HONR 292 - Knowing in Arts and Humanities: Construction of Knowledge

INSTRUCTOR: Mark Brown

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Politics of Knowing through the Centuries (Compiled readings)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The overarching theme for this seminar is the “construction of knowledge.” Students will be engaged in discussions, readings, written communication, and oral communication to consider ideas of how knowledge is produced, by whom it is produced and for what purposes it is produced. The political construction of knowledge challenges students to consider the potential impacts of manipulating what is known and by whom it is known. Cultural identity, arts, philosophy, literature, film, and social media will be considered for their subjectivity and selectivity in the sharing of knowledge which can ultimately drive election outcomes, perpetuate social injustices, or be used as justification for wars. Students will also be challenged to reflect upon the sources of their own knowledge and to identify gaps that may ultimately impact their views and actions.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, a successful student will be able to:
1. Analyze how the arts and humanities enhance and express ways of knowing.
2. Apply and integrate ways of knowing in the arts and humanities to contemporary issues and topics.
3. Creatively engage and integrate the arts and humanities to express one’s own understanding and experience.
4. Explore and appreciate how knowledge is produced, constructed, expressed, and contested among different disciplines in the sciences and humanities.
5. Reflect on the limits of knowing, how knowledge changes, and the social, historical, political, and cultural influences that shape ways of knowing as expressed in the arts and humanities.
6. Articulate the value and purpose of ways of knowing in and through the arts and humanities.
7. Describe issues of ownership, identity, and power as they relate to the processes of knowledge production in and across the arts and humanities.
8. Critically assess interdisciplinary connections and interdependent overlaps between ways of knowing in the arts and humanities and the natural and social sciences.

COURSE SCHEDULE: TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: What is Knowing?
Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird”
Thomas Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?”
Gerry Callahan, “Chimera”

Week 2: How Do We Know and What Are the Challenges of Knowing?
Words that Change the World – Radiolab Presentation (http://www.radiolab.org/story/91728-words-that-change-the-world/)

Week 3: What Do We Know and How Is It Expressed?
Karl Popper and Imre Lakatos on scientific knowing
Choose one: Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles”; Emily Martin, “Visions of the Immune System” from Flexible Bodies; or Susan Sontag, Illness as Metaphor excerpt.

Week 4: Who Owns Ways of Knowing?
Eli Clare, Exile and Stones excerpt.
Optional: Michael Foucault, “Two Lectures” from *Power/Knowledge*

**Week 5: What are the Purposes of Knowing?**
Richard Feynman, “The Value of Science”
Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, Chapter II
Ray Bradbury, “The Flying Machine”

**Weeks 6 through 12: Case Studies focus on the Political Construction of Knowledge**

**Week 6: Cultural Foundations of Knowledge**
Excerpts from *Knowing and Learning as Creative Action: A Reexamination of the Epistemological Foundations of Education (The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education)*, A. Stoller

**Week 7: Philosophical Notions of Politics**
Excerpts from *Politics*, Aristotle

**Week 8: Art and Literature as Drivers of Ancient Wars**
Excerpts from *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides

**Week 9: Art and Literature as Drivers of Ancient Wars**
Excerpts from *The Great Mortality*, John Kelly

**Week 10: Selective Knowledge in the Making of a Nation**
Excerpts from *April 1865: The Month that Saved America*, Jay Winik

**Week 11: Selective Knowledge in the Making of an American Hero**
Selected Articles

**Week 12: Selective Knowledge in the Making of a President**
Selected Articles

**Weeks 13 through 14 – Formal Speeches**

**Week 15: Conclusion and wrap up**

**Week 16: Final Critical Analysis and Research Writing Projects**

**EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The requirements that will be used to evaluate student learning are:
1. Discussion question assignments (10% of grade). Weekly one-page writing assignment on readings (10 total).
2. Two writing projects (35% of grade). Writing assignments (5-10 pages each) can be in the form of a traditional academic essay, personal essay, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, or art/design project with narrative.
3. Formal speech (20% of grade). A 7-minute extemporaneous speech to the class related to content.
4. Analytical research writing project (10-20 pages; 25% of grade).
5. Participation (10% of grade).

**GRADING**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion question assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Writing projects</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Final research paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Formal speech</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grade distribution (plus/minus grades may be used):

- 90-100% A
- 80-89% B
- 70-79% C
- 60-69% D
- <60% F

Incomplete
The grade of “I” is a temporary grade awarded to indicate that for reasons beyond the student’s control or that the student could not have reasonably have anticipated, he/she could not complete the requirements for the course. When an instructor assigns an “I,” he/she shall specify in writing the requirements the student shall fulfill to complete the course. After one year, or at the end of the semester in which the student graduates (whichever comes first), an “incomplete” grade will automatically changed to an “F” grade unless the course has been completed and the grade change submitted. Student must be in good academic standing in the class in order to receive an incomplete. (CSU Faculty Council policy)

Honors Competencies and Skills for Honors Students (“PICC” feedback)
The CSU University Honors Program has prioritized four general competencies skills that should be addressed in each honors course. These skills include (1) Professionalism, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence; (2) Interdisciplinary learning integrated with global and/or cultural viewpoints; (3) Critical thinking; and (4) Creativity and problem solving. This is a two-stage process. First students complete a self-evaluation of these skills at the beginning of the semester. At the end of the semester instructors will provide feedback for each student, based on assignments and activities. The feedback is part of the University Honors Program; it is for advising purposes only and is confidential. It is not part of a student’s grades or academic record. A standardized rubric is used to provide feedback for growth in these areas and to measure the Honors Programs progress in helping students to develop these skills through their academic career. The feedback categories and activities/assignments used to measure progress in HONR 392 – Myth Busters are listed below and noted in the assignment descriptions.

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<th>Skill Category (PICC)</th>
<th>Relevant Course Activities &amp; Assignments</th>
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| 1. Professionalism, interpersonal skills, & emotional intelligence: Acts ethically & positively to foster a supportive instructional or work environment. Has the emotional intelligence (ability to perceive, evaluate, & manage emotions) & interpersonal skills to work effectively with others. | • Class participation & conduct  
• Discussion question assignments  
• Formal speech |
| 2. Interdisciplinary learning integrated with global &/or cultural viewpoints: Integrates diverse knowledge, perspectives, &/or skills into arguments &/or strategies; is aware of and can clearly incorporate global &/or cultural perspectives to an argument or issue. | • Class discussions  
• Discussion question assignments  
• Writing projects  
• Final research paper  
• Formal speech |
| 3. Critical thinking: Student advances a position with specific theses or hypotheses & can conceptualize ideas or lines of thought. Conclusions and related outcomes acknowledge complexities of an issue (implications and consequences) and recognize differing points of view. Formulates & develops claims with sufficient support, including reasoning, evidence, & persuasive appeals, & proper attribution where necessary. Uses written and oral communication effectively in persuasive arguments. | • Class discussions  
• Discussion question assignments  
• Writing projects  
• Final research paper  
• Formal speech |
| 4. Creativity & problem solving: Creatively applies discipline-based and/or cross-discipline-based knowledge to discover and design a variety of forms often using a problem-solving strategy | • Class discussions  
• Discussion question assignments  
• Writing projects  
• Final research paper  
• Formal speech |