

*Core 1: Do the Right Thing*  
*Freshmen Seminar: Critical Thinking and*  
*Academic Literacy*

Fall 2013  
IDST (Interdisciplinary Studies) 1000  
Section H4  
MWF, 10-10:50 and Th, 8-8:50  
Christian Center, room 4

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Office hours: MW, 1-2,  
or by appointment.  
Ford Fellow: Sara Del Castillo



*What can I expect to have learned by the end of the semester?*

First and foremost, this course teaches you to think in complex ways by considering multiple viewpoints. You'll learn to cultivate academic habits of thinking, also called analytical thinking or critical thinking. In addition, the course will provide you with tools to convey your understanding to others through writing and speaking. Finally, you'll learn philosophical arguments about justice, which you will then apply to your own arguments about specific issues of justice.

The toolkit you will leave this course with consists of communication skills, which can be broken down into four interrelated and overlapping components: writing, speaking, listening, and collaborating. In each of these, critical thinking is of utmost importance, so let's look at this term in more depth.

Critical thinking is a type of complex thinking that's used to figure out *what something means*. It entails the ability to address multiple viewpoints and to tolerate ambiguity. It admits that all forms of inquiry must include various perspectives and that no conclusions are 100% certain. Thus, our goal is not to definitively solve problems, but to enhance our moral clarity as we explore issues and take positions. This process does not occur in a vacuum; rather, we join ongoing academic and civic conversations. For this reason, critical thinking requires respect for the collaborative process that the human search for meaning involves, as well as a degree of humility.

Communication Skills:

**Writing**

Learning to express oneself through written communication is a major goal of a liberal arts education and of this course. Therefore, a large portion of your grade comes from written work.

## **Speaking**

This class will be discussion based. Our discussions will have the goal of developing knowledge and collaboratively arriving at judgments. This does not mean that our judgments will all be the same, but they will be informed by the material we read and by the understanding of others in the classroom. In other words, discussion should change us. We will also have opportunities for more formal speaking, and expectations for these will be distributed later in the semester.

## **Listening**

Listening is a crucial communication skill that is sometimes overlooked. We listen when we attempt to understand another's viewpoint, whether that of an author, a professor, or a fellow student. Listening is not passive; it is active. It may involve questioning, making connections, or empathizing. At the very minimum, listening to a speaker entails looking at the person speaking.

## **Collaborating**

Learning to work with others to produce a product is a “real world” skill that takes practice, just as any other skill does. Think of the classroom is a laboratory for trying out collaborative skills such as negotiating, practicing patience, listening and then paraphrasing, creating a culture of mutual respect, pointing out areas of agreement among your peer group members, thinking under pressure, and thinking outside the box.

## *What do I need to do in order to accomplish these goals?*

- Purchase the class texts (right away!) and check your email regularly for assignments not listed on the syllabus. There are three texts for this class and they are available in the bookstore: *Justice* by M. Sandel; *From Inquiry to Academic Writing* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by S. Greene and A. Lidinsky; and *Easy Writer* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) by A. Lunsford. A fourth document, *Writing at Millsaps: 2013-14*, will be emailed to you.
- Attend all classes unless you are ill, have an emergency, or are traveling for a Millsaps-sponsored event. If you need to miss class, email me before class to let me know why you can't come and how you plan to make up your absence. Perhaps you could make an appointment to talk to me about the reading for that day, or you may want to write an essay about the reading. The makeup should occur within one week of the missed class. Failure to do so will result in a final grade reduction. If you miss twenty or more classes (about a third of the semester) for any reason, you should withdraw from the course to avoid receiving an F. If the absences occur after the final day to withdraw without a grade (Oct. 31), you should make arrangements for a medical withdrawal in order to avoid receiving an F.
- Arrive to class on time and bring texts and/or articles to class on the day they will be discussed. If you are late, sign the sheet by the door and note the time you arrived. Otherwise, you'll be marked absent.
- In addition to reading the assigned text, engage with the material.

- Engage with others during class time.

### *What do “engage with the material” and “engage with others” mean?*

- Read actively, not passively. Ask questions and write comments in the margins or on a separate sheet of paper when you don’t understand something, or if you disagree with something, or if what you’re reading reminds you of something else you’ve read or heard. Keep an ongoing list of key ideas and terms.
- Refer to these notes in class as you engage with others. Listen to your peers’ questions and concerns. Build on their comments. Make connections between discussions from one class to another.

### *What if I have problems or concerns? Whom should I talk to?*

“Problems” are normal and you can expect them to arise. They may be academic, physical, emotional, or social in nature. In fact, a common problem with first-semester freshmen combines all of these – it’s called fatigue. It’s important for you to understand that help is available, but you need to let someone know that you need help. Please talk to me if any problem arises. If I can’t help you, I can connect you with the right person on campus to address your needs.

### *A few assorted details:*

#### **Web Technologies**

The standard word processing file format for this course is MS Word's .doc format; if your word processing software cannot save to this format, you should use the Rich Text Format (.rtf) option. In addition to traditional means of communication (paper syllabus, email, word processed files), we'll also be communicating through **Course Connect (CC)**. You can also view your grades on CC.

How to log in to Course Connect:

1. Go to <http://courses.millsaps.edu> or click Course Connect from the main menu on the Millsaps homepage.
2. Click the "Login" link in the top right.
3. Use your Millsaps ID and password. You should now be logged in. If you got a login error, please double-check your password and ID. Try using the same credentials to login to email.
4. Scroll down and find your course listed. Click on the name of the course. You will need to enter an enrollment key the first time you go to your course. Your enrollment key is [ethics](#).

#### **Paper Policies**

To be fair, due dates apply to everyone equally. Late work will lose 5% for each day it is late. You will be given a set of due dates for each part of your writing projects when you receive the

assignment sheets in class. Late submission of any part of a project will affect your final grade on the project.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at the beginning of class. In order to save paper, please use 1.5 line spacing rather than double-spacing. No title page. Single-space the heading (your name, instructor's name, course name and number, date, and word count). Use Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Include your last name and page # on each page in the header. If your printer allows double-sided printing, please use it.

### **Assignment Distribution**

Major Papers: (65%) You will receive more information on each paper as it is assigned.

- Paper 1: Using Critical Analysis (15%) 750-1000 words
- Paper 2: Synthesis (10%) in-class writing
- Paper 3: Perspectives (15%) 1000-1500 words
- Paper 4: Research writing (25%) 1500-2000 words
- Paper 5: Reflection (ungraded, but required for course completion and portfolio) 600-800 words

Engaged participation in class discussions (10%)

Reading response papers, homework assignments, and quizzes (10%)

Interview project and collaborative paper (5%)

Presentation of research (10%)

**Grading scale:** A (93-100) A- (90-92) B+ (87-89) B (83-86) B- (80-82) C+ (77-79) C (73-76) C- (70-72) D+ (67-69) D (60-66) F (below 60)

### **Grading Criteria**

Often effort correlates with quality. It would be rare for someone who puts forth very little effort to make an excellent grade. However, as unfair as it seems, some students must work harder to make the same grade as another who doesn't put in quite as much effort. Furthermore, talents vary: one person excels in chemistry, another in writing, and another in sports. Some excel across the board, but these are rare exceptions. People who feel they have to excel in everything sometimes end up with mental and emotional problems. All of this is to say, it's not the end of the world if you don't receive an A in this class.

To maintain the integrity of the academic grading system of Millsaps College, it is my responsibility to evaluate your work based on its quality, and in a way that does not support grade inflation. To these ends, **A** means you have produced exemplary, highly impressive work. **B** means you have succeeded in important ways, and your work is good. **C** equates to average work that has no serious problems. **D** is given when the work has serious problems. An **F** means the work you have done not only has serious problems, but it fails to respond to the assignment.

**Writing (short essays, exams, and research paper)** will be graded based on the following: command of material, clarity and organization of ideas, persuasiveness of argument, complexity and creativity of thinking, elegance of expression, and grammatical correctness.

**Engaged class performance (discussion, daily work, listening, and collaboration)** will be graded according to the following: class preparedness (including oral and written evidence that you have read and thought about the assignment), thoughtful informal written responses when required, active engagement in discussions (including substantive comments that move the discussion forward, responses to others' contributions, questioning others' comments, drawing connections between material and between comments, and refraining from texting or any other activities that cause a disruption in focus). Engaged collaboration with others in small group discussions will also be figured into this grade. If you have any concerns about uneven participation among members in small group discussions or project work, please email me or talk to me. If I don't know a problem exists, I can't attempt to solve the problem.

**Disability Services:** If you have any needs or require accommodations related to a disability, please contact Patrick Cooper to register for disability services. You can reach him via e-mail at coopeap@millsaps.edu or by calling extension 1228. Accommodations will not be granted until a meeting with Patrick has taken place, each semester, and letters have been received by your instructor.

**Honor Code and Plagiarism:** See Appendix A and B in this syllabus. Be aware that the penalties for not following the Honor Code are quite strict. The procedure for offences is outlined in the student handbook.

**Classroom Etiquette:** The only time you are to use a computer in the classroom is when we are looking at an online website together, and I'll let you know ahead of time when this will be. Otherwise, no laptops please; no cell phones, please; no iPods, please – just human beings relating face to face. This includes before class. Arrive to class a few minutes before it begins. If, for some good reason, you must arrive late, remind me at the end of class to mark your attendance. A pattern of lateness will affect your final grade.

**Class Schedule (subject to change).** Plan in advance. If you know you'll be too busy to prepare for class the day before, do the reading or writing ahead of schedule.

### **Week 1**

- 8/26 Overview of course; get to know each other; distribute take-home quiz on syllabus, Course Connect, and *Writing at Millsaps* (which will be emailed to you).
- 8/28 Ch. 1 in *From Inquiry to Academic Writing* (hereafter, referred to as *Inquiry*); be familiar with bolded terms, four habits of mind, and essay examples. Think about your own "literacy narrative" and be ready to share. Distribute interview assignment due next Wednesday and form pairs for interviews.
- 8/29 Turn in quiz; discussion about what it means to "discuss."
- 8/30 Discuss ethical issues raised in three *Purple and White* articles (emailed); **Complete plagiarism tutorial by Sept. 6.**

## Week 2

- 9/2 Labor Day, No Class
- 9/4 Discuss interviews; turn in 1-page reflection on interview project; discuss how to pose good discussion questions.
- 9/5 Bring in 2 written discussion questions on *Henrietta Lacks* (to use for discussion and to turn in). **Complete plagiarism tutorial by tomorrow.**
- 9/6 *Inquiry*: Ch. 10; be prepared to discuss the difference between revising and editing, and the reader's and writer's responsibilities in peer reviews; **bring 3 copies of your essay on *Henrietta Lacks*; major paper # 1 prompt** (using critical analysis) distributed. (Note: plan ahead for the weekend. You have a paper due in Heritage AND a thorough response to your peers' papers due for this class – all on Monday.)

## Week 3

- 9/9 **Bring 2 copies of letters to each author** that address the questions on p. 280; 1 for student, 1 for me (to be graded); peer review in class.
- 9/11 **Turn in revised summer reading essay**; practice critical analysis; meet in Lewis Art Gallery.
- 9/12 No structured class; view films alone or in groups.
- 9/13 Discuss ethical issues raised by films; sign up for roles in next week's discussions; view film clips for more critical analysis practice.

## Week 4

- 9/16 Discuss *Justice*, Ch. 2; utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill); reading response. (See appendix C, last page of the syllabus for directions.)
- 9/18 Discuss *Justice*, Ch. 5; moral imperative (Immanuel Kant). Note: 37 pages and difficult; reading response.
- 9/19 Discuss *Justice*, Ch. 6; equality (John Rawls); reading response.
- 9/20 Discuss *Justice*, Ch. 8, 184-195; telos and honor (Aristotle); Ch. 3; libertarianism; reading response. (Plan ahead! Revision of Heritage paper being due does not excuse you from having read and taken notes on material for today.)

## Week 5

- 9/23 **Bring 4 copies of critical analysis** (1 to turn in; 3 for peer review); peer review addressing questions on p. 284. **Either attend a Writing Center workshop or take your paper to the Writing Center this week. Note that the Writing Center informs me of your participation. Two points will be deducted from your final grade for not completing the Writing Center requirements for Core 1.**

- 9/25 *Inquiry*, Ch. 7, p. 144 to top of p. 170; discuss synthesis vs. summary; practice paraphrasing (in class); annotate one chapter from last week's reading (before class).
- 9/26 Choose three viewpoints from last week's reading; make a chart based on figure 7.2. (You can bring this chart to class for your in-class writing on 10/2.)
- 9/27 **Revision of major paper #1 due**; bring *Justice*; review philosophical arguments.

### Week 6

- 9/30 Unintended stereotyping, discuss *Easy Writer*, pp. 145-147; avoiding plagiarism, discuss *Inquiry*, pp. 180-186; citations, bring *Easy Writer* so we can discuss the documentation section. (Reading is light because of your Heritage exam, but you do need to do it!)
- 10/2 **Major paper #2**: Synthesis of material in timed context. Prompt provided at beginning of class.
- 10/3 Discuss *Justice*, Ch. 7, "Arguing Affirmative Action"; reading response; **major paper #3 prompt** distributed (gathering and evaluating different perspectives).
- 10/4 Discuss two essays on affirmative action (emailed); reading response.

### Week 7

- Note: Reading is light this week to allow you to work on your annotated bibliography for Heritage. The idea for your writing for Core 1 this week and next is to experiment. You may find some of the ideas will work well for your Heritage fall project as well.
- 10/7 Library workshop; meet in library computer lab; note that if you miss either of the library workshops, you'll need to make it up by attending a workshop outside of class. Two points will be deducted from your final grade for not completing this Core 1 requirement. Choose one additional essay on affirmative action. **Write a first draft of your paper this week!** We'll be peer reviewing it in parts this week and next.
- 10/9 Library workshop; meet in library computer lab; continue writing paper.
- 10/10 *Inquiry*, Ch. 5, pp. 99-top of 110 and "Let's End Thesis Tyranny" (emailed); bring **4 copies** of your research question(s), your working thesis, and one to two paragraphs establishing context.
- 10/11 *Inquiry*, Ch 9, pp. 247-253; **bring 4 copies of two very different introductions** for your essay, using two of the models.

### Week 8

- 10/14 Fall Break, No Class

- 10/16 No homework, so you can enjoy the break! In class, we'll read *Inquiry*, Ch 9, pp. 254-55 and then analyze the excerpt from "Reinventing America"; form pairs and choose people to interview from list; contact people this week for an interview the week of 10/21.
- 10/17 *Inquiry*, Ch 9, pp. 259-266; **bring the body of your essay, cut into paragraphs; bring one whole body to turn in:** underline topic sentences; make sure details in each paragraph support one focus and extend (or question) your thesis; underline repeated words and transition words; notate in margins where you've included illustrations, data, analysis of text(s), narratives, definition(s) of terms, comparisons, and examination(s) of causes and consequences. (You don't have to use all of these, and you may have something different to notate.)
- 10/18 *Inquiry*, Ch 9, pp. 266-272; **bring four copies of two very different conclusions**, using two of the models. Prompt for justice interviews and collaborative essay on "Justice and Millsaps College" distributed.

### Week 9

- 10/21 **Major paper #3 due;** Create interview questions; complete interviews by 10/28; arrange for taping equipment; discuss labeling.
- 10/23 Discuss *Inquiry*, Ch. 11, pp. 307-311; Peace Studies – go to "Academics" from the Millsaps webpage, then "majors and minors," then click on Peace Studies and explore the site before class.
- 10/24 Guest speakers: Chelsey Overstreet and Ann Phelps, 1 campus 1 community
- 10/25 Guest speakers: Dr. Evans and Sara Del Castillo, poverty consortium

**Week 10 (Collaborative paper all week)** Note that work is light due to Heritage fall project, but you need to put effort into our own project as well.

- 10/28 Discuss interviews and how they relate to paper topic; create outline for paper; assign introduction, history, and conclusion.
- 10/30 **Meet in AC 335;** guest speakers: Dr. T. W. Lewis and Dr. Jeanne Middleton Hairston (former Millsaps professors who were involved in the Civil Rights Movement; interview paragraphs due
- 10/31 Intro, history, and conclusion paragraphs due; put sections together; add transitions
- 11/1 Revise for style and continuity; **prompt for major paper #4** distributed.

### Week 11 (Research and take notes all week!)

- 11/4 Discuss *Inquiry*, Ch. 4, pp. 73-90; discuss possible topics
- 11/6 Meet in computer lab; research topics

11/7 No class; continue research

11/8 Turn in proposal; present proposal to class; continue research

**Week 12 (Write, write, write! Take paper to Writing Center sometime this week or next.)**

11/11 Individual conferences (Heritage exam)

11/13 Class evaluations; be prepared to discuss one of your sources

11/14 Individual conferences

11/15 Turn in annotated bibliography; present to class something interesting you've learned.

**Week 13**

11/18 **Bring 4 copies of major paper #4;** peer review

11/20 Discuss *Easy Writer*, pp. 41-46

11/21 Present opening of presentation for critique

11/22 Continue presentation practice sessions; **turn in major paper #4;**

**Week 14**

11/25 Discuss Laney Award essay; writing about your own experiences; **prompt for assignment #5** distributed.

11/27-29 Thanksgiving Break, no class

**Week 15** Presentations all week

**Week 16** 12/9 last day of classes; **turn in critical reflection on personal learning;** be prepared to discuss assignment 5 essays; all essays uploaded to Writing Portfolio. (No final exam.)

Appendix A: (excerpts with minor modifications from Writing at Millsaps, 2012-13, by Dr. DeRouen

Plagiarism is the use of the ideas and/or words of others without attribution; the plagiarist incorporates some portion of the work or thinking of another into their own work, without acknowledging the source of that work or thinking. Plagiarism can appear small (for example, the use of a single sentence of text from the work of another author) or enormous (the wholesale copying of chunks of text or entire documents), but any instance of plagiarism is anathema to the pursuit of the liberal arts education.

Many people think that it's hard to avoid plagiarizing, but it's really quite simple: you just have to acknowledge/credit the sources of the ideas and words you incorporate into your own arguments. Doing so demonstrates that you are an ethical participant in the academic discourse, a demonstration that helps to establish and maintain your credibility as a thinker and a writer. So why do people think it's so hard to not plagiarize?

The answers to this question are as varied as the people who find avoiding plagiarism difficult. Some students are unclear about the appropriate use of work they've done for other classes. In some cases, plagiarism appears to be a viable option when pressed for time in completing a writing assignment. In others, the question of what is and is not "common knowledge" proves confusing, particularly when students are dealing with information that appears right on the border between the commonly known and unknown. Still other students may find the process of documenting sources confusing, while other writers may not fully understand the difference between direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries.

Sometimes the work you do for one class dovetails nicely with work you need to do for another. If you're considering exploring a topic in more than one class, your first course of action is to speak to the instructor(s) in question. This conversation should happen EARLY in the writing process, as early as the receipt of the assignment if possible. In most cases, your teachers will be glad to encourage further or new exploration of a topic, but they will expect that the text you produce for their assignments will be new or substantially revised and reworked.

The main remedy for the second instance is, of course, better planning and use of time. One of the easiest ways to avoid plagiarizing when writing papers is to have all of the documentation information you need at your fingertips while writing. Good note taking practices will prove invaluable to you in your academic work; when taking notes from sources (be they your textbook, a journal article, or a website), always note the page number and source information alongside the actual notes. If you're photocopying information to review later, bring for a photocopy of the cover of the book or journal and the page containing copyright information;

Common knowledge is a bit trickier. We consider known information like "the sky is blue" to be common knowledge and, therefore, not requiring citation, but the designation "common knowledge" becomes harder to assign when considering what's commonly known or understood within a particular discipline or for a particular audience. Rule of thumb: when in doubt, ask your instructor.

If you are unclear about any aspect of plagiarism, please consult with the instructor of your course or the Writing Center.

## Appendix B: ACADEMIC HONOR CODE of MILLSAPS COLLEGE

Millsaps College is an academic community dedicated to the pursuit of scholarly inquiry and intellectual growth. The foundation of this community is a spirit of personal honesty and mutual trust. Through their Honor Code, the students of Millsaps College affirm their adherence to these basic ethical principles.

An Honor Code is not simply a set of rules and procedures governing students' academic conduct. It is an opportunity to put personal responsibility and integrity into action. When students agree to abide by an Honor Code, they liberate themselves to pursue their academic goals in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect.

The success of the Code depends on the support of each member of the community. Students and faculty alike commit themselves in their work to the principles of academic honesty. When they become aware of infractions, both students and faculty are obligated to report them to the Honor Council, which is responsible for enforcement.

The pledge signed by all students upon entering the College is as follows:  
As a Millsaps College student, I hereby affirm that I understand the Honor Code and am aware of its implications and of my responsibility to the Code. In the interests of expanding the atmosphere of respect and trust in the College, I promise to uphold the Honor Code and I will not tolerate dishonest behavior in myself or in others.

Each examination, quiz, or other assignment that is to be graded will carry the written pledge: "I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment. (Signature)" The abbreviation "Pledged" followed by the student's signature has the same meaning and may be acceptable on assignments other than final examinations.

It is the responsibility of students and faculty to report offenses to the Honor Code Council in the form of a written report. This account must be signed, the accusation explained in as much detail as possible, and submitted to the Dean of the College.

The Honor Council, 2013-2014

Students:

Daniella Rossano, Chair

Sarah Peterman, Vice-Chair

Rebecca Foreman, Sergeant-at-Arms

Merrit Corrigan

Konstantin Baizat (Four graduate student positions, one sophomore position, and two non-voting freshman positions will be filled at the beginning of the fall term.)

Faculty:

Dr. Brent E. Hendrixson, Faculty Chair

Dr. Ted Ammon

Dr. Bill Brister

## Appendix C

### Reading responses: tools to begin analytical process

Choose three of the following to turn in as a reading response. Put your name and the title of the reading at the top. These are to be typed (one half to one page) and turned in at the end of class. If you'd like to keep everything together, you can take further notes on the same page when ideas arise in class that you think are important/interesting, that raise further questions, make more connections, etc.

1. Two things you found interesting/intriguing
2. Author's thesis/major idea/theme
3. A question or concern the reading raises for you
4. A connection to previous reading in this course, material from another course, or personal experience
5. A diagram or flow chart to help you visualize ideas presented (draw this part)
6. An essay exam question or class discussion question on the material

After these are returned to you, save them so you can refer back to them as you write papers.