Sample Syllabus

SCLA 102-01

Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking & Communication II: Modern World

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

T.S. Eliot

Professor
Office Phone: Spring 2018
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Course Description:

The second half of the two-semester liberal arts sequence examines texts from the modern era. This foundational course fulfills part of the first level of the Integrated Liberal Arts certificate program, Cornerstone. It is based on the premise that transformative texts - whether essays, legal documents, fiction, drama, historical writing, – provide not only models for intelligent and eloquent written and oral communication, but that they likewise inform us, inspire us, encourage our creative and imaginative capacities, allow us to see the world from different perspectives, and console us in times of adversity. Transformative texts, along with great teachers, help students explore enduring themes and questions about the very nature of our humanity: about the pains and pleasures of being human; the use and abuse of power; the power and limits of human reason; and the existence and nature of God.

Required Texts:

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, The Federalist Papers (1788)
Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (1789)
Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams (1913)
Primo Levi, Survival at Auschwitz (1947)
Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963)
Toni Morrison, Beloved (1987)

Learning Outcomes:

1. Engage critically with transformative texts drawing on multiple perspectives to reflect on one’s position in the world.
2. Write with clarity, concision, and coherence in a variety of genres.
3. Present and discuss ideas orally with intelligence, eloquence, and respect for a variety of audiences.
4. Identify, analyze, and evaluate claims through deep reading of a variety of sources such as print, digital and visual.
Our understanding and enjoyment of these texts will be supplemented by extracurricular activities and presentations, such as plays, musical performances, films, galleries, poetry readings, and public lectures.

**Schedule of Readings and Major Assignments:**

Week 4-5 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789)
Weeks 6-8: Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1913)
Weeks 12-13: Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (1963)

**Course Requirements:**

We will devote our time to reading deeply, discussing the questions and ideas these texts explore, and how to communicate these ideas.

Each student is responsible for two individual oral presentations, a group presentation and three essays. Students will also maintain journals in which they will record class notes and their reactions to the texts (see below).

**Grades will be calculated as follows:**

- Discussion and Attendance 20%
- Daily Journals 20%
- Oral Presentations 30%
- Essays 30%