

Liberal Studies 300

An Introduction to Liberal Studies

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Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 10:00-12:00 pm and 1:00-3:00 pm
Thursday 10:00-12:00 pm and 1:00-2:00 pm
Friday: Available by email

Required Texts: Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. *Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking*, 9th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Kimmel, Michael and Amy Aronson. *The Gendered Society Reader*, 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Dettwyler, Katherine. *Dancing Skeletons*, Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, IL, 1994

Course Description: Liberal Studies is designed to provide students with a wide-ranging (liberal) education. As an interdisciplinary major, Liberal Studies looks at the world from a variety of perspectives unlike traditional majors that focus on one particular area. In this class, we are going to begin by reading a book on critical thinking which will help us to understand, evaluate and write about interdisciplinary topics. Then we will read, discuss and write about one interdisciplinary subject area, gender studies. We will examine gender and issues regarding gender from the perspectives of women's studies, masculinity studies, biological sciences, psychology, sociology, education, communication studies, and the humanities. Finally, we will read a book titled *Dancing Skeletons* which is an excellent example of global and multicultural studies, one of the four alternative concentrations in the Liberal Studies program.

Course Objectives:

This course will teach students to:

- Reason and write clearly
- Reason and write analytically
- Comprehend writings from an interdisciplinary perspective
- Write a critical review of an assigned book

Discussion Board:

You will be required to post contributions to the Discussion Board once per week. The deadline for posting will be **12:00 Noon on Monday**. Five points will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Thus an assignment that is three days late will receive a zero. Please do not ask for an extension of this deadline.

The grading criteria for these postings follows:

Criteria	Possible Points	Your Points
Student followed directions (posted The required # of times	2	
Student answered question posed (rather than got off track, or discussed topics not germane to the course	3	
Student contributes to discussion and moves topic forward with substance and depth	5	
Student uses critical thinking & evidence from texts & lectures (rather than anecdote or personal opinion	3	
Student uses proper grammar, complete sentences, spell-check & cites when appropriate	2	
Total Score	15	

We will be using the discussion board frequently so it is necessary to lay some ground rules to guide your postings. Remember the postings should allow me and your classmates to see that you have read and thought about the reading assignments before logging on. It is fine to disagree with someone else's point of view, but do so politely and avoid any sorts of personal insults or attacks. I have included a link below to a website that covers the basic rules of etiquette for those working online. We will follow these rules for this class. Thanks for your cooperation.
<http://albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Critical Book Review:

The book review should be 4-5 pages in length, double spaced with one-inch margins. Remember “critical” reviews are not necessarily negative reviews. The paper should consist of a brief summary of the book followed by a longer evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. **You will be expected to apply what you have learned in the Ruggiero text in crafting your review**, and proper, grammar and spelling do count. The book review is worth .40 points.

Criteria	Possible Points	Your Points
Student makes few if any grammatical and spelling errors	5	
Student applies critical thinking skills based on Ruggiero’s book and lecture, and points out strengths and weaknesses of book	20	
Student provides a brief summary of book which contains key points	10	
Student’s paper is not based merely on personal opinion but on sound reasoning and evidence	10	
Overall the paper is well-organized with clear paragraph structure, introduction and conclusion	5	
SCORE	50	

Grading Scale

90-100 %	A
80-89	B
65-79	C

56-64	D
< 56	F

Please Note: 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 accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library, Room 132

Phone (903) 468-8148 or (903) 886-5835

FAX (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Reading Schedule: Please note that the Reading Schedule is subject to change as circumstances warrant. I will announce any changes as far in advance as possible.

Week One: Ruggiero

Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5

Week Two: Ruggiero

Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9

Week Three: Ruggiero

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13

Week Four: Ruggiero

Chapters 14, 15, 16

Week Five: Ruggiero

Chapters 17, 18, 19

Week Six: (Ways of Seeing and Knowing)

Kimmel and Aronson: "Testosterone Rules" p.22

"Dude You're a Fag" p. 113

Week Seven:

Kimmel and Aronson: "The Feminization of Love" p. 545

"Men as Women and Women as Men" p. 51

Week Eight:**Global and Multicultural Perspectives)**

Kimmel and Aronson: "To Veil or not to Veil" p. 353

Anson: "Black Men

Kimmel and Aronson: "Racializing the Glass Escalator" p. 401

"Who Makes the Clothes We Wear" (online)

Week Ten (Child and Family Studies)

Kimmel and Aronson: "American Marriage in the Early Twenty-First Century"

"Household labor and the Routine Production of Gender" p. 257

Week Eleven

Kimmel and Aronson: "The Trouble with Black Boys: The role and Influence of Environmental and Cultural Factors on the Academic Performance of African American Males." p. 333

"The Myth of Sexual Symmetry in Marital Violence" p. 618

Week Twelve (Popular Culture)

Kimmel and Aronson: "Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings: p. 453

"Growing up in the Culture of Slenderness" p. 517

Week Thirteen:

Kimmel and Aronson: "Little in Common: Racial and Gender Differences in Adolescents' Television Diets"

Anson: "Why I [Still] Want a Wife" (online)

Week Fourteen:

Work on Writing Critical Review of "Dancing Skeletons"

Week Fifteen:

Work on Writing Review of "*Dancing Skeletons*"

Book Review due by NOON, December, 7