**Honors 3, Section 2, Spring 2024**

**Great Books and World Civilizations, 1500-present**

*“Perhaps the history of the errors of [humankind], all things considered, is more valuable and interesting than that of their discoveries.”*

*–*Benjamin Franklin, quoted in Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong*

**Professor:** Ted Lascher

**Class Meets:** Tuesdays and Thursdays,10:30-11:45 a.m., Shasta 254

**Email:**tedl@csus.edu

**Office Hours:**12:30-1:30 Tuesdays and Thursdays, Tahoe 3036 or hanging out right after class

**Catalog Description:**Exploration of some of the most influential works of literature, philosophy, history, religion, and art from cultures around the world in the modern era. Students will gain knowledge of different cultural traditions, explore ways to criticize and to learn from different forms of cultural expression, examine their own concepts and ideas, and practice skills of critical thinking in dialogue with challenging works. **Prerequisite:**Open only to students enrolled in the General Education Honors Program who have completed HONR1, HONR 5, and HONR 2. **Graded:**Graded Student. **Units:**3.0

**Course Description:**This course is the third and final installment in the Foundations and Legacies of Arts and Ideas component of the Honors program. Continuing with the seminar format of the previous courses, students will explore cultural expressions from a variety of perspectives all with the goal of engaging in discussions of major themes and issues that have shaped the human experience. Covering the period roughly from 1500 to the near future, we will delve into works of literature, philosophy, social science, history, and culture in order to discover our own place in human history. We will especially pay attention to the nature of error and how this relates to other topics such as freedom/slavery, race/class/ethnic identity, citizenship/civic engagement, and prospects for the future.

**Wicked Problem and Other Key Topics:**In this course, we will continue to explore the wicked problem of privilege. We will consider how privilege relates to the rejection of evidence that contradicts people’s personal views. We will also consider other types of reasoning errors that are highlighted (either inadvertently or deliberately) in course materials. Additionally, we will address questions such as: How do we receive and respond to uncertainty and insecurity? How do we plan for the needs of the present and the future? Turning to the past, we will look at how humans have historically thought about the civil society and some of the consequences of those actions. Hopefully this will help us avoid past mistakes as we plan for the future.

**Course Learning Outcomes (ELO 1):**

* 1. Synthesize ideas from different genres of literature or literary styles
  2. Form their own world views through analysis of major themes presented in a variety of cultural expressions
  3. Critically analyze art and/or literary works
  4. Express ideas clearly and cogently in written and oral communication

**GE Category C2: Humanities: Literature, Philosophy, Languages Other Than English**

**Area C2 Learning Outcomes (ELO 2):**

* 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities
  2. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies
  3. Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind
  4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values

**Honors Program Learning Outcomes (PLO 1): Written Communication:** Upon completion of the GE Honors Program students will be able to develop and disseminate an informed argument in writing.

1.1: Context and Purpose – Clearly identifies and establishes the audience, purpose, and context for writing.

1.2: Content Development – Uses reliable, credible and relevant sources that are accurately integrated into the argument in a lively, interesting, and well-paced manner. Fully develops Ideas, engaging the reader throughout the paper. Employs sufficient sources to support the argument that are identified by proper and accurate citations.

1.3: Structure – Produce a clear, compelling and interesting thesis statement that draws the reader into the work. Each paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence directly related to the body of the paragraph and that leads the reader through the writer’s thought process. Employs clear language, structural organization, and evidence to allow the reader to easily follow the progression of the argument. Drafts an introduction that grabs the reader’s attention and pulls them into the subject and a conclusion that succinctly wraps up the argument and leaves the reader pondering upon the argument.

1.4: Grammar and Syntax – Compose written work that is virtually error free of punctuation and spelling mistakes, employ strong verbs to engage the reader and assign responsibility to individuals and events, and apply graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning with clarity and fluency.

**Honors Program Learning Outcomes (PLO 7): Wicked Problem:** Upon completion of the Ge Honors Program students will be able to develop and disseminate an informed argument offering a solution to a Wicked Problem.

7.1: Identifying the Problem – Drawing upon multiple reliable and credible sources representing competing perspectives, students identify and define the problem with clarity and fluency, exploring the depth of the complexities of the problem and suggesting options for solving it.

7.2: Context and Assumptions – Students provide a sophisticated analysis of the impact of the context and assumptions of their sources on their ability to support or counter the argument.

7.3: Embracing Contradictions – Students incorporate alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas into the analysis of the problem and the solution.

7.4: Innovative/Transformative Thinking – By analyzing multiple perspectives, students transform ideas or knowledge into new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries.

7.5: Solving Problems – Students develop not only a logical, consistent plan to solve the problem, but recognize the consequences of the solution and articulate the reasons for choosing the solution.

**Course Materials**: Our main course materials are books, including both novels and nonfiction works. For some class sessions I will also ask that you read articles or watch videos. I will indicate as much in the Canvas modules for particular days and they will be available through Canvas

Books**:** The following books are required and may be purchased/rented at the Hornet Bookstore or from other venues. If possible, please purchase/rent/the Diaz and Wollstonecraft works from the Hornet Bookstore because the editions of these books vary, and we all should be on the same page when referring directly to the texts in class.

* Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*
* Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*
* Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
* Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* [free pdf available in Canvas]
* Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* [free pdf available in Canvas]
* Celeste Ng, *Our Missing Hearts*
* *Little Seagull Handbook with InQuizitive for Writers*(ebook) -[https://digital.wwnorton.com/littleseagull (Links to an external site.)](https://digital.wwnorton.com/littleseagull3)

**Attendance**

Our class is a community whose value is dependent on all of its members’ participation and contributions. Therefore, your attendance is important for the entire class. Furthermore, discussions will build on material from previous sessions so failure to attend can lead to greater confusion.

Accordingly, I expect you to notify me if for some reason you need to miss a class. Students will be penalized one full class participation grade for every unexcused absence above three in a semester. Excused absences require appropriate documentation.

**Class Participation Expectations**

This seminar relies heavily on student participation, which also requires students to be prepared prior to coming to class. Students are expected to complete all reading assignments prior to class and be ready to discuss their understandings of them in class. This seminar is no place to sit silently and attentively listen. Active engagement is critical.

Be prepared to be uncomfortable. That is part of the learning process as your views are challenged or you encounter material you deem objectionable, and need to determine how to respond. You will likely be sympathetic to views presented in some materials and critical of views presented in others. You will also likely disagree with each other at times. I encourage healthy discussion of topics. I also urge you to consider why any discomfort may be happening and ask what it can teach us. Consider what you can contribute to an agreement or disagreement.

This classroom is to remain a place of respect for each other and the community at large. Disagreement with someone does not necessarily mean we dislike one another. Disagreeing with an opinion should not be an attack on the person, but a way to understand ourselves better by asking ourselves why we disagree and then forming a logical argument around that.

**Writing**

The Honors Program generally, and Honors 3 specifically, strongly emphasize effective writing. This is also skill that proves valuable in many contexts, even in the era of artificial intelligence. For example, as former chair of a department that trains people for careers in public service, I commonly hear from employers that effective writing is one of the main things they are seeking in new employees.

I will provide more guidance about what I am seeking from your writing assignments during the course of the semester. I have also included some general guidance about effective writing in the general information section at the beginning of the Canvas modules. I will likely add more such material during the course of the semester.

Honors faculty members are aware that students come to a course such as this one with uneven writing instruction. To address this disparity, the Honors Program has adopted Norton’s *Little Seagull Handbook* with InQuizitive. This is the most accessible writing guide we have found. I will assign InQuizitive training on an individualized basis to address each of your personal areas of weakness. If you do these exercises and apply the lessons you learn to your essays your writing should improve noticeably.

**Assignments and Bases for Evaluation**

My evaluation of your work in Honors 3 will be based on the following:

* Class participation. This will be based on your own assessments of the quantity and quality of your participation as well as my reaction to these assessments. More details will be forthcoming about when and how to evaluate your own participation.
* Three short analytical papers addressing specific questions related to the books.
  + These are to be four to five double spaced pages in length, and each I will focus on a particular book. These are to be *analytical* papers, not book reports. I will provide further guidance for each paper as the semester progresses.
  + You are required to do the initial paper related to the Kathryn Schulz book. You are to choose to write about two of the four remaining books.
  + For the first of these papers, I will have you submit an initial draft that I will not grade. You will have an opportunity to keep the paper as is or revise it with an eye toward receiving a higher grade, in accordance with my comments. For subsequent papers I will have you submit a single draft that I will grade.
* One paragraph reading reflection papers. In weeks when you do not have an analytical paper due, I will have you submit a reflection paper about the main reading. These paragraphs should consist of a single, tightly organized paragraph that reflects on a particular quote from the reading that you find intriguing, and that relates to the wicked problem of privilege and/or the nature of human errors (I will have you place the quote and its source above your reflection paragraph). Each paragraph should have an easily identifiable topic sentence, no grammar mistakes, and no spelling mistakes.
* Summary of your idea for idea for an end-of-semester argumentative essay. In the middle of the semester, I will have you submit a summary of your idea for a final essay. This summary should be no more than two double spaced pages (and one may be fine. It will be worth a very small part of your final grade: the main purpose is to help me ensure that you’re on track to do a strong final paper.
* Completion of the longer, end-of-semester argumentative essay itself. This essay should be 10-12 double spaced pages, including appropriate citations. It will require you to explore ideas that cross multiple texts, and refer to these texts in your own paper. It will be due during finals week. I will provide further instructions as the semester progresses.

**Grading Weights**

Each of the above components will receive a letter grade. Your final class grade will be based on averaging your grades across all components, using the following grading weights:

* Class participation: 15% (including both attendance and evaluation of your in-class contributions)
* Three analytical papers: 45% (15% each)
* Reading reflection papers: 10%
* Summary of idea for major argumentative essay: 5%
* Final argumentative essay: 25%

**Inclusivity Statement:**This course is to be a place where people of any and all identities are welcome. If you have a preferred pronoun and/or name that is not listed in our student center, please let me know in whichever way you feel most comfortable (after class, right now, or by email). We will follow the tenets of the Sacramento State Statement of Diversity and Inclusion, which can be found here at [http://www.csus.edu/diversity/d%20and%20i%20 statement.html (Links to an external site.)](http://www.csus.edu/diversity/d%20and%20i%20statement.html) .

**Students with Disabilities:**If you have a documented disability and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please see me early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure your full participation in class. Also, you are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) for additional information regarding services that might be available to you.

**Technology Requirements:**This class is supplemented by material and assignments on Canvas. Students must have access to a computer in order to complete the course.

**Cheating:**No cheating of any sort will be tolerated in this course. All sources (primary and secondary) in papers must be cited and given appropriate credit. We will follow the university policy on academic honesty, which can be found here at [http://www.csus.edu/ (Links to an external site.)](http://www.csus.edu/)admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm.

**Weekly Topics/Schedule:** Following is a broad overview of the weekly topics and schedule for this particular section of Honors 3 (note that the schedule is similar but not identical across all sections of the course). Refer to Canvas modules for more specifics about readings and other materials, assignments, and due dates. This schedule is subject to change. While I will inform you of any changes during class, it is also your responsibility regularly check Canvas for updates and changes. Please contact me if you have any questions.

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| Week | Topic | Materials and Assignments |
| 1 | *No classes; CFA labor action* |  |
| 2-3 | * Orientation and introductions * Moving towards appreciating why and how people are wrong, and why wrongness matters | * Kathryn Schulz * Weekly Writing * Short Essay |
| 4-5 | * Conquest, colonization, and intercultural misunderstanding | * Bernal Diaz * Weekly Writing * Short Essay |
| 6-8 | * The social construction of gender roles and misunderstandings about gender | * Mary Wollstonecraft * Weekly Writing * Short Essay |
| 9-11 | * The social construction of race and racial misunderstanding | * Frederick Douglass and Mary Prince * Weekly Writing * Short Essay |
| 12-14 | * A scary future? A bright future? Both, neither? | * Celeste Ng * Weekly Writing * Short Essay |
| 15 | * Humility, ambition, wrongness, and adventure | * Kathryn Schulz, last section * Weekly writing |
| 16 | * Finals Week; no class meetings | * Final Project |