



CID 2301.02E (#28076): The Human Experience

The American Dream

Education South (EDS) 129, MWF Noon-12:50 PM

Course Syllabus: Spring 2024

Updated December 29, 2023

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Baker

Office Location: Ferguson 126

Office Hours: M 2-5 PM, T 3:15-5 PM, W 2-5, R 3:15-5 and by appointment

University Email Address: Andrew.Baker@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: 24 hours (weekday) / 48 hours (weekend)

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

CID 2301: The Human Experience introduces students to humanities-based inquiry by guiding students through an exploration of important humanistic questions across all elements of the human experience. Through the deep focus on a connecting theme, students will engage in holistic discussions of topics addressing fundamental questions about human life and human interactions, develop the skills of humanistic inquiry (including critical thinking, research, literacy skills, and communication skills), and learn to apply their knowledge to their personal, professional, and academic goals.

This course is the foundational course for the Humanities Certificate program, a grant-funded, TAMU System-wide initiative designed to create an intentional connective pathway through the core curriculum to infuse the humanities and humanities-based inquiry (critical thinking, research, communication, ethics, morality, cultural awareness, empathy, etc.) into student degree pathways and encourage students to see the relationships between larger questions of the human experience and their own lives and goals. The course is based on Transformative Texts and a Transformative Project.

Our theme for this course is the American Dream. We will explore this theme through the novel *The Great Gatsby* and other historical readings from the early 20th century with a focus on the ways wealth, democracy, and opportunity have shaped our shared vision of the good society and the good life.

Course Details

The format for this class is in-person, web-enhanced. We will hold course meetings in our assigned classroom (EDS 129) at Noon Monday, Wednesday, and Friday except where indicated in the course schedule. Class will begin promptly at this time. Arriving late disrupts the class and distracts your fellow

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students. Please make every effort to arrive on time. During class we will participate in interactive lectures, class discussions, group discussions, and tests. These course meetings will not be recorded. Remote attendance will not be offered. If you miss a class, please contact another student to identify what you missed.

Additional course materials will be available through D2L under the *content* tab. The course schedule (below) is organized by day, with assignments being due an hour before class time on the day indicated unless otherwise noted. Test will be taken in class. Assignments should be turned in either on D2L or in-person as explained in the course schedule. See the assignment section below for more details. **Late work will be accepted with a one letter grade penalty.**

In the event of a campus closure, we will follow the instructions given by the university. If the university permits, cancelled class meetings will be converted to recorded lectures and/or discussion boards on D2L. If you have any concerns about class attendance or have family or work responsibilities that may interfere with your class attendance, please contact me as soon as possible. Enrolling in this course is an implicit commitment to make class attendance a priority.

My expectation is that this course will be challenging, fair, rewarding, and engaging. If, at any point, you feel it is not meeting these goals please let me know. I welcome your ideas for how I might improve the course. If at any time you are confronted with circumstances outside the classroom that limit your ability to complete the coursework or arrive on-time to class, please let me know. I am willing to work with students to ensure that they have the best opportunity to succeed in the class.

A Note on Smartphones

Smartphones are one of the most amazing pieces of educational technology ever created. Smartphones are one of the most frustrating and distracting pieces of educational technology ever created. We will, at times, use smartphones to look up information, to explore historical sources, and to examine alternate interpretations. At all other times cellular phones (and computers not being used for note taking) should be silenced and put away.

Smartphones also work against the development of a lively and engaging classroom community. For this reason, students are asked to put away their phones upon entering the classroom. Students who would like to spend the time between classes on their phones should do so in the hallway or lounges. Upon entering the classroom, students should be prepared to engage socially and intellectually with their fellow students and professor in an in-person format. Students violating this policy should expect a penalty on their participation grade.

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

The readings for this course are partially drawn from a system-wide list of Transformative Texts.

Transformative Texts are books, films, artwork, music, documents, memoirs, etc. from diverse regions, cultures, ethnicities, ideologies, religions, genders--around the world and through time--that reflect the core ideals, ethics, and moralities of the human experience.

Our main text for the course will be *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. You should plan to secure a print copy of the book before the first week of class. We will be spending a lot of our class time reading, interpreting, and revisiting this text. There will also be short readings related to the course theme. These will be identified in the course schedule below and can be accessed through D2L. I strongly encourage students to print copies of these readings to bring to class, as we will reference particular sections of them in our course discussions.

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Student Learning Outcomes

- 1. Critical/Integrative Thinking:** Students will apply insights from the humanities (i.e., examinations of human history, culture, language, ethics, and aesthetics) to problems or questions that intersect with other areas of inquiry, including STEM and professional disciplines. (Core Outcome Alignment: Critical Thinking)
- 2. Communication:** Students will communicate ideas effectively through writing and, where appropriate, through oral communication, visual communication, or creative performance. (Core Outcome Alignment: Communication)
- 3. Ethical Reasoning:** Students will engage with multiple perspectives in exploring the human dimensions of real-world situations and problems. (Core Outcome Alignment: Personal Responsibility; Critical Thinking)
- 4. Cultural Awareness:** Students will demonstrate an appreciation for social and cultural diversity while engaging in critical analysis of various forms of literary, artistic, or cultural expression. (Core Outcome Alignment: Social Responsibility; Critical Thinking)

What CID 2301: The Human Experience is all about

This course will be centered on classroom discussion of assigned works, using small group and large group discussions, with short writing and reflection assignments to prepare you for the final Transformative Project. The Transformative Project showcases student learning of humanities skills, including information literacy, critical thinking, and communication. Students will read, analyze, and develop an understanding of the assigned texts and their connections to their own lived experience, goals, and beliefs; conduct research; and communicate their ideas. In engaging with the core learning objectives of critical thinking, communication, social responsibility, and personal responsibility, students will gain a greater appreciation of the complexities of the world and their place within that complexity, and gain new skills derived from deep textual reading and analysis, critical thinking and engagement, research and information literacy, and the ability to communicate their ideas. These skills provide a key foundation for the college experience and will bolster students' employability after graduation.

To prepare for and develop the Transformative Project, students will engage in short writing, research, and oral presentations that provide a foundation for their final project. Students will develop a project focused on their reading of Transformative Text. They will conduct research on different approaches to understanding the different perspectives on the large issue, and make arguments about how such different perspectives might shape a society's understanding of the issue. Students will prepare a product that articulates the connections between their research and their own lives, goals, and experiences. The final Transformative Project will be presented using Adobe Creative Campus suite of programs, to allow them creativity of expression in making the connections between their humanities inquiry and their personal experiences.

Throughout the course, discussions and assignments will be geared to reinforcing the basic premises of university education and to emphasizing students' development of skills central to their college career and beyond—exposing students to new ideas, different perspectives, and the diversity of the human experience; developing relationships between and among students, mentors, and faculty; reinforcing persistence and resiliency; encouraging reflection and sense of purpose; and honing reading, writing, and communication skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

Attendance: Showing up is one of the most important factors in success in any realm of life. Therefore attendance will be taken each day of class. Each student will receive 3 points for each day they are present in class (excluding test days). Students with excused absences will also receive the 3 points. Students who arrive more than 3 minutes late will not receive the points for the day. Students may receive more than the allotted 105 points for attendance. Any additional points will count as extra credit. This assignment supports the student success goals of the course.

Participation: In addition to showing up, success requires students who are prepared for class and engaged with our course activities. Students are expected to contribute to classroom discussions. Thoughtful participation is not necessarily the same as talking frequently. It means demonstrating a knowledge of the material, a willingness to think critically, and, most importantly, a willingness to learn from others. Humility and a willingness to listen are essential virtues in the classroom. Students are encouraged to engage not only with the professor and the material, but also with each other where appropriate. I will assess students periodically throughout the semester for their participation. Students who are using their smart phones or other technology in a way that distracts themselves or others should expect an immediate penalty to their participation grade. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Orientation: At the beginning of the semester there will be a number of small assignments through D2L designed to orient you to the course and to introduce you to your fellow students. These will be due the first two weeks of the semester.

Reading Checks: We will spend most course days analyzing, discussing, and interacting with course readings. These discussions will only be fruitful if students come prepared to class, having read and thought about the documents. For this reason, I will assign periodic reading checks. These may take a number of forms including pop-quizzes, submitted notes, and/or in-class short essays. These assignments will assess whether you, as an individual student, have come prepared to class and are doing the work. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Group Submissions: Early in the course I will assign students to groups. These groups will serve a number of functions in the course. They will be your group for the podcast assignment. They will also serve as your discussion group for both in-person discussions. During some classes we will have in-class assignments that groups will work on collaboratively. These will be submitted for group grading. Only students who attend will receive credit for these group submissions. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Tests: There will be three tests during the semester. These tests will be hand-written essays and will be taken during class time. They will invite students to take the materials from the unit and use them to analyze a new primary source from the same period that connects to the themes. These tests are open-note. You may bring printed annotated copies of course documents. Both must be analog. No computer, tablet, or smart phone may be used during the tests. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Reading Journal: Each student will be responsible for keeping a reading journal that includes at least one page of hand-written notes in response to each major reading from the course. This is designed to provide students with a way to reflect on their reading and thinking as we work our way through the texts. Students will periodically submit these for review for a completion grade. At the end of the semester each student will write up a 2-3 page typed reflection on the course readings based on the thoughts recorded in the journal. This will be submitted as a more polished final paper.

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Group Podcast: During weeks 14 and 15 we will be doing a group podcast assignment as a way for groups to engage with the course theme of the American Dream through an extended analysis of both the course materials and independent historical research by the group. This assignment will provide students with the opportunity to revisit course materials and refine their understanding of the course theme. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Transformative Project: The Transformative Project will ask students to create a cultural product that presents the American Dream as they have come to understand it. This is an individual project. Each student should identify a creative medium (poster, podcast, video, poem, monologue, etc.) and should use the Adobe Creative Suite to produce a final project. These projects will be publicly presented at the Learning Showcase. Additional details, including a rubric and group role descriptions, will be available through D2L. You will submit a proposal, the final product, and a brief process paper. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Extra Credit: Over the course of the semester, any student may attempt to secure up to 20 points of extra credit by memorizing and reciting (in front of the class) a section of at least 150 words from one of our course readings. This selection should be made in consultation with the instructor. These need to be completed before the last day of class, scheduled at least one class period in advance.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Final grades will use the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Assignment Grading

Attendance	105
Participation	100
Orientation	50
Reading Checks	70
Group Submissions	50
Journal	80
Test (3x75)	225
Group Podcast	150
<u>Transformative Project</u>	<u>170</u>
Total:	1000

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1

- January 10 The American Dream
Watch: D2L Orientation
Post: Course Welcome Forum
- January 12 Why read a book?
Due: Orientation Quiz
Due: Academic Honesty Quiz

Week 2

- January 15 No Class: MLK Day
- January 17 Setting the Scene
Lecture: World War I and the Jazz Age
Due: *Gatsby* and Journal Check
- January 19 Book Discussion
Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 1

Week 3

- January 22 How to read a book (print)
Read: Billy Collins, "Marginalia" ([online](#))
- January 24 Book Discussion
Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 1
- January 26 Heading "East": Class and Wealth in America and *Gatsby*
Journal Discussion

Week 4

- January 29 Book Discussion
Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 2
- January 31 Why read old books?
Read: Alan Jacobs, *How to Think* (selections)
- February 2 Book Discussion
Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 3

Week 5

- February 5 Book Discussion
Discussion: Shared Humanity and the RCO
Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 4
- February 7 Book Discussion
Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 5
Journal Midterm Submission
- February 9 How to study; How to test

Week 6

- February 12 Test 1
- February 14 The Dream of Pleasure
- February 16 The Dream of Mobility

Week 7

- February 19 The Dream of Wealth

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February 21	The Dream of Security
February 23	No Class
Week 8	
February 26	How to read for themes and symbols Gatsby review, chapters 1-5
February 28	Book Discussion Read: Gatsby, Chapter 6
March 1	Book Discussion Read: Gatsby, Chapter 7
Week 9	
March 4	Book Discussion Read: Gatsby, Chapter 8
March 6	Book Discussion Read: Gatsby, Chapter 9
March 8	Test 2
Week 10	
March 11	Spring Break
March 13	Spring Break
March 15	Spring Break
Week 11	
March 18	Making Sense of Gatsby: Our Capacity for Wonder Listen: John Green, <i>Anthropocene Reviewed</i> (online)
March 20	Making Sense of Gatsby: The Carelessness of the Rich
March 22	Making Sense of Gatsby: Gatsby as Trimalchio? Read: The Satyricon of Petronius, Vol. 2 (selections)(D2L)
Week 12	
March 25	Race and the American Dream Read: James Weldon Johnson, <i>The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> (selections)
March 27	Opportunity and the American Dream Read: Langston Hughes, "Let America be America Again" (online)
March 29	Immigration and the American Dream Read: TBD
Week 13	
April 1	Citizenship and the American Dream
April 3	Campus Life and Campus Engagement
April 5	Test 3
Week 14	
April 8	Introduce Podcast Project
April 10	Podcast Workday Podcast Proposal Due
April 12	Podcast Workday Podcast Script Due

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Week 15
 April 15 "Are you a college man?"
 Journal Submission and Journal Final Writeup Due
 April 17 T Project Introduction
 Podcast Recording and Revised Script Due
 April 19 Living well in past, present, and future
 Podcast Individual Report Due

Week 16
 April 22 Course Wrap-up
 T Project Proposals Due
 April 24 T Project Workday
 April 26 Course Wrap-up

Week 17
 April 29 T Project Workday
 T Project Recording Due
 May 1 Study Day
 May 3 Study Day

Final Exam: Present final project at university event
 3:00-5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 8, Rayburn Student Center
 Due: T Project Final Submission
 Due: T Project Process Paper

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COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor. If you are having technical difficulty with any part of D2L, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Statement on AI (ChatGPT)

At A&M University-Commerce we recognize that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that can generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words. AI is a powerful tool for generating text and for consolidating information. As a tool it requires that both students and faculty think through how to use it wisely and responsibly to accomplish our goals. AI is also a powerful tool for gathering the work of others and combining it, without citation, into a polished product. In this it is morally dubious.

For this course our goals are to practice historical thinking, to interpret historical evidence, and to grow in our understanding of the past. As a tool AI does little to help us in these tasks. On the contrary, using AI for course assignments would undermine your learning in these areas—the learning you are paying for. For this reason, students and faculty are not authorized to use any AI software in this course. Any use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). As a student you are fully responsible for the content of any assignment you submit.

Statement on Student Grievances

Students who have questions or concerns about the Instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the Instructor or a classmate should first consult with the Instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky (Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be clearly communicated to the students with as much notice as is practicable.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

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.

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UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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, Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835; Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

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

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the

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Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

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 [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.