

HUM 2301: The Human Experience

Theme: Great Works of Art

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East Texas A&M University

Web-Based Class, Fall 2026

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES

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 Human Experience 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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- enhance visual literacy critical thinking skills (discussion posts / assignments)
- apply interdisciplinary scholarship through designing and carrying out the transformative project
- generate and effectively communicate scholarly material in discussion posts and research project
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 (peer engagement)
- ability to work both independently and productively, while developing effective time management skills by staying on track in an online course
- understand definitions of important art and art historical terminology
- discuss and explain historically significant works of art
- analyze significant styles and movements within art history and including a variety of types of media
- demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, trends, processes, and systems)

THEME: Great Works of Art

Students will become acquainted with the general historical development of art from the prehistoric period to contemporary art. The course will introduce basic tools and terminology used in discussing artworks. We will explore art and artifact contextually – through culture, language, politics, and location, as well as techniques and production, to better begin to truly see and understand what makes this work so essential. This class will require students to *discuss* several images that represent the historical span of the course and to *demonstrate the analytical skills* necessary to communicate visual information. By the end of the course, students should not only be able to discuss historically significant works of art but also be acquainted with the characteristic features of the art and culture from major historical periods.

Transformative Project:

The Transformative Project will ask students to take a theme from the course, engage in research about that topic, identify relevant sources, present an argument, and link the outcomes to an issue relevant to their own career or personal trajectory. The Transformative Project aligns with and assesses all Student Learning Outcomes for the course. The Transformative Project should engage students in the use of Adobe Creative Cloud.

Mission Statement for the Human Experience Program

- Students will explore their own agency and recognize how they are responsible for their success in their college experience, careers, and lives
- At the same time, they will contextualize, reflect on, and share their experiences and perspectives in their communities.
- In doing so, they will examine differing perspectives, which will lead to two interconnected ideas: seeing different perspectives develops empathy and Individual student voices and creativity add to larger cultural understandings of the world and the human experience.
- We will examine how “texts” transform not just individual lives but also the ways that groups of people perceive and understand the world.

ASSESSMENT:

Students’ ability to meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be evaluated through written assignments, discussion posts, worksheets, projects, and essays.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

No textbooks are required; everything is on our course website.

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.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The focus of this class is to build student skills in critical analysis and communication by developing students' ability to think critically, empathetically, and holistically about big issues and to develop, hone, and communicate their ideas about those big issues. The common student learning outcomes for this course are:

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)

Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed by the Transformative Project, presented during the Learning Showcase held on the Wednesday of Exam Week, 3-5pm. Students will present their projects during one hour of that time and are required to attend as assigned.

This course also fulfills the Phase I requirements of the University QEP through the completion a Competencies Pre-Reflection, a Competencies Post-Reflection, and the Focus2 Career Assessment.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ASSESSMENT:

This course will be centered on classroom discussion of assigned works, using small group and large group discussions, with short low-stakes writing and reflection assignments that scaffold to a final Transformative Project. The Transformative Project showcases student learning and development of humanities skills, including information literacy, critical thinking, and communication. Students will read, discuss, listen, 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 scaffolded foundation for their final project, as set out in the Course Schedule. Through reflective assignments, students will develop a project focus that sets out the large issue drawn from their study of the chosen Transformative Text and the relevance students find to their lives and goals. They will conduct research on different approaches to that large issue to understand in a holistic sense 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 the larger issue they researched and discussed and their own lives, goals, and experiences. The final Transformative Project will be presented at the Learning Showcase using the Adobe Creative Campus suite of programs, in a format that makes the most sense to students, 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 variability 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: *

Engagement: Each person is expected to participate fully in class, by following the guidelines listed below.

- **Preparation:** reviewing readings and material before class
- **Focus:** avoiding distractions during in-person and online activities
- **Presence:** engaged and responsive during all activities
- **Asking Questions:** in class, out of class, online, offline
- **Listening:** hearing what others say, and also what they are not saying
- **Specificity:** referring to specific ideas from reading and discussions
- **Synthesizing:** making connections between reading and discussions

Discussion: Each student will write numerous times to the discussion page for the class. Make sure to answer the prompt fully, and follow all guidelines. Then, make sure to engage in conversation, responding to comments on your posts and commenting on your peers' posts. All comments on peers' posts are due for the week by the following Monday. At that point, the discussion boards will close, and will not be allowed to be modified/edited at this point. All your posts need to be written formally. This means appropriate punctuation and capitalization. No text speak (i.e. U or R substituting for you or are). Follow the guidelines and make sure to respond to your classmates!

Short Papers: Throughout the course, students will complete several short papers. These will involve writing film reviews, responding to different issues, and summarizing key topics. Papers should follow all of our [formatting guidelines](#).

One-pagers: A one-pager allows students to creatively synthesize key concepts and information about a chosen artwork or historical period. It takes the form of a visual representation, incorporating text, images, and creative elements to demonstrate understanding. You can design your own page, or you can use a [template](#) that is provided in our Helpful Information. Other than a template, these should be entirely hand-made – which means you will be incorporating drawings and handwriting (can be made using markers, pins, colored pencils, whatever writing materials you prefer). To turn in this project, you will take a picture or a scan of your page and upload it to the D2L site. To get credit for this assignment, the one-pager must be made by hand.

Art on Campus Assignment: Each student will be given the opportunity to study a piece of public art, and write a short paper exploring its role in the environment.

Human Experience Assignments: These projects are simple assignments meant to help students acclimate to college, specifically East Texas A&M University. They can include short, repeatable quizzes, pass/fail assignments, or discussion posts.

Transformative Project: The Transformative Project will ask students to take a theme from the course, engage in research about that topic, identify relevant sources, present an argument, and link the outcomes to an issue relevant to their own career or personal trajectory.

Assignments will NOT be accepted over one week late. For each class day late, the grade will be reduced. Further, the final project will not be able to be accepted late.

Grade Breakdown:

20% - Discussion Posts
30% - Short Papers and Worksheets
10% - Art on Campus Assignment
10% - Human Experience Assignments
20% - Transformative Project
10% - Reflection Paper

Grade Scale:

A = 90%-100%	(exceptional)
B = 80%-89%	(good)
C = 70%-79%	(average)
D = 60%-69%	(minimally sufficient)
F = 50%-59%	(failure)

*subject to change

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 school or local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

PERSPECTIVE:

Each person will bring their own experiences to this class and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. We will look at a wide array of artwork and examples of visual culture, some of which might include nudity, intense language, violence, etc. The classroom is a safe environment, and each student should behave with integrity and treat their peers with respect. The purpose of this course is to educate and inform students on human rights issues, protest movements and social dynamics and actions; to be clear, there is no attempt to convince people to alter their beliefs or to join any movements.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment must be uploaded on time. Discussion posts will not be accepted after their due date. For other assignments, for each class day late, the grade will be deducted. **Assignments will NOT be accepted over ONE week late.**

On our course website you will see both DUE DATES and END DATES:

- Due Dates: The day the assignment is due.
- End Date: The last day work can be submitted for partial credit.

*** THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS***

WORKLOAD:

The rule of thumb for time required for course study and preparation each week for a face-to-face class or an online course during the spring and fall semesters is three times the number of credit hours (or 9 hours per week) for the course. You need to plan accordingly. If you find yourself unable to complete course requirements in a timely manner, refer to the University's withdrawal policy and the appropriate dates.

Incomplete grades are only granted for extreme emergencies. Being "overloaded" either from other class assignments or job commitments are not considered to be emergency situations. For this class, you should expect an hour to an hour and a half of work each day. If you desire, you can work ahead and start the projects early and take the class at your own pace, just remember to follow due dates and engage in conversation in discussion posts!

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

East Texas A&M University 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.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Statement on Student Behavior:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

All students must show respect toward the instructor and the instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should respect each others' differences. If the instructor determines that a student is not being respectful towards other students or the instructor, it is the instructor's prerogative to ask the student to leave, to refer the student to the department head, and to consider referring the student to the Dean of Students who may consider requiring the student to drop the course. Please refer to pages 42 – 46 of the East Texas A&M University Student guidebook's Codes of Conduct for details.

Academic Dishonesty: Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. There is **no tolerance** for any kind of academic dishonesty in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, and misrepresenting absences. Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression and may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class and/or the University, and a failing grade.

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

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

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

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there may be legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism)

The use of ChatGPT, Copilot, or any other AI platform or tool to generate ideas, write content, or produce any material is strictly prohibited in this course. This class is designed to develop your writing skills, and if you are using AI, you are not writing or learning. This is because the use of AI diminishes opportunities to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, college is a place for learning, and this AI simply cannot do that learning for us.

Any work written, developed, created, or inspired by generative artificial intelligence does not lend itself to our learning goals and is a breach of ethical engagement and our academic integrity policy. Using AI opens up academic honesty issues, both because it raises the question if the work is "your" work, and also because tools like ChatGPT rely on taking material from uncredited scholars and writers. **If it is suspected that the student used AI, the professor reserves the right to ask for more information, including how the assignment was created and written.**

Please be cautious using tools like Grammarly, which can be very helpful when it comes to spell check and grammar advice, but should be avoiding when they generate content. It is strongly suggested that students activate the feature called "Grammarly Authorship" which documents how the assignment is written and illustrates the student's writing process thereby showing that the work is their own.

TURNITIN

East Texas A&M University uses Turnitin software to help students avoid plagiarism and cheating. Turnitin is a 'text-matching' software which is designed to educate students regarding appropriate citation and referencing techniques. Turnitin is also used to provide East Texas A&M University with confidence in the academic integrity of students work. Turnitin does this by comparing a student submission against an archive of Internet documents, Internet data, a repository of previously submitted papers, and subscription repository of periodicals, journals, and publications. Turnitin then creates an 'Originality Report' which can be viewed by both lecturers and students, which identifies where the text within a student submission has matched another source.

EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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.etamu.edu/counsel



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADA ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

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
East Texas A&M University, Waters Library, Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5150, Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu

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

After contacting the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of what accommodations are needed **IN ADVANCE** of when they are needed (for example, if testing accommodations are necessary, please inform the instructor with appropriate documentation at LEAST one week before the test date).

EMAIL POLICY:

Email is the preferred form of communication, with a general response time of 24 hours during the week (do not expect replies over the weekend). For all emails sent, please **include full name, student ID, and the class** that you are attending. Do not send emails to myself and other professors at once, as each professor has different issues to address. You are allotted three absences for this course; plan accordingly and there is no need to contact me about unexcused absences that are incorporated into this allowance. For excused absences, you need to bring in a hard copy of appropriate documentation of your absence.

GRADE POLICY:

If you have concerns regarding a grade, email me **within one week of receiving the assignment back** clearly explaining why you think the assignment was addressed incorrectly. After the email is received, we will then set up an appointment to discuss the concern.

CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

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

LMS Requirements:

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

LMS Browser Support:

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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@etamu.edu.

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 Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PROGRAMS NEEDED

At a minimum, you must have access to and be able to use 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, the university provides access here:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/facultystaffservices/academictechnology/documents/Office-365-Students.pdf>

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

Great Works of Art Course Schedule

1. Intro Week:

- 8/24 – Introduction Discussion Post
- 8/25 – Intro to Art History
- 8/27 – Focus2 and Syllabus and Course Resources Test

2. Prehistoric Art

- 9/1 – Lascaux Worksheet
- 9/3 – Venus of Willendorf One-Pager

3. Death in Egypt

- 9/8 - Pyramid Fact Sheet and Discussion Post
- 9/10 – Death in Egypt vs. Death Today

4. Parthenon

- 9/15 – Sculptural Development Worksheet
- 9/17 – Parthenon One-Pagers

5. Benin Bronzes

- 9/22 – Benin Bronzes Paper
- 9/24 – Single Story Post

6. Imperial Rome

- 9/29 – Roman Portraiture Discussion Post
- 10/1 – Imperial Portraiture Discussion Post and Engineering an Empire Worksheet

7. Icons

- 10/6 – Icons Discussion Post and Historiated Initial Worksheet
- 10/8 – Islamic Aniconism Post

8. Power in China

- 10/13 – The Forbidden City Discussion Post
- 10/15 - Terracotta Warriors Paper

9. Leonardo

- 10/20 – Humanism Discussion Post
- 10/22 – Marketing Leonardo

10. Artemisia's Judith and Holofernes

- 10/27 - Introducing Baroque and Judith and Holofernes Comparison
- 10/29 – Artemisia Assignment

11. Taj Mahal

11/3 - Taj Mahal Worksheet

11/5 – Art on Campus Assignment

12. The Ukiyo-E World

11/10 – Ukiyo-E Discussion Post

11/12 – One-Pager on Hokusai's The Big Wave and Transformative Project Beginning

13. Invention of Photography

11/17 – Invention of Photography Discussion Post and Understanding a Photograph

11/19 – Lewis Hine Collage

14. African Art

11/24 – Yoruba and Memory Project

15. Impression Sunrise

12/1 – Impressionist One-Pagers

12/3 – Film Review

16. Transformative Project

12/8 - Digital Presentation

12/9 - Reflection Paper