Constructions of Knowledge

Fall Semester 2015; Honors 1110, Perspectives in the Humanities
Honors Classroom 227
Tues/Thurs 9:00 to 10:15

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Course Description:
This course examines how knowledge is produced, what it is used for, and what it means. Specifically, it uses science and literature to examine different ways of knowing. These ways sometimes correspond and sometimes diverge from each other. Different disciplines adopt different approaches, ask different questions, and expect different outcomes.

Class Format:
This seminar style class is discussion based. The format involves gathering around a table and discussing ideas, listening to each other, asking critical questions, and formulating meanings. Because Honors Program classes are limited in terms of enrollment, we can tailor the experience to particular interests or needs, which is a way of saying that we will make revisions to this syllabus when necessary. We will listen to feedback from all of you. You will find that course materials engage the topic of the class in compelling ways. After reading or viewing these materials, you will want to talk; you will have ideas to express. Please feel comfortable sharing your views. This class is about knowledge, and all of us have different ideas, perspectives, and understandings. Hearing a variety of viewpoints helps all of us learn from each other.

Required Texts:
Frankenstein
Mary Shelly

The Things They Carried
Tim O’Brein

Readings that you will print and bring to class are on the Canvas page. A reading schedule for the class is posted as well.

Learning Outcomes:
• Students will demonstrate knowledge of different philosophical, literary, and scientific traditions.
• Student will analyze literature and scientific readings to understand disciplinary standards and terminologies, as well as trans-disciplinary concepts.
• Students will demonstrate critical thinking that is open-minded, objective, and as free from bias as possible.

Class Requirements:
1) Reading is essential in this class, and reading well usually means reading more than once. Please annotate the readings by underlining, writing comments on the side of the page, looking up unknown words, etc. Be engaged. Formulate questions. Challenge the writers and yourself.

2) Attendance/Participation: A percentage of your class grade is based on participation during class discussions. This means that you have to attend class and be prepared. Please stay current on the reading
assignments so you may participate fully. You may miss two class sessions, but please arrangements with the professors. More than two absences will negatively impact your grade.

**Attendance/Participation = 10% of grade**

3) **Discussion Posts:** At times we will ask that each of you post a short response to a reading or a course idea on the Canvas discussion page. This forum will allow us to continue our conversation even outside of class.

**Posts = 10% of grade**

4) **Reading Responses** will be assigned for *Frankenstein, The Things They Carried,* and for readings in the science unit. A rubric that lists requirements for these responses is located on the Canvas page.

**Responses = 30% of grade**

5) **Notebooks:** Your notebook is a compilation of your learning. It should include notes from class, reflections on notes in which you process and respond to information from class, and any assigned in-class writings.

**Notebooks = 30% of grade**

6) **Final Project:**
At the end of the semester, you will present a brief but substantive project that showcases your learning. You may use any media (film, video, photos, music, or websites) that engages your audience and facilitates their understanding. We will provide detailed information about the projects- including a grading criteria- at the point when you will need to start planning. Think of these projects as opportunities to further communicate ideas with people who have been engaged in similar study. We will also eat lots of food because it is the end of the semester and we survived!

**Projects = 20% of grade**

**University Policies:**

**Academic Dishonesty:** As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person's or group's ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

**Children in the Classroom:** According to PPM 4-23, children are not allowed in classrooms except through prior approval. In this class setting, we ask that you avoid bringing children.

**Core Beliefs:** According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to “[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs.”

**Disability Accommodation:** PPM 3-34 notes: “When students seek accommodation in a regularly scheduled course, they have the responsibility to make such requests at the Center for Students with Disabilities before the beginning of the quarter [semester] in which the accommodation is being requested. When a student fails to make such arrangements, interim accommodations can be made by the instructor, pending the determination of the request for a permanent accommodation.”

**Emergency Closure:** If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct our class via the course Canvas page.