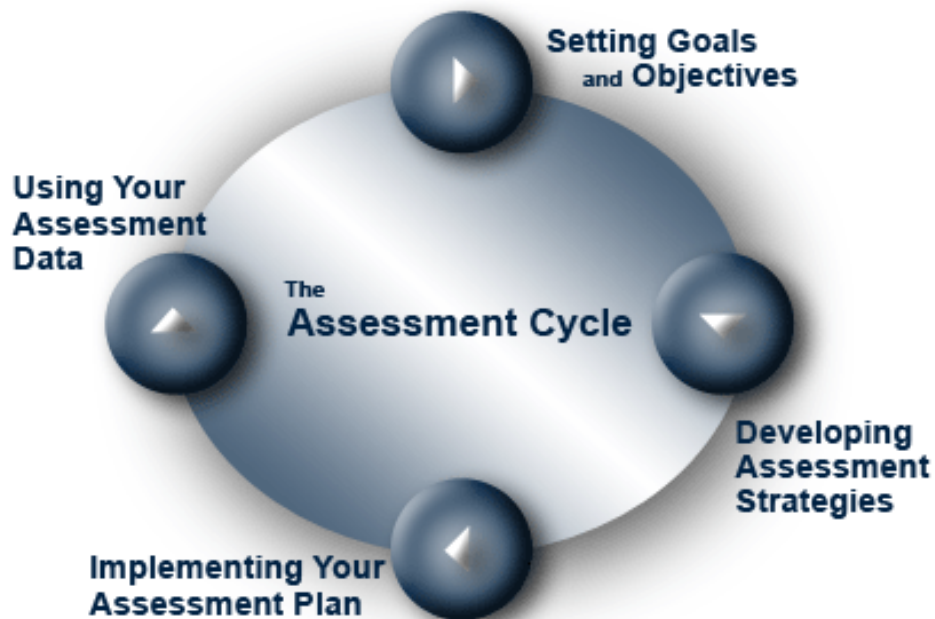


Course Assessment 101: A Primer for Faculty



Office of Academic Planning,
Institutional Research, and Assessment

www.gwu.edu/~assess/coursetoolkit.html

The George Washington University, like many universities, devotes substantial resources to gather measurable evidence of achievement - particularly of initiatives at the programmatic, departmental, or university-wide levels. The individual courses developed and taught by faculty are, of course, the building blocks of these programs, departments, and university initiatives. Faculty thus naturally and inevitably play a key role in the assessment process. This brochure is designed to help faculty understand the *context* of the assessment mission, think about various *approaches* to assessment, and learn about an *array of techniques* for assessment.

Assessment for improvement:
the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning.

When assessment became an educational byword in the 1980s, the primary emphasis was on *accountability*: how would those who funded higher education be assured that student learning goals were being met? By the early 2000s, an interest in assessment for *improvement* began to balance the focus on accountability. “The central leitmotifs of this new accountability environment are transparency and learning outcomes.”¹ Accrediting organizations (such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) are now taking the lead in assessing student learning, and, consequently, the mandates now apply as much to independent institutions as to state-funded ones. At GW, many of the schools and colleges perform assessment to meet their professional accreditation reviews. The entire university reports assessment activity to the Middle States Commission as part of the regular accreditation process. More importantly, the University’s own commitment to academic excellence in research and teaching charges us to set high standards for our students and to provide the learning environment for them to achieve these outcomes.

Assessment for accountability:
assessment of some unit (could be a department, program or entire institution) to satisfy stakeholders external to the unit itself. Results are often compared across units.

Putting student *learning outcomes* at the core of assessment moves us from a *teacher-centered* to a *student-centered* approach. The new orientation entails a shift from reviewing “inputs” to education, primarily faculty reputation, curriculum, and syllabus content, to evaluating “outputs” of education, mainly student competencies at the end of a course, general education curriculum, or degree program. The measure is not what faculty teach, but what students learn. There are numerous ongoing arguments about how to determine what students have learned and regular debates about quantitative and qualitative methodologies. These debates are less important than the new attention faculty are giving to what students take away from their classes, course assignments, and research experiences.

Learning outcomes:
formal statements that articulate what students are able to know, think, and do at the end of a course.

Faculty have been assessing how well their courses work for years, though we have not always called it assessment. Reflecting on how well our syllabi, assignments, and classroom practices facilitated student learning, and then revising our syllabi from semester to semester are all part of the assessment cycle. In the current intentional assessment scheme, analyzing student performance and then using the analysis to make revisions in course design to improve learning, either during a semester or for the next course session is called

¹Ewell, P. T (2008). “*Assessment, Accountability, and Improvement: Revisiting the Tension*,” issued by National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

“closing the loop” of the cycle. For each of us, as teachers, assessment can provide the tools to help us think more consciously and intentionally about what we teach, how we teach, why we teach, and how we can do this work more effectively and with greater satisfaction.

Designing Courses: Setting Learning Goals and Outcomes

The first and most essential element in intentional course design is deciding on what you expect students to learn and then stating those learning outcomes in clear, direct statements. Different schools or fields may use different terms for the goals, objectives, or outcomes, the term we have generally used, for the student learning expected in a course. Whichever term is used in your department, typically goals, objectives, or outcomes are written as a subject (student), plus a verb phrase (cognitive skill or what the student will be able to do) and an object of the phrase (type of knowledge that is the focus of the verb phrase). Note that this method does not define the course by content or professorial expertise. Instead, it emphasizes the professor’s expectations about what students will be able to know, think, and do at course’s end.

Cognitive psychologists have defined learning outcomes as moving from lower-order ones that rely on memory, accumulation of facts, or rote memory to higher-order ones that require analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and problem-solving. The best-known taxonomy of learning, formulated by Benjamin Bloom in the mid-1950s, posited a *hierarchical* learning sequence moving from knowledge (recall of information) to comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.² In 2001, Lorin Anderson updated Bloom’s terms, but kept the six-step taxonomy: moving from remembering to understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and, finally, creating.³

A non-hierarchical approach is the taxonomy of *significant learning* developed by L. Dee Fink, which emphasizes *integration* of different kinds of learning. The elements are: foundational knowledge (with mastery over specific information), application (with skills to apply knowledge), integration (of ideas from different realms), human dimension (about the consequences for oneself and others), caring (with energy to study and master), and learning how to learn (with understanding to take on future learning).⁴

Faculty design learning outcomes for a course and then use these as the basis to design other elements of the course, especially the assignments. *Outcomes provide students with a way to grasp the overall purposes of their course work.*

In addition to your individual goals for the course and considerations about developing student competencies, you should design your courses in the context of how they support or advance departmental, programmatic, or general education goals.

- Determine the part your course plays in your department, program, or general education curricula;
- Consider how your course description advances the mission of your department or college. What learning outcomes does your course need to include in order to fulfil its responsibilities within a departmental curriculum, general education requirement, disciplinary expectations, or accreditation standards?
- Check with your dean, chair, colleagues teaching coordinate courses, or colleagues teaching other sections of the same course to align learning outcomes.

² See <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/coursetaxonomies.html>

³ Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. eds. (2001). *Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: a revision of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives*, New York: Longman.

⁴ Fink, L.D. (2003). *Creating Significant Learning Experiences. An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 30-32. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/coursegoals.html>

Then, when you begin to write learning outcomes, think about making them clear, active, and measurable. Begin to think about what assignments will help students develop the knowledge and skills desired and also help you to assess their mastery. Remember:

- *Learning goals need to be stated as behaviors (or outcomes), as in the hackneyed but useful phrase: At the end of this course, students will be able to do X.* Samples of learning outcomes and worksheets to help you with outcomes design can be found on the assessment website: <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/coursegoals.html>
- Every course must employ at least two measures of assessment and at least one of those measures must be a *direct* measure of actual student work (e.g., papers, lab reports, homework). A list of *direct* and *indirect* measures can be accessed at <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/directandindirect.html>

Direct measure:
evaluation of actual student work, such as papers or presentations, to determine what students know, think, or can do after taking the course

Indirect measure:
student or supervisor evaluations of what students learned, student success in jobs or acceptance into professional programs, to gain data separate from actual demonstrations of learning

Designing Courses: Developing Assessment Strategies

We have typically thought of assessment as putting exams, papers, and projects into the course design in order to generate a grade at semester's end. Assessment is not only about grading, however, because grades do not necessarily disaggregate the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking that make up the complex learning outcomes of a course. Since a goal of assessment is advancing and measuring student success at achieving the learning outcomes, "select assignments that both teach and test the learning you value most."⁵

Grades function primarily as *summative assessments*, which typically occur at the *end* of a project or semester, but it should also be clear to you and to the students how these assignments facilitate and measure the competencies laid out in the course's learning outcomes. Course assignments should also enable *formative assessments* and gathering information about student learning during the semester so you can improve the learning in classrooms and assignments before final exams or projects.

Summative assessment: the gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, it impacts the next cohort of students taking the course or program.

In a course organized around student learning, assignments don't simply measure learning at the end of the course; they are an essential component of learning throughout the course.

Assessment strategies will vary greatly among disciplines, courses, and instructors, but here are some general tips:⁶

- Be cognizant of linking course assignments and classroom activities to the learning outcomes. What do you expect students to learn, and through what activities will this learning take place?

Formative assessment: the gathering of information about student learning during the progression of a course or program and usually repeatedly - to improve the learning of those students.

⁵ Walvoord, B. (1998). *Effective Grading. A Tool for Learning and Assessment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. p. 17.

⁶ Suskie, L. (2009) *Assessing Student Learning. A common sense guide*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 155, 161.

Do your assignments provide experiences for students to practice skills? Do assignments provide evidence about the scope of student learning and insights about which skills they have not mastered? How will assignments or activities produce learning and also data so that you (and they) know they have learned what you expect them to learn?

- “Give students a variety of assignments, not just traditional essays and research papers” and mid-term exams.
- “Ask yourself if students will learn significantly more from a thirty-page assignment than a five-page assignment – enough to justify the time that they and you will spend on it.” Would you be able to teach students how to be peer reviewers so that you aren’t responsible for all the essay reading, feedback, and evaluation?
- “Break apart large assignments into pieces that are due at various times. You might ask students to submit an outline of a research paper first and then an annotated bibliography.”
- Investigate whether your discipline or field has produced information about assignments and assessment strategies. Especially in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), a lot of thinking has gone into improving teaching to achieve better outcomes. Or search for information about teaching specific skills, such as oral communication. See “Resources” in the Appendix for web connections.
- Ask colleagues about assignments they have used that elicit the kind of learning you want to measure and that were interesting and challenging to students.
- Consider creating a variety of assignments that teach students the *critical, creative, and practical* modes of applying knowledge: how to analyze; to find new ways of answering questions; or to solve problems.⁷

Implementing Your Assessment Plan

Assessment is directed at what students are and are not learning and how the faculty member can promote maximal learning for each student. During a semester, you will want to evaluate assignments so that you and your students understand what they’ve learned and what they haven’t yet mastered. You will do this through the graded assignments and also through using classroom time effectively.

⁷Fink, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*, 38-42.

Rubrics and *blueprints* are primary tools that faculty can use to break out the components of complex assignments and specify the different elements and qualities of work expected. Rubrics outline scoring guides or list grading criteria so that you and your students can see how to prepare for projects, what is being evaluated, and in what ways they have achieved mastery or not. If you have not used or seen rubrics in the past or thought about developing rubrics for your course assignments, there are many examples on the web. A variety of resources can be found at <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/course rubrics.html>.

Rubrics: scoring guides or grading criteria that identify elements of a complex assignment and the qualities of mastery so that student learning can be evaluated for each component

Test blueprints, like rubrics, provide a rationale for the elements of a complex task, in this instance by linking learning outcomes to the specific questions on a test. Test blueprints help guide faculty as they formulate multiple choice tests which may measure mastery of facts, modes of analysis, and applications of models or themes. A web site that offers useful guidance for constructing multiple-choice tests that support learning is <http://www.schreyer institute.psu.edu/Tools/TestPlanning/>, maintained by the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence at Pennsylvania State University. Other resources are available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/courses blueprints.html>.

Blueprints: a framework for multiple choice tests so that each test question is linked to a knowledge, skill, or analytical learning outcome being assessed on the test

Classroom assessment, by contrast with *course assessment*, includes the myriad methods that faculty use during any given course to determine how their students are responding to materials and to presentation of materials and to make adjustments to aid more effective learning. Sometimes it is useful at different points in a semester to change directions, alter a format of delivery, integrate more varieties of approach, when evidence arises that students aren't learning as well, as much, or as quickly as they might.

Some tips for doing classroom assessment:

- Consider some class sessions when you might use classroom assessment to see how students are keeping up with the work and understanding the material. Allow students to share what they know; provide space within class to raise questions about the materials or to share thoughts about the course format. Frequent, short, ungraded assignments in the classroom provide useful information to faculty about what students are or aren't learning.
- Consider how you know that a class, a unit within a course, or the course in its entirety has "gone well" or "not gone well." What is your contribution to the outcome? Is there something that you might do differently to make the learning outcome better? What alterations in teaching techniques will you make the next time you teach the course?
- Consult resources to generate ideas for ongoing assessments throughout your course: one-minute papers; teaching goal inventories; "muddiest point" questions; self-confidence surveys; first-day surveys; and background knowledge probes are just a few of the many techniques that help faculty ascertain throughout the course itself just what, or how, students are learning. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/courses plan.html> for tips.

[The One-Minute Paper]

Some faculty recommend providing students with a short—one-minute!—opportunity at the end of class at the end of a week or of a unit to respond to these two questions:

1. What is the idea you learned this week that you feel the most confident about? Explain in three sentences maximum.

2. What are the ideas you feel the least confident about? Can you explain what you don't understand in three sentences maximum?

Whether using a simple device such as passing out index cards so that students can easily, perhaps anonymously, respond to these questions as a class ends or encouraging them to post their responses using the Blackboard discussion space or its chat rooms to make the responses more widely available, the feedback can provide you with valuable insight into just what students are and are not learning.

- Most basically, faculty can reconsider the existing convention that classroom time exists primarily for the teacher to *introduce* students to new information or ideas. Barbara Walvoord proposes replacing *lecture-based* classes with *interactive teaching*, in which students are responsible for the first exposure to new material, and faculty use the classroom for helping students to process material through application, analysis, argument, or problem-solving. Students can be required to produce brief writings in response to readings and to post these or bring them to class so that they are ready to do more sophisticated work. Faculty can organize the assignment to minimize grading by: using a check-list for “credit” or “no credit”; having students grade classmates’ responses; or sampling only some of students’ responses for a grade.⁸

Choices about First Exposure of Classroom Materials⁹

	In Class	Student’s Own Time	Instructor’s Own Time
Traditional Model	First Exposure	Process of analysis, application, synthesis, problem-solving	Response to assignments
Alternate Model	Process, response to daily, short assignments; guidance for longer assignments	First exposure	Response only to selected assignments

GW has many tools that make it easy to ask students to post responses and drafts, respond to each other’s drafts, carry on discussion threads, and provide feedback on readings in preparation for class meetings. The electronic course system of Blackboard (Bb) has various tools for faculty and students and a team able to train faculty on the system. So you might consider:

⁸ Walvoord, B. & Anderson, V. J. (1998). *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 53-55.

⁹ Walvoord, B. (2009). “How to Make Grading Fair, Time-Efficient, and Conducive to Learning,” presented at GWU Faculty Workshop

- Making use of the asynchronous possibilities of Blackboard, which provides students with opportunities to raise questions that come up *between* class sessions—when they are reading, studying, practicing, doing homework, or working in the lab or library—and are engaged with the course materials directly.
- Using Blackboard assignments to collect responses to assigned readings so that students are better prepared for discussions.

Using Assessment Data: Closing the Loop

Faculty routinely make decisions after a course has been completed about what they might do differently next time around. All too often, this kind of self-assessment, which most faculty do intuitively, gets left out of consideration when we think about course assessment. Assessment makes the usual post-course self-review an intentional and useful process and provides information to improve the course the next time you teach it.

Reading final papers, reviewing final projects, or grading final exams often provides faculty with a natural opportunity to think about what improvements they might make so that results the next time around are more satisfactory.

- Take some time after a course ends to reflect on what you would do differently if you were to immediately re-offer the same course: i.e., would you use the same textbooks or set of readings? Would you develop different writing and homework assignments or cut back on the number of examinations?
- Consider curricular reviews within the department, program reviews, and other broader assessment initiatives to think about how courses might be refreshed, revised, redeveloped so as to better reflect a program's purpose and/or stated mission.

- What key capabilities did you find your students lacking when they took the class? For biology courses, this might be mathematics, for literature it might be history, for psychology it might be biology, etc.
- Can you revise the course to build in a unit that gets the students the necessary information succinctly, perhaps through some additional reading, joint teaching experiences, or guest lectures?
- Should the course have prerequisites that you had not before considered?

Faculty have a legitimate concern that assessment might become another form of evaluation that could have negative consequences, especially when we are asking that faculty identify problems in a course in order to improve student learning in its next iteration. Since an emphasis on student learning and assessment may also result in a better-ordered and perhaps more rigorous course, faculty also fear repercussions from students wanting easier work and higher grades. These are ongoing issues, but they are ones that administrators, deans, chairs, and faculty are paying attention to.

As GW builds a campus culture of assessment, the rewards for faculty participation should be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intentionally-designed courses with clear learning outcomes that give direction to students, assignments that facilitate student learning and engagement, and practices that assist effective teaching practices should provide evident satisfactions. The incorporation of assessment work into annual reviews and departmental program reviews is creating institutional structures to evaluate and to reward attention to, and success with, student learning – a fundamental mission of the University.

APPENDIX

Resources for Course Assessment

Selected resources on assessment available at Gelman Library or through its consortium:

- Angelo, T.A., Cross, K. P. (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques. A handbook for college teachers*, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Banta, T.W., Lund, J. P., Black, K. E., and Oblander, F. W. (1996). *Assessment in Practice: Putting Principles to Work on College Campuses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Banta, T.W., ed. (2007). *Assessing Student Achievement in General Education: Assessment Update Collections*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Diamond, R. M. (1998). *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula. A Practical Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (See especially Chapter 13, “Developing a Learning-Centered Syllabus”)
- Fink, L.D. (2003). *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Fink’s integrated learning adds “caring” and “human dimensions” into more traditional learning ideals.
- Marzano, R. J. & Kendall, J. S. (2007). *The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press. A categorization and explanation for various modes of learning and thinking. Chapter Four, “The New Taxonomy and the Three Knowledge Domains” helpfully examines six levels of “knowing” and categorizes a variety of types of thinking into these six levels. The examples are concrete and vivid.
- Stevens, D. D. & Levi, A. J. (2005). *Introduction to Rubrics*. Sterling VA: Stylus. A how-to for thinking about and writing your own rubrics.
- Suskie, L. (2009) *Assessing Student Learning. A common sense guide*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Chapter 10, “Creating an Effective Assignment,” and chapter 18, “Using Assessment Results Effectively and Appropriately,” are especially valuable for faculty.
- Walvoord, B. (2004) *Assessment Clear and Simple. A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Clearly-described practical tools for the course and classroom
- Walvoord, B. & Anderson, V. J. (1998). *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. A practical and helpful set of tools and ideas for revising classroom time use and student participation and responsibility.
- Wehlburg, C.M. (2006). *Meaningful Course Revision. Enhancing Academic Engagement Using Student Learning Data*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing, Inc. Useful guide with analysis of a variety of active learning techniques and suggestions about how to make these work in practical ways.

Recommended Websites with Assessment Resources:

George Washington University, Office of Planning and Assessment:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/courseassessment.html> This website includes links to easily downloadable and helpful documents and worksheets on course assessment, course goals and objectives, and other tools

American Association of Colleges and University (AACU): http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=26856061&CFTOKEN=47486781 The AACU Value Rubric lays out 15 essential learning outcomes, which are quite ambitious and unlikely to be fulfilled in any single course. But the descriptions offer some inspiration and practical ideas.

ABET. Assessment Planning with Gloria Rogers. <http://www.abet.org/assessment.shtml>. Rogers is the assessment expert for ABET, the accrediting organization for Applied Science, Computing, Engineering and Technology Education. Her papers, including “Assessment Tips for Programs,” are brief, straightforward, sensible, and informative basic guides.

Assessment Resource Center for the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business: http://www.aacsb.edu/resource_centers/assessment/default.asp The rich site offers information about practices, tools, reading lists, and web links for business school curricula and courses.

Center for Critical Thinking: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/> Site of the Foundation for Critical Thinking, it offers tools for teaching and assessment, definitions of critical thinking, and tools for some fields such as engineering and writing.

Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide: http://www.flaguide.org/start/assess_in_context.php The site offers assessment information and models for science, math, engineering, and technology instructors, which are very helpful, but not updated since the National Science Foundation grant ended in 2001.

Internet Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessments:

<http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm> This enormous file of relevant links grouped under the headings General resources, Assessment handbooks, Assessment of specific skills or content, Individual institutions’ assessment-related pages, State boards and commissions, Accrediting bodies, Student assessment of courses and faculty is updated annually.

National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and for Students in

Transition: <http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/assessment/index.html> The site offers useful information about assessment for first-year student programs, including general education.

Rubric Library, California State University, Fresno: www.csufresno.edu/irap/assessment/rubric.shtml The site has PDFs of rubrics by activity, e.g. oral presentation, writing, and for some disciplines, e.g. integrative science, theatre arts, political science.

Shaun Longstreet, Assessment of Student Learning: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4ogt0yI8xA&feature=related> This is a clearly-stated and informative 9-minute video by the director of the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Center at UC-Irvine. If you have trouble with the URL, go to YouTube and type in Shaun Longstreet. That should get you to the video.

Swarthmore College, Advice on Designing Scientific Posters:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm> Exceedingly helpful, detailed how-to guide for faculty and students with up-to-date references for poster software and incorporation of PowerPoint.

Rubrics

Rubrics are scoring guides or grading criteria that enable the professor and the students to identify the various elements of a complex assignment and the qualities evaluated for performance on each element. There are many ways to format rubrics, but checklists, analytic rubrics and holistic scoring guides are three common practices. California State Fresno has a rubrics library with a number of disciplinary examples: <http://csufresno.edu/irap/assessment/rubric.shtml>. Here are some examples of Analytic, Checklist, and Holistic rubrics.

A. UW20 ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

1. Evaluates and analyzes evidence and assumptions in complex argumentative texts, including their own writing.

Learning Outcome	4	3	2	1
a. Evaluates sources for viewpoint and evidence.	The treatment of the difference between fact and viewpoint in expert sources is impressive.	There is sufficient recognition of the difference between fact and viewpoint in the treatment of expert sources.	There is limited recognition of the difference between fact and viewpoint in the treatment of expert sources.	Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
b. Analyzes assumptions and relevant contexts	Demonstrates a sophisticated analysis of assumptions and careful evaluation of the relevance of contexts.	Adequately identifies assumptions and relevant contexts.	Shows an emerging awareness of assumptions and contexts.	Shows little awareness of assumptions and contexts.

2. Use research questions to frame and develop an argument.

Learning Outcome	4	3	2	1
a. Frames and investigates a research question or problem.	The writer frames a compelling line of inquiry and performs unexpectedly apt research to find answers.	The writer frames a line of inquiry that is appropriate to the scope of the project and undertakes substantial research to find answers.	The writer's attempt to establish a line of inquiry is too limited or too ambitious for the scope of the project, undermining research goals.	The line of inquiry is incoherent, making effective research impossible.
b. Uses research questions to develop an argument.	Research is compellingly employed to achieve a specific argumentative purpose with clarity and depth.	Research is adequately employed to achieve a specific argumentative purpose.	Research is inadequate or argumentative purpose is ill-defined.	Research is misdirected, with no clear argumentative purpose.

3. Apply appropriate rhetorical principles and stylistic conventions for the genre in which they are writing.

Learning Outcome	4	3	2	1
a. Demonstrates an understanding of audience, purpose, and context appropriate to the assigned task.	Addresses audience, purpose, and context appropriate in particularly apt ways.	Adequately addresses audience, purpose, and context in ways that are appropriate to the assigned task.	Demonstrates some consideration of audience, purpose, and context that is appropriate to the assigned task.	Demonstrates minimal attention to audience, purpose, and context or is unresponsive to the assigned task
b. Employs conventions that are appropriate for the genre in which they are writing.	Skillfully executes conventions appropriate for the genre in which they are writing, such as organization, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Adequately executes conventions for the genre in which they are writing, such as organization, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Shows a limited ability to execute conventions for the genre in which they are writing, such as organization, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Shows minimal attention to conventions for the genre in which they are writing.

4. Find and incorporate sources from appropriate academic databases in their essays and cite them correctly.

Learning Outcome	4	3	2	1
a. Accesses appropriate sources	Selects unexpectedly apt sources that indicate a high capacity to gather traditional library and technological sources.	Selects appropriate sources that indicate the capacity to gather traditional library and technological sources.	Sources selected indicate a limited capacity to gather traditional library and technological sources.	Selects sources that appear random or inappropriate.
b. Uses information ethically and legally	Writer clearly cites sources and skillfully employs paraphrasing, quotations, and summaries.	Writer generally cites sources clearly and correctly employs paraphrasing, quotations, or summaries.	With occasional lapses, writer generally cites sources and employs paraphrasing, quotations, or summaries correctly.	Source citations are confusing or absent.

5. Proofread and edited their own work through a process of structured revision.

Learning Outcome	4	3	2	1
a. Proofread and edited	All drafts are essentially free of mechanical or stylistic problems or such problems are resolved by the final draft.	All drafts are largely free of mechanical or stylistic problems or such problems are largely resolved by the final draft.	Some problems of mechanics and style from earlier drafts have been resolved by the final draft.	Most problems of mechanics and style from earlier drafts remain by the final draft.
b. Writing improved through revision	Substantive revision that not only responds to but also moves beyond feedback.	Effective revision that is responsive to feedback, with significant improvement in areas such as organization, argumentation or conceptual development.	Somewhat effective revision that attempts to respond to feedback; limited substantive improvement.	Minimal and ineffectual or merely trivial response to feedback; little or no improvement.

B. Final Paper Checklist

<p style="text-align: center;">Content</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The paper...</i></p> <p>Addresses the topic or question Accurately presents assigned authors' viewpoints Provides sufficient textual evidence to support the argument</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Structure</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The introduction...</i></p> <p>Is present in the paper Includes a clearly stated thesis Indicates how the paper is organized</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The body...</i></p> <p>Contains a complete discussion and support</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Each paragraph...</i></p> <p>Includes a topic sentence Develops one main idea Has a transition sentence linking it to the next paragraph</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The conclusion...</i></p> <p>Recaps the thesis statement and the essay's main points Presents a closing statement of the writer's position</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Organization and Development</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The entire composition...</i></p> <p>Is logically organized Has a solid argument with supporting evidence</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Main points...</i></p> <p>Are relevant to the thesis statement Are discussed without too much repetition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Style...</p> <p>Is concise and precise Is free of misspellings Is free of grammatical mistakes Lacks incomplete sentences Uses correct punctuation Includes subject/verb agreement Uses pronouns correctly Is free of jargon and clichés Cites references correctly</p>
--	---

C. Analytic Rubric for Biological Research Project

Rubric for Scientific Experiment in Biology Capstone Course, by Virginia Johnson Anderson, Towson University, Towson, MD. Taken from Barbara Walvoord, "How to Make Grading, Fair, Time-Efficient, and Conducive to Learning," presented at George Washington University, May, 2009.

Assignment: Semester-long assignment to design an original experiment, carry it out, and write it up in scientific report format. Students are to determine which of two brands of a commercial product (e.g. two brands of popcorn) are "best." They must base their judgment on at least four experimental factors (e.g. "% of kernels popped" is an experimental factor. Price is not, because it is written on the package).

Title

- 5 - Is appropriate in tone and structure to science journal; contains necessary descriptors, brand names, and allows reader to anticipate design.
- 4 - Is appropriate in tone and structure to science journal; most descriptors present; identifies function of experimentation, suggests design, but lacks brand names.
- 3 - Identifies function, brand name, but does not allow reader to anticipate design.
- 2 - Identifies function or brand name, but not both; lacks design information or is misleading
- 1 - Is patterned after another discipline or missing.

Introduction

- 5 - Clearly identifies the purpose of the research; identifies interested audiences(s); adopts an appropriate tone.
- 4 - Clearly identifies the purpose of the research; identifies interested audience(s).
- 3 - Clearly identifies the purpose of the research.
- 2 - Purpose present in Introduction, but must be identified by reader.
- 1 - Fails to identify the purpose of the research.

Scientific Format Demands

- 5 - All material placed in the correct sections; organized logically within each section; runs parallel among different sections.
- 4 - All material placed in correct sections; organized logically within sections, but may lack parallelism among sections.
- 3 - Material placed in right sections but not well organized within the sections; disregards parallelism.
- 2 - Some materials are placed in the wrong sections or are not adequately organized wherever they are placed.
- 1 - Material placed in wrong sections or not sectioned; poorly organized wherever placed.

Materials and Methods Section

- 5 - Contains effective, quantifiable, concisely-organized information that allows the experiment to be replicated; is written so that all information inherent to the document can be related back to this section; identifies sources of all data to be collected; identifies sequential information in an appropriate chronology; does not contain unnecessary, wordy descriptions of procedures.
- 4 - As above, but contains unnecessary information, and/or wordy descriptions within the section.
- 3 - Presents an experiment that is definitely replicable; all information in document may be related to this section; however, fails to identify some sources of data and/or presents sequential information in a disorganized, difficult pattern.
- 2 - Presents an experiment that is marginally replicable; parts of the basic design must be inferred by the reader; procedures not quantitatively described; some information in Results or Conclusions cannot be anticipated by reading the Methods and Materials section.
- 1 - Describes the experiment so poorly or in such a nonscientific way that it cannot be replicated.

Non-experimental Information

- 5 - Student researches and includes price and other non-experimental information that would be expected to be significant to the audience in determining the better product, or specifically states non-experimental factors excluded by design; interjects these at appropriate positions in text and/or develops a weighted rating scale; integrates non-experimental information in the Conclusions.
- 4 - Student acts as above, but is somewhat less effective in developing the significance of the non-experimental information.
- 3 - Student introduces price and other non-experimental information, but does not integrate them into Conclusions.
- 2 - Student researches and includes price effectively; does not include or specifically exclude other non-experimental information.
- 1 - Student considers price and/or other non-experimental variables as research variables; fails to identify the significance of these factors to the research.

Designing an Experiment

- 5 - Student selects experimental factors that are appropriate to the research purpose and audience; measures adequate aspects of these selected factors; establishes discrete sub-groups for which data significance may vary; student demonstrates an ability to eliminate bias from the design and bias-ridden statements from the research; student selects appropriate sample size, equivalent groups, and statistics; student designs a superior experiment.
- 4 - As above, but student designs an adequate experiment.
- 3 - Student selects experimental factors that are appropriate to the research purpose and audience; measures adequate aspects of these selected factors; establishes discrete sub-groups for which data significance may vary; research is weakened by bias OR by sample size of less than 10.
- 2 - As above, but research is weakened by bias AND inappropriate sample size
- 1 - Student designs a poor experiment.

Defining Operationally

- 5 - Student constructs a stated comprehensive operational definition and well-developed specific operational definitions.
- 4 - Student constructs an implied comprehensive operational definition and well-developed specific operational definitions.
- 3 - Student constructs an implied comprehensive operational definition (possible less clear) and some specific operational definitions.
- 2 - Student constructs specific operational definitions, but fails to construct a comprehensive definition.
- 1 - Student lacks understanding of operation definition.

Controlling Variables

- 5 - Student demonstrates, by written statement, the ability to control variables by experimental control and by randomization; student makes reference to, or implies, factors to be disregarded by reference to pilot or experience; superior overall control of variables.
- 4 - As above, but student demonstrates an adequate control of variables.
- 3 - Student demonstrates the ability to control important variables experimentally; Methods and Materials section does not indicate knowledge of randomization and/or selected disregard of variables.
- 2 - Student demonstrates the ability to control some, but not all, of the important variables experimentally.
- 1 - Student demonstrates a lack of understanding about controlling variables.

Collecting Data and Communicating Results

- 5 - Student selects quantifiable experimental factors and/or defines and establishes quantitative units of comparison; measures the quantifiable factors and/or units in appropriate quantities or intervals; student selects appropriate statistical information to be utilized in the results; when effective, student displays results in graphs with correctly labeled axes; data are presented to the reader in text as well as graphic forms; tables or graphs have self-contained headings.
- 4 - As 5 above, but the student did not prepare self-contained headings for tables or graphs.
- 3 - As 4 above, but data reported in graphs or tables contain materials that are irrelevant. and/or not statistically appropriate.
- 2 - Student selects quantifiable experimental factors and/or defines and establishes quantitative units of comparison; fails to select appropriate quantities or intervals and/or fails to

display information graphically when appropriate.

- 1 - Student does not select, collect, and/or communicate quantifiable results.

Interpreting Data: Drawing Conclusions/Implications

- 5 - Student summarizes the purpose and findings of the research; student draws inferences that are consistent with the data and scientific reasoning and relates these to interested audiences; student explains expected results and offers explanations and/or suggestions for further research for unexpected results; student presents data honestly, distinguishes between fact and implication, and avoids overgeneralizing; student organizes non-experimental information to support conclusion; student accepts or rejects the hypothesis.
- 4 - As 5 above, but student does not accept or reject the hypothesis.
- 3 - As 4 above, but the student overgeneralizes and/or fails to organize non-experimental information to support conclusions.
- 2 - Student summarizes the purpose and findings of the research; student explains expected results, but ignores unexpected results.
- 1 - Student may or may not summarize the results, but fails to interpret their significance to interested audiences.

Student Scores for Science Reports, Before and After Anderson Made Pedagogical Changes

Trait	Year 1	Year 2
Title	2.95	3.22
Introduction	3.18	3.64
Scientific Format	3.09	3.32
Methods and Materials	3.00	3.55
Non-Experimental Info	3.18	3.50
Designing the Experiment	2.68	3.32
Defining Operationally	2.68	3.50
Controlling Variables	2.73	3.18
Collecting Data	2.86	3.36
Interpreting Data	2.90	3.59
Overall	2.93	3.42

D. Holistic Grading Rubric for Essays

- A. A paper that demonstrates the student
- understands the arguments being made by scholars in assigned reading
 - has developed a compelling and convincing thesis/argument distinct from that being made by the authors under consideration advances evidence in an original manner (ie does not simply replicate the argument of one of the authors being critiqued) to make a convincing point.
- B. A paper that demonstrates the student
- understands most aspects of the arguments being made by scholars in assigned reading
 - attempts to advance an argument distinct from the authors, though the argument is not as convincing or fully developed as would be found in an “A” paper advances evidence that supports the thesis statement with some (but not complete) success.
- C. A paper that demonstrates the student
- understands some of the arguments being made by scholars in assigned reading
 - does not advance a thesis/argument distinct from the authors by and large repeats the evidence used by authors to draw the same conclusions as authors. This is a descriptive rather than argumentative essay, even if it recapitulates the arguments of the author.
- D. A paper that demonstrates the student
- does not really grasp significant aspects of the arguments being made by scholars makes some points, but the points are not necessarily part of a larger, coherent argument.
- F. A paper that is not turned in, and/or shows no knowledge of the material studied.

Grammar: Papers that are poorly written will be marked down to a “-“ grade. Papers that are well written will be marked up to a “+” grade. Grammar includes: following conventions of writing, inclusion of title, full title page, numbering pages, proper footnote citation, etc.

Assignments besides Term Papers*

Analysis of scholarly articles
Annotated bibliography, linked to research question
Briefing paper for a policy decision
Classroom debate, in teams
Collection of data and presentation of findings, in writing or oral report
Concept map of relationships among central concepts in course or session
Debate
Diary of an historical figure
Dramatization of an event, acting out parts of an argument
Editorial letter or blog response
Ethnographic observation and report
Experiment, designed by student
Graph of a set of relationships
Journal of responses to readings
Newspaper edition from historical period
Oral summary of readings presented to class, with questions about main arguments
Paper revisions, with comments on process
Peer reading and critiques of paper drafts
Plan for items in a museum exhibit
Quiz on readings
Reactions to readings and questions for author
Reflections on what one has learned from a lecture or a course section
Review of a museum exhibition, dramatic performances, dance, political speech
Website creation
Website critique/analysis

*Adapted from Linda Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning. A Common Sense Guide*, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009, p. 158.

Model Syllabi, with Assignments Linked to Learning Outcomes
Humanities
AMERICAN STUDIES 101/HISTORY 113
EARLY AMERICAN CULTURAL HISTORY

Teresa Murphy
Office: 609 22nd St rm 202
Email: murphta@gmail.com

Office Hours: WF 4-5
Phone: 4-6891

Course Description

This course will examine culture in the United States (and what would become the United States) in the period before 1876. We will define culture broadly in this class to consider social customs and beliefs as well as more specific forms of literary and artistic expression. As we examine cultural history, we will try to figure out the ways in which culture has been important in the creation of the United States: in its expansion across the continent, in its hierarchies and expressions of power, in the meaning of democracy and free expression, and in its cities and in the countryside. We will examine how some people have gained power and others have lost it, whether it be on account of race, class, ethnicity, or gender.

As we examine these questions, we will read competing interpretations of culture from a variety of scholars. We will read and examine a wide variety of cultural documents, and we will produce our own cultural histories.

Learning Objectives:

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze competing interpretations of cultural history and to create their own analyses of primary documents;
- Write clearly and cogently in their analytical papers about secondary sources and primary documents;
- Analyze cultural artifacts such as paintings, material objects, and buildings;
- Understand a variety of American experiences in their different forms of cultural expression and relationships of power that are structured through culture;
- Work collegially as thinkers and cultural critics, particularly in their discussion sections.

Required Readings

Al Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*
Additional scholarly articles are posted on blackboard

Course Requirements:

Students are required to write four short papers and to revise two of them (in lieu of a final exam.) Students are also required to make a brief presentation based on one of the papers to the class.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Paper # 1 (2 pages)	10%
Paper # 2 (5 pages)	15%
Paper # 3 (5 pages)	15%
Paper # 4 (5 pages)	15%
Rewrite of two papers	25%
Class Participation	20%

(includes response papers, presentation, & participation in section)

Note: Students may miss two lectures and one section meeting with no penalty. After that, students will receive a 0 for all classes missed. Serious illnesses are handled separately. All work must be turned in for a student to pass this course.

Schedule of Classes

Wed Sept 2	Introduction
Fri Sept 4	<u>What Is Culture?</u> Read: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "An Indian Basket," <i>The Age of Homespun</i> (2001) (Blackboard) Assignment: One page response paper

Colonial Negotiations

Wed Sept 9	<u>How devastating was cultural contact?</u> James Merrell, "The Indians' New World: The Catawba Experience," <i>William and Mary Quarterly</i> , vol.41, October, 1984, 537-565. Assignment: One page response paper
Fri Sept 11	<u>How did Native Americans find sources of power?</u> Read: Steven W. Hackel, "The Staff of Leadership: Indian Authority in the Missions of Alta California," <i>William and Mary Quarterly</i> , 54, 1997, 347-76. Assignment: One page response paper Visit: Exploring the Early Americas (LOC exhibit) and National Museum of the American Indian
Wed Sept 16	Class presentations on objects of cultural contact Paper No. 1 due in class
Fri Sept 18	<u>Consumption a source of revolution?</u> Read: Timothy Breen, "Narrative of Commercial Life: Consumption, Ideology, and Community on the Eve of the Revolution," <i>William and Mary Quarterly</i> , vol. 50, no. 3 (July, 1993), 471-501 Assignment: one page response paper

Creation of a public in the eighteenth century

- Wed Sept 23 What is the public sphere?
Read: Jurgen Habermas. 'The Public Sphere', in Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (eds.), *Rethinking Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 398-404 (Blackboard)
Assignment: One page response paper on an eighteenth century newspaper article that contributes to the creation of a public sphere
- Fri Sept 25 What are the problems with the idea of a public sphere?
Read: Nancy Fraser. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 109-142 (Blackboard)
Assignment: one page response paper

Popular participation in the revolution

- Wed Sept 30 Did the common folk make a difference in the Revolution?
Read: *The Shoemaker and Tea Party*
Assignment: One page response paper
- Fri Oct 2 Is fashion really revolutionary?
Read: Kate Haulman, "Fashion and the Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 4 (October, 2005)
Timothy Shannon, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 53, 1996, 13-42.
[Delete Shannon; add newspaper assignment]
Assignment: One page response paper

Creating a Nation

- Wed Oct 7 What is nationalism?
Read: Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1-28. (Blackboard)
Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983, 1999), 1-8, 37-66. (Blackboard)
Assignment: One page response paper
- Fri Oct 9 How does nationalism get created?
Read: David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," *Journal of American History*, vol 82, no. 1 (June, 1995), 37-61.
[Add newspaper assignment]
Assignment: One page response paper

Gender and Nation

- Wed Oct 14 How is gender central to the creation of nationalism?
Read: Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism, and the Family," *Feminist Review* No. 44 (Summer, 1993) 61-80.
Jeremy Engels and Greg Goodale, "'Our Battle Cry Will Be: Remember Jenny McCrea!': A Precis on the Rhetoric of Revenge," *American Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 1 (March, 2009) 93-112.
Assignment: One page response paper
- Fri Oct 16 How do captivity narratives create a sense of nationalism?
Visit: Museum of American Art
Assignment: Find a captivity narrative in a newspaper, 1780-1860, and write a one page response paper.

Democratic Culture

- Wed Oct 21 Class presentations
Paper No. 2 due in class
- Fri Oct 23 What is democracy and how did it operate in the early republic?
Read: Jeffrey Pasley, "The Cheese and the Words: Popular Political Culture and Participatory Democracy in the Early American Republic," in *Beyond the Founders, New Approaches to the Political History of the Early Republic*, Jeffrey Pasley, Andrew Robertson, and David Waldstreicher (eds.) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 31-56. (Blackboard)
Assignment: One page response

Economy, Politics, and Painting

- Wed Oct 28 What does it mean to vote?
Read: Alexander Keyssar, "Democracy Ascendant," in *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 26-52.
Gail Husch, "George Caleb Bingham's The Country Election," *American Art Journal*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Autumn, 1987), 5-22.
Assignment: One page response
- Fri Oct 30 How were paintings used to comment on politics and economy?
Read: Laura Rigal, "Picture Nation: Pat Lyon at the Forge, 1798-1829," in *The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) (Blackboard)
April F. Masten, "Shake Hands? Lilly Martin Spencer and the Politics of Art," *American Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 2, June 2004, 348-394.
Assignment: One page response

Race and Representation

- Wed Nov 4 Was there a black public sphere?
Read: Michael Warner, "A Soliloquy 'Lately Spoken at the African Theater': Race and the Public Sphere in New York City, 1821," in *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 225-268. (Blackboard)
Assignment: One page response
- Fri Nov 6 What is whiteness and how was it created?
Read: David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness, Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (New York: Verso, 1991), 95-163. (Blackboard)
Assignment: one page response
- Wed Nov 11 How were slavery and race intertwined?
Read: Walter Johnson, "The Slave Trader, the White Slave, and the Politics of Racial Determination in the 1850s," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (Jun., 2000), pp. 13-38
View: Greek slave
Assignment: one page response
- Fri Nov 13 Class presentations
Paper No. 3 due in class

Border Struggles: The Cultural Construction of Manifest Destiny

- Wed Nov 18 How did cultural representations of the West foster expansion?
Read: Peter J. Kastor, "What Are the Advantages of the Acquisition?: Inventing Expansion in the Early American Republic," *American Quarterly*, vol. 60, no. 4 (December, 2008), 1003-1035.
Kathryn S. Hight, "'Doomed to Perish': George Catlin's Depictions of the Mandan," in *Art Journal* 49, no. 2 (Summer, 1990)
Assignment: one page response
- Fri Nov 20 Why did Mexico fail to create a sense of nationalism along its northern borders?
Read: Andres Resendez, "National Identity on a Shifting Border: Texas and New Mexico in the Age of Transition, 1821-1848," vol 86, no. 2, *Journal of American History*, vol. 86, no. 2 (September 1999)
Assignment: one page response

Thanksgiving week

- Wed Nov 25 Self guided tour
- Fri Nov 27 Thanksgiving

Wrap- Up

Wed Dec 2	Class presentations Paper No. 4 due in class
Fri Dec 4	Review
Tues Dec 15	Rewrites due (in lieu of final exam)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states:: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

SECURITY

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

American Studies 101/History 113 Reading Assignment

American Studies/History 101

Question for September 25 (based on Fraser)

AIM TO SPEND 3 HOURS READING AND WRITING FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT. GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO FORMULATING THE POINTS AT WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH FRASER. DO NOT SPEND MORE THAT 3 HOURS TOTAL ON IT!

What does Fraser mean when she says the bourgeois conception of the public sphere was a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule? (116) Do you agree?

Your responses should be no more than one page total.

- Your responses should be typed, double-spaced, with a title, and numbered.
- Use 12 point font and one-inch margins.
- Be sure to include your name, your TA's name, the course number, and the date at the top of the first page

Bring your response to class on September 25.

How to crack this assignment:

The Fraser reading is in the same file as the Habermas reading.

Note that Fraser gives a nice summary of Habermas' argument, even as she describes his limitations on pp. 111-113 (in case you didn't pick it up for his article)

How does the scholarship of folks like Landes and Eley show that the public sphere was more limited than Habermas contended? (113-115) And how does a scholar such as Mary Ryan show alternative public spheres (counterpublics)? (115-116)

Why does the bourgeois public sphere facilitate a new mode of domination? (117)

Why and how does Fraser challenge the idea that individuals can participate in a public sphere as social equals? (118-121)

What is the value of multiple publics, in Fraser's opinion? What is the difference between a dominant public and a counterpublic? (121-128)

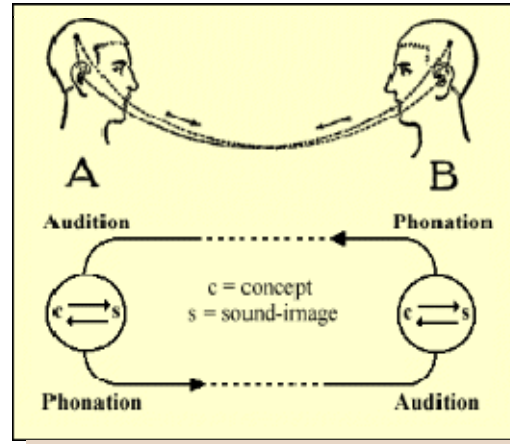
According to Fraser, what sort of personal issues should be discussed in the public sphere? Do you agree or disagree? (121-132)

According to Fraser, what sort of relationship should exist between the public sphere and the state? Do you agree or disagree? (132-136)

Social Sciences
Anthropology 004. Language in Culture and Society

Language in Culture and Society
Anthropology 004.10
Summer 2010

Instructor: Dr. Alexander S. Dent
Lecture Time: MTWR 12:30 PM – 2:00PM
Lecture Location: Duquès 259
Instructor Email: asdent@gwu.edu
Phone: 202.994.5084
Office Location: 2110 G. St. Rm. 302
(Hortense Amsterdam House)
Office hours: By appointment



Introduction

Where did language come from? How does it work? What are the relationships between languages and the cultural contexts in which they are spoken? Indeed, can language and culture be separated at all?

After a brief introduction to the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure, this course begins by exploring the evolution of language, making use of biological anthropology and archaeology. Our overarching topic in this first half will be how language evolved as it did. In the second half we explore the cultural ways that people use language to communicate, employing comparative and ethnographic approaches to examine social categories such as gender, race, and identity. Our major topic in this second half will be how language is used to perform certain kinds of tasks. While we will briefly treat the technical-descriptive procedures associated with anthropological linguistics, we will stress an integrative view -- focusing on the use of language to understand and interpret broader social and evolutionary issues.

ANTH 4 introduces the linguistics component of the anthropology major, as well as further courses in linguistic anthropology such as “Language, Culture, and Cognition” (ANTH 161), “Performance Ethnography” (ANTH 162), “Media, Technology, and Performance” (ANTH 169), and “Linguistic Anthropology “ (ANTH 204). This course is also one of the foundational courses for the Minor in Linguistics.

Please note that early drafts of the syllabus sometimes contain typos. The working copy of the syllabus is always the one available on Blackboard.

Learning Goals (specific)

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- understand the significant *biological* aspects of the human capacity for language
- understand the major *cultural* aspects of the human capacity for language
- distinguish the more “traditional” view of language found in the discipline of linguistics from an anthropological perspective on language as sign-related behavior be able to use anthropological concepts of culture, frame, genre, performance, and mediation to interpret social categories such as race, gender, and social class

Learning Goals (general)

This course will contribute to student mastery of:

- critical thinking skills, where critical thinking is defined as analyzing and engaging with the historically specific concepts that underlie an argument
- written communication skills, which will be evaluated in the short paper, journal/portfolio, and take-home final assignment; oral communication skills will be evaluated through “class participation,” though oral communication skills will not necessarily be a primary focus
- global and cross-cultural perspectives, where international institutions and practices are understood, and the importance of cultural knowledge is emphasized as a fundamental category of human social life

Course Requirements

1) Class participation, and attendance – 20 % (8 – participation; 12 class attendance– see below)

Absences will have a profound effect on each grade for a variety of reasons. First, all material from discussions, lectures, films, and readings will be tested on the final. But also, knowledge will be cumulative, and in lectures, I will reference previous topics. For this reason, students must: 1) attend every lecture and discussion section; 2) complete reading for that class *before* the class, arriving at class prepared to comment on, and react to, the reading; 3) complete in-class assignments; 4) contribute to in-class discussion, some of which may take place in small groups; and 5) practice ‘academic integrity’ (see below). There will be no make-ups for missed assignments. Based on your comments in class, I will award eight (8) points for in-class participation, so if you want to do well in class, speak up; in borderline cases, this seemingly small eight percent can make a difference. Your eight points will be decided based on how often you speak up, and the quality of what you say. – **total of 8 pts. for participation**

In order to monitor attendance I will hand out an assignment sheet at the beginning of each class. You will receive one half point for each class attended. (Do not sign in for an absent friend, trying to “cover” for them. If you do, you will both receive zero, and if this occurs more than once, it will be treated as a violation of academic integrity.)

– **total of 12 pts. for class attendance**

*If you need to miss a class for a **religious holiday**, you need to let me know within the first week of class. Last minute religious holiday requests cannot be honored.*

2) Short paper – 20% -- due 6/21 at the beginning of class

3-4 pp. ethnography (observation & analysis, 12pt. font, standard margins, double spaced) paper on the role of language in a religious service.

This paper asks you to critically apply course concepts to language in a *particular* religious service that you observe. You should observe a religious service in one of several modes: 1) in standard English; 2) in non-standard English (for example, AAVE, or some other non-standard form); 3) in a language other than English that you DO understand (a service in Spanish, German, or Italian, for example). A service held entirely in a language that you do NOT understand (option 4) is not out of the question, but makes the assignment more difficult; make sure you consult with me if you choose this fourth option.

Go to the service, and pay special attention to LANGUAGE. What kinds of language are being used in the ceremony, and how can you tell that different kinds of tasks are being accomplished *through* that language. For instance, is some language read directly from text-artifacts (readings or prayers), while other language is improvised (sermons, homilies)? If this is the case, what different kinds of tasks might these different forms of language-use accomplish? Give examples.

Write a short paper analyzing some aspect of language-use in the ceremony according to two or three concepts, from the course (frames, gender, race, identity, genre, performance, are all excellent candidates, though there are many others). You want to convey your sense of language-use within this *particular* ceremony, so make sure to provide some descriptive details about what you're seeing/hearing. But make certain that your descriptive details concern *language* (or some form of sign-related behavior), and make certain you are anchoring your analysis both in course concepts, AND in that particular ceremony. It is often better to select one single detail (the alternation between prayers and sung hymns, for example, or the role of pronunciation) rather than trying to cover absolutely everything that takes place.

You will need to plan ahead in order to accomplish this by the deadline. Check the Yellow Pages for churches, temples, or other religious spaces and services. You will probably want to call ahead for times and dates, especially if you are using the internet to research a location, as internet sites are sometimes poorly maintained.

Before or after the service, interview someone knowledgeable from this religious community and ask them about the history of speech in the church/synagogue/temple/etc.: Has it always been this way? How has it changed? How do they see the different kinds of language that get used in the ceremony?

*[Note – it is important to let them know that you are a student at GWU, that you are doing a class project, that you have NO intention of publishing this material, that you will use a pseudonym for them in your paper, and that not only do they **not** have to participate, but they can end participation at any time if they would like to. Always get permission if you want to record someone. It is crucial that you present yourself as a student, and not someone who wants to join their church – which is unethical.]*

The paper is due at the **start** of class on June 21st. I deduct 1/3 of a grade for each day the paper is late. Thus, at 12:31 PM, June 21st, the paper is a day late. By a third of a grade, I mean that if your paper was an A, but you turned it in to me a day late, it automatically becomes an A-. If it was an A-, it becomes a B+. And so forth.

Your paper, for a total of twenty points, will be evaluated based on:

6pts -- Depth of descriptive detail

6pts -- Use of concepts and citations from the course

6pts. -- Originality

2pts -- Style, grammar, and use of social sciences notation form

3) Journal/Portfolio -- 24% (12 assignments for two points each)

Throughout the class, you will keep a folder in which you complete in-class assignments and homework assignments. I will collect these folders without prior notice from time to time, and I will select two assignments from each week to grade. Examples of in-class assignments include questions about the reading for that day (reading which you would need to have done in order to do well on the assignment), journaling exercises, and sometimes even creative writing in some form. Each assignment will be worth two points. Note that the pop-quiz nature of some of these in-class assignments is yet another reason that it is important to come to class with your reading done. *Make sure you bring your journal to every class. If you do not have your journal with you on the day that I collect them, you will receive a zero for that day's assignment.*

4) Take-home final assignment-- 36%

The exam will consist of two essay questions that will require your reflecting on the entire course. The exam is **cumulative** – which means to say that it covers the entire semester.

Grading scale for final grade:

A 93% or higher

A- 90-92%

B+ 88-89%

B 83-7%

B- 80-82% ... and so on ...

A word about grading: Usually, about one third of my classes end up in the A range, one third in the B range, and one third in the C range, with some scoring slightly below this. Please understand that to get an A in this class, your work needs to be outstanding, not merely competent. Merely coming to class, doing the reading, and basically staying on top of things usually garners a low B.

Academic Integrity

All students must practice academic integrity. This means doing your own work, and when you use *the words and ideas of others in any written work, you must*: 1) identify quotations with quotations marks; and 2) indicate the source of ideas that are not your own using social sciences notation form. If you have any questions at all about what this means, you should speak to the instructor. Plagiarism, and all breaches of academic integrity (for example, the sale of lecture-notes from this class, or use of content from the internet as though it was your own), will be severely dealt with in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. For more information on The George Washington University's policies on academic integrity, consult: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

*The policy on academic integrity in this course is that if you commit a breach of academic integrity in any assignment or exam, you will receive a zero for that assignment or exam. This infraction will be reported to the University's Academic Integrity Council. You will be **clearly** notified by the instructor in person OR by email before the Council is informed.*

Special Needs

Please let me know right away if you have any special needs with respect to how this course will be conducted. Don't wait to do this.

Reading

Required reading will be available in the GW bookstore. Other chapters and articles will be available on the course's Blackboard site, or Electronic Reserves in Blackboard – hereafter referred to as **ER**.

Required Books

- Agar, Michael. 1996. *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation*. NY: Harper ("Agar" below).
- Aitchison, Jean. 2000. *Seeds of Speech: Language Origin and Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ("Aitchison" below).
- Rickford, Russell. 2000. *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*. New York: Wiley ("Rickford" below).

A Few "Do's and Do Not's"

- a) **Do not** email me asking for a class outline for a class that you missed. Make a "note-buddy" on the first day of class, and get the class outline from that note-buddy if you should miss a class.
- b) **Do not** email me with reasons that you will miss a class, or reasons that you missed one. Reasons for missing a class are limited, and include an emergency in your immediate family (distant relations, I fear, do not count), or some kind of medical condition for which you can provide documentation.
- c) **Do** come and talk to me early in the semester about questions or concerns. Leaving these till the last minute can lead to frustration on everyone's part.
- d) **Do** come to talk to me about your paper topic and approach.
- e) As a matter of fact, **do** come to talk to me with questions or comments about the course, even if they don't seem shatteringly important. My office hours belong to you.
- f) **Do** show up to class on time.

g) **Do not** email me after the course is done asking me to “bump” your grade up just a tiny bit. The time to be thinking about your grade is over the course of our classes and assignments.

Section I: Linguistics – Its Politics & History

Week 1

M 5/17 -- Introduction

How can the study of language help us understand culture?

How can it help us understand “human nature”?

T 5/18 – The Study of Language

Reading:

Agar, “Preface.” Pp. 7-9.

“Culture Blends.” Pp. 13-30.

“The Circle.” Pp. 31-48. (36)

W 5/19 – The Saussurian Turn

What important concepts were introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure?

Reading:

Agar,

“The Circle and the Field.” Pp. 49-60.

“Cultural Signifieds.” Pp. 61-72. (22)

R 5/20 – Language and Culture

What contributions were made by Boas, Sapir, Whorf, Bloomfield, and Malinowsky?

Reading:

Agar, “Similarities & Differences.” Pp. 73-88.

“Situations.” Pp. 89-107.

“Culture.” Pp. 108-139. (64)

Section II -- Language and Human Nature

Week 2

Does language define us as uniquely human?

Why did language develop into something so complex?

M 5/24 – Origins of Complex Communication

Reading:

Aitchison, chapter one “A Natural Curiosity.” Pp. 3-15.

chapter two “A Peculiar Habit.” Pp. 16-25.

chapter three “The Bother at Babel.” Pp. 26-37. (32)

T 5/25 – Complexity, Continued

Reading:

Aitchison, chapter four “Distinct Duties.” Pp. 38-48.

chapter five “The Family Tree.” Pp. 49-64. (25)

Section III – Language, Context & Culture

W 6/9— Ways people talk

In-class film: *American Tongues*.

R 6/10 – Phonology

Reading:

Rickford chapter 6, “Vocabulary and Pronunciation.” Pp. 91-108. (17)

Week 5

M 6/14 – Syntax

Reading:

Rickford chapter 7, “Grammar.” Pp. 109-128. (19)

T 6/15 -- Speech Acts

Reading:

Agar “Speech Acts.” Pp. 140-163.

“Speech Act Lumber and Paint.” Pp. 164-191. (50)

W 6/16 -- Identity I

Reading:

Rickford, chapter 12 “The Crucible of Identity.” Pp. 223-232. (9)

Agar “Coherence.” Pp. 192-210. (18)

R 6/17 – Identity II

Reading:

Rickford chapters 1 “What’s Going On?” Pp. 3-12.

chapter 3 “Preachers and Pray-ers.” Pp. 39-56.

chapter 4 “Comedians and Actors.” Pp. 57-72 (41)

Week 6

M 6/21 – Gender I

What role does language play in shaping gender roles?

Reading:

Kuipers, Joel, “Talking about Troubles: Gender Differences in Weyewa Ritual Speech Use” pp. 448-462. (14) **ER**

T 6/22 – Gender II

Kira Hall “Lip Service in the Fantasy Lines.” Pp. 183-218. (35) **ER**

W 6/23– Performance

Bauman & Briggs. “Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life.” Pp. 59-88. (29) **ER**

R 6/24 – Mediation

Spitulnik “The Social Circulation of Media Discourse and the Mediation of Communities.” **ER**

The Take-Home Final will be handed out at the end of the last class. It will be due by noon, 6/28.

W 5/26 – Grooming and Gossiping

What functions might language have evolved to perform?

Reading:

Aitchison, chapter six “A Devious Mind.” Pp. 65-76.
chapter seven “Broken Air.” Pp. 77-92. (26)

R 5/27 – Communicating Critters

In-class film: “Signs of the Apes, Songs of the Whales.”

Week 3

M 5/31 – No Class – Memorial Day

T 6/1 – Animal Communication, pt. II

Reading:

In Aitchison, chapter eight, “Small beginnings.” Pp. 93-106.
chapter nine “The Second Word.” Pp. 107-122. (28)

W 6/2 – Learning Language

How do children learn to use language?

In-class film: “Baby Talk.”

R 6/3 – Learning Language, Learning Culture

Reading:

Ochs/Schieffelin. “Language Acquisition and Language Socialization.” Pp. 263-301.
(38) **ER**

Week 4

M 6/7 – The Case of Color

Do all people see the world in the same way?

Or does each language provide a unique set of lenses for interpreting experience?

Reading:

Berlin and Kay “Introduction” to *Basic Color Terms*. Pp. 1-23. (22) **ER**
Conklin “Hanunoo Color Categories.” Pp. 189-192. (3) ER

T 6/8 -- Pidgins & Creoles

Are there primitive languages?

Do creoles provide a glimpse into the origin of language?

Reading:

In Aitchison chapter ten “The tower of speech.” Pp. 123-134.

Chapter eleven “Time-traveling.” Pp. 135-147.

Chapter twelve “Rebuilding on the high seas” 148-160 (35)

Paper due at the beginning of class