

## **Syllabus for Humanities 131--Cultural Connections Fall 2021**

Instructor: Mort Cohn

Course Text: Handbook for the Humanities (2013) ISBN: 13: 978-0205161621

### **Course Description**

From the college catalog: "HUM 131 CULTURAL CONNECTIONS (3 CR) This interdisciplinary course examines contemporary issues, their human and technological components, and their historical precedents through art, music, literature and philosophy." Admittedly, this course description sounds pretty vague. That might be a good thing for our purposes, however. Part of the power of this course is drawing from sources that are familiar to us-- and learning to find their connections to a larger and more diverse culture on our own.

### **Workload and Grading**

There will be three or four short quizzes or informal writings that respond to selected readings or class discussions. In total, they will constitute 10 percent of the class grade. Class participation will account for 20 percent of your semester grade. The formal paper will receive a letter grade and constitute three to five pages of academic writing--and 20 percent of your semester grade. The formal paper will need to include complete academic notation where appropriate. (We will discuss this.) There will be in-class midterm and final exams, each worth 20 percent. In addition, you will be required to keep an informal academic journal during the time you take the course. The journal can be typed or hand-written and should comment on your academic work, your life, or the world at-large, whatever you are interested in, as long as it represents your best prose. This will provide an additional resource during the composing process. At the end of the semester it should comprise at least 20 pages of prose (approx. 250 words per page--single spaced if written, double spaced if typed with one-inch margins all around) and will be worth ten percent.

Another important part of the class will be the colloquium. Each student will choose a specific time to present materials and lead discussion--and essentially take an active role in teaching an aspect of the texts or on a relevant topic of your own choice. After we get under way, one or two students will present colloquia at the end of each session. While your performance here cannot hurt your participation grade, an excellent performance will certainly help. The colloquium is important because it fosters a sense of responsibility that a simple discussion cannot. We are better readers and writers when given the additional task of presenting material or leading discussion.

## **Grade Weighting**

Academic journal 10%

Formal paper 20%

Participation 20%

Midterm exam 20%

Final exam 20%

Quizzes 10%

## **Schedule of Major Assignments**

Midterm Exam—March 15

Term Paper—due April 5

Final Exam—April 26

(I will generate a detailed work schedule in the days ahead, so perhaps keep in mind some dates when you might wish to participate in a colloquium.)

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students should achieve the following outcomes:

ADO 1—Writing Clearly, Concisely, and Intelligibly at the Developing Level

ADO 6—Understanding and appreciating aesthetic experience and artistic creativity.

Beyond the college's desired outcomes, I have some of my own, which we will discuss at some length in the days ahead.

## **Student Responsibilities**

\*As I've pointed out, you will be responsible for submitting all assignments on deadline.

\* Your attendance in the class is mandatory. With three weeks' worth of class absences (or their equivalent), your semester grade will be reduced one full letter grade. Upon reaching four weeks' worth of absences, you will receive a failing mark.

\*Students are required to submit only their own original prose written during this semester.

\*Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in the class. Plagiarism or cheating will result in either a failing grade or outright expulsion from the program. We'll discuss it.

\*If any problems arise during the semester, please get in touch with me as soon as possible