Course Syllabus
Honors Humanities 105
Fearless Ideas in the Humanities
Fall 2014

Tuesday, 9:30-10:45 Susquehanna Hall 1119
Thursday:
Section 0101: 9:30-10:45, Tydings 1108
Section 0102: 9:30-10:45, Skinner 1112
Section 0103: 3:30-4:45, Taliaferro 1101
Section 0104: 3:30-4:45m Taliaferro 1103

Professor Gregory A. Staley
Office: 0111 Anne Arundel Hall
gstaley@umd.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30-5:00; Wednesday, 2:00-3:30, and by appointment

Graduate Teaching Assistant Nancy Stewart
Office: 0100 Anne Arundel Hall
nstewar3@umd.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00-4:00, and by appointment

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants:
Erica Fuentes (ericaf@yahoo.com)
Christina Parisi (cparisi@terpmail.umd.edu)
Emmy Schafer (eschafer@terpmail.umd.edu)

Course Website: www.elms.umd.edu
REQUIRED TEXTS
Please note: you do not need to use the specific editions listed for the following works and can choose alternative editions as appropriate.

Many additional readings will be provided on the course website in the form of pdf files.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
A proper introduction to the arts and humanities would encompass much of the curriculum of the entire university, since our subject represents the foundation of the Western educational tradition. The syllabus of this course, however, must be selective yet seek to represent the important themes and interests of the arts and humanities across time and across cultures. The course is subtitled “Fearless Ideas in the Humanities,” since Fearless Ideas serve as the University of Maryland’s motto and agenda. From their beginnings, the Arts and the Humanities (in antiquity they would not have been treated as two different things, which is why our program bears the single title of “Honors Humanities”) explored what it means to be human: to be born; to pursue the adventure in life which we call “growing up”; to relate to others who are same and different, male and female; to consider how we are defined in relation to gods and animals; to ask whether this life has an end or continues in another form. In this course we will consider four fearless ideas: the nature of
education, the examined life, the relationship between art and life, and the 1960's as a moment in the past which has shaped our present.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of this course you should be able to:
1. Describe the nature of the arts and humanities and articulate the ways in which they constitute a shared subject and set of methods.
2. Trace the history of the humanities and appreciate why and how they have shaped the educational curriculum in the West.
3. Utilize a variety of methods in interpreting literature, art and music.
4. Appreciate how differing historical contexts and cultural traditions affect the values and uses of the humanities.
5. Conceptualize a project which uses the arts and humanities to explore some aspect of human experience and contemporary life.
6. Construct a persuasive and articulate defense of the humanities in a time when they are under challenge.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING
All of you come to this course with excellent preparation and strong motivations; we believe that you all can continue to perform at a superior level as you transition from high school to college. Success, however, must be earned and not be assumed. We aim to challenge you, to ask you to test your interests and abilities. We expect you to complete assignments, to attend and participate in classes, and in general to show a sense of curiosity and engagement in our shared work. We will encourage you to refine your ability to speak and to write, to argue and to persuade. Ultimately, we will ask you to do one of the most difficult of tasks: to come to know yourself and to recognize your capacity to become even more than you now are.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION:
Seminar Content:
1. Blog Posts: 15%
2. Writing Assignments: 40%
3. Course Engagement: 15%
4. Final Examination: 20% (Tuesday, December 16th from 8:00-10:00 a.m.)
5. Keystone Proposal: 10%

COURSE POLICIES
1. Attendance and absences: your engagement in the work of this course and of this program is a vital element in your success. We will therefore expect you to attend all classes unless you have a valid reason for being absent. The University’s policies on medical and other absences can be found at: http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540
Absences due to religious observance are perfectly acceptable; however, it is your responsibility to notify us within the first three weeks of the course of any religious absences which will take place during the semester. When assignments or activities fall on such dates, we will schedule an equivalent experience for you at an acceptable time.
2. Academic Integrity: The student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibit students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. All of your work in this course will be covered by this Honor Code.
3. The use of electronic devices in class: we will have a discussion of this issue early in the semester and reach a consensus about it. Class time should be focused on ideas and discussion and usually the use of cell phones, tables or computers during class detracts from our task. Even if an individual student chooses to tune out and log in, this can create distractions for other students who inevitably see a flickering screen.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

WEEK ONE: The Humanities are Not Ho-Hum
Readings: David Foster Wallace, “This is Water”; Martha Nussbaum, “Not for Profit: Liberal Education and Democratic Citizenship”

WEEK TWO: Studia Humanitatis: The Origin of an Idea
Readings: Geoffrey Harpham, The Humanities and the Dream of America (Univ. of Chicago 2011); Homer, The Iliad, book 18; W. H. Auden, “The Shield of Achilles.”

WEEK THREE: The Rationale for the Humanities: Living and Learning, Learning and Earning
Readings: Geoffrey Harpham, The Humanities and the Dream of America

WEEK FOUR: The Humanities: American as Apple Pie
Readings: Geoffrey Harpham, The Humanities and the Dream of America; Prof. Harpham is Director of the National Humanities Center and will visit us during this week.

WEEK FIVE: Fearless Idea: The Unexamined Life

WEEK SIX: The Keystone to the Humanities

WEEK SEVEN: Design Thinking and the Humanities

WEEK EIGHT: Designing Your Keystone
Reading: George Saunders, “The Semplica Girls Diaries”

WEEK NINE: Life’s Mirrors
Readings: Larry Shiner, The Invention of Art: A Cultural History (Univ. of Chicago, 2001), chapters 1 and 11; Susan Sontag, “On Photography”

WEEK TEN: Fearless Idea: All the World’s a Stage
Readings: Oscar Wilde, the preface to Dorian Gray and “The Decay of Lying”; Judith Butler, “Performatice Acts and Gender Construction”; Tom Stoppard, The Real Thing.

WEEK ELEVEN: Stranger than Reality
Reading: Truman Capote, In Cold Blood.

WEEK TWELVE: Fearless Idea: Remembering the Past or Repeating It
Readings: Terry Anderson, The Sixties (Texas A & M, 1999); John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address; Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

WEEK THIRTEEN: History and Herstory

WEEK FOURTEEN: Counterculture