



CID 2301.10E (#21214): The Human Experience

The American Dream

BA 257, MWF 2:00-2:50 PM

Course Syllabus: Spring 2025

Updated December 9, 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Baker

Office Location: Ferguson 126

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: noon-1 PM, 3-5 PM and by appointment

University Email Address: Andrew.Baker@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

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

Supplemental Instructor (SI):

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

CID 2301: The Human Experience introduces students to fundamental questions about human life. Students will develop the skills of critical thinking, research, literacy, and communication, and will apply these skills 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. 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.

Materials

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. Please get the copy put out by Amazon, available at the bookstore. We will be spending our class time reading, interpreting, and revisiting this book. There will also be short readings related to the course theme. These will be identified in the 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.

Course Details

The format for this class is in-person, web-enhanced. We will hold course meetings in our assigned classroom (BA 257) at 2 PM Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Class will begin promptly at this time. Arriving late disrupts the class and distracts your fellow 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.**

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 a commitment to make class attendance a priority.

Our class will have a Student Instructor (SI). The SI is a fellow student who is there to help and guide you as you learn to navigate college life. The SI will help the professor through course administration, such as taking attendance, and engaging in the class, but will not have any grading responsibilities.

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 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.

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)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

Attendance: Showing up is one of the most important factors in success in any realm of life. 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 late will receive partial credit 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. 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 and a willingness to learn from others. Humility and teachability are essential virtues in the classroom. 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 a 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 Journal: Each student will be responsible for keeping a reading journal that includes at least one page of hand-written notes and/or written reflections 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 photograph and upload these notes before class for review for a completion grade. The lowest grade will be dropped. 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. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

Group Submissions: Early in the course I will assign students to working 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 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. These assignments may not be turned in late without an excused absence. This assignment supports SLO's 1-4.

American Dream in Music and Art Presentations: During Week 8 students will work in their groups to identify, analyze, and present both a work of visual art or music that they see as representing the American Dream. These presentations will be at least 12-15 minutes and will include all group members. 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 and open book. 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.

Group Podcast: During weeks 12-15 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 from one of our course readings. 10 words per point. 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	80
Orientation	50
Reading Checks/Journal	130
Group Submissions	65
Journal Writeup	25
Music/Art Presentation	20
Test (3x75)	225
Group Podcast	150
<u>Transformative Project</u>	<u>150</u>
Total:	1000

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1

- January 13 The American Dream
 Watch: D2L Orientation
 Post: Course Welcome Forum
- January 15 Why read a book?/How to read a book
 Due: Orientation Quiz
 Due: Academic Honesty Quiz
 Read: Billy Collins, "Marginalia" ([online](#))
- January 17 Setting the Scene: World War I and the Lost Generation
 Due: *Gatsby* book and Journal Check

Week 2

- January 20 No Class: MLK Day
- January 22 *Gatsby* Discussion: The Opening Monologue
 Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 1
- January 24 *Gatsby* Discussion: The First Party

Week 3

- January 27 The American Dream and American Experiment
 Student Success: Campus Resources
- January 29 *Gatsby* Discussion: The Second Party
 Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 2
- January 31 The Dream of Happiness and Pleasure

Week 4

- February 3 *Gatsby* Discussion: The Third Party
 Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 3
- February 5 *Gatsby* Discussion: The Characters
 Group Assignment: The Characters
- February 7 Party like its 1920: Prohibition and its Discontents

Week 5

- February 10 *Gatsby* Discussion: Chasing Daisy; Uncovering *Gatsby*
 Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 4
- February 12 The Dreams of Wealth and Mobility: Driving Mr. *Gatsby*
- February 14 Henry Ford's America
 Read: Calvino, "Henry Ford" (D2L)

Week 6

- February 17 *Gatsby* Discussion: Capturing the Dream
 Read: *Gatsby*, Chapter 5
- February 19 How to read for themes and symbols
 Gatsby review, chapters 1-5
- February 21 Test 1

Week 7

- February 24 Immigration and the American Dream

February 26	Immigration and the American Dream Read: Anzia Yeziarska, "America and I" (link)
February 28	<i>Gatsby</i> Discussion: Gatsby's Past Read: Gatsby, Chapter 6
Week 8	
March 3	American Dream in Music and Art Workshop
March 5	American Dream in Music and Art- Presentations
March 7	American Dream in Music and Art- Presentations
Week 9	
March 10	Spring Break
March 12	Spring Break
March 14	Spring Break
Week 10	
March 17	<i>Gatsby</i> Discussion: The Crisis Read: Gatsby, Chapter 7
March 19	Careers and College Discussion Student Success: Skills and Careers
March 21	Race and the American Dream Read: James W Johnson, <i>The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> , Chapter XI (11) only (D2L, under Content)
Week 11	
March 24	Is Gatsby Trimalchio? Is Gatsby Biloxi?
March 26	Test 2
March 28	Podcast Project - Introduction University Drop Deadline
Week 12	
March 31	The Dream of Security Podcast Proposal Due (11:59 PM)
April 2	The History of Security in America Podcast Script Draft Due (11:59 PM)
April 4	Daisy, Jordan, and the New Woman
Week 13	
April 7	Podcast Workday – Check in at Library second floor
April 9	<i>Gatsby</i> Discussion: The real Gatsby? Read: Gatsby, Chapter 8
April 11	Coming to terms with the limits of the American Dream Read: Langston Hughes, "Let America be America Again" (online) Podcast Recording and Revised Script Due (11:59 PM)
Week 14	
April 14	<i>Gatsby</i> Discussion (Finale) Read: Gatsby, Chapter 9

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

	Podcast Individual Report Due
April 16	Gatsby's Dream and Our Capacity for Wonder Listen: John Green, <i>Anthropocene Reviewed</i> (online)
April 18	Gatsby's Dream and the Past, Present, and Future Due: Discussion Post of quotes about time (D2L)
Week 15	
April 21	T Project Introduction
April 23	<i>Gatsby</i> Discussion: The Characters Character arc group assignment
April 25	Test 3
Week 16	
April 28	College and the American Dream Read: David Brooks, "How the Ivy League Broke America," <i>The Atlantic</i> , November 14, 2024 (https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/12/meritocracy-college-admissions-social-economic-segregation/680392/)
	T Project Proposals Due (11:59)
April 30	T Project Workday – How to Adobe Journal Final Writeup Due
May 2	T Project Workday – How to Present T Project Recording Due May 6, 11:59 PM
Final Exam:	Present final project at Learning Showcase 3:00-5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 7, Rayburn Student Center Due: T Project Final Submission Due: T Project Process Paper

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.

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). www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx

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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 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.