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Syllabus

Sunday, August 23

First pre-semester meeting, 1:00

We will introduce ourselves, go over some information for registration, and discuss course planning in terms of majors, concentrations, spikes, and bumps. We will also discuss content- and process-related goals for our class time.

Monday, August 24

Note that these first few days are not normal course meetings.

For today, four short readings to set the stage for course selection:

- **Academics section of Advice for Incoming College Students: A Grinnell Planpoll**
- **William Cronon, "'Only Connect': The Goals of a Liberal Education"**
- **The Grinnell College catalog, Education in the Liberal Arts**
- **Oren Shapira and Nira Liberman, An Easy Way to Increase Creativity**

And a brief video that (indirectly) explains some of the reasoning behind our group blog, our workshops, and some of the other course activities and assignments:

- **Howard Rheingold on essential media literacies**

First blog assignment! Due by **10:00 Monday morning**.

I know your schedules are tight between our first meeting on Sunday and our advising meetings on Monday and Tuesday. Make some time for these readings; use them (with direct quotations or specific references as appropriate) to write a post for our group blog about your course selections. Like the other blog posts for this course, this is a loose assignment; I mean it to be serious but flexible. Tell the rest of us how you relate these readings to your approach to choosing courses, now or in the future. **AFTER** you write about the readings and your general approach, list seven to ten courses for which you might register on Wednesday.

Compose your post in a word processor first. Then post on the blog: sign in to WordPress, and I believe you'll be on the dashboard for The Life of Comedy. (Of not, select it.) Click the "New Post" button in the top right. Then add a subject line and paste your post into the main box. Then go to the "post tage" box on the right and type "advising, liberal arts" (without the quotation marks). Finally, hit the blue "Publish" button on the right. Bingo!

Monday and Tuesday, August 24 and 25

Advising meetings!

PREREGISTRATION CARDS DUE TO THE REGISTRAR BY 3:45 ON TUESDAY

Wednesday, August 26

Post-registration course adjustments in the Harris Center for those who need them, 3:00.

Thursday, August 27

First day of the Tutorial course: overview of assignments of policies, discussion of discussions, ground rules for workshops. No additional reading for today.

Tuesday, September 1

- *MLA Handbook*, chapter 2 on plagiarism
- *Connections* on **Quotation and Citation**

Today's class session will be devoted first to a discussion of quotation practices and second to a group writing contest in which every student needs to have done the readings carefully in order to explain the group's answers. Be ready. And bring the *MLA Handbook* to class.

Thursday, September 3

- Charles Perrault, "Cinderella" and "Blue Beard" (1697, from the fairy tales anthology pp. 449 and 732)
 - The Wikipedia **page** on Cinderella provides a good introduction to the character's history and a useful set of external references.

Note: here and throughout this syllabus, when there are two kinds of readings for a given day, the first (less indented) list of readings is required, while the second (more indented) list of readings is supplemental and optional. Here, for example, the two fairy tales are required readings, but the Wikipedia page is optional.

Group 1 response: Many of you probably knew these stories as children, and most of you probably have not read them recently. (If that description does not match your experience, adjust your response accordingly.) Discuss what you see in fairy tales as grizzled young adults that you do not expect to find in fairy tales. What details jump out at you? How can you make sense of these two stories fitting in the same genre of the "fairy tale"? (tags: group1, response1, fairy tales)

Everyone: Group 1 will post this response to the blog. Everyone (including group 1) will then be able

to click the "response1" tag to see the set of responses, print the set, read it carefully, and bring it to class for discussion. This is the standard procedure for days when a group has written responses.

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

Blog assignment: With the discussion goals handout from Thursday in mind, consider your own history of participating in discussions, in and perhaps out of the classroom. Possible questions to answer: When you speak in discussions, do you have typical ways of speaking? What function do you serve in a group? What might you do differently or better to foster good discussions? (tags: advising, discussion)

Tuesday, September 8

NOTE: Group 2 should read the response assignment before doing the reading.

- Jack Zipes, "Cross-Cultural Connections and the Contamination of the Fairy Tale" (in the fairy tales anthology, p. 845)

Group 2 response: When you do this reading, **FIRST** spend ten minutes (no more!) looking over the article in whatever way you think will help you get a quick understanding of what Zipes is doing. After the ten minutes is up, note your impressions. Then read the article. Then write your response about what you did and did not gather about the piece in your initial ten-minute look at it. (tags: group2, response2, fairy tales)

Thursday, September 10

- Rob Reiner, *The Princess Bride* (1987)

Group 3 response: Following up on the class discussion of fairy tales, write about an element of the film that seems out of place in the simple love

story that structures the plot of *The Princess Bride*. What strikes you as unusual and interesting in the film, and why? (tags: group3, response3, Princess Bride). Since this is a film, you just need to have the posted before the class meets, and you may read it aloud in class to share it with us.

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

- **Lifehacker: 10 Must-dos for the first week of college**
- Mortimer J. Adler, **How to Mark a Book**
- **Lifehacker: Five classic ways to boost your note-taking**
(see the comments, too)
- Margaret Gould Stewart's **notes from a series of TED lectures**

Blog assignment: How do you take notes--when you read, when you are in a small class, when you watch a film for class, when you attend an interesting lecture? Does your method of recording information help you reproduce your memories of what you've seen or heard? How do the readings above make you think you might take notes differently? (tags: advising, note-taking)

Tuesday, September 15

I will be gone today, but I will construct for you a session at the library to get an introduction to its physical and digital holdings.

Your assignment for today is to assemble a calendar of your semester that includes your regular obligations (such as class meetings) and unusual tasks (such as papers and exams). Ideally, your calendar will send you email reminders in advance of unusual tasks; Google's and Yahoo's free calendars will allow you to do that, or you may have a calendar you already use on your computer. Before Thursday's class session, post to our blog a brief report on how your semester looks, especially

noting any serious clusters of exams and papers.
(tags: advising, calendar).

Thursday, September 17

I will be away today; we will have individual advising appointments on Friday in place of a class session today. Your assignment for Thursday, therefore, is to do a blog post looking back at your first post about the liberal arts and course selection. At this early point, how do you see your classes, your extracurricular activities, and your habits developing your new relationship to the liberal arts?
(tags: advising, liberal arts)

Tuesday, September 22

- *Connections*, **Developing a Thesis**
- Ronald de Sousa, "When Is It Wrong to Laugh?"
- V. S. Ramachandran, "A Pain in the Brain"
- **Zach Galifianakis goes to preschool** (4-minute video)

Everyone: Be ready to tell a joke in class. Make it a clean one. Our discussion will focus on the structures of jokes and papers, and what they might have to do with each other.

Everyone: Note that part of your assignment for Thursday is to write a paragraph describing your idea for a paper topic, with a provisional thesis if you have one. We will have individual conferences on Friday to discuss your topics.

Group 1 response: The first of these readings comes from a perspective based mostly in humanistic and social scientific approaches to laughter. The other two describe recent developments in science and, in some ways, social science. Choose one specific moment in one of the readings where the author begins to address an issue that crosses disciplinary

lines. Quote the author and use that moment as the starting point for your response. (tags: group1, response4, laughter)

Thursday, September 24

- Brian Doyle, "Yes"
- **Connections, 30-Point Inspection**

First, read "Yes." Then, read the 30-point inspection. Finally, prepare yourself to discuss a specific moment in "Yes" that illustrates or works against each of these points in the inspection: 5-10, 16-18, 20, 21, and 23-30.

Bring your descriptions of paper ideas to class. We will have brief individual conferences to discuss your paper ideas tomorrow.

Tuesday, September 29

Workshop #1: papers from AW and ZS, with respondents DP and AF.

**FIRST PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR BY 2:00 P.M.**

Writers of papers for Workshop 1 can have an automatic extension until 2:00 Friday.

Thursday, October 1

- William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act I
 - **Shakespeare on the Internet**

Group 2 response: Choose a specific passage that you would like us to discuss in class and explain your choice. (tags: group2, response5, Much Ado)

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

- Scott Adams, **Career Advice**
- Merlin Mann, **The Richard Scarry Book of the Future** (audio podcast from **43 Folders**)

Blog assignment: Write something that imagines a relationship between your college experience and your career experience based on the two readings. (tags: advising, careers)

Tuesday, October 6

- Shakespeare, *Much Ado*, Acts II and III

Group 3 response: Choose a passage that takes our first discussion of the play in a new direction. Explain how your passage relates to our previous discussion and where you think it can take us. (tags: group3, response6, Much Ado)

Thursday, October 8

- Shakespeare, *Much Ado*, Acts IV and V

Group 1 response: Like Group 3 last time, choose a passage that takes our previous discussions of the play in a new direction. Explain how your passage relates to our previous discussions and where you think it can take us. (tags: group1, response7, Much Ado)

**FIRST PAPER REVISION DUE FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 9TH
UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR BY 2:00 P.M.**

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

- Lone Gunman **Validation vs. Correctness**
- APA: **People sometimes seek the truth ...**

Blog assignment: How well do you think you do at seeking correctness rather than validation? How do you (or might you) encounter perspectives that challenge your own? What kind of evidence or perspectives have persuaded you to change your mind in the past? (tags: advising, persuasion)

Tuesday, October 13

- Kenneth Branagh, *Much Ado about Nothing* (1993)
- *Connections* on **Film**

Group 2 response: Discuss some element of Branagh's production that provides an interesting interpretation of a textual moment we discussed in class. Use that element as a way to talk about the way the film interprets the written text we read. Because this is a film, you do not have to observe the usual time for submitting responses; just post your response to the blog sometime before class and bring it to class. You will read it aloud. (tags: group2, response8, Much Ado)

Thursday, October 15

Workshop #2: papers from LB and HS, with respondents ZS and CB.

Note: after break, we'll be reading *Pride and Prejudice* fairly quickly. The reading load will be heavier than usual. You may (but are not required to) get a head start over break.

SECOND PAPER DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16TH UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR BY 2:00 P.M.

Writers of papers for Workshop 2 can have an automatic extension until 2:00 Monday. Because Monday is part of Fall Break, these papers can be submitted by email.

FALL BREAK

Tuesday, October 27

- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, volume I
 - For better or worse, there's nothing else quite like **The Republic of Pemberley**. It explains itself.

Group 3 response: Open response. (tags: group3, response9, Pride and Prejudice)

Thursday, October 29

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, volume II

Group 1 response: Open response. (tags: group1, response10, Pride and Prejudice)

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

Post a full four-year course plan (perhaps as an attached file) and write about a page explaining the choices you made as a blog post. This exercise, like our earlier discussions about long-term course planning, is meant to help you see what it's like to make a set of choices, not to lock you into anything or close off options. We will have individual conferences early next week, and you should bring your course plans, short essays, and backup plans for the spring to your conference.

Tuesday, November 3

We meet at the library today to learn about finding different kinds of research sources. We will use Austen as the basis of our case study. We will also be doing preregistration advising conferences today.

Thursday, November 5

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, volume III

Group 2 response: Open response. (tags: group2, response11, Pride and Prejudice)

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

- Daniel H. Pink, article AND video, **Pecha Kucha: Get to the PowerPoint in 20 Slides Then Sit the Hell Down**
- **Inspiring Non-Scientists** and any presentation of your choice from **TED** (try the "most favorited all time" link)

Blog assignment: Relate the readings to presentations you have given or seen in the past. What possibilities to the readings open up? (tags: advising, presentations)

Tuesday, November 10

- Gurinder Chadha, *Bride and Prejudice*

Group 3 response: Open response. Because this is a film, you do not have to observe the usual time for submitting responses; just post your response to the blog sometime before class and bring it to class. You will read it aloud. (tags: group3, response12, Pride and Prejudice, Bride and Prejudice)

Thursday, November 12

Workshop #3: papers from CB and JT, with respondents WB and LB.

Also note the upcoming film presentation responses.

THIRD PAPER DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR BY 2:00 P.M.

Writers of papers for Workshop 3 can have an automatic extension until 2:00 Monday.

Tuesday, November 17

- Woody Allen, *Manhattan* (1979)

Group 1 oral presentations: Prepare your response as a short oral presentation of the same length as a normal response. As you write it, have in mind that you will be speaking to the class. When we talk about your presentation, we will discuss the effectiveness of the presentation itself as well as the content of your response.

Thursday, November 19

- George Cukor, *The Philadelphia Story* (1940)

Group 2 oral presentations: (This is the same assignment that Group 1 had for Tuesday.) Prepare your response as a short oral presentation of the same length as a normal response. As you write it, have in mind that you will be speaking to the class. When we talk about your presentation, we will discuss the effectiveness of the presentation itself as well as the content of your response.

When you're feeling thoughtful between classes--Friday, over the weekend, or Monday

- Grinnellian (and Simpson tutee!) **Adam Beals on Lesotho**
- Grinnellian (and Simpson tutee!) **Jan Koszewski on New Orleans**
- Economist **Tyler Cowen on Japan**

Blog assignment: Responding to some of the readings, post your musings on experiences with other cultures. Those could be experiences you've had, are having, or want to have. (tags: advising, other cultures)

Tuesday, November 24

- John Landis, *Trading Places*, 1993

Group 3 oral presentations: (This is the same assignment that Groups 1 and 2 had last week.)

Prepare your response as a short oral presentation of the same length as a normal response. As you write it, have in mind that you will be speaking to the class. When we talk about your presentation, we will discuss the effectiveness of the presentation itself as well as the content of your response.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tuesday, December 1

Workshop #4: papers from WB, AM, and TK, with respondents TC, JT, and AW.

Thursday, December 3

Workshop #5: papers from TC, DP, and AF, with respondents AM, TK, and HS.

**FOURTH PAPER DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH
UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR BY 2:00 P.M.**

**Writers of papers for Workshop 5 can have an
automatic extension until 2:00 Monday.**

Tuesday, December 8

Day 1 of portfolio presentations

Thursday, December 10

Day 2 of portfolio presentations

**PORTFOLIOS DUE WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 16TH, 3:00 P.M.**