

UC 11715 125

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

APPROVED FEB 22 2012

Undergraduate Council
 New Course Course Change
 Core Category: Humanities Effective Fall 2012
Core Code 40

or Graduate/Professional Studies Council
 New Course Course Change
 Effective Fall 2012

1. Department: CCS College: CLASS
 2. Faculty Contact Person: Thomas Behr Telephone: 713-743-4943 Email: tbehr@uh.edu

3. Course Information on New/Revised course:
 • Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
ILAS / 2350 / Introduction to Liberal Studies
 • Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)
ILAS / 2350 / INTRO TO LIBERAL STUDIES
 • SCH: 3.00 Level: SO CIP Code: 24.0101.00.01 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs:

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4. Justification for adding/changing course: **To meet core curriculum requirements**
 5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course? Yes No
 If Yes, please complete:

• Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
 / /
 • Course ID: Effective Date (currently active row):

6. Authorized Degree Program(s): B.A. Liberal Studies
 • Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department? Yes No
 • Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments? Yes No
 • Can the course be repeated for credit? Yes No (if yes, include in course description)

7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: lecture ONLY (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)

8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title
ILAS / 2350 / INTRO TO LIBERAL STUDIES
 • Course ID: 47578 Effective Date (currently active row): 8222011

9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: ~~English~~ 4 ENGL 1304. Description (30 words max.): Readings in theory and methods of liberal arts, across disciplines. Study of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, the relationships between them, and the centrality of humanities in interdisciplinary understanding.


10. Dean's Signature: Dr. David Phillips Date: 2.6.2012
 Print/Type Name: Dr. David Phillips

U N I V E R S I T Y *of* H O U S T O N
CORE CURRICULUM COURSE REQUEST

Originating Department/College: Comparative Cultural Studies / CLASS

Person making request: Thomas C. Behr, Director Liberal Studies Telephone: 713-743-4943

E-mail: tbehr@uh.edu

Dean's signature:  Date: 2.6.2012

I. General Information:

Course number and title: ILAS 2350 Introduction to Liberal Studies

Catalog description must be included on completed CBM 003 form and attached to this document.

Category of Core for which course is being proposed (mark only one):


- Communication
- Mathematics
- Mathematics/Reasoning (IDO)
- American History
- Government
- Humanities
- Visual/Performing Arts Critical
- Visual/Performing Arts Experiential
- Natural Sciences
- Social/Behavioral Sciences
- Writing in the Disciplines (IDO)

II. Objectives and Evaluation (respond on one or more separate sheets):

Call ext. 3-0919 for a copy of "Guidelines for Requesting and Evaluating Core Courses" or visit the website at www.uh.edu/academics/corecurriculum

- A. How does the proposed course meet the appropriate Exemplary Educational Objectives (see **Guidelines**). Attach a syllabus and supporting materials for the objectives the syllabus does not make clear. (SEE ATTACHED)
- B. Specify the processes and procedures for evaluating course effectiveness in regard to its goals.
- C. Delineate how these evaluation results will be used to improve the course.

SVP. Effective 5/2/08. Replaces all previous forms, which may no longer be used.


Dr. David Phillips

2.6.2012
Date

Thomas Behr -
Introduction to Liberal Studies, Core Curriculum Course Request, Section II

- A) This class compliments the other required course for Liberal Studies, the capstone ILAS 4350 "Liberal Studies Senior Seminar" and assists students in their Sophomore year to begin to acquire an interdisciplinary understanding of the theories and methods of the various branches of knowledge as well as to build reading, research, reasoning, writing and discussion skills to prepare them for their upper level courses. The course aims at fostering an appreciation for the central role of culture, aesthetic judgments, and reason in human thought, values and behavior. Lectures are based on classic manuals in the art of reading complex works for understanding. Seminar readings span literary, philosophical, and social scientific works.
- B) The course has a part-lecture, part-seminar format and will be taught as a hybrid course, the lecture component, with related readings and exams, online, combined with weekly small-group discussion seminars. Use of evidence (the text under consideration), logic, experience, critical reason and coherent argumentation will be the standards upon which all of the written work will be graded, and will be modeled and encouraged within the seminar format itself, conducted on a quasi-Socratic method. Students will write 10 three-four page essays, and have two objective exams on the lectures, and an essay final exam. The writing assignments in this course will prepare students to understand philosophical premises and methodological assumptions, to assess and employ evidence and arguments in their own research and writing, to read and assess works, both for information and for increased understanding, across higher educational and professional disciplines.
- C) Evaluation, of papers and of final essays, will serve to refine the selection of seminar readings, that serve most to engage the students in basic intellectual and practical concerns of liberal learning. Seminar texts will also be adapted to versions of this course offered in diverse study abroad locations.

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Learning Objectives

Course Description:

Introduction to Liberal Studies is a required course for the B.A. in Liberal Studies. It is to orient students to the interrelationship of the various branches of knowledge that inform higher education and the inquiry into the conditions of our experience as human beings. It will sharpen their skills in reading perceptively, writing insightfully, analyzing ideas and discussing them in a civil exchange at a high level of discourse. It will also prepare students with the cultural content and practical skills for advanced study in their chosen fields on the path to professional excellence and life-long learning. The class will be part lecture (video presentations by Dr. Thomas Behr) and part seminar format. Students will view the assigned video lectures on Blackboard, complete assigned readings, write about them and discuss them in seminar.

Learning Outcomes:

Students in Introduction to Liberal Studies will gain fundamental skills in reading works across fields, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, and in analyzing and articulating evidence and arguments in oral and written forms. Students will have an understanding of some of the principle issues in the objectives and methods of, and some points of contention within and between, the various sciences.

Major Assignments/Exams

Seminar “Previews” (50%) will be written responses completed before seminar discussions, to analyze what “the point” of each assigned reading is, and to support the claim with evidence from the reading. NB: two of your “Previews” must be taken to the Writing Center for evaluation before “Lecture Eight” online. Students who receive less than a “B” on one of their “Previews” must meet with the instructor and do a re-write of that. See “Preview Guidelines.”

Midterm (20%)

Final Exam (20%)

Class Participation (10%)

Required Reading

Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book*, 1972

Mortimer Adler, *How to Speak, How to Listen*, 1997

James V. Schall, *A Student’s Guide to Liberal Learning*, 2000

Seminar readings – at UH Copy Center

Recommended Reading

William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style, 50th Anniversary Edition*, 2008

Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 2009

Reading and Seminar Schedule

- Jan. 17 - Class One – no reading
- Jan. 19 – Class Two – view Behr video, Lecture #1
- Jan. 24 – Seminar – Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 2, *How to Read a Book*, Adler, Chs. 1-3
- Jan. 31 – Seminar – Weber, “Science as a Vocation”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 3A and 3B; *Book*, Adler, Chs. 4, 5
- Feb. 7- Seminar – Kuhn, “Structure of Scientific Revolutions”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 4, *Book*, Adler, Chs. 6-7;
- Feb. 14- Seminar – James, “Lecture XX, Conclusions”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 5, *Book*, Adler, Ch. 8
- Feb. 21 – Seminar – Aquinas, from “Summa Theologica”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 6, – *Book* , Adler, Ch.9
- Feb. 28, Seminar – Tolkien, “Fairy-Stories”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 7, *Book* , Adler, Chs. 10-11
- March 6 – Seminar – Aristotle, from “Nicomachean Ethics”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 8, *Book* , Adler, Chs. 12, 14, 15 (skip 13)
- March 13 - No Class – SPRING BREAK
- March 20 Seminar – Schall, *Student Guide to Liberal Learning*
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 9, *Book*, Adler, Chs. 16-18
- March 27 – MIDTERM EXAM
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 10, *How to Speak, How to Listen*, Adler, Chs. 1-3
- April 3 – Seminar: Sartre, “The Wall”
 - o Hybrid Lecture 11, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs. 4,5
- April 10, Seminar: Solzhenitsyn, “New Generation”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 12, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs. 7, 8 (skip 6)
- April 17, Seminar – TBA
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 12, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs.10-12 (skip 9)
- April 24, Seminar – TBA
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 13, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs.13, 14
- May 1 – No Class - Study Day
- May 8 - FINAL EXAM

The information contained in this class syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course.

Book Preview Guidelines

The “Preview” is in quotation marks, because this is not a usual reading assignment. It is not a summary, is not a reader response, it is not a typical reading review. The *via negativa* is to be kept in mind.

Previews must be 300 to 500 words. You will have 10 minimum required out of the 11-12 assigned. You will take at least two Previews to the Writing Center for evaluation. You will have the opportunity to have feedback and re-writes for any Preview graded below a “B.”

The prime directive is to identify “the point” of the readings. Not what it says, not how it says it, but what it is that the author wants you to understand! That means you do need to understand what the text says, and how it says it, but you need to go on to assess what the author wants you to now understand. Not as daunting as it sounds. Because the “point” will always be about one or more of these things: how is the world, how are we, and what do we need to do to be happy. Those are the basic philosophical-religious questions (and answers) that constitute the “software” of every individual and society. Our answers to those questions, our paradigms, conscious or unconscious, inform our every significant act. That has always been the case for every human being that has ever walked the earth, and no doubt hardwired into the rest of the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

These comments must be taken with a grain of salt. They will need to be interpreted and applied differently according to the genre and character of the work in question. There are some important general considerations, however, and some requirements that ought to be kept in mind. Adler will inform you of these. You should have a few standard references within reach if possible: Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*; Wikipedia is extremely useful to quickly get an idea of a name, place, event that you need to know some basic things about, and Wiktionary, or Dictionary.com should be ever at your fingertips. But you don’t need to, indeed, should not, rush to consult outside interpretations of our readings. Stay in the four corners of the text.

You should plan on reading your assignments a number of times, if possible three times. What Adler calls “inspectional reading” and “analytical reading.” We will learn about these levels of readings. The first two levels, take 20 minutes!

Carefully avoid ALL anthropological, sociological or historical claims, generalizations, and conclusory claims from other texts not under consideration: e.g., “Human beings are violent by nature...,” or “People have always...,” or “Everyone knows that...,” “The Bible says...,” etc.

Ideology, or intellectual and spiritual commitment, is probably among the most important points we’ll want to evaluate eventually, but this is best done in our class discussion. Why does *this* author want to prove *this* particular point? *Cui bono*? What are the debates behind it, around it? What is not being said? Who benefits? What philosophical assumptions, premises, and vision of the cosmos are implicit? What’s their view of the meaning of life? What do we care today about such things?

But, for now, bracket all that in your own mind. We will take them up in class.

In your writing now, start with The Point(s). Your first sentence should be something like: “Plato’s point in the *Meno* is....” If the points are not black-and-white, don’t shy away from *shades of gray*. If there are ambiguities, maybe it is intentional, maybe there is some deeper connection? Bring together your notes from your reading. What kind of evidence does the author use? Does the evidence prove what the author wants it to prove? What are other ways of interpreting the same evidence? Are there other things that the author ignores, accidentally or deliberately? Is some agenda apparent? Has the

author assumed “facts” without proving them? What questions would you want to put to the author? Is the author serious and to be taken literally? Or does he/she expect us to recoil in horror?

That all should be specified in your first paragraph.

The rest of your Preview is to support your claims, about what the author wants us to know about the world, our human nature, and what we need to do to be happy. Cite text and analyze how it supports your claims.

The “great books” are a glimpse into ourselves, into our institutions and values, into our conflicts, despairs and hopes. The experience of reading a great book may be difficult because they present complexities, not usually simple lessons. Such an encounter is like meeting a new person: a bundle of unknown complexities. It takes patience, authentic dialogue, effort, and even love, to get to that person’s understanding of the truth, and to our understanding of what we have in common or where we actually differ, and what difference it makes.

Have fun!