Junior Colloquium 2025

**Instructor:** Dr. Maria Slocum

**Office:** Wagoner 151 **E-Mail Address**: mlslocum@bsu.edu

**Office hours**: Office hours: MW 9:30-10am, MWF 1-3pm, Thurs 1-2pm, and 2 hours by appointment on Tues.

Classroom: BU215

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Junior Colloquium is a discussion-oriented seminar where we will work to create a space in which you can discuss your educational experiences. It has two interlinked goals: a place of practical concerns, where you can check in with classmates and instructors about your time at the Academy, and a place of critical reflection on learning itself. Over the course of the semester, we’ll explore the philosophies informing the different disciplines here at the Academy, culminating in a project where you’ll develop your own ideal educational institution. We’ll also have regular times for check-ins to reflect on your actual experience at the Academy, and to provide direction to resources that may benefit you.

**COURSE METHODOLOGY**

While the first two classes of the semester will focus on laying the groundwork, each regular class will follow a specific rhythm. It will start with a brief overview of the article before breaking into small group discussion, in which you’ll share your individual reflections with each other and compose a group discussion document; the second half will merge these group conversations into a whole-class discussion, tackling questions and topics of particular interest. Participation is encouraged at every stage, with small group discussion being especially important; colloquium is, at its heart, about conversation with your peers about your shared experience.

**METHODS OF EVALUATION**

**1. (30%) Individual responses:**

**Before class time each week**, you’ll need to **read the assigned text. You will** **write a short individual reflection in class**, with an emphasis on a.) general comprehension of the article’s main points and b.) specific points which you feel deserve further discussion, especially in the context of your education at the Academy.

These responses must demonstrate your understanding of the article’s argument (and your reflections on it) and have **at least two (2) points of discussion** for your group and the class at large.

**2. (35%) Group discussion:**

Your in-class work will largely take the form of group discussion; your **small groups are especially important** in this regard, since you’ll also be sharing responsibilities for the final project. Your efforts to contribute to your group will constitute a large part of your grade, which will draw upon the testimony of your peers as well as each class’ **group discussion document**.

If you find you’re having trouble contributing sufficiently to your group, or find one of your groupmates is struggling or slipping away, please get in touch with your instructor to help ameliorate the issue. We need to take responsibility for each other’s involvement in colloquium!

**3. (35%) Final Project**

The culmination of our work over the semester–taking up the last four weeks of the course–will be a group project in which you’ll collaboratively design an ideal educational institution. You’ll self-assign roles and take on different tasks in developing this dreamed-up school; the details of the project will be shared in a separate document.

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.

**SCHEDULE**

8/12 - 8/14 -> Draft Discussion Consensus Document

8/19 - 8/21 -> Review Document - Group Assignment - Project Introduction

8/26 - 8/29 -> Learning and Teaching (Rancière Chapter)

**LABOR DAY EXTENDED**

9/2 - 9/4 -> NO COLLOQ

9/9 - 9/11 -> Project Discussion, Role Selection

9/16 - 9/18 -> History (Wineberg Article)

9/23 - 9/25 -> Language & Culture (Borges Story)

9/30 - 10/2 -> Literature (TBD)

**OCTOBER EXTENDED**

10/7 - 10/9 -> NO COLLOQ

10/14 - 10/16 -> Science (TBD)

10/21 - 10/23 -> Math (Hofstadter Chapter)

10/28 - 10/30 -> Check-In - Project Confirmations

11/4 - 11/6 -> Project Work

11/11 - 11/13 -> Project Work

11/18 - 11/20 -> Project Work

**BREAK**

12/2 - 12/4 -> Project Work

12/9 - 12/11 -> Project Work

**FINALS - Project Presentations**

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Class attendance policies:**

**You are expected to attend every class.** Assignments, presentations, projects, and tests missed due to absences will be handled according to the late work policy of this class **(see make-up work and late work policies below).**

**Instructor’s policy on unexcused absences:**

**All work missed due to an unexcused absence will be a zero. This includes in-class activities, in-class writing, and participation in discussions. No make-ups are allowed for unexcused absences. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your participation grade.**

**ATTENDANCE: Colloquium is a discussion-based class that requires your consistent attendance, participation, effort, and engagement. You are required to attend every class.** You need to be in class to participate in class discussions, in-class activities, and to work with your group on your project.There will often be important announcements about your assignments in class. We will be choosing project groups in class and several class periods will be devoted to working with your group. 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 fifteen or more minutes late, you will be marked absent for the day, but you are still encouraged to attend class to participate in group work and class discussions.

**LATE WORK:** Late assignments will not be accepted without an in-person discussion and a clear plan for timely submission. If I do not have your assignment when it is due, and we do not discuss a plan for a brief extension, you risk receiving no credit for it. Please make every effort to make sure assignments are timely, and that you meet the deadlines as outlined in the syllabus. If you must miss a class, plan ahead to get your work in before the deadline. In the case of an excused absence (those deemed so by the school), you will need to contact me promptly to plan to get your missed work in. Extensions are very rare and will be granted only when the school has excused your absence, and we have had an in-person discussion about a plan for timely submission. This discussion must occur before a pre-arranged absence and within a few days for other excused absences, such as absences due to illness. All work missed due to an unexcused absence will be a zero. This includes in-class writing, participation in discussions, group activities, project work, and presentations. I will not credit missing assignments. For missed writing exercises, I’ll expect you to speak to me in office hours about the circumstances of the missing work, and so we can decide on a reasonable timeframe for you to make up those assignments.

Please note that sports practices are not excused absences; you are required to prioritize attending your classes, including Colloquium. If you have a scheduling conflict, please notify me on the first day of class, so that we can find a solution. **Since this discussion-based class only meets once per week, and we will be doing most of the work in class, it is particularly important that you attend all classes.**

**TECHNOLOGY:** Please render your cell phones silent before you enter class, put them out of sight, and refrain from using them in class. Laptop use is not preferred; if you feel a laptop computer is necessary but do not have an official accommodation, please speak to me about your needs.

**BALL STATE UNIVERSITY BENEFICENCE PLEDGE**

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains outstanding faculty, staff, and students. Ball State is committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the varied experiences and worldviews of the people whom we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our Beneficence Pledge. As a reflection of Ball State’s commitment to respect, civil discourse, and the Beneficence Pledge, inclusiveness at the Indiana Academy emerges as one of the priorities of our living and learning community. We strive to exist together respectfully and compassionately, creating an environment where every member can thrive.

**IA WIRELESS DEVICE POLICY**

Pursuant to Indiana Code 20-26-5-40.7, The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics and Humanities prohibits student use of wireless communication devices for non-instructional purposes in the classroom. As such, any and all portable wireless devices that have the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, must only be used for academic purposes directly tied to the classroom activity or related educational task. Exceptions to this wireless device policy are eligible through academic accommodations, individualized education programs, or with instructor approval permitting the use of a wireless device for justification related to health, safety, and/or well-being.

The improper use of a wireless device in an active classroom setting is subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to; a verbal warning, temporary seizure of said device by a school official, an unexcused absence for the class in question, written communication to parent/guardian, among other elevated consequences for repeated improper use.

**INDIANA ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance is mandatory. Students may receive excused absences at the professional discretion of the school nurse, the associate director of mental health services, the associate director of college counseling and student engagement, the director of academic affairs, and the executive director of the Indiana Academy. Unexcused absences occur when students miss class without prior approval from the aforementioned designated school officials. Continued absences (both excused and unexcused) from Academy classes increase the likelihood of unsuccessful completion.

Alongside steady attendance, students are expected to maintain consistent healthy habits of decorum, respect, and kindness towards their classmates, instructors, and teaching assistants. When students fail to meet these classroom behavioral standards and academic habits, it is the expectation that faculty engage appropriately to bring quick and immediate resolution. When students consistently fail to meet these behavioral standards and academic habits in the classroom, an administrative consequence ladder will be adopted, and recorded, in an attempt to administratively address, engage, and rectify ongoing challenges.

**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](https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/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****.**

# **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.

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