IAH 201 HANDBOOK, 2000-2001 EDITION

This handbook appears at the beginning of the custom-published anthology for IAH 201. *Making Connections: Reading American Culture*. Copies of this text as well as the other course texts are available at the Reserve Reading Counter in the MSU Library.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

IAH 201, The U.S. and the World, offers undergraduates a common opportunity to examine the unities and diversities of the American experience on the basis of historical, literary, artistic and other cultural materials. It uses primary-source readings, video texts, an interactive cd-rom, class discussions, museum visits, and substantial amounts of student writing to broaden and deepen understanding of the peopling of what is now the United States by successive waves of immigration and of the processes by which the American nation and American identity have been made and remade in response to internal and external challenges and opportunities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

When you have completed this course, you should have acquired:

- a sizeable body of knowledge about the factors making for unity and diversity in American life;
- a perspective on the experience and contributions of Americans that takes account of race/ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic condition;
- an appreciation of the ways in which the arts, literature, and history help to illuminate our national past; an understanding of America's relations with other countries and international forces;
- and extensive practical experience forming and expressing your understanding of course issues and materials through small-group discussion and frequent written work.

TEXTS


*My Bondage and My Freedom*, Frederick Douglass

*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Anne Moody or *A Rumor of War*, Philip Caputo (Go to class before purchasing one of these books.)

A TYPICAL WEEK IN IAH 201: AN OVERVIEW

Your IAH 201 class will meet four times a week. For three of those times, your section of 30 students will meet in a Combined Session, joining another section for a number of in-class activities. Your fourth class hour of the week will be a Section Meeting with your group of 30 students. The in-class activities for the Combined Sessions include writing, discussion, watching videos, and working with a partner on the interactive cd-rom. The major business in each week's Section Meeting will be a discussion or other group activity that highlights various aspects of the week's readings, videos, or cd-rom exploration. The format for Section Meetings will vary; sometimes your TA will lead a whole-class discussion; sometimes you will have discussions in small groups; sometimes students will lead discussions or make presentations.
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Your work in the course will focus on four thematic units, each asking you to consider a question of significance for understanding how Americans have shaped and reshaped their identity—in framing and re-framing constitutional government; in the making and remaking of the American people through immigration and migration; in the cultural expressions of art, architecture, and literature; and in the visions that have prompted social change in the U.S. and framed Americans' understanding of the role of the U.S. in the world. You will explore these questions using book-length texts, short readings, video texts, and—for the second unit—an interactive cd-rom. The readings will provide you with firsthand accounts, contemporary comments, and literary reflections on various moments, events, issues, and personalities in the development of the U.S. The videos will offer scholars' interpretations and perspectives on these moments, events, issues, and personalities. These scholars represent a number of different disciplines—history, anthropology, literature, art history, philosophy, and women's studies—and each will approach events and issues with an angle of vision or perspective provided by his or her discipline. In addition, you will have opportunity to use the resources of the two museums on campus—the Kresge Museum and the MSU Museum—to increase your understanding of the variety of cultural adaptations to the U.S. environment and artistic interpretations of experience. Taken together, these varied course materials offer the opportunity to develop a richly layered understanding of America's history, experience, and culture.

READING PRINTED TEXTS — SOME ADVICE

Most of the readings are "primary" materials—documents like letters, diaries, personal narratives, laws and other legal documents, logbooks, literature, speeches, etc.—written by people who lived during the periods we are studying. They offer glimpses of individual actions, social movements and social events, and they contain clues about the ways people responded to and interpreted actions and events as they were occurring. Scholars study these kinds of documents, along with pieces of material culture in order to reconstruct or understand the past. Your work for this course will engage you in a similar kind of study.

There are, as you know, any number of ways of reading. You read a Schedule of Courses book, for example, in a different way than you read the newspaper, and the newspaper in a different way than you read a paperback science fiction novel. Reading primary sources requires different sorts of skills as well, which you will develop over the term. Here are a few suggestions on how to read and take notes on these texts:

1. Take an overview of the readings. The first set of readings, for example, includes a petition brought to the Massachusetts legislation early in the Revolution. You will want to think a bit about what kind of writing this is. Who is the author? What do you understand about him from your reading? To whom is the author speaking/writing? Why? Under what circumstances. What assumptions does the author make?

2. Read through each of the assigned selections without stopping to take a lot of notes. You want to begin by noting key ideas, the "flavor" and perspective of each piece. If there is something you simply do not understand, just jot down a phrase to remind you to look it up or ask about it.

3. After finishing each piece, jot down your thoughts—what interested you, surprised you, perplexed you. This may simply be a note to yourself that you'll refer to when you begin writing assignments. As you move from one piece to the next, it's likely that you'll begin to have ideas and questions about the connections among the selections. Keep note of these too.

READING VIDEO TEXTS — SOME ADVICE

Virtually all of us have deeply ingrained, passive television viewing habits. In American culture we associate the television screen with relaxation, entertainment, and very general presentations of basic information like news headlines, weather, and sports. The videos for this course may look like "TV" to you because they appear on a television screen—but they are not "TV." They present a good deal of detailed information through language, images, and sound. These videos offer interpretations of various aspects of American history, literature, and culture through lectures, interview, and panel discussions, as well as music, art, maps, dramatic readings, on-site footage, and dramatic re-creations. You will need to have a good grasp of the major themes of these videos, the interpretations they offer, and the ways in which specific
events relate to (those themes and interpretations. You cannot rely on the kinds of general impressions that people often get from watching network and cable TV programming, but should watch these videos actively and critically. Attending to connections among the "big picture" (major topics and ideas), detailed explanations, and interpretations will allow you to see how the scholars involved in making the videos have developed and supported an account of events.

In order to give you an opportunity to watch videos you have missed, MSU's cable network will show the videos from the preceding week at a regularly scheduled time each weekend. Consult your TA for details. Copies of most videos are also available for viewing in the Audio-Visual Library located within the MSU Library.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

This course will engage you in working with a great variety of materials and resources—readings, videos, cd-rom, museum exhibits, perspectives offered in class discussions and on e-mail. The main purpose of the writing you will do in the course is to provide you with a way of bringing together and thinking about what you learn from these varied materials and resources.

Your writing activities in the course will be of three kinds:

1. informal pieces of writing your TA asks you to do in preparation for class or perhaps during class. These assignments will ask you to think on paper about course readings, videos, and the cd-rom; they may require you to articulate an understanding of issues addressed in several of the course materials. In addition to providing a focus for your study, this writing will prepare you to participate actively in class discussions.

2. regular contributions to WebTalk. This is a project you will undertake jointly with a small group of fellow students. The explanation of this activity appears below.

3. end-of-unit papers—reflective pieces of writing which develop from your study of the thematic units in the course. You will write three of these papers during the semester.

WRITING ACTIVITIES — PAPERS

At least a week before each paper is due, your TA will give you more detailed directions for the paper. You will also receive information on grading criteria. You should expect to write two papers of 4-5 typed pages and a third of 5-6 pages. Prior to the due date for each paper, you will have opportunity to participate in a writing workshop during class. In this workshop you and two or three of your classmates will read drafts of each other's papers, provide feedback, and offer suggestions for revisions. You should expect to bring xerox copies of your draft for each member of your peer response group on days when workshops are scheduled.

You are expected to complete each of the papers on time. For every weekday that one of these papers is late, your TA may deduct 0.10 from your final grade for the course. Thus a final grade that averages 2.75 would be lowered to 2.65 if a paper is one day late and the course grade would therefore be lowered from a 3.0 to 2.5. You will be required to hand in each of the three papers in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Taken together, the three papers will count for 55% of your course grade (the first will count 15%, the second 20%, and the third 20%). Your marks on each of the papers will be based on four equally important criteria: formulation of intellectual problem/response to topic, demonstrated knowledge of subject, analysis and interpretation, and clarity of purpose, organization, language, and mechanics.

WRITING ACTIVITIES — 20INET CONVERSATIONS

At least four times in the semester, you will participate in an on-line discussion with the students in your section. Your TA will assign a topic or suggest a focus for these WebTalk discussions. This assignment is a significant part of your work for the course and will count for at least 10% of your final grade.

Topics may include:
• responses to an assigned reading
• responses to a museum visit
• responses to a film in the film series or to a lecture given on campus
• responses to a question your TA poses.
Use the conversational space of WebTalk to talk with other students about the ideas that you've had as you've read texts (those in books assigned for the course as well as those written by your fellow students) watched videos, studied images on the cd-rom, and looked at piece in the museum collections. Talk to one another about these texts and the issues they raise for you. Here are some rules and some suggestions for the WebTalk discussions.

1. **Do not summarize a reading or film, and do not simply describe what you saw during a visit to one of the museums. Everyone in your group will have done the reading, watched the film, or seen the museum pieces just as you did.**

2. **However, since we are all different readers and thinkers, we all see things somewhat differently. So explain yourself fully when you write.**

3. **Make specific references to the selections you've read, the films you've watched, the lectures you've heard, or the pieces of art you've seen.**

4. **Do not write a "little essay" addressed to your TA in answer to the assigned topic. Instead, as you focus on the topic, also consider and respond to ideas and questions raised by other participants in the WebTalk discussion.**

5. **As a general rule, consider the minimum of writing to be two screens.**

6. **To receive credit, your contributions to WebTalk must respond in a thoughtful/critical way to either the assigned topic or a classmate's response to the topic. Your post must be pertinent to the topic. You may discuss other related matters, but will not receive credit for them. You are further expected to be courteous and respectful of others when participating in the WebTalk discussion.**

**Grading Criteria**

The grade for your work in the WebTalk discussions will be based on:

1. whether you have completed all your assigned contributions to WebTalk,
2. whether you have stayed on schedule,
3. how much detailed attention you pay to the text of the article or the film or to the specific features of museum pieces,
4. how substantively you engage others in conversation on the topic or on a classmate's response.

These last two are often hard to do in only 2 screens; the best entries will usually be 3-4 screens. Your grade will not be based on mechanics, anything personal you say, or your opinions.

If you write regularly, on time, and in sufficient length and with sufficiently detailed attention to specific features of the texts and your classmates' postings, you will receive a satisfactory grade (2.0-2.5). If you fail to do so, you will receive an unsatisfactory grade (0-1.5) no matter how long or insightful your late writing is. Above average (3.0) or excellent (3.5-4.0) work means you are engaged in challenging conversation with the other members of your group; you pay close, careful attention to the articles, films, pieces of art about which you are writing; you take risks; and you make connections among WebTalk topics and class discussions, videos, cd-rom, and readings. Participation in the WebTalk discussions is worth 10% of your course grade.

[We wish to acknowledge our indebtedness to Professor Laura Julier of the Department of American Thought and Language in developing these WebTalk suggestions and criteria.]

**MUSEUM VISITS**

During the course you will be asked to visit one or both of the two museums located on the MSU campus. The pieces of art and the exhibits you see on these visits will contribute in important ways to your understanding of the variety of American experiences and the diversity of Americans' artistic and cultural expression. Once in the semester--during Unit III--you will visit the Kresge Art Museum to see pieces selected for their special relevance to topics you are studying. This Handbook includes a guide for this self-directed museum project.

In order for the Kresge to accommodate all the students in the course, each section will be scheduled for the Kresge Art Museum project on a week-by-week basis. As noted in the section on WebTalk, you may be asked to make the pieces of art you saw on your museum visit the topic of a WebTalk discussion. That being the case, you and a few of your
classmates might well decide to make the museum visit a group activity. The second museum on campus, known as the MSU Museum, has a focus that is broadly cultural. Thus, for example, its collection includes many pieces representing the varieties of Michigan folk art. The MSU Museum regularly features special exhibits relevant to the topics discussed in this course. Depending on the exhibits featured during a particular semester, your TA may make an assignment for WebTalk discussion based on a visit to the MSU Museum.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Twenty-five percent of your course grade will be based on such learning activities as those listed here. Your TA will inform you at the beginning of the semester which activities will be required and what proportion of course credit will be assigned to each activity.

- Additional WebTalk conversations (i.e., beyond the four described above)
- A reading journal or other written assignments intended to prepare you for class discussions
- Quizzes
- Group presentations
- A creative project (individual or group)

PARTICIPATION

The portion of your course grade allotted to participation is 10 percent. Your grade for participation will be based on your performance of the conversational activities of speaking and active, responsive listening. It is expected that your spoken contributions to both whole class and small group discussions will demonstrate that you have come to class prepared and that you have attended to what earlier speakers have contributed to the discussion.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to attend class regularly, arrive on time, and stay for the entire session. You are also expected to be a conscientious and considerate member of the class.

Your TA will take attendance at every class meeting, probably by asking you to sign an attendance log or by collecting in-class assignments. If for some reason you miss signing the log when it is circulated, it is your responsibility to see your TA and have your name added to the list BEFORE you leave the classroom that day. If your name is not on the list, you will be counted absent.

For each day beyond four that you are absent, .05 will be deducted from your final course grade at the end of the semester. Thus, if your final average for the semester comes to 2.75, the deduction for one day's absence (beyond four) would lower the average to 2.70, and lower your course grade from a 3.0 to a 2.5.

GRADING

Grading in the course will be based on a 4 point scale as follows:

WebTalk ..................10%
Papers.........................55%
  First Paper ...............15%
  Second Paper ...........20%
  Third Paper ............20%
Participation...............10%
Other Learning Activities... 25%
As you look at this grading system and plan your semester, you should remember two things: (1) You must complete each of the three papers in order to pass the course. (2) When your final grade is calculated, deductions will be made for:

- absences beyond four (see Attendance Policy)
- academic dishonesty (see Academic Honesty)

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The following information on Academic Honesty is taken from MSU's Student Resource Guide & Handbook. For further information on University regulations on this issue, please refer to that publication.

Academic honesty is central to the educational process and acts of academic dishonesty are serious offenses within the University community. Suspension from the University could be the consequence for acts of academic dishonesty. Therefore, no student shall:

- claim or submit the academic work of another as one's own:
- procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without authorization;
- complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization;
- allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization;
- alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person; fabricate or falsify data or results.

To make this statement on academic honesty more concrete, we cite the description of plagiarism included in a 1986 document prepared in the MSU English Department:

You commit plagiarism if you submit as your own work:

1. Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from another person's manuscript, notes or talk [lecture].
2. Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from anything published.

You are an accomplice in plagiarism if you:

1. Allow your paper, in outline, draft, or finished form, to be copied and submitted as the work of another.
2. Prepare an assignment for another student which she/he submits as her/his own work.
3. Keep or contribute to a file of papers or presentations which anyone other than the author adopts and submits as her/his own.

If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by a TA, it is his or her responsibility to take appropriate action. Depending upon the circumstances of the particular case, students may receive a failing grade for the assignment or the course.
THE HELP MENU

WRITING CENTER
If you find you would like help brainstorming ideas for a paper, organizing ideas you've already generated, or turning a rough draft into a polished draft, you are encouraged to visit the Writing Center. The Writing Center has experienced consultants prepared to assist writers of all levels of proficiency at all stages of preparing a paper.

In order to be assured that a consultant will be available to work with you, you are advised to call the Writing Center two days in advance to schedule an appointment. Appointments last up to one hour. The Writing Center is located in 300 Bessey Hall. The phone number is 432-3610.

For additional information, consult the Writing Center web page (http://www.msu.edu/user/writing).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER WRITING LAB
If English is your second (or third or fourth) language, you are invited to visit the English Language Center's Writing Lab when you are working on assignments for IAH 201. Tutors are available to help you develop and organize ideas or revise and polish your rough drafts.

The ELC Writing Lab is located in A-714 Wells Hall. Call 353-0800 to inquire about hours or to schedule an appointment.

LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER
If you find you're having trouble with the reading assignments for the course, assistance is available in the Learning Resources Center. For help with the particular kind of reading selections and writing assignments you have in IAH 201, you will probably find it most useful to begin by working one-on-one with one of the Center tutors or attending one of the Center's reading seminars. Call 355-2365 or stop by the LRC office in 209J Bessey Hall to set up an appointment or register for one of the seminars. LRC hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00a.m. - 9:00p.m.; Friday, 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m. Calling for an appointment is recommended.

The LRC suggests that when you come for tutoring, you bring your IAH 201 texts and assignments with you. That way the tutor will be able to help you work on the course materials.

HANDICAPPER SERVICES
Handicappers needing assistance or accommodation in IAH 201 (or any other course) may consult with the Office of Programs for Handicapper Services. The phone number is 353-9642.

INSTRUCTORS OF RECORD
Instructors of Record for the course are Jenifer Banks, Kathleen Geissler, Bill Lawson, Anne Meyering, Kay Rout, and Sayuri Shimizu.

If you wish to speak with an Instructor of Record, call the Center for Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities for an appointment. The phone number is 353-3560.