



HUM 2020: Encountering the Humanities

Department of Philosophy
College of Arts and Humanities, University of Central Florida

Instructor:	Dr. Jeffrey Nall	Term:	Spring 2018
E-Mail:	Jeffrey.Nall@ucf.edu	Class Meeting Days:	MWF
Office Hours:	By appointment	Class Meeting Hours:	1:30-2:20pm
		Class Location:	BA1 0147
		Course Number:	18862
		Section Number:	0003

About the Professor

Dr. Jeffrey Nall earned a Ph.D. in Comparative Studies from Florida Atlantic University (FAU). He has a Master of Liberal Studies from Rollins College and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies from FAU. Dr. Nall has taught a range of courses in philosophy, humanities, and women, gender, and sexuality studies at institutions including Indian River State College and Florida Atlantic University.

University Course Catalog Description

Examination of the range of ideas, research methods and approaches to scholarship, critical reflection, and creative work in the humanities. (3 credits)

Course Overview

Encountering the Humanities introduces students to the meaning and purview of the humanities. The course will offer a multifaceted exploration of themes that are of interest and concern to the interwoven fields that comprise the discipline. The topics to be explored will include education, the power of the arts in our lives, the meaning of life, love, and happiness. This study will be accompanied by an examination of salient concepts and scholarly methods of critical and creative examination within the humanities. One of the goals of the course is to demonstrate the relevance of the humanities to students' contemporary lives. Course assignments will also provide students with the opportunity to develop their critical thinking and communication skills.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of "Encountering the Humanities," students will have:

1. Identified the basic components of critical and creative thinking.
2. Accurately identified and expressed the basic meaning and scope of the humanities.
3. Thoughtfully articulated their perspective on key questions within the humanities.
4. Demonstrated clear, precise, and reasonable written communication examining distinguished primary sources and/or scholarly works in the humanities.
5. Authored several written critical reflections contemplated the merits and significance of diverse humanistic representations and theories of the human condition.
6. Authored several one-page critical reflections upon the value and relevance of salient works within the humanities to the present and the future.

7. Engaged their peers in considerate, open-minded discussion of key questions within the humanities.
8. Through regular reflection and discussion, students will have demonstrated awareness of the role of culture in shaping the individual and society, as well as the potential for individuals to contribute in the shaping of culture.

FINANCIAL AID ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENT

All faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the short syllabus quiz available via the webcourse site. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Texts and Materials

Required Texts

1. Eagleton, Terry. *The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. (ISBN: 9780199532179)
2. Bok, Sissela. *Exploring Happiness: From Aristotle to Brain Science*. New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 2010. (ISBN: 9780300178104)
3. Sousa, Ronald. *Love: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. (ISBN: 9780199663842)
4. Bok, Sissela. *Mayhem: Violence As Public Entertainment*. New York: Perseus Books 1999. (ISBN: 978-0738201450)
5. *Don Jon*. Dir. Joseph Gordon-Levitt. Relativity Media, 2013. DVD. (The film is widely available and may be streaming on Netflix, Hulu, etc. You can also purchase a DVD for as little as \$5 [here](#))

Webcourse-Site

- The Webcourse site contains links to readings, the most recent version of the syllabus and schedule, and additional announcements. Students should check the Webcourse site frequently to be well informed about any changes or additional material relevant to the course.

Basis for Final Grade

Final grades will be calculated on the basis of successful completion of the following assessments:

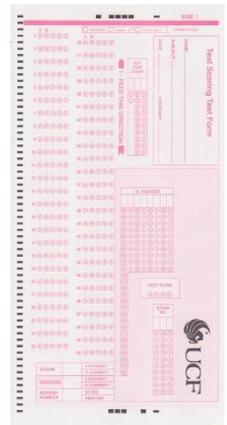
Assessment	Percent of Grade
Humanities Journal	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Term Paper	25%
Final Exam	25%
	100%

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm exam will test students' knowledge of all material covered through the first half of the semester. The final exam will test students' knowledge of all material covered throughout the course from start to finish. It will be comprehensive.

*Note: Students must be present in class on the scheduled exam date; make-ups are rarely permitted, and are only allowed under the most severe, well-documented scenarios.

- o Question: Which scantron do I need?



- Answer: pink/raspberry scantron form with the Pegasus UCF logo. This is the only option for the exams. [The form may be filled out with a pencil or with blue or black ink]
- Question: What do I have to put on the form?
- Answer: In addition to your name, you must bubble in your correct UCF ID number (formerly called their PID) on the answer form in order for it to be graded.

Term Paper

Students will author a 1,300 to 2,200-word term paper on one of two topics (see below). Papers will be graded once and no revisions will be permitted. Students are urged to 1) closely examine the instructions below, 2) review the term paper rubric below, 3) contact and/or meet the professor about any questions concerning the paper, and 4) to utilize the writing center's services to ensure the submitted term paper is of the highest quality and, thus, more likely to receive a higher mark. Please note that term papers will be graded in a rigorous fashion, thus As are reserved for outstanding or excellent work, Bs for very good work, Cs for satisfactory work, Ds for poor work, and Fs for unacceptable work.

Option 1: Cultural Analysis

Author a 1,300 to 2,200-word critical interpretation of a cultural artifact—movie, book, TV series, album, work of art, comedy act, monument, historical site—that is relevant to one or more of the major themes discussed in our course: the value of the humanities (including the arts), thinking philosophically, the meaning of life, the good life (happiness, pleasure), philosophy of education, love, and the power of the arts.

All papers *must* identify a research question to answer

Examples of the kinds of questions you might take on include:

- What vision of a meaningful life does Slipknot's *Vol. 3: The Subliminal Verses* convey to listeners and how does it relate to existentialism?
- How does *Twenty One Pilot's* "Stressed Out" question conventional notions of human happiness, and how does it relate to the ideas of Epicurus (or Seneca, etc.)?
- How does *Edge of Tomorrow (Live. Die. Repeat)* (2014) relate to the idea that human beings have a fixed destiny and Sartre's contention that human beings are condemned to freedom?
- Why do I agree/disagree with the vision of a meaningful life projected by the film *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*?

General questions to consider in formulating your research question include:

- What meanings are presented? Are multiple meanings offered? Which ones do I agree with and why?
- What does this cultural artifact say about the meaning of life, truth, education, and/or God's existence?
- Does this historical site or monument present an honest portrayal of the past? Does it feature some bias?
- In what way does this work of art affirm what is best in humanity? Does this work of art have anything to teach us about the difference between the ends and means of life?
- In what way does this cultural artifact exemplify or communicate thinker from our course's philosophy?

All papers *must* put the given cultural work into conversation with key authors of our course

- Draw on the ideas of key thinkers throughout the course to interrogate or examine the cultural work in question
- Ask yourself how it relates to the ideas of Seneca, Epicurus, Aristotle, Plato, Martha Nussbaum, Adrienne Rich, Paul Goodman, Bok, etc. What would they say in response to the work? What would they say in response to your perspective?

- For example: What would Seneca have to say about the vision of purposeful existence suggested in *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*? How does the movie relate to Epicurus' ideas?

All papers *must* also be comprised of these components:

- 1) Introduction
 - Introduce the subject of your analysis, the question(s) you intend to answer, and your thesis: what you will be arguing.
- 2) Background/Summary of cultural work
 - Provide your reader with key information they may not already have about the work in question. When was it made, how many copies sold (how popular is it), how did critics respond to it? What is the short thumbnail sketch of the work—the “trailer” if you will.
- 3) Analysis (featuring consideration of opposing or contrasting perspectives)
 - Your analysis must feature
 - interpretation and/or evaluation of the work (see below)
 - engagement with and/or application of ideas from course materials
 - consideration of opposing or contrasting perspectives
 - Interpretation: Explain your interpretation of the work's relevance to your research question
 - What does the work say to the audience about the meaning of life, God, truth, happiness, the good life, the importance of the arts or philosophy? Justify your claim: What is the basis of this interpretation?
 - What does the work suggest is a good life? What does it teach us about the meaning or importance of truth? What vision of life does it promote? Justify your claim: What is the basis of this interpretation?
 - Example of interpretative claim: *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* suggests the most purposeful life is to be found in romantic love. You would then give reasons why you believe this to be an accurate representation of the movie's aim. To do so you might discuss the way the film highlights Dodge and Penny's lives, and how each finds a way pass suicide, returning to the family, survivalism, or nihilism. You would provide key details: discuss scenes, dialogue, visual representation, plot, etc.
 - Evaluation: Explain your evaluation of the work
 - How does the message of the cultural artifact compare, contrast with views of authors from our course?
 - Do you agree: why or why not? Who do you think gets it right, wrong? Why?
 - Opposing or contrasting perspectives:
 - How might someone else interpret or evaluate this differently than I am? Why would such an interpretation or evaluation be mistaken?
- 4) Conclusion
 - Briefly reflect on your analysis and its conclusions.
 - Identify the significance of your argument.

Option 2: Self-Examination Paper

Author a 1,300 to 2,200-word examination of your present values, beliefs, commitments and/or actions in the light of course readings in topic areas such as the Humanities, Education, the Meaning of Life, Love, Happiness, and The Arts, Popular Culture, and Our Humanity. Students must author a concentrated analysis answering one or more specific questions. Given that the topics of the course are inherently interconnected students may draw on readings from more than one area. The emphasis of this paper, however, should be on providing an in-depth consideration of

a particular question or topic. Put differently: do not sacrifice depth of analysis in order to cover a lot of ground. Students are encouraged to identify a particular focus and answer a question that is particularly of interest and importance to them.

Content and form: The paper need not be a cut-and-dry argument driven paper, but it must have discernable purpose and direction. This essay must also directly consider and engage course works and ideas relevant to the chosen topic. Furthermore, students should consider and engage ideas that challenge as well as confirm the author’s own thinking. Finally, be sure to thoughtfully organize and develop the paper: interesting introduction, carefully developed body paragraphs, conclusion.

Keys to a successful Self-Examination paper:

- Identify and articulate the key question your paper is considering and seeking to answer or bring clarity to.
- Draw on, implement and/or critically evaluate course ideas/works relevant to your paper’s focus.
 - For example: How does Epicurus’ vision of the good life challenge your present lifestyle? What does Seneca get right/wrong in conceptualizing the happy life? What insights or challenges does a film like *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* provoke in you? How does Virginia Woolf’s approach to life validate/support or challenge your way of living?
- Consider contrasting or opposing perspectives (i.e. those ideas you do not (or are less) convinced by)
 - Imagine that you were arguing that your philosophy of life is justified. Further imagine that you bring Epicurus into your paper to offer support: you explain how your philosophy of life relates to some of his ideas and why you believe he’s right.
 - For this particular paper, for example, considering contrasting or opposing views might involve bringing Seneca or Aristotle’s ideas up as a counter to the view you and Epicurus support, and explaining why those views are not (or less) convincing.

Term Paper Rubric		
Area of Evaluation	Criteria	Value
Content: Critical Analysis (64%)	✓ Meaningfully and fairly acknowledges, articulates, and engages key, relevant course concepts and thinkers	8%
	✓ Provides original analysis (does not simply summarize lectures and readings, but engages them, opening new lines of inquiry or contributing new ideas to the discourse)	8%
	✓ Justifies claims: provides <i>reasoned</i> support for claims	8%
	✓ Clearly explains the relationship between claims and supporting premises or reasons; clearly explains how premise A and premise B produce conclusion C.	8%
	✓ Avoids dogmatic thinking; recognizes that one’s views are not inherently or obviously true and that others’ ideas are not inherently or obviously false	8%
	✓ Avoids egocentric thinking; recognizes that one’s views or perspectives are not necessarily obvious or the same as others; Acknowledges, explains and engages alternative, contrasting, and/or opposing perspectives	8%
	✓ Avoids informal fallacies including unfounded appeals to cultural tradition, popular opinion, and power; avoids personal attacks, stereotyping, and hasty generalizations in analysis	8%
	✓ Showcases appropriate empathy and respect for others (This does not mean that you must agree with a viewpoint of an individual or group of people! Rather it simply means that you are expected to recognize and honor the dignity of others, including those you disagree with.)	8%
Form/ Organization (26%)	✓ Implements analytical writing: author does not simply tell a story or list facts but offers a critical analysis (though some narrative prose is acceptable the paper must emphasize analysis)	3%
	✓ Deploys appropriately formal tone; avoids inappropriately casual language, turns-of-phrase and the like (when appropriate the use of pronouns such as “I” is acceptable, but abbreviations and slang should not be included unless justifiable)	2%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Features introduction, body paragraphs developing one's ideas, and a conclusion ✓ Formatted according to MLA, Chicago, Harvard or other designated scholarly guidelines ✓ Provides original title ✓ Enticing introduction (engaging the reader, inspiring them to read on) ✓ Includes specific thesis statement indicating not only the topic or subject matter but the central claim being advanced in the paper ✓ Logically structured paragraphs that support the stated thesis: purposeful paragraphs feature clear topic sentences, indicating the main idea of the paragraph and developing the thesis presented in the introduction, and development ✓ Provides all appropriate in-text citations indicating source of others' ideas ✓ Provides works-cited page ✓ Minimal direct quotes; summarizes others' ideas in one's own words rather than excessively relying on quoting 	<p>3%</p> <p>1%</p> <p>1%</p> <p>1%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>4%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>1%</p> <p>2%</p>
Grammar/ Mechanics (10%)	<p>Very few if any grammatical errors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Correct spelling ✓ Correct punctuation ✓ Correct word-choice ✓ Complete sentences; no sentence fragments ✓ No run-on sentences 	<p>2%</p> <p>2%</p> <p>2%</p> <p>2%</p> <p>2%</p> <p>Total: 100%</p>
Word-count penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Papers falling under 95% of the required word-count will be receive a penalty commensurate with the missing word-count percentage. ✓ For example, if the word-count requirement is 1,500 and the submitted paper is 1,000 words it will receive an automatic deduction of 33%, making a 67% the highest possible score. A 750 paper would receive an automatic deduction of 50% because 750 words is half of the required word-count. 	
Late penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assignments will receive a deduction of 5% for each day the assignment is late ✓ An assignment that is 5 days late will receive an automatic deduction of 25% ✓ An assignment that is 20 days late will receive an automatic deduction of 100%, meaning that the paper will receive an automatic zero ✓ When a student has a reasonable excuse for submitting a late assignment they should consult with the professor, and after doing so, leave a comment with their submitted work 	
Fails to follow instructions penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Papers failing to address the assigned term paper prompt will receive an automatic zero. ✓ Papers failing to engage the concepts, thinkers, and material the term paper is purposed to evaluate will receive an automatic zero. ✓ Be sure to follow the assignment instructions 	

Final Humanities Journal

Throughout the semester students will be assigned at least several in and out of class writing assignments. These reflections will be integral to in-class discussions, developing understanding of key course concepts, improving critical and ethical thinking, and aiding students for the midterm and final essay exams. Unless otherwise noted students are expected to complete out-of-class journal writing prior to the class period it accompanies. Students will sometimes be required to bring a copy of their out of class journal entry to the relevant class period. In such instances the submitted journal assignment will be used to verify the student's attendance in place of signing the roster sheet. The objective of doing so is to 1) ensure timely completion of the reflections and 2) promote informed student participation in class discussion or small group discussion.

Attendance and Keeping Track of Entries

Out-of-class journal prompts are found in the schedule of readings and assignments. In-class prompts are given in-class. To complete in-class journal assignments, students must be present the day of the class. Students are also responsible for keeping track of the number of assigned journal entries. Only students who present evidence of an

excusable absence within three days of that absence, excepting extenuating circumstances, will be permitted to make-up missed in-class assignments.

Self-evaluation cover page

Upon completion of the final entry, students are to read over all journal entries and write a 250-300-word, single-spaced self-evaluation of their overall journal. Questions to consider include: Have you developed new insights about yourself? Has your thinking developed or changed in any way? Have you developed new understanding relevant to the course? Did you discover or perhaps simply clarified something about yourself or others? You might also consider the impact of the journal project on your writing skills and retention of key concepts: How did your journal entries change over the course of the semester? Did you develop greater intellectual independence in your written reflections? Did writing on a regular basis improve your ability to express yourself? Did writing about key ideas help you understand and retain them?

Formatting of Journal Project

The first page of the journal must include the self-evaluation, a tally of the total number of entries, and the word-count for the entire document. The self-evaluation does not count as a journal entry itself.

Students are to identify one entry they believe is the most important of the semester to be placed directly after the self-evaluation page. This entry, regardless of its chronological order, will be the “first” entry in the journal.

All entries must be numbered and given a relevant title. Word-counts must be provided for each out of class entry. In-class journal entries should be clearly labeled as such; word-counts do not need to be listed for in-class entries. You may scan, snip/screen shot, or photograph in-class entries and insert them in the journal if you do not want to type them up. All out of class entries must be typed.

All entries must be provided together in a single word-document to be uploaded through the available submission link online.

Final Journal Rubric		
Area of Evaluation	Criteria	Value
Self-evaluation (5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completion of grammatically sound and thoughtful self-evaluation, of at least 300 words, reflecting on experience in class and intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intellectual development(s). 	5%
Formatting (15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Favored journal entry is selected and placed as the opening journal entry (#1) ✓ Each unique journal entry title is in bold and numbered ✓ All in-class journal entries are labeled as such (“#4 In-class: Shoes”) ✓ All out-of-class entries are typed and presented in single spacing ✓ Accurate word-count is given for each out-of-class entry ✓ Journal prompt is <u>not</u> included in the final collection of journal entries ✓ Journal does not include headings for entries that were not actually answered (include only entries you have actually done) 	1% 2% 2% 2% 3% 2% 3%
Completion and content (80%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Out-of-class entries meet minimum word-count requirement, which is 150-words unless otherwise noted ✓ Entries meaningfully and fair-mindedly engage relevant readings and course concepts ✓ Entries appropriately respond to relevant assigned questions/prompts ✓ Completion of each entry assigned from the start of semester, including in-class and out-of-class entries <p><i>Explanation of grading for this area:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Divide 80 by number of total assigned entries. The resulting number, rounded down, 	80%* See note in “Criteria” box”

	<p>becomes the maximum value that will be deducted for each incomplete or missing entry. (For example, if there were a total of 25 entries assigned we would divide 80 by 25. The answer, 3.2, would be rounded down to 3. Consequently, the maximum penalty for each incomplete or missing entry would be -3%.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To reward students who completed nearly all the entries, the first missing entry receives a deduction of half the value of the entry. (This means if the maximum deduction value of each entry is 3, the penalty would be -1.5 for one missing entry.) ✓ The first two missing entries receive a deduction equal to the maximum deduction value of one entry. (This means that if the maximum deduction value of the entry is 3 the penalty would be -3 for the first two missing entries.) ✓ Each subsequent missing or incomplete entry—number three and so on—receives deductions commensurate with its maximum deduction value. 	Total: 100%
Late penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assignments will receive a deduction of 5% for each day the assignment is late ✓ An assignment that is 5 days late will receive an automatic deduction of 25% ✓ An assignment that is 20 days late will receive an automatic deduction of 100%, meaning that the paper will receive an automatic zero ✓ When a student has a reasonable excuse for submitting a late assignment they should consult with the professor, and after doing so, leave a comment with their submitted work 	
Fails to follow instructions penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Submissions that are not compiled in a single word document, uploaded via the assigned online submission link will receive an automatic zero. ✓ Late submissions, following the initial mistaken submission, will be subject to late penalties described above. ✓ Be sure to follow the assignment instructions 	

Grading Scale

Total	100-90	89-87	86-80	79-77	76-70	69-67	66-60	59-0
grade	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	F

Attendance Policy:

Regular class attendance is essential to succeeding in, and benefiting from this course. Students are responsible for notifying faculty members of *legitimate* absences, providing appropriate documentation, and arranging to make up all missed work. Legitimate absences include illness, emergency, military or legal obligation, religious observations (see below), and participation in athletic or scholastic teams, musical or theatrical performances, and debate activities. Students who are unable to attend all or nearly all classes for reasons other than those identified above are encouraged to withdraw and take the course at a more appropriate time.

Religious Observations

- A student shall be excused from class without penalty to observe a religious holy day in his or her own faith. A religious holy day is defined as a significant day of religious observance as recognized by the highest body of that particular faith.

What's due, what to read?

- Students who miss class and need to know about forthcoming coursework should consult the schedule of readings and assignments on the Webcourse site.

Excused Absence Notification

- In order for your absence to be counted as excused you will need to supply the professor with relevant explanation and documentation *via email* within one week of the absence.

Unexcused absences penalty

- Students who amass 7 or more unexcused absences from the equivalent of 50 minute classes will lose 5 points from their final grade score. Thus, if you have a 74% (C) in the class and have 5 unexcused absences, your grade will drop to 69% (D).

Outstanding Attendance and Participation Extra Credit

Students who miss no more than the stated allowances, and regularly *meaningfully* contribute to class discussion are eligible for the extra credit listed below. Meaningful participation includes not only verbal contribution but also attentiveness to both the lecture and fellow students.

Twice-a-week Classes (Fall/Spring Semester)

- No more than one absence: 2 points added to final grade
- No more than two absences: 1 points

Three-times-a-week Classes (Fall/Spring Semester)

- No more than two absences: 2 points added to final grade
- No more than three absences: 1 points

Participation Extra Credit

Students who contribute to class discussion during four separate class sessions during the summer or six class sessions during fall and spring will receive 1 point of extra credit added to the final grade. This means that if a student has an 89% and has contributed to class discussions during four separate class sessions, this student's grade will be increased to a 90%.

Incompletes and Withdrawals

Incompletes and Instructor Withdrawals are given solely at the instructor's discretion. Only on rare occasions will the professor give a student an "incomplete." Students who have not attended the majority of courses or not completed the vast majority of coursework will not be considered for an "incomplete." Instructor withdrawals are reserved for very unique circumstances. Under no circumstances will students be granted such withdrawals at or near the end of the semester because they do not like the final grade they are on course to earn.

Examination Make-up Policy

Students are encouraged to take exams when they are assigned. Exam make-ups are done at the discretion of the instructor. Exams not taken will be given a failing grade.

Academic Paper Format

Students' grade will be substantially based on academic writing assignments. These papers must be written in MLA format ([Purdue's MLA formatting and style guide](#)) or Chicago Style Author-Date (Parenthetical) System (<http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/citing-chicago-ad>). This means that papers must be double-spaced and must include citations among other features. Students are urged to take their papers to the University Writing Center (see below) prior to submission.

University Writing Center:

The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu>, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

Student Accessibility Services (Disability Services)

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD

Instead we will approach the critical exploration of significant and often controversial questions, beliefs, values, and theories in a manner that will enhance students' critical thinking skills and cultural competency. We will achieve this by striving to respectfully include and consider diverse perspectives from within the classroom and among significant thinkers within the humanities as a field of study. *By remaining registered for this class, students consent to respectful participation in this intellectual endeavor.* For more information on UCF's efforts to support cultural competency through honoring diversity through inclusion go to [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Laptops, Electronics, and Cell-Phones

Laptops, cellphones and other electronic devices may not be used in class, unless prior approval is given by professor. Those who use these devices during class will be asked to leave. Students who have emergency situations arise and need to utilize their phones must leave the classroom to conduct their business; students are also advised to let the instructor know ahead of time if they are expecting an important call.

Recording Devices

In order to ensure an open and free discussion environment no recording of our classes is permitted. When recording devices are present some students may have reservations about engaging in the sometimes cumbersome process of freely and openly speaking in the classroom setting. Since class discussion is so crucial to this course, it is imperative students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of being recorded and potentially having their words taken out of context.

UCF Support Services

Students in need of assistance with issues such as safety and wellbeing, sexual violence, and mental health are encouraged to contact [UCF Cares](#)

"UCF Cares is an umbrella of care-related programs and resources dedicated to fostering a caring community of Knights. However, it takes all of us from students to staff, from faculty to friends, to show that we care about one another. The goal of the UCF CARES initiative is to build a culture of care one KNIGHT at a time. We are all UCF and need to do our part in connecting any fellow knights in distress to appropriate resources."

Students who have knowledge of sexual misconduct should contact [UCF Shield](#):

"Together, we can work toward eliminating sexual misconduct in the UCF community. We've provided this comprehensive source for information about identifying, preventing, and responding to sexual misconduct including sexual assault and sexual harassment affecting members of the UCF community. We are committed to providing a safe educational, working, and living environment."

[Victim Services](#) is another key resource for UCF students

"We offer support, crisis intervention, options, information, referrals, practical assistance, and educational programs. We inform our clients of their options and potential outcomes and empower them to make the best decision for themselves. Although reporting to law enforcement or university administrative offices is presented as an option, we will never force a client to report."

"Advocates are available 24 hours a day to assist clients by phone or respond to the scene of a crime. To contact an advocate anytime day or night, call (407) 823-1200. We provide crisis counseling and emotional support in the aftermath of victimization."

This [web-page](#) features a variety of UCF resources for students.

Note: This schedule is *tentative* and subject to change as per instructor. Items may be added, removed, or rearranged.

Key Dates	Assignments and Grades
Monday, February 26	Midterm Exam (in class)
9am, March 28, Friday	Self Examination Paper (via webcourses)
11:59pm, Monday, April 23	Final Humanities Journal due (via webcourses)
Monday, April 30	Final Exam: 1-3:50pm (in class)
12pm, Friday, May 4	Grades due
Monday, January 15	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, March 12- 16	Spring Break
Academic Calendar	http://calendar.ucf.edu/2018/spring/no-classes
Final Exam schedule	https://exams.sdes.ucf.edu/2018/spring

First Week of Class

Course Overview

- Read syllabus
- Take financial aid quiz (no impact on your grade, but must be completed to ensure release of your financial aid)
- Obtain assigned textbooks

Monday, January 8 & Wednesday, January 10

Introducing the Humanities: *What (the Hell) are the Humanities?*

- Benton and DiYanni, "[Introduction to the Humanities](#)," *Handbook for the Humanities*, xiv-xxiv
- Richard Jewell, "[Introducing the Humanities](#)," *Experiencing the Humanities*

Journal: The Appeal of the Humanities

Reflect on one or more of the following questions in light of assigned course materials:

- Which aspect(s) of the humanities most appeal to you and why?
- Have you ever been profoundly impacted by a work of art, music, book, film?
- Have you ever seriously considered such a work and its meaning to you?
- Benton and DiYanni contend that literature "helps us think broadly and deeply because diversity, conflicting views, counter-arguments, nuances and qualifications are at its hearts." Do you agree or disagree? (Any examples?) Is this true of film? How so? How might it be argued that literature may often have the upper-hand in fostering such deep engagement?

Friday, January 12

Introducing the Humanities: On Reading and the Humanities Journal

Writing the Term Paper

- "[Reading in the Humanities and Social Sciences](#)," Trent University
- Noam Chomsky on [Reading](#)
- James Doubek, "[Attention, Students: Put Your Laptops Away](#)," NPR, April 17, 2016 (Also listen to 3-minute audio portion, or read transcript)
- Read term paper instructions and bring questions about the assignment to class.

Journal: Reading and Writing

Answer both of these questions.

Bring a hard copy of your journal entry to class to submit in place of signing the attendance sheet; hard copies of the journal entry should be turned in at the end of class.

- Reflect on why you agree or disagree with Noam Chomsky's perspective on reading and digital media.
- How do you take notes, and are you surprised by the results of the research discussed in Doubek's article?

Wednesday, January 17 & Friday, January 19

Introducing the Humanities: *Why Study the Humanities?*

- Martha C. Nussbaum, "[The Silent Crisis](#)," 1-11, in *Not for Profit, Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*
- Nussbaum, excerpt from [Not for Profit, Why Democracy Needs the Humanities](#)
- Mark Edmundson, "[Why Major in Humanities? Not just for a good job — for a good life](#)," *Washington Post*, August 8, 2013
- David Behling, "[On Studying the Humanities: What Does it Mean to be Human?](#)," *Huffington Post*, August 5, 2012
- Judith Butler, "[On the Value of Reading and the Humanities](#)" (Audio: 7:44)

Journal: Nussbaum and the Humanities

Take 15-minutes to reflect on the points raised by Martha Nussbaum. If you need help getting started you might consider the following:

- Nussbaum writes that we "are pursuing the possessions that protect, please, and comfort us....But we seem to be forgetting about the soul, about what it is for thought to open out of the soul and connect person to world in a rich, subtle, and complicated manner; about what it is to approach another person as a soul, rather than as a mere useful instrument or an obstacle to one's own plans; about what it is to talk as someone who has a soul to someone else whom one sees as similarly deep and complex."
- Do you agree that too many of us overemphasize the pursuit of comforting and pleasing possessions at the expense of exploring and enriching our fuller humanity? Do you agree that too many interact with others without an appropriate appreciation of the other person's "soul"?

Monday, January 22 & Wednesday, January 24

Methods: Critical (and Ethical) Thinking

- Robert Solomon, "[Doing Philosophy](#)," pp.3-14 (the main section to have read is "Concepts and Conceptual Frameworks," 8-13)
- The Critical Thinking Community, "[Defining Critical Thinking](#)"
- Anthony Weston, *A Practical Companion to Ethics*, [Getting Started](#), pp.1-15

Journal: What is Critical Thinking?

Answer each of the following questions:

- How do these discussions of critical thinking contrast with your understanding of the concept? (Be sure to explicitly engage assigned readings)
- Drawing on your experience, discuss whether or not educators and the school system prioritized the teaching of critical thinking? And did they adequately explain and exemplify (in their manner of teaching) the concept?

Friday, January 26

Methods: Creativity

- bell hooks, "[Imagination](#)," pp. 59-62
- Carol Becker, "[Art as Research](#)," *Truth Out*, January 22, 2014
- Eduardo Galeano, "[The Right to Dream](#)"
- Optional: Richard N. Foster, "[What Is Creativity?](#)," Yale Insights, February 16, 2015 (Yale School of Management)

Journal: Imagination

- Do you believe the imagination is sufficiently honored by the dominant by dominant American culture?
- In what ways do hooks, Galeano, all agree in terms of the value of imagination?

Monday, January 29

Education: Thinking Critically about Education

- bell hooks, "[Critical Thinking](#)," pp. 7-11
- Kant, "[What is Enlightenment?](#)" (Alternative link [here](#))
- Dr. Martin Luther King, "[The Purpose of Education](#)" , Maroon Tiger (1947)
- Abraham Maslow, "[Value-free Education](#)", in *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*

Journal: What is Education?

- Before you read the articles, take 5-10 minutes to address this question from your perspective: "What is education and how should we go about educating ourselves?"

Wednesday, January 31 & Friday, February 2

Education: Thinking Critically about Education

- Adrienne Rich, [Claiming an Education](#) (1977)
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Education: An Essay and Other Selections*, ed. Henry Suzzallo (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909)
- Emma Goldman, "[The Social Importance of the Modern School](#)," in *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, edited by Alix Kates Shulman (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1996), 140-149. (140)
- Bertrand Russell, "[Education as Political Institution](#)," *The Atlantic*, June 1916 [Read at least section I and II]

- Paul Goodman, "[A Usual Case—Nothing Fancy](#)," from *Compulsory Mis-education and The Community of Scholars* (1964) 131-154

Optional:

- Henry David Thoreau on [Education](#), pp.19-20
- Albert Einstein, [Schooling](#)
- Ivan Illich, [Chapter One](#), *Deschooling Society*

Journal: Thinking Critically about Education

- Sympathetically summarize the key points from two of the assigned readings, then explain your perspective on their ideas: are they relevant today or dated? Do you agree or disagree, why?

Monday, February 5

Education: Intelligence and Stupidity

- Howard Gardner, "[[Multiple Intelligences](#)] [In a Nutshell](#)" pp. 9-31
- Joanna Kadi, "[Stupidity Deconstructed](#)," *Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker*(Cambridge MA, South End Press, 1996), pp.39-57 (1996) Read at least from the bottom of p.47 to the top of p.52

Journal: Intelligence and Stupidity

- Draw on your experience and insight to comment on the value of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, then briefly explain whether or not the dominant education system sufficiently values the diversity of intelligence Gardner contends exists. Do you believe there is any merit to Kadi's argument regarding the dominant conceptualization of "stupidity"?

Wednesday, February 7

Methods: Freedom of Speech & Democratic Dialogue

- John Stuart Mill, excerpt from chapter two, "[Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion](#)" of *On Liberty* (1859)
- Freedom of Speech in Question (Read at least one)
- Kristine Phillips, "[A university professor suggested Harvey was karma for Texas Republicans. Then, he was fired](#)," *Washington Post*, August 29, 2017
 - Paul Elias, "[Turmoil Erupts at Berkeley Rally After Civil Start](#)," Associated Press, August 27, 2017
 - Glenn Greenwald, "[In Europe, Hate Speech Laws are Often Used to Suppress and Punish Left-Wing Viewpoints](#)," *The Intercept*, August 29, 2017

Journal: Dissenting Opinions

Important note: In order to be counted as attending today's class you must bring a physical copy of the journal entry to this class period .

- Identify at least two key quotes from Mill's work, and explain why you believe they are important.
- Additionally, reflect on one of the following questions: Why is it important for those interested in truth to be confronted by unfamiliar even discomforting opinions and perspectives? On what grounds would Mill defend what some term "hate speech"? Is our society losing sight of the value of the First Amendment? How do Glenn Greenwald's arguments relate to Mill's?

Friday, February 9

Methods: Freedom of Speech & Democratic Dialogue

- bell hooks: "[Democratic Education](#)," "[Conversation](#)," and "[Conflict](#)," pp. 43-47, 85-89
- Audre Lorde, "[The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action](#)" pp.40-44
- Robert Jensen, "[Avoiding False Alternatives](#)," from *Arguing for Our Lives: A User's Guide to Constructive Dialogue*
- Anthony Weston, *A Practical Companion to Ethics*, [Ethics with a Heart](#) , pp.69-82

Journal: Democratic Society

Engage at least one reading to reflect on the significance of conversation for the pursuit of truth and understanding in a democratic society. Questions to contemplate may include, but are not limited to:

- What is bell hooks' perspective on conflict? How does it differ from perspectives on conflict you are used to?
- What are your thoughts on hooks' perspective on the value of conversation? How often do you speak up in class or in other settings?
- Have you ever been made to feel "stupid" for sharing your thoughts in class (work, family)? Explain when, where, and why this happened.
- Based on your experience, how do people -- in your family, workplace, classroom(s)--handle controversial topics and disagreement? Are opinions that challenge the common sense of that group respectfully listened to?
- What are the benefits of hearing a variety of perspectives on a given topic even when we might strongly disagree with the perspectives being offered?

Monday, February 12 & Wednesday, February 14
Culture and Cultural Studies

- Cultural Studies UNC “What Is Cultural Studies?”
- UCF “Humanities and Cultural Studies, B.A.”
- Michael Lewis Goldberg, “Cultural Hegemony”
- Watch/listen to Stuart Hall, “Representation & the Media”

Optional:

- Stephen Duncombe, “Introduction,” *Cultural Resistance Reader*. New York: Verso, 2002, pp.1-9
- Antonio Gramsci, “From the Prison Notebooks,” pp.58-67

Friday, February 16

Cultural Studies and Current Events

Required:

- Richard Jewell, “History and Ideas”
- James W. Loewen, “Why do people believe myths about the Confederacy? Because our textbooks and monuments are wrong,” *Washington Post*, July 1, 2015
- Southern Poverty Law Center, “Whose Heritage?,” 4-16
- Jennifer Schuessler, “Historians Question Trump’s Comments on Confederate Monuments,” *New York Times*, August 15, 2017

Optional:

- *Democracy Now*, “As Study Finds 4,000 Lynchings in Jim Crow South, Will U.S. Address Legacy of Racial Terrorism?,” February 2, 2015
- Chris Hedges, “The Greatest Crimes Against Humanity Are Perpetrated by People Just Doing Their Jobs,” 23 July 2012, *Truthout*

Journal: The Confederacy

After reading sociologist James W. Loewen's essay, the *New York Times* piece, and the Southern Poverty Law Center's discussion of Confederate monuments and memorials, reflect on your prior understanding of the Civil War and the Confederacy. You may answer one or both of these sets of questions, but be sure you engage the required readings.

- Which if any of the points Loewen raises surprising or unfamiliar to you? Is the public sufficiently aware of the explicitly white supremacist motivations behind Southern Secession?
- Do you have a special attachment to what is commonly called the “Confederate Flag”? If so, what does it mean to you? How does that meaning differ from its historical context? Is the meaning of the flag changing for some? Should it change, or should its explicitly racist historical context be maintained in honor of those who died through enslavement?

Monday, February 19

Power of Culture

- Sissela Bok, *Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment*, 1-21
- Coleman, “Gladiators: Heroes of the Roman Amphitheatre,” *BBC*,
- Giroux, “Violence is Deeply Rooted in American Culture: An Interview With Henry A. Giroux,” *Truthout*, Jan 17, 2013
- Optional: Watch *The Gladiator* (2000)

Journal: Parallels

- Author a reflection on one or more of the following questions:
- How different is our culture from that of the Romans? What parallels can be made between Roman society and that of our nation? Are we also a culture of violence?

Wednesday, February 21 & Friday, February 23

Power of Culture

- Bok, “The Thrill of the Kill,” “But Movies are Not Real,” and “Transforming Violence,” pp. 27-45

Journal: Desensitization and Humanitas

Engage Bok’s work to answer at least one of the following questions. Be sure that you not only answer the relevant question but also provide support for the claims you make. Clearly connect the dots of your thinking in your work: walk the reader through the reasoning that arrives at the conclusion you are presenting.

- Do you think cultural experiences like movies can desensitize people? Do you think you’ve personally become desensitized as a result of entertainment violence? Do you know others who you believe have become desensitized at least partly due to entertainment violence?
- Contrast two movies or TV series that depict violence differently: how is it treated and what is the difference in the response it evokes in the viewer?
- What creative works—movies, music, art—have you experienced that inspired you to be a better person—cultivated your humanity? What made them “cathartic”?

Monday, February 26

Midterm

- bring pink scantron with UCF logo and pencil

Wednesday, February 28

The Meaning

of Life: Understanding the Question

- Robert Solomon, "[The Meaning of Life.](#)"
- Terry Eagleton, *The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*, 1-15 (16-32 optional), 33-55

Journal: Solomon and the Meaning of Life

Sympathetically summarize key points made by Solomon and Eagleton, then explain your perspective on the identified ideas. Questions to consider might include:

- Do any of the visions of life discussed in the readings relate to your ideas about life's purpose? Does life have cosmic meaning? Do we give our lives meaning? Is our quest for a meaningful existence absurd? Is it of vital importance? Is both vital and absurd?
- Perhaps more basically you might consider the question: does the question of our fundamental commitment or purpose receive proper consideration in society, or are we simply expected to adopt dominant visions of a meaningful existence presented by our culture?

Friday, March 2

The Meaning of Life: Literature and Music and the Meaning of Life

- Read the opening, "A. Life's Chronic Ailments": James Fieser, "[The Meaning of Life](#)," from *Great Issues in Philosophy*
- Watch/listen to: "Literature—Virginia Woolf", *The School of Life*
- Richard Jewell, "[All the Arts Equal Beauty](#)", *Experiencing the Humanities*

Journal: Meaningful Music

- Write a reflection on a song that is "meaningful" to you, explaining why it is significant to you and how it relates to your vision of life.
- Bring a copy of the song (as digital file, youtube video etc.) and a small device to play the song on (smart phone, MP3 player) and a pair of headphones for you to use.
- You will be asked to share the song with someone in class.
- A copy of the reflection will be turned in at the end of class as proof of attendance. Anyone who fails to bring in a copy of the reflection on this day will not be counted as present.

Monday, March 5 (Begin Seeking a Friend in class)

The Meaning of Life

- Read: "B. Ancient Greek Solutions": James Fieser, "[The Meaning of Life](#)," from *Great Issues in Philosophy*
- Seneca, "[The Happy Life](#)"
- Epicurus, "[Letter to Menoecus](#)"
- Optional: Audio of Letter to Menoecus
- Epicurus, "[Principal doctrines](#)"
- Optional: Audio of Principal doctrines

Journal: Quoting the Ancients

Two-part journal:

1. Identify at least three significant quotes from each of the two ancient Greek thinkers, Epicurus and Seneca. The quotes might be significant because you believe they offer valuable wisdom, or that they help us understand distant, past cultures, or perhaps because you vehemently disagree with the argument or claim. The quotes must come from the assigned readings.
2. In addition to the six quotes you must briefly comment on each set of quotes. This part of the journal should be at least 150 words, not including the above quotes.
3. In your final journal submission the six quotes and your 150+ word commentary should be together as one, single journal.

Wednesday, March 7 & Friday, March 9

The Meaning of Life

- Terry Eagleton, "The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction", 78-101
- Read "E. Philosophy and Life's Meaning": James Fieser, "[The Meaning of Life](#)," from *Great Issues in Philosophy*

Journal: The Meaning of Life and Seeking a Friend for the End of the World (viewed in class) (due Friday, March 9)

Consider the film's implications for the meaning of life and the humanities more generally. Questions to consider include but are not limited to:

- How does this film relate to the question of the meaning of life, and does it offer a vision or perhaps advice worth considering?
- How did this film affect you emotionally, and what does this say about the power of art forms such as film?
- Did the film succeed in engaging you with the crucial choices and questions that its characters dealt with?
- How would you react to a crisis of impending planetary doom? Does the film offer any insight into the meaning of life and how best to face death?
- How does the film echo Nussbaum's criticism of the one-sided pursuit of protection, pleasure, and comfort? How does it echo Bertrand Russell's command to contemplate and appreciate more than simply the means of living but the ends?
- What does the readiness with which so many abandon their pre-apocalyptic lives say about the meaningfulness of their lives?
- What does it mean that Wally (the officer) and Elsa (house-cleaner) continue working even as the end is immanent? (Others cut grass, work out, hold yard sales) Does this indicate insipidity of their lives; or do they have something (profound?) to teach us?
- At the end of the film Dodge says, "Penny, I'm really glad I got to know you." Does he sum up the meaning of life here? Is connecting with another person, soul to soul, as good as it gets in life?
- How does the film relate to Fieser's discussion of Gilgamesh and Death, Sisyphus and Futility, Boethius and Cosmic Insignificance, Job and Suffering?

Monday, March 19, Wednesday, March 21 (Bottom in class), Friday, March 23

Love

- Ronald de Sousa, *Love: A Very Short Introduction*
 - Puzzles, pp.1-16
 - Perspectives, pp.17-35
- Alain de Botton, "Why You Will Marry the Wrong Person," *New York Times*, May 28, 2016
- Ovid, [book 4](#), line 55-166: "Pyramus and Thisbe"

Journal: Interrogating Love

Reflect on one or more of the questions posed in chapter one:

- How subjective is love?
- Do we love for reasons?
- Is love blind?
- Is love freedom, or bondage?
- Does love mar the purity of sex?
- Is tragic love the best kind?
- Sousa writes: "The greatest love stories usually end in death...." Do you agree? What are we to make of the fact that so many (perhaps once in love) married couples live and behave as though they were anything but in love with one another?

Monday, March 26, Wednesday, March 28, Friday, March 30 & Monday, April 2

Love

- Ronald de Sousa, *Love: A Very Short Introduction*
 - Desire, p.36-50
 - Reasons, pp.51-75
- Excerpt from Plato's *Symposium*

Journal: Your favorite love story

- Describe your favorite (fictional or non-fiction) love story.
- Tell us the who, what, when, where, how, why
- Why is it your favorite love story?
- And if you don't have a favorite love story, perhaps you can write about your favorite anti-love story
- If you are comfortable sharing, bring a copy to class.

Wednesday, April 4 & Friday, April 6

Love

- bell hooks, "Romance: Sweet Love," in *All About Love: New Visions* 186-188
- Pablo Neruda, Love poems: "If you forget me," "I Like for You to be Still," "[I crave your mouth](#)," "[Tonight I can Write the Saddest Lines](#)"
- Christopher John Farley, "[The Platinum Poetry of Taylor Swift](#)," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 31, 2012

Journal: Radio Love (due Wednesday, April 4)

From an early age, stories and visions of romantic love are pressed upon us throughout school and popular culture. Flip through radio stations and contemplate the emphasis most popular music places on romantic love; further consider the visions of romantic love represented in such art forms.

Potential questions to consider:

- Is dominant American culture's vision of love healthy, misguided, a mix?
- Is love inherently problematic?
- Do we expect too much of love?
- Is romantic love overrated?
- Are there other forms of love we would be better off focusing on? (Consider for example, the unique—in comparison to most Disney films—vision of love offered in the Disney film, *Frozen*.)

Monday, April 9-Friday, April 13**Love**

- bell hooks, "Male Sexual Being," *The Will to Change*, 75-90
- Watch *Don Jon*. (Available to be streamed [here](#))

Journal: Don Jon (due Wednesday, April 11)

- Author a 150-250-word reflection on *Don Jon* utilizing key readings from this week and the prior week along with your own insights. Questions to consider include:
- Does the film honestly portray many heterosexual men's vision of sexuality and women? Does the film help us identify a more humane and perhaps enlightened vision of sexuality and love? What are the differences between the characters' approaches to sex and love? Do you see yourself in these characters? Choose at least one key scene to discuss in your reflection.

Monday, April 16 & Wednesday, April 18**Happiness**

- Sissela Bok, *Exploring Happiness*, 1-34
- [World Happiness Report](#)

Journal: My Vision of Happiness

- What is your present vision of happiness? What do you deem essential to happiness, what is inessential? What, do you think, has shaped your thinking about happiness?

Friday, April 20**Happiness**

- Sissela Bok, *Exploring Happiness*, pp.35-58
- Happiness [10 Things](#)
- Jill Suttie, "We Know Nature Makes Us Happier. Now Science Says It Makes Us Kinder Too," *Yes Magazine*, March 12, 2016

Journal: The Experience Machine

Would enter Nozick's imagined "Experience Machine."

- Do you agree with Nozick and Bok that we should reject the opportunity offered by the machine? Why or why not?
- Which vision of happiness discussed in the readings resonate with you the most? Why?

Monday, April 23**Happiness**

- Sissela Bok, *Exploring Happiness*, "Happy Life," pp.59-82, 173-178
- Sarah van Gelder, "A Brief History of Happiness: How America Lost Track of the Good Life—and Where to Find It Now," *Yes Magazine*, May 15, 2015

Journal: Deserving Happiness

Author a reflection answering one or more of the following questions.

- "What moral considerations should set limits to such pursuits?"
- "What else should matter in human lives aside from happiness?"
- "How should we weigh our own happiness against that of others in a world where we are aware, as never before, of extremes of misery and opulence?"
- "How might we best take into account what we are learning about the effects of our individual and collective choices on the prospects for the well-being of future generations?"

- “And how should we respond to individuals and groups advocating intolerant or outright inhumane conceptions of happiness or well-being?” (Bok 4)

Monday, April 30, 1-3:50pm

Self-Evaluation Share & Final Exam

- Bring scantran

Extra Credit:

- Students wishing to receive +5% to their final exam grade may bring in a copy of their self-evaluation reflection to share with the class. Students can omit any private details relayed in the self-evaluation but are asked to read as much of the reflection as they are comfortable sharing.
- To receive the +5% credit students will hand in a printed copy of the self-evaluation to the professor after they have shared it with the class.