

**LIBS 400 – Liberal Studies Senior Seminar**  
**Texas A&M University - Commerce – Spring Semester 2015**  
Online course

**Instructor:** Dr. Brad Klypchak

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 1:00-3:00

Tues and Thurs 11:00-12:00; 2:00-3:00, or by appointment

**Course Description:** This course provides each student in the Liberal Studies Program with opportunities for making connections among his or her concentration, support fields, other educational experiences, and possible careers. A project reflecting a sound application of research methods, analytical frameworks, or performance criteria and a learning outcomes learning assessment will also be required. Must be taken in final semester.

**Course Objectives:**

1. to demonstrate the effective application of interdisciplinary scholarship and its theoretical underpinnings through designing and carrying out an independent research project.
2. to demonstrate the academic skill of researching a topic from multiple disciplinary fields and to then use the findings to inform one's project.
3. to generate and effectively communicate scholarly material which is informed by critical thought and the student's personal academic career.
4. to communally engage in the process of assessment, critique, and refinement as applied to the work of not only the student but of their classmates as well.

**Evaluation:**

Academic Autobiography:	5%
Future Applications Project:	5%
Annotated Bibliography I:	5%
Annotated Bibliography II:	5%
Proposal Plan:	10%
Progress Reports:	10%
Draft Final Project:	10%
Critiques:	10%
Revised Final Project:	20%
Executive Summary	5%
Reflective Review:	5%
Participation and Engagement:	10%

**Grading System:**

A (exceptional) = 100 - 90%      B (good) = 89.99 - 80%      C (average) = 79.99 - 70%  
D (minimally sufficient) = 69.99 - 60%      F (failure) = <60%

I am a firm believer in the formal significance to these letter grades and their meaning. As much as it pains us on occasions to realize, exceptional is a difficult realm to achieve. As well, average is just that, average – on a level with one’s peers. Average does not equate to poor or a “bad” grade. In nearly all grading instances, I start from a mindset that one begins at middle “C” (75%), and one proves their relative ability to shift above, shift below, or remain at that mark with their work.

In a course such as this one, the ability to work with independence in a productive manner is crucially important. As well, the ability to problem solve and to synthesize are key skills to develop and demonstrate. I will continuously be looking for evidence that these qualities are being demonstrated and will evaluate with such considerations in mind.

### **Brief Assignment Explanations:**

**Academic Autobiography:** As the first step in the process of developing a project which successfully reflects their LIBS degree, students will depict their academic career, their specific areas of academic interest, and their potential future pursuits as they fit with their scholarly experiences and/or professional aspirations.

**Future Applications Project:** As a second step to the process, the student will locate potential outlets for scholarly and/or professional connection to their respective field(s) of interest. Beyond locating where like-minded professionals gather and network, the student should also become aware of outlets where a project’s results could be put to practical academic use. This might include outlets such as conference presentations, journal submissions, staged performance or exhibitions, or the like.

**Annotated Bibliography Projects:** Students will be required to locate source material from scholarly-sound sources on a topic which pertains to the student’s particular interests. Specific attention will be also given to discovering a specific scholarly theory which may be applied to the further analysis/conceptualization of the chosen topic.

**Proposal Plan:** Part of the nature of the Senior Seminar course is to demonstrate the integrations and synthesis of the entire undergraduate experience. For a program like Liberal Studies, one inherently engages an interdisciplinary approach towards one’s academic pathway. The proposal plan simply declares how your eventual completion of the Senior Seminar will effectively demonstrate such qualities: you declare what your project will be, how it is scholarly-sound in both methodological conception and connection to existing scholarly literature, and provide a timeline for when each component step to the project’s execution will be achieved. The proposal plan establishes an effective plan for the student to follow throughout the duration of the term.

**Progress Reports:** Periodically throughout the term, students will be asked to inform the professor and/or their classmates as to their relative progress on their individual projects. Documentation of such progress at the given time may be requested. These reports are intended to serve as both reflections of what had been done on the project during the given time span, but also what needs to happen in the coming future for the project to reach its intended aims. Additionally, progress reports serve as a means to encourage self-reflection on the process of doing independent work.

**Draft Final Project:** A completed draft of the final project is to be distributed amongst the course community. This draft will then be reviewed by one's colleagues, allowing for feedback and offering outlets for where revision may well be in order thereby improving the project as a whole.

**Executive Summary:** This brief form summarizes elements of the project and serves to illustrate some of the project's core elements.

**Critiques:** One will provide feedback to the work of one's colleagues. The relative degree of effort and engagement contributed to the critiques offered will be assessed.

**Revised Final Project:** A completed final project, informed by the critiques and thoroughly demonstrating the intentions of the Senior Seminar, will be required.

**Reflective Review:** Independent projects are a process (much like achieving an undergraduate degree in and of itself). Here, the student is to reflect on the experiences of the term and the ways in which the project experience as a whole has come to achieving what initially was considered.

### **Readings**

There is no required text for the course. There is a recommended text, particularly suited for those individuals less certain as to their immediate aims for the Senior Seminar.

Davies, Martin Brett. (2007). *Doing a Successful Research Project* 1st Edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4039-9739-3 manufacturer list price \$25.00

[Palgrave Macmillan's catalog page for the text](#)

[Companion web site to the text](#)

### **Academic Dishonesty**

All coursework is to be an original work by the student and created specifically for fulfilling the requirements for this course. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as one's own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. It is the student's responsibility to:

1. research and write their own papers
2. give proper credit through documentation when using words or ideas of others
3. rely on their own knowledge when taking tests
4. refuse to give another student the opportunity to be dishonest

**Any act of academic dishonesty will result in the automatic failure of the course** and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the university.

**“Attendance” policy, instructor’s rights and expectations:**

All courses demand active participation and regular attendance. Online courses offer no exception. Rather, it is imperative that the student do all assigned work in a timely fashion. In particular, this course demands the student to be independently dedicated to making positive progress throughout the term. As we are working toward a collective goal of not only accomplishing our own projects, but also aiding others in their pursuits, it becomes all the more important that each and every student stays actively engaged in the process. Failure to do so hurts not only the individual student, but the collective community as a whole.

*Please be aware:* Full term online courses are typically already quite time-involved as the amount of outside library work, reading, and writing is greater than a traditional classroom course. One must stay active and disciplined with researching, writing, discussion board posting, and assignment management throughout the term.

All assignments are devised for the explicit purpose of offering educational benefit, be that academic growth, hands-on experience, development and display of critical thought, or expression of our academic selves. Coursework is to be completed as assigned and is to be turned in no later than the formal due date. Any work turned in after due dates will incur a penalty respective of its relative degree of tardiness (to a point of no credit whatsoever). Failing to complete assignments not only inhibits the immediate learning process but, again, ultimately hurts the overall learning community as discussion of the process and its results can prove insightful as well. Repeated failures to meet deadlines (be it missed assignments, periods of minimal progress, failure to engage with the course community, etc.) will constitute the equivalence of “absences” in a traditional classroom setting. Students with more than **three** “absences” may be dropped from the course. For additional information, see the *Student’s Guide Handbook*, p. 37. Additionally, I reserve the right to assign a final course grade no higher than a “C” for students accumulating more than **three** “absences.”

Course participation includes aspects of respectful, thoughtful, class interaction and engagement in group discussions. This course’s expectations work in conjuncture with what the *Student’s Guide Handbook* describes as Civility in the Classroom (see p. 36). Additionally, all students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Student’s Guide Handbook*, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, pg. 42).

### **ADA Statement - 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 have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

## **Course Outline:**

### Week 1 (1/20-1/26)

- general course information
- establishing expectancies and introducing options
- **Academic Autobiography due January 26**

### Week 2 (1/27-2/2)

- **Future Application Project due February 2**

### Week 3 (2/3-2/9)

- **Annotated Bibliography I due February 9**

### Week 4 (2/10-2/16)

- **Annotated Bibliography II due February 16**

### Week 5 (2/17-2/23)

- **Proposal Plan due February 23**

### Week 6 (2/24-3/2)

- Independent work

### Week 7 (3/3-3/9)

- **Progress report I due March 9**

### Week 8 (3/10-3/23) \* includes Spring Break week

- Independent work

### Week 9 (3/24-3/30)

- **Progress report II due March 30**

### Week 10 (3/31-4/6) (\* no office hours 3/31-4/2 due to conference travels)

- **Progress report III due April 6**

### Week 11 (4/7-4/13)

- **Draft Final Project due April 13**

### Week 12 (4/14-4/20)

- **Critiques due April 20**

### Week 13 (4/21-4/27)

- Independent work

### Week 14 (4/28-5/4)

- Independent work

### “Week” 15 (5/5-5/15)

- **Revised Final Project due May 7**
- **Executive Summary due May 7**
- **Reflective Review due May 12**

final grades available via MyLeo on Tuesday, May 19

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

- To fully participate in online courses, you will need to use a current, Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Internet Explorer 9.0 or 10. For Mac users, the most current update of Firefox is suggested.
- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
  - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- You must have a:
  - sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
  - speakers or headphones.
- Depending on your course, you might also need a:
  - webcam
  - microphone

For courses where interactive tools are used, like VoiceThread or ClassLive Pro, headphones are suggested for use with recording and playback. We recommend a webcam with an integrated microphone, such as the Microsoft LifeCam Cinema. All devices should be installed and configured before class begins.

- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. Java can be downloaded at: <http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.
- You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - Adobe Reader
  - Adobe Flash Player
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word

processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

- For additional information about system requirements, please see: <https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical>

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

### **Pearson LearningStudio (eCollege) Access and Log in Information**

This course will be facilitated using Pearson LearningStudio, the learning management system used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx>.

**You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).**

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to Pearson LearningStudio, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

### **Pearson LearningStudio Student Technical Support**

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of Pearson LearningStudio.

Technical assistance is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Chat Support:** Click on '*Live Support*' on the tool bar within your course to chat with a Pearson LearningStudio Representative.



- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.
- **Email:** [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) to initiate a support request with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

**Accessing Help from within Your Course:** Click on the *'Tech Support'* icon on the upper left side of the screen inside the course. You will then be able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone by calling the Help Desk number noted below.

**Note:** Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

## **Policy for Reporting Problems with Pearson LearningStudio**

Should students encounter Pearson LearningStudio based problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments/exams, the following procedure **MUST** be followed:

1. Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) or 1-866-656-5511
2. Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number
3. Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should email me to advise me of the problem and to provide me with the helpdesk ticket number
4. At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you

**PLEASE NOTE:** Your personal computer/access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for compatibility of your browser **BEFORE** the course begins and to take the Pearson LearningStudio tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the Pearson LearningStudio platform. **ONLY** Pearson LearningStudio based problems are legitimate.

**Internet Access**

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

**myLeo Support**

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu) or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at <https://leo.tamuc.edu>.

**Learner Support**

Go to the following link [One Stop Shop](#)- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.

Go to the following link [Academic Success Center](#)- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.