John Bennett, or “Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know” by E.D. Hirsh (all of which can be found on our course website). Using these sources as evidence, you will further develop an overall goal or problem that future Cultural Traditions students should address.
* Explanation of the course unit – Describe your ideas for the texts, activities, and assignments that you would include in a new Cultural Traditions unit. Why would these texts be useful for students, citizens, and humans in general to read? What skills would students develop through your in-class assignments? How would these texts and assignments help students achieve the overall goals of liberal education?
* Conclusion – Finally, make a persuasive argument about why Cultural Traditions faculty should consider altering the course to include your sequence of readings. This is your last chance to make a case for your approach!

Essay Calendar

Wednesday, May 3: Draft of the persuasive essay due (bring two copies).

Monday, May 8: Final portfolio due (along with the final draft of the persuasive essay).

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| **Rubric****(Subject to change as announced.)****Essay Structure/Organization:*** Follows prompt, use approved topic
* Clear, focused purpose
* Well-written thesis, represents essay in entirety
* Brief summary of the original sources to help the reader(s) understand the topic
* Introduction is attention-getting
* Introduces the sources by providing relevant background information (author, title)
* Clear organization that highlights the author’s strategies for development
* Each paragraph clearly fits with purpose of essay
* Paragraphs are structured clearly (MEAL Plan)
* Utilizes effective transitions between main ideas and paragraphs (flows well)
* Resolution/conclusion
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| **Essay Development/Detail:*** Analysis and explanation is clear and fully explained
* Each main point (paragraph) analyzes specific detail from text and connects to thesis
* Quotations are smoothly worked into paragraph, not dropped in
* Quotations and other examples are fully explained in connection to thesis
* Essay demonstrates a certain level of maturity, professionalism and appropriateness
* Makes significant revisions from draft to draft, not just sentence-level changes
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| **Polish:*** Grammar
* Active verbs, present tense
* Clarity
* Sentence structure and variety
* Punctuation—commas, colons, dashes and semi-colons
* Mechanics
* Works-Cited page in MLA format
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