

LIBS 300 – Introduction to Liberal Studies
Texas A&M University - Commerce – Fall Semester 2018
Web Enhanced Course – Mon/Wed/Fri 11:00-1:50 (312 Ferguson Social Sciences)

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Office Hours: Mon 12:30-2:00; Tues and Thurs 11:00-1:15 or by appointment

Course Description: An introduction to interdisciplinary study and the Liberal Studies major. Through readings in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences, students will develop an appreciation and understanding of disciplinary perspectives. Emphasis on learning how to conduct efficient and effective information searches. Students will develop an Individual Education Plan.

Course Objectives:

1. to demonstrate and communicate an understanding of the core concepts of interdisciplinary scholarship and its theoretical underpinnings through a variety of written and discussion-based activities
2. to encounter and engage in readings from a variety of disciplines as a means for generating synthesis, analysis and communication of critical thought
3. to demonstrate the academic skill of researching a topic from multiple disciplinary fields through creating an annotative bibliography
4. to apply the principles of interdisciplinary scholarship by reflectively and informatively contributing to dialogues on a variety of topics
5. to construct a personalized plan of study informed by interdisciplinary academic principles

Evaluation:

Individual Education Plan Project:	10%
Exams:	20%
Annotated Bibliography:	15%
Research Proposal Draft:	10%
Peer Review Critiques	10%
Revised Research Proposal Draft:	15%
Reflective Review	10%
Participation and Engagement:	10%

Grading System:

A (exceptional) = 100 - 90% B (good) = 89 - 80% C (average) = 79 - 70%
D (minimally sufficient) = 69 - 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. This is particularly true of participation and class engagement happenings.

Brief Assignment Explanations:

Individual Educational Plan Project: The ultimate aim of the course is to demonstrate one's capability to do interdisciplinary scholarship. The LS degree plan requires students to develop a course of study in which the student chooses their area of study and develops a rationale for their following coursework in relation to that topic. This project serves as an introduction to this process.

Exams: During weeks 5, 10, and finals week, a timed examination will be given to assess mastery of the course's core concepts. All topics build upon one another. As a result, the exam will be cumulative in nature. Exams will include short answer and essay-based questions and will consist of questions asking students to demonstrate their mastery of the course material through the critical thinking skills of analysis, reflection, evaluation, synthesis, and application.

Annotated Bibliography Project: Students will be required to utilize online databases for locating source material on a topic which pertains to his/her particular interest. By completing an annotated bibliography of journal articles from diverse areas of scholarship, the student will engage with a variety of academic research while also establishing a scholarly foundation reflecting their Individual Educational Plan and informing their eventual Research Proposal Project.

Research Proposal Project: Students will devise and propose a research topic and the ways in which that topic would be explored interdisciplinarily. An initial first draft of the Research Proposal will be distributed amongst the course community for peer review. Feedback derived from peer reviews will then inform a revised final draft.

Peer Review 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.

Reflective Review: Given the nature of an introductory course, there should likely be discovery and development of new considerations of the topic matter at hand. Here, the student is to reflect on the experiences of the term and the ways in which liberal studies functions as an academic practice and as a scholarly pursuit.

Participation and Engagement: Whether in the classroom or online, students are expected to dialogue in a way that provokes, clarifies, challenges, and enlightens the course community. In these communications, the concepts of a liberal studies approach to higher education will be practiced and varying interpretations, particularly in relation to the course readings, will be shared.

Additional considerations of a student's relative level of engagement and academic integrity will also be made across all aspects of the course including but not limited to completion and quality of tasks and assignments, communications, following instructions and guidelines, and accessing materials. As mentioned previously, all students will start as receiving 75% and will be assessed as to their respective demonstration of proficiency/deficiency/adequacy across the term.

Readings

Richard Paul & Linda Elder (2014). *Critical Thinking Concepts & Tools (7th Edition)*. Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Purchase a hard copy via the [Foundation for Critical Thinking website](#). (\$4 + shipping)

Purchase a digital copy via [Kindle](#) (\$2.99) or [iBooks](#) (\$2.99)

All other course readings will be available via D2L Brightspace. A full bibliography of the course readings is available at the end of this syllabus.

All readings are to be completed during the respective week they are assigned, and their material will be needed on exams. On occasion, students may be asked to complete additional readings

beyond those listed on the syllabus. Should this be the case, sufficient time and access to such readings will be provided.

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. It is imperative that the student do all assigned work in a timely fashion. In particular, the benefits from discussion specifically depend on each student's respective preparation and distinctive contribution. Failure to do so hurts not only the individual student, but the collective community as a whole.

Please be aware: Upper-division courses are typically already quite time-involved as the amount of outside library work, reading, and writing is demanding. 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 via the D2L Brightspace dropbox 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).

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 current Student Guidebook).

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

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

Email: Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

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.

Concealed Carry Notice

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the [formal policy](#) and/or consult your event organizer. Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Course Outline:

Note: The course outline is only a guideline. It is subject to change based on discussion, current events, or other such influences.

Week 1 (8/27-9/2)

- general course information
- general introduction to liberal studies and interdisciplinarity
- readings:
 - Blum (p. 1-5; read for 8/29 class session)
 - Paul & Elder (p1-6; read for 8/31 class session)

Week 2 (9/3-9/9) (* no classroom session 9/3 – Happy Labor Day!)

- Critical thought and interdisciplinarity in action
- readings:
 - Deitering & Gronemyer (p489-503; read for 9/5 class session)
 - Paul & Elder (p7-12; read for 9/7 class session)

Week 3 (9/10-9/16)

- navigating interdisciplinarity – paradigms
- readings:
 - Paul & Elder (p13-15; read for 9/14 class session)

Week 4 (9/17-9/23)

- navigating interdisciplinarity – critical being and investment into the subject
- readings:
 - Lee (p84-101; read for 9/17 class session)
 - Paul & Elder (p16-18; read for 9/21 class session)
- **Individual Education Project due September 23**

Week 5 (9/24-9/30) (* no in-person session Friday, September 28)

- liberal studies in action - the research process initiated
- readings:
 - Broom (p51-61; read for 9/24 class session)
- **Exam One to be completed between Thursday, Sept. 27 and Friday, Sept. 28**

Week 6 (10/1-10/7)

- liberal studies in action - thought, language and education
- readings:
 - Shoebridge et al (p1-18; read for 10/1 class session)
 - Woodward (p359-374; read for 10/3 class session)
 - Paul & Elder (p19-22; read for 10/5 class session)
- **Sample Annotation due October 7**

Week 7 (10/8-10/14)

- liberal studies in action – reading scholarship critically
- readings:
 - Stoller (p22-35 for 10/8 class session)
 - Ritter (p601-631 for 10/10 class session)
 - Newton (p1-8; read for 10/10 class session)
 - Paul & Elder (p23; read for 10/12 class session)

Week 8 (10/15-10/21)

- doing interdisciplinary studies – generating a topic and thinking through connections
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 9 (10/22-10/28)

- doing interdisciplinary studies – establishing theoretical foundations and methods
- readings:
 - TBA
- **Full Annotated Bibliography due October 28**

Week 10 (10/29-11/4) (* no in-person session Friday, November 2)

- doing interdisciplinary studies – getting it written
- readings:
 - Berg (p378-407; read for 10/31 class session)
- **Exam Two to be completed between Thursday, Nov. 1 and Friday, Nov. 2**

Week 11 (11/5-11/11) (no in-person session Friday, Nov 9; one-on-one meetings Nov 8-9)

- bringing it together as a whole
- readings:
 - TBA
- **First Draft of Research Proposal Project due November 11**

Week 12 (11/12-11/18)

- the peer review process
- readings:
 - Graff (p81-87; read for 11/12 class session)
 - VanDeWeghe (p95-99; read for 11/12 class session)

Week 13 (11/19-11/25)

- incorporating peer feedback
- readings:
 - Yancey (13-18; read for 11/19 class session)
- **Peer Review of Research Proposal Projects due November 25**

Week 14 (11/26-12/2) (no in-person session Fri, Nov 30 – Happy Thanksgiving!)

- revision and refinement
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 15 (12/3-12/9) (no in-person session Wed, Dec 5; one-on-one meetings Dec 4-5)

- tying things back together and looking ahead
- readings:
 - none
- **Revised Research Proposal Project due December 7**
- **Reflective Review due Friday, December 9**

Finals Week (12/10-12/15)

- **Exam Three to be completed between Monday December 10 and Wednesday, December 12, 12:30 PM**

final grades available via MyLeo on Tuesday, December 18

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Browser support

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version. Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- 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.
 - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.
 Pop-ups are allowed.
 JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (*version 17 or later*) <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
 - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
 - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- 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.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection 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, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support

Need Help?

Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “[click here](#)” to submit an issue via email.



System Maintenance

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.

LIBS 300 – Introduction to Liberal Studies

Reading list bibliography – Fall 2018

Week 1

Blum, S. (2017, November 14). Ungrading: The significant learning benefits of getting rid of grades.

Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved December 7, 2017, from

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/11/14/significant-learning-benefits-getting-rid-grades-essay>

Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2014). *Critical Thinking Concepts & Tools (7th Edition)*. Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Week 2

Deitering, A. & Gronemyer, K. (2011). Beyond peer-reviewed articles: Using blogs to enrich students’

understanding of scholarly work. *Libraries and the Academy*, 11(1), 489-503. [https://muse-jhu-](https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.tamuc.edu/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v011/11.1.deitering.html)

[edu.proxy.tamuc.edu/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v011/11.1.deitering.html](https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.tamuc.edu/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v011/11.1.deitering.html)

Week 4

Lee, J. (2000). Critical thinking and science. In *The Scientific Endeavor: A Primer on Scientific*

Principles and Practices (pp. 84-101). San Francisco: Benjamin Cummings.

Week 5

Broom, C. (2011). From critical thinking to critical being. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social*

Justice, 24(2), 16-27. <https://great-ideas.org/Encounter242/Broom242.html>

Week 6

Shoebridge, A., Shields, N., & Webster, K. (2017). Minding the body: An interdisciplinary theory of

optimal posture for musicians. *Psychology of Music*, 1, 1-18.

Woodard, S. (2016). Object interviews, material imaginings and ‘unsettling’ methods: Interdisciplinary

approaches to understanding materials and material culture. *Qualitative Research*, 16(4), 359-374.

Week 7

Ritter, K. (2005). The economics of authorship: Online paper mills, student writers, and first-year

composition. *College Composition and Communication*, 56(4), 601-631.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037888>

Stoller, A. Educating from failure: Dewey's aesthetics and the case for failure in educational theory.

Journal of Aesthetic Education, 47(1), 22-35.

Newton, D. (2015). Cheating in online classes is now big business. *The Atlantic*, Retrieved from

https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/11/cheating-through-online-courses/413770/?utm_source=facebook&utm_content=edit-promo&utm_term=2018-07-15T16%3A19%3A19&utm_campaign=the-atlantic&utm_medium=social

Week 10

Berg, B. (2009). Writing research papers: Sorting noodles from the soup. In *Qualitative Research Methods of the Social Sciences* (7th ed.) (pp. 378-407). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Week 12

Graff, P. (2009). Approaching authentic peer review. *The English Journal*, 98(5), 81-87.

<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/0985-may09/EJ0985Approaching.pdf>

Van De Weghe, R. (2004). Research matters: "Awesome, Dude!" Responding helpfully to peer writing. *The English Journal*, 94(1), 95-99.

http://www.csun.edu/~krowlands/Content/Academic_Resources/Composition/Responding/VanDeWegh-Responding%20to%20Peer%20Writing.pdf

Week 13

Yancey, K. (1998). Getting beyond exhaustion: Reflection, self-assessment, and learning. *The Clearing House*, 72(1), 1-18. <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=39f9576e-6ff7-4499-bd2c-de1be3cc4907%40sessionmgr4003&vid=1&hid=4211&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=edsjsr.30189412&db=edsjsr>