

# SENIOR COLLOQUIUM 2024

Instructor: Dr. Phillip Lobo

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Office location: EL-B008D

Office hours: MWF 12:15-2:00pm, T 9:45-11:30am; R digitally for three hours, by appointment.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Senior Colloquium is a discussion-oriented seminar which is meant to foster critical thinking, critical engagement with texts, and respectful dialogue with peers. This course is unique, in that, the class sessions are comprised almost entirely of student discussion and will generally be led by students themselves. The professor is a facilitator, not the leader of the discussion.

We will engage with course material spanning a variety of topics, grouped into units, broadly falling under the themes of communication, community, and the creation of knowledge. This course material can contain anything from films, video essays, podcasts, scholarly articles or book chapters, etc. It will be made accessible via the Canvas homepage.

This course is student-powered. In order to succeed, you must *engage* with the course material and participate in spirited and thorough class discussions about them. In other words, mere receptivity is not enough. You must offer input and ideas via analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. We will aim to achieve respectful, productive, and lively discourse.

## COURSE METHODOLOGY

- View/listen to/read content assigned each week and discuss that material in class, both in groups and in full class format, to show engagement
- Take turns leading discussion, demonstrating comprehension and directing activities
- Complete and submit to Canvas a written assignment on the course material assigned each week

## METHODS OF EVALUATION

### 1. (50%) Presence, Preparation, Participation:

- You will be evaluated based on your participation for each class. This means presence (be in class on time), preparation (have the reading/viewing/listening completed), and participation (you must engage in both group discussion and full-class discussion to some meaningful degree).

**Comments are deemed meaningful** when they:

- Introduces new and intriguing idea that moves discussion along
- Agrees with and expands another participant's remarks
- Disagrees with participants and explains why
- Gives persuasive analysis of text
- Gives opinion with backup text/evidence
- Refers to a relevant event (may be historical or current) and explains why
- Shows connection to other sources, either used in this class or others
- Gave thoughtful comparison to another remark's
- Clarifies an obscure passage so that it makes sense to all of us
- Thoughtful response to classmate's comment

Comments that cannot fall under one of these categories may still be counted if it reflects understanding of text/classroom discussion and explained clearly.

## 2. (25%) Leading Discussion

Throughout the semester your group will be responsible for leading class discussion more than once. These will be weighted more heavily than weekly class participation, requiring that you engage with especial depth with the work and motivate your classmates to participate. You are encouraged to introduce activities to spur discussion. You will be graded based on a simple rubric based on three criteria:

- Comprehension - demonstrating a sufficiently deep and accurate understanding of the text.
- Reference - referring to and utilizing the text in your framing of discussion.
- Engagement - energizing the class and motivating discussion, enabling all students to participate.

Note that this means you will be graded in part on the degree of participation you can stir up; when you are not presenting, your engagement has an effect on the grade of your classmates, as well as your own. What goes around comes around, so be sure to participate each class to support your fellow students, and earn their support in turn.

## 3. (25%) Written Reflection

Please write **two important points** from the reading that you can bring to the discussion. This must be **submitted before class**. Each point must be at least **a few sentences and contain one direct quotation with proper citation**.

You are exempt from this requirement on days when your group is leading discussion.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

Grading: A 93-100, A- 90-92, B+ starts at 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D 69 and below

## COLLOQUIA DIALOGUE RULES OF THUMB

1. The exchange of declarative monologues tends to be dialectically unproductive. The effort to be too complete is often self-defeating. Brevity stimulates dialectic. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there – respectful disagreement is normal and expected.
2. The imaginative and unexpected are frequently more fruitful than a prematurely prudent opinion.
3. In dialectic conversation, listening intently is in everybody's intellectual interest.
4. Agreeing to disagree respectfully is a powerful asset to any conversation. This practice will heighten the courtesy that any good and rigorous conversation demands. Also, don't assume that everyone holds the views they put forward – Colloquium is a space for testing out ideas and analyses.
5. Follow the argument wherever it leads. Think with your peers and trust their intelligence to lead to (sometimes much unexpected) understanding.

## METHODS OF GETTING INTO CLASS DISCUSSION

- ✓ Clarify a point in discussion
- ✓ Ask a relevant, productive question
- ✓ Offer a comparison
- ✓ Offer a contrast
- ✓ Offer supporting evidence
- ✓ Refer to a literary work germane to the ideas being discussed
- ✓ Refer to historical idea/work germane to the idea being discussed
- ✓ Analyze a section of the course material
- ✓ Agree with and add to someone else's comment
- ✓ Offer a counterpoint that is respectful and productive

- ✓ Offer a definition
- ✓ Help the group move to a new thread
- ✓ Provide a helpful summary
- ✓ Propose a hypothesis
- ✓ Provide a creative explanation or solution
- ✓ Improvise a scenario

### **SCHEDULE OF WORK**

*The colloquium instructors reserve the right to modify or amend this schedule as needs be.*

Week 1 (1/9) - Introductions and Course Policies

Week 2 (1/16) - Extended, **no colloquium**.

Weeks 3 & 4 (1/23 & 1/30) - **Language and Communication**

Week 5 (2/6) - Extended, **no colloquium**.

Week 6 (2/13) - **Language and Communication**, continued.

Weeks 7 & 8 (2/20 & 2/27) - **Intellectualism and Public Discourse**

### **SPRING BREAK**

Week 9 (3/12) - SAT, **no colloquium**.

Week 10 (3/19) - **Intellectualism and Public Discourse**, continued.

Week 11 ( & 3/26) - **Monsters and Marginalia**

Week 12 (4/2) - Extended, **no colloquium**.

Weeks 13 & 14 (4/9 & 4/16) - **Monsters and Marginalia**, continued.

Weeks 15 & 16 (4/23 & 4/30) - **Wildcards**, TBD

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE:** Regular and punctual class attendance is expected and required of all students. If you are not in class when it officially begins, you will be marked tardy. If you show up to class ten or more minutes late, you will be marked absent for the day. You will also be marked absent if I see you sleeping.

**LATE WORK:** Written reflections will be turned in electronically, unless otherwise stated; if I do not have your assignment when it is due, you will not receive credit for it. **If you must miss a class, plan ahead to get your work in before the deadline.** In the rare case of an excused absence (those deemed so by the school), you will need to contact me via email to make arrangements to get your missed work in ASAP.

**SAVE YOUR WORK:** Backing up your files regularly is a course requirement. Get into a habit of emailing your drafts to yourself, and/or saving them on a thumb drive, external drive, or the cloud. Your

computer malfunctioning/blowing up/self-destructing on the day the assignment is due will not be an acceptable excuse for not turning work in on time.

EXTENSIONS: Extensions are very rare. I only give one if the school itself grants you an extension on the basis of extenuating circumstances. In these cases, the extension and timeline for the submission of work needs to be formally agreed upon in advance. This is not something that happens last minute.

TECHNOLOGY: Please turn off your cell phones before you enter class, put them out of sight, and refrain from using them in class. Devices can be used to access the reading, but please refrain from using them for other purposes.

### **INDIANA ACADEMY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY**

It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor.

\*You are expected to attend every class. You are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will be penalized as follows: Unexcused absence (1) = 1-point subtraction from final grade. Unexcused absence (2) = 3-point subtraction from final grade. Unexcused absence (3) = 5-point subtraction from final grade. (For example, if you have an 89 final average with (3) unexcused absences your final grade will be 84). Four (4) or more unexcused absences will lead to academic and residential consequences beyond the scope of this class determined by the Office of Academic Affairs (i.e., residential groundings, parent/principal conference, and/or detention).

\*\*Any minor assignment/test/project/presentation missed due to an unexcused absence will be handled according to the late work policy of this class. You will be given an opportunity to retake any missed assignment/test/project/presentation worth more than 20% of the final grade but will be docked a full letter grade as a result.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

You are responsible for the integrity of your work and you are required to produce work that is academically honest. This means that all of your work for this course must be your own and must be created specifically for this course. Failing to maintain the integrity of your work will have serious consequences. Submitting someone else's paper, including papers you obtain online, as your own writing is fraud. Attempting to take credit for someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them is plagiarism. Direct and indirect plagiarism, both of which we will discuss in class, are unacceptable and have serious academic consequences. If you are even remotely uncertain about whether or not any part of your work is academically honest, contact me and we can sort it out. Please refer to the student handbook for additional information, including information that is new this year.

## APPROPRIATE USE OF LLM/‘AI’ TECHNOLOGY

### Official Humanities Division Statement:

The Humanities Division recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) provides some exciting new tools for academic work. However, AI also poses significant dangers for academic integrity. Passing off as your own any research, words, or ideas which you did not create is plagiarism. That is always the case whether the source is print, internet content, or generated by AI. It is vital to read the policies your individual humanities instructors have regarding AI, and ask them any questions you may have about the use of AI in their course.

### Instructor Statement:

Large language models (more colloquially known as AI chatbots) are powerful tools which are rapidly altering the landscape of humanities scholarship. As with many such devices, there are benefits and drawbacks. Take for example motorized transport: automobiles made remarkable things possible for transit and logistics. It has also fostered a sedentary lifestyle, with all the concomitant health problems (i.e. driving instead of walking causes your legs to wither, your heart to weaken, your lifespan to contract).

Similarly, while large language models can accelerate a number of tasks, **it risks replacing invaluable skills and leading to the atrophy of the very capacities this class is meant to exercise and refine.** Letting an LLM write for you will not only produce mediocre, intellectually vacuous work, it will also cause your own abilities to shrivel precisely when they should be developing. It is also a priori plagiaristic: **all the words a LLM uses are drawn from uncredited, uncompensated sources.** It is not a voice from nowhere; it is stolen language. I want you to use your own words and ideas, and credit the words and ideas of others when you use them.

For the purposes of this class, **LLM/AI chatbots can be legitimately used for research purposes:** you can ask them questions (though always double check, since they frequently ‘hallucinate’) to increase your awareness of a topic, with the understanding that proper sourcing and citation must follow. **They may not be used to produce prose that represents itself as your own.** If you have doubts about the appropriate use of this technology, simply get in touch with me and we can clarify.

## LITERATURE NOTE

Important literature is often about the deepest and most difficult struggles of humans to live authentically in a complex world. Through the thoughts and experiences of literary characters, we can examine and evaluate our personal responses to life’s mysteries, complexities, disappointments, and joys. In addition, we begin to understand how a writer, in his or her own struggle to experience creatively, has responded to the social, political, and artistic environment of his/her times. The English Department at the Academy

selects reading material that reflects these human struggles, has endured the test of time, and has earned a respected place in the universe of letters. The instructors will often include recently published poems, stories, and articles that reflect the diversity of contemporary cultures and experiences.

**If, because of the powerful nature of the reading experience, you are unable to read and study a specific text with reasonable analytic objectivity, please confer with your instructor.** Alternative texts are available.

## **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>. As such, it is important to ensure that your comments and behavior in class is respectful and inclusive. Discriminatory comments or behavior will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with Indiana Academy and Ball State University policy.

## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. The [Office of Disability Services](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at **765-285-5293** or **dsd@bsu.edu**.