

GMC

UC 12147 12F ✓

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

APPROVED APR 24 2013

Undergraduate Council
 New Course Course Change
 Core Category: Lang/Phil/Culture Effective Fall 2014

or

Graduate/Professional Studies Council
 New Course Course Change
 Effective Fall 2013

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:
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. .B.S ✓
 - 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: seminar (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 / Introduction to Liberal Studies
 - Course ID: 47578 Effective Date (currently active row): 8272012
9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: English 1304. Description (30 words max.): Readings in theory and methods of liberal arts, across disciplines. Techinques in effective reading of sophisticated texts in humanities, natural and social sciences.
10. Dean's Signature: _____ Date: 12/8/12
 Print/Type Name: _____

RECEIVED OCT 12 2012

REQUEST FOR COURSES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Originating Department or College: CLASS

Person Making Request: Thomas Behr

Telephone: 713-743-4943

Email: tbehr@uh.edu

Dean's Signature: _____

Date: 9/1/12

Course Number and Title: ILAS 2350 Introduction to Liberal Studies

Please attach in separate documents:

Completed CBM003 Add/Change Form with Catalog Description

Syllabus

List the student learning outcomes for the course (Statements of what students will know and be able to do as a result of taking this course. See appended hints for constructing these statements):

Students in Introduction to Liberal Studies will gain fundamental skills in reading difficult 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.

Component Area for which the course is being proposed (check one):

Communication

American History

Mathematics

Government/Political

Science

Language, Philosophy, & Culture

Social & Behavioral Science

Creative Arts

Component Area Option

Life & Physical Sciences

Competency areas addressed by the course (refer to appended chart for competencies that are required and optional in each component area):

Critical Thinking

Teamwork

Communication Skills

Social Responsibility

Empirical & Quantitative Skills

Personal Responsibility

Because we will be assessing student learning outcomes across multiple core courses, assessments assigned in your course must include assessments of the core competencies. For each competency checked above, indicated the specific course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the competency. Provide detailed information, such as copies of the paper or project assignment, copies of individual test items, etc. A single assignment may be used to provide data for multiple competencies.

Critical Thinking:

Students read fundamental texts in the great books tradition and are assigned each week "Preview" essay assignments in which they are to attempt to identify the fundamental philosophical or religious assumptions in the work, whether about the nature of the universe, the nature of man, or the pursuit of happiness given the former two assumptions. Out of 10 such assigned Previews, all of which are to be submitted on Turnitin through Blackboard Learn, the 9th Preview will demonstrate the level of competency in critical thinking acquired during the course. Students read Mortimer Adler's "How to Read a Book," and "How to Speak, How to Listen" and watch video lectures on those readings for the online portion of this hybrid course. The seminar portion treats different readings, from different fields of inquiry and literature, both to practice their growing analytical skills as well as to ponder the issues raised in the texts we read, dealing as they do with perennial philosophical questions.

Standard assignment is the same for all of the 10 "Previews," regarding different texts, assigned in the course: Identify the "point" of the reading, i.e. what it is that the author wants you to know, feel, or understand about the important questions of life: how is the universe, how is our nature, and what do we as humans, individual and/or collectively need to do to be happy. That should be your first paragraph. The remainder of the paper, 500-1000, words should be devoted to analyzing crucial relevant passages that support your interpretation of the author's point.

Communication Skills:

Based on their readings and Previews, students will effectively communicate findings in the same assessment. ✓?

Empirical & Quantitative Skills:

Click here to enter text.

Teamwork:

Click here to enter text.

Social Responsibility:

Each of the readings in this course is intended to provoke thought and discussion about social responsibility, including this assignment. ✓?

Personal Responsibility:

Each of the readings in this course is intended to provoke thought and discussion of personal responsibility, including this assignment. ✓?

Will the syllabus vary across multiple section of the course? Yes No

If yes, list the assignments that will be constant across sections:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Inclusion in the core is contingent upon the course being offered and taught at least once every other academic year. Courses will be reviewed for renewal every 5 years.

The department understands that instructors will be expected to provide student work and to participate in university-wide assessments of student work. This could include, but may not be limited to, designing instruments such as rubrics, and scoring work by students in this or other courses. In addition, instructors of core courses may be asked to include brief assessment activities in their course.

Dept. Signature: _____

✓ for Thomas Behr

Office Hours

I will be available 10-11am, Mondays and Wednesdays; and by appointment, M.D. Anderson Library, Room 212G; jonathan.zecher@gmail.com

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.

Critical Thinking: Students read fundamental texts in the great books tradition and are assigned each week "Preview" essay assignments in which they are to attempt to identify the fundamental philosophical or religious assumptions in the work, whether about the nature of the universe, the nature of man, or the pursuit of happiness given the former two assumptions. Out of 10 such assigned Previews, all of which are to be submitted on Turnitin through Blackboard Learn, the 9th Preview will demonstrate the level of competency in critical thinking acquired during the course. Students read Mortimer Adler's "How to Read a Book," and "How to Speak, How to Listen" and watch video lectures on those readings for the online portion of this hybrid course. The seminar portion treats different readings, from different fields of inquiry and literature, both to practice their growing analytical skills as well as to ponder the issues raised in the texts we read, dealing as they do with perennial philosophical questions.

Communication skills: Based on their readings and Previews, students will effectively communicate findings in the same assessment.

Social Responsibility: Each of the readings in this course is intended to provoke thought and discussion about social responsibility, including this assignment.

Personal Responsibility: Each of the readings in this course is intended to provoke thought and discussion about social responsibility, including this assignment

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 may 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

- Aug. 27 – Class One – no reading
- Sep. 3 – Labor Day – view Behr video, Lecture #1
- Sep. 10 – Seminar – Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 2, *How to Read a Book*, Adler, Chs. 1-3
- Sep. 17 – Seminar – Weber, “Science as a Vocation”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 3A and 3B; *Book*, Adler, Chs. 4, 5
- Sep. 24 – Seminar – Kuhn, “Structure of Scientific Revolutions”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 4, *Book*, Adler, Chs. 6-7;
- Oct. 1 – Seminar – James, “Lecture XX, Conclusions”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 5, *Book*, Adler, Ch. 8
- Oct. 8 – Seminar – Aquinas, from “Summa Theologica”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 6, – *Book*, Adler, Ch.9
- Oct. 15 – Seminar – Tolkien, “Fairy-Stories”
 - o Hybrid: Lecture 7, *Book*, Adler, Chs. 10-11
- Oct. 22 – Seminar – Aristotle, from “Nicomachean Ethics”

- Hybrid: Lecture 8, *Book*, Adler, Chs. 12, 14, 15 (skip 13)
- Oct. 28 – Seminar – Schall, *Student Guide to Liberal Learning*
 - Hybrid: Lecture 9, *Book*, Adler, Chs. 16-18
- Nov. 5 – MIDTERM EXAM
 - Hybrid: Lecture 10, *How to Speak, How to Listen*, Adler, Chs. 1-3
- Nov. 12 – Seminar: Sartre, “The Wall”
 - Hybrid: Lecture 11, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs. 4,5
- Nov. 19 – Seminar: Solzhenitsyn, “New Generation”
 - Hybrid: Lecture 12, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs. 7, 8 (skip 6)
- Nov. 26 – Seminar – TBA
 - Hybrid: Lecture 12, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs.10-12 (skip 9)
- Dec. 3 – Seminar – TBA
 - Hybrid: Lecture 13, *How to Speak*, Adler, Chs.13, 14
- FINAL EXAM – See Official Exam Schedule

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

This is a learn-as-you-go course, it is progressive, not merely cumulative. It is aimed at honing skills in careful reading, reasoning and communicating about important books and ideas. Unfortunately these skills are rarely taught, but good students usually figure the techniques out to some degree by the time they get to graduate school! The course is built around two practical works: Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book*; and *How to Speak, How to Listen*. The seminar portion of the class will deal with some essays, short stories, chapters from books on various topics to let you put your improving skills to work. The Previews WILL get easier if you keep at it, so don't worry, be happy.

These first pointers are in the first chapters of Adler, but here's a sneak peek:

- 1) Inspectional Reading
 - a. Systematic skimming equals look at the introduction and conclusion, or first and last paragraphs, read backward from the end until the conclusion makes some sense, i.e. you understood the problem and got an idea of the author's solution...
 - b. Superficial reading means read the whole text through quickly, not stopping at terms or propositions that you don't understand, underline/mark those to come back to, now you should have an idea of the steps in the argument, or the parts of the plot
- 2) Analytical reading
 - a. X-ray the reading to see all its parts/episodes in detail, how they fit together, the logic or argument that's being advanced
 - b. Figure out the key terms (words not used in a normal way, but in a special way and particularly crucial to the argument or story (key terms in stories are key characters)
 - c. Figure out the key propositions, mini arguments that are the building blocks of the overall argument, or the key episodes in a story, building blocks of the plot
 - d. Identify the author's POINT, i.e. what he wants you to understand (not just know) that you may not have understood or believed before? The point will address one or more of the "basic philosophical-religious questions" – virtually always, in one way or another, directly or very indirectly. These are the questions to which every human being must have some sort of answer, no matter how unconscious, confused, inchoate, in order to make choices in life. They are 1) what is the nature of the universe, 2) what is the nature of man, 3) what must we do to be happy?
 - i. But relax, the range of what is thinkable on each of these inter-related topics is strictly limited, one might say from radical materialism to radical idealism.

So, view the first video lecture for some more tips on how your course will proceed. Then dive into the Adler reading, the second video lecture and your quiz by the appointed time. Then you will have your first Preview to do. The task of the Preview is to identify the POINT of the reading, i.e. what it has to say about the universe, humanity, happiness. The text may not address all three at all, and you will come to see that convictions on one of these topics has implications for what is possible to think on the other topics.

Start your Preview with something like “Tolkien’s point in this reading is that x about happiness, because y about human nature and z about the universe.” Then proceed to analyze the most relevant quotes to show how they support your conclusions. The nature of the universe and of man are frequently identifiable with the problem, while the recommendation for happiness then takes on the aspect of a solution.

We start with some hard readings, but that means it will all get much easier as you go along!

Enjoy!

Dr. Behr