

Humanities 401: The Idea of a University

Fall, 2001

TR: 2:10-3:30, HS 127 (sections 1, 2, and 3)

R: 3:40-4:30 (section meetings)

Murkland 22 (sec. 1)

Murkland 203 (sec. 2)

Murkland 207 (sec. 3)

Instructors: David Andrew, Catherine Peebles, David Richman

Office Hours: to be arranged with section leader

Humanities 401 takes as its subject this semester "the idea of the university." What is a university? What did universities used to be? When did they begin? Why is a campus called a "campus"? What is the purpose of a university? What should students and professors do there? What is learning, and what is knowledge? Who should study at a university, and why? These are some of the questions we'll be addressing and asking you to address in this course. The first, and perhaps most difficult, prerequisite is that we ask ourselves why we are here. The answers that we come up with may produce some astounding conclusions about the nature of the university and its place in our world.

Requirements

-Coming to class prepared, having done the assigned reading and made extensive notes on it, and having carefully reviewed lecture notes. This course involves a heavy reading load, and students should budget their out-of-class work time accordingly. Students are expected and required to devote a minimum of six to eight hours per week to class preparation. Preparing for this class involves reading and rereading the assigned work carefully, underlining important passages, making notes in the margins, and making notes in your notebook. Your own notes should range from copying significant sections of text and definitions of new vocabulary words, to writing down specific questions you have, to formulating critical responses and interpretations. You are required to look up in a good desk dictionary (such as The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language or Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary or New World Dictionary of the American Language) every vocabulary word with which you are unfamiliar. And you are required to bring formulated questions to each discussion meeting. Your class preparation grade will be based upon your contribution of salient questions and interpretations.

-Attendance does not count toward class preparation, and is, of course, required. (What does count toward class preparation is your alert, thoughtful, active presence.) A student who misses three classes during the semester (lecture or discussion) will lose a full letter grade for each subsequent absence, and is required to make an appointment and discuss the problem with her/his section leader. The penalty scheme for attendance takes into account the occasional emergency or illness. Accordingly, students are allowed three

absences with no penalty. There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences.

Attendance penalty scheme:

Up to three absences: no penalty

Four absences: one letter grade lower

Five absences: two letter grades lower

Six absences: three letter grades lower

Seven or more: four letter grades lower

-Participation in discussion. As emphasized under "class preparation," participation in discussion is a crucial part of this course, and consists in doing the reading assignments thoroughly and bringing well thought out questions to the discussion section. Missing a lecture session would make it impossible for students to participate well in discussion, as would failing to do the reading assignment attentively. A student's class preparation grade is based on her/his contributing well thought out questions consistently in section.

-Papers and Exams. There will be two exams during the semester. The first will be a short-answer, in-class exam. The second will be the final exam, which will be take-home, essay format, and is due on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. in the Humanities Program office, Murkland Hall, room 2. The first paper assignment will be a short, closely directed assignment. The second will be a five to seven page essay, to be assigned by your section leader. Check with your section leader for details. Your final grade will be an average of your class preparation and participation, first and second exams, and first and second papers, minus any penalty for missed classes (see "attendance" above).

Required Texts

The books listed are available at the Durham Book Exchange, on Main Street in Durham. All other readings are contained in the course packet, which you can purchase at Durham Copy, also on Main Street.

Course Packet (available at Durham Copy, Main Street)

David Mamet, "Oleanna"

Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams

Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus

Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own

Richard Russo, Straight Man

Semester Timetable

Readings are to be completed by the first day they are listed. Abbreviations stand for the instructor principally responsible for that day's lecture. DA = Prof. Andrew; CP = Prof. Peebles; DR = Prof. Richman.

Week 1

T 9/4 DA, CP, DR. Introduction

R 9/6 DA. Walker Percy, "The Loss of the Creature" (course packet)

Week 2

T 9/11 DR. David Mamet, "Oleanna"

R 9/13 DA. Stuart Palmer, from The Universities Today (course packet)

Week 3 Paper assignment #1 handed out this week.

T 9/18 CP. Michel de Montaigne, "The Education of Children" (course packet)

R 9/20 DR. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, from The Republic of letters (course packet)

Week 4

T 9/25 DR. Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams, Preface and chapters 1-4

R 9/27 DA. Paul Turner, from Campus (course packet). The development of the University, part I.

Week 5

T 10/2 CP. Plato, from Republic (course packet)

R 10/4 CP. Plato, from Republic (course packet)

Week 6

T 10/9 DR. Aristotle, from Politics (course packet)

R 10/11 DA. Pierson, from American Buildings and their Architects (course packet). The development of the university, part II.

Paper assignment #1 due.

Week 7

T 10/16 First Examination (in class).

R 10/18 VISIT?

Week 8

T 10/23 DA. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" (hand-out)

R 10/25 CP. Henry Adams, chapters 5-6

Week 9

T 10/30 DR. Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus

R 11/1 DR. Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus

Week 10

T 11/6 DA. Mark Edmundson, "On the Uses of a Liberal Education" (course packet)

R 11/8 DA. Turner, from Campus (course packet). The development of the university, part III.

Week 11

T 11/13 CP. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

R 11/15 CP. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Final paper assignment handed out

Week 12

T 11/20 DA. Powers, "The Architecture of the Airforce Academy" (course packet). The development of the university IV.

R 11/22 No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 13

T 11/27 DR, Henry Adams, chapters 20, 25, 33-35

R 11/29 CP. Malcolm X, from *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (course packet)

Week 14

T 12/4 DA. Camille Paglia, "Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders: Academe in the Hour of the Wolf" (course packet)

R 12/6 DR. Richard Russo, *Straight Man*

Week 15

T 12/11 DR. Richard Russo, *Straight Man*

R 12/13 Class colloquy

Final paper due. Final exam handed out.

FINAL EXAM DUE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 3:00 p.m.