
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR (FYS) - GETTING SCHOOLED: THE PROMISES AND PROBLEMS OF COLLEGE IN AMERICA

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

The first-year seminar course, "Getting Schooled: The Promises and Problems of College in America" is designed for students in their first semester at the university—either as first-year students or entering transfer students. Although taught in a traditional format—face-to-face, twice a week—it brings several unusual approaches to the first-year seminar (FYS) framework.

Although many institutions offer a course called "First-Year Seminar" that is primarily focused on study skills and carries partial credit, here I describe what has sometimes been called the "academic content" FYS— one that offers a full-credit course, rich with content, and taught by faculty. Academic-content first-year seminars have long been a staple of both the undergraduate curriculum and student retention initiatives at many colleges, especially liberal arts-focused colleges and universities. Usually intended to be small and intimate, with 15-18 students, FYS courses serve as an entry point into engaged forms of learning grounded in reading, discussing, and writing about ideas, and they aim to offer students plenty of direct access to seasoned faculty. Many first-year seminars are organized around multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary topics. At some universities, all sections have the same content and assignments, but others offer a range of special topics developed by individual faculty that students may select from. The example I discuss below comes from a university that uses the special topics approach.

Because this FYS course follows a structure in place at numerous universities, many elements of the course are not unique, and the course could be translated into many institutions with similar FYS programs. It differs, however, in some of its strategies. Its distinctiveness comes from two elements: a) topic and content; and b) assignment structures.

CONTENT FOCUSED ON INEQUITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The first distinctive element of this FYS course is its content. This course takes higher education itself as its subject matter. To do so, it focuses on three questions of personal and public significance about higher education, each forming a major unit of the course.

Unit 1 dives into the access and equity issues at the heart of the question, "Who Gets to Go to College?" It includes debates about unequal preparations in America's public and private K-12 schools, admissions and testing policies (including affirmative action) that define what counts as "merit" for entrance, costs and financial aid structures that decide who can afford to attend, the growing problem of student debt

loads, and student demographic trends that result from all of these factors and policies. This unit particularly foregrounds questions about equity and justice, including the many class, racial and ethnic, religious, and ableist disparities that have plagued college access in America.

Unit 2 focuses on the controversies surrounding the question, "What is the Purpose of College?" This unit foregrounds competing visions for the goals of postsecondary education, especially tensions between civic ideals that hold education as a public good for both nation and world and competing claims that college is a private economic good that mainly benefits individuals; debates about whether college is worth the rising costs; and the ongoing question of whether colleges should focus on preparing students more narrowly for employment or rather (and also) on offering a broad-based, liberal education. This lens also connects to the previous question of who college is for—whether all students should be enabled to go to college, or whether vocational and other post-secondary education options might be just as valuable.

Finally, Unit 3 focuses on controversies around the question, "What (and How) Should Students Learn in College?," including the dramatically different curricula that colleges require (but about which most parents and students are ignorant), especially in general education, the wide variances in teaching and student support models, and the ongoing debates about the knowledge and skills colleges should teach regardless of major.

This topic may seem a strange one to give to students just beginning their own college journeys. Foregrounding the problems that surround higher education is eye opening and sometimes unsettling for first-year students, especially those who have just taken on significant debt to attend. Based on my experiences teaching the course, however, I have found that learning about and entering these conversations is ultimately empowering to students. Because of its relevance to students' own educations, the course enables them to make immediate connections between their own personal educational journeys and the course materials. Because they bring their own experiences to the table—their existing "funds of knowledge," as education researchers call them—they also have increased authority to speak, even as first-year students, because they know aspects of this subject intimately (Moll et al. 1992; Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti 2006). Moreover, gaining vocabulary, labels, theory, and data can help them put into perspective the often confusing or opaque aspects of how college is structured and how their own experiences have unfolded.

Finally, because the research and writing assignments in this course ask them to study and then take a position on a current issue in higher education policy, they begin practicing the skills needed to advocate for a better future—for themselves and for others. Students have had the chance to enthusiastically research, write, and argue about topics that were close to their own hearts: debates about race in admissions, calls for more faculty of color in schools and colleges, the workings of public K-12 school finance and its impact on inequality, how the FAFSA's complexity affects first-generation students with high financial need, how some high schools prioritize funding sports over core academics, how the college-for-all movement impacts students who do not wish to pursue college, or why high schools need more college counselors.

As I have organized it, the content of the course is flexible and can be adapted in response to emerging current events. For example, when the college admissions scandal broke in the summer of 2019, I updated the "Who Gets to Go to College" portion of the course with articles and debates about the role of parental influence and money in college admissions. When a local school district began re-zoning and closing K-12 schools in an effort to address costs while correcting racial and class disparities, I added coverage from

the local NPR station about the issue, including the voices of parents and students. Though some texts serve as "core" texts from semester to semester, the course topic can be adapted for timely or regional contexts.

ASSIGNMENTS – MULTI-MODAL READING AND WRITING

The other distinctive feature of this course is the assignment structure. Two activities, in particular, further FYS goals in unique ways. The first structures an approach to teaching reading as a social and writing-oriented activity. The second uses podcasting as an approach to translating formal academic writing for broader audiences.

First, critical reading is taught through an ongoing set of annotation assignments. Because FYS courses aim to cultivate the skills valued at liberal arts-focused institutions, they often emphasize critical reading, discussion, and writing as core activities. This course scaffolds college-level reading skills by using digital, social annotation tools to make critical reading a visible and shared project. For all digital course texts, students socially annotate the text using the tool Hypothesis (though other tools, such as Perusall, could also work). For films or printed texts, students socially annotate chapters or text sections in shared small-group Google docs.

Having students annotate their readings in shared, visible spaces can help slow down their reading and enable closer, more detail- and argument-oriented reading. This practice can also help them later, as they begin writing their own essays, to construct arguments that are grounded in evidence from the readings. Regularly using social annotation tools can also help students begin to see that learning and knowledge-building are iterative, developmental, even inductive processes, and that these processes rely on conversation and engagement with others (Sievers 2021). Students have routinely reported in end-of-class surveys that the annotation component of the course helps them prepare for class discussions, holds them accountable for getting the reading done, deepens their learning, and helps them begin to learn from one another.

Second, writing is scaffolded by pairing a traditional research paper with a group podcast project. Because they are surrounded in college by others who have direct experience with many course topics, the podcast project requires students to conduct interviews with other students, faculty, parents, and staff and include these voices when making arguments about higher education. Students have conducted interviews at other area colleges as well, including a major public university, a community college system, and a minority-serving institution, in addition to interviewing at their own small, private, predominantly white institution. Because the podcast topics are tied to their academic research papers, they also build upon and reference the knowledge they have gained through traditional academic work. Podcast episodes are compiled into a series and published to the course's page on Soundcloud. While this assignment was tailored to serve my course's specific goals, it built upon others' explorations of podcasting as a form of writing pedagogy (Bowie 2012; Bruff 2017; 2018; 2019; Cushman and Kelly 2018; Danforth, Stedman, and Faris 2018; Hicks, Winnick, and Gonchar 2018; National Public Radio 2018).

When I introduce the podcast assignment, I tell students why they are doing it: "This assignment will expand your communication and argumentation skills beyond written papers. You will learn to make and support arguments in audio—using your own voice and those of others as well as sounds and music—to engage a broader, public audience. Podcasts are a journalism genre, and you will learn to do research

beyond the library, which will help ground your final essay. Finally, you will deepen your expertise in an aspect of our course topic that matters to you." Students ultimately say that the podcast project is one of the most meaningful, if challenging, parts of the course. Their voices and interests come through in a very different way here than in their formal academic writing, and the knowledge that their podcasts, if complete, will go public on a platform they know, Soundcloud, lends immediacy to the assignment. In their end-of-course evaluations, this project is the one that they cite as the most valuable part of the course.

These two elements—the content focused on higher education problems and assignments that help students critically respond to others' writing and then contribute back to the conversation through a podcast—are designed to center students' expertise as participants and agents in the world they are studying and writing about. The content gives students an entirely new framework to use when moving through their own college experiences, and the skills they develop help them understand that college's ultimate goal is not to stuff their heads with knowledge but to empower them to become active participants and advocates in the world.

PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES IN CONTEXT

The course, as described in this essay, should translate easily into other institutional contexts, but it may be helpful to understand the context in which it was first developed, including a few distinctive features of this institution's FYS approach. At this small liberal arts college (with a total student population of about 1,500 students), FYS courses generally have 16-20 students per section, with a total of about 25 sections, and are almost exclusively taught by tenure-line or tenured faculty. Required components of FYS are overseen by a faculty committee and, while faculty have latitude in shaping their section's content and assignments, faculty development activities encourage a shared vision for course goals and pedagogy. FYS is one of the only shared experiences in the curriculum for students, since the university has a cafeteria-style structure for general education requirements.

One of the most distinctive features of this institution's FYS program is the summer / orientation week integration. FYS courses get started with reading and writing during the summer, though the amount varies by instructor. They then meet daily during orientation week—the week before the rest of the college's courses begin—for a total of 12 contact hours that week. Thereafter, FYS courses meet in-person, twice a week, for 75 minutes. Because of the intensive beginning, the course ends about 1 month before the regular semester ends. Altogether, however, this course has the same number of total contact hours as a traditional semester-long course, and the content and activities listed below can be made to fit a regular semester schedule by spreading the summer and first week content and activities across the first month of the semester and by revising the assignment deadlines.

While expanding students' communication toolkits could be useful in many contexts, it felt particularly important here due to another contextual factor: the institution's focus on disciplinary writing. Although this FYS program includes writing among its list of core learning goals and expectations, it is not considered to be a foundational course in the writing curriculum, and the writing elements vary widely by section (unlike some institutions where FYS follows a more uniform approach to teaching writing, as outlined, for example, in Gretchen Flesher Moon's (2003) discussion of FYS in a Writing-across-the-Curriculum program). There is no other required first-year composition course, however. Instead, the university exclusively uses a writing-in-the-disciplines approach. The departments take the lead in this approach,

and there is no central writing program administrator. Departments are to ensure that students encounter at least two writing-intensive courses in their majors. Because of this focus, FYS may be a student's only writing-rich course not focused on their major's writing conventions. My sense was that students needed practice writing for audiences outside their major, and even outside academia, if they wanted to engage social problems like those confronting higher education. FYS seemed an ideal place to practice such forms of writing— an argument Doug Brent (2005) also makes when suggesting that FYS courses can free up space to focus on academic skills that get sidelined in disciplinary courses (262).

Finally, in a course largely about issues of access and equity at a rapidly diversifying institution, inclusive approaches proved important. Throughout, this course draws on a growing literature about inclusive pedagogy ("Inclusive Pedagogy"), but three strategies are worth noting regarding materials shared here. First, the course used scaffolded and transparent assignment strategies, which have been shown to improve student outcomes, especially among less-prepared populations, by clarifying the purpose and tasks involved in successfully completing assignments (Winkelmes et al. 2016). Second, in all written and spoken contexts, I cultivated a welcoming and supportive rather than punitive tone, emphasizing that the course was challenging but that students could meet the challenge and I would help them do so, an approach that has been shown to give students more confidence and to reduce stereotype threat (Cohen et al. 1999; Verschelden 2017). Finally, the activities described below routinely use discussion frameworks that gave students multiple lower-stakes ways to try out ideas before asking them to move into higher-stakes discussion and argumentation environments, such as having online annotation conversations structured into small groups, rather than in a whole-class format, or giving students chances to do informal writing about their ideas before asking them to develop arguments in class or in higher-stakes written assignments. These approaches tend to generate much broader participation rates and build confidence.

SYLLABUS FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR – GETTING SCHOOLED: THE PROMISES AND PROBLEMS OF COLLEGE IN AMERICA

OVERVIEW

Americans have long agreed that a college education is key to a good future. But a growing number of critics argue that college is over-rated, too expensive, too exclusive, and teaches the wrong things. What really is the purpose of college? Is it worth the cost, and why is it so expensive? Who should go, and how do we make access fair? And what should students learn there?

Our texts will encompass the origins and history of higher education in America, essays by faculty and students, first-hand reporting, documentary films, as well as primary sources and data about students, teaching, and institutions. The course will focus on three major questions: 1) What is the purpose of college?; 2) Who should (get to) go to college?; and 3) What (and how) should students learn in college? Your experiences as a college student will serve as foundational expertise for incorporating new knowledge and finding your own voice.

In this first-year seminar, grappling with these questions will help you develop essential academic skills. Our primary goal is to develop as readers, writers, thinkers, researchers, and participants in public conversations. You will learn research, analysis, and documentation skills useful for your academic careers. You will practice argumentation and communication techniques and explore your personal

voice—skills useful in your future professional life. And you will grow familiar with the drafting and revising processes useful for all of your future projects. In order to learn all of these skills, you will perform many small assignments over the course of the semester, in addition to the larger projects.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

BY THE END OF THE SEMESTER, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

- *Know and understand major controversies in higher education;*
- *Evaluate problems and solutions in higher education, especially major ethical and practical problems facing students, parents, and higher education institutions in America;*
- *Read critically*—not just comprehending the text but also using it to interpret significant concepts or make connections among concepts. You'll also practice evaluating the text's logic, assumptions, and rhetorical effects;
- *Think critically and creatively*, by interpreting evidence; identifying key arguments, ideas, and ideologies; analyzing and evaluating your own assumptions and beliefs; and creating new knowledge or providing new perspectives.
- *Participate in informed discussions* by listening to and engaging others' perspectives and basing your contributions on information and preparation;
- *Write & communicate effectively*, including developing clear arguments, supporting assertions with evidence and explanations, organizing your points, and using language and communication media strategically;
- *Engage in basic research* drawing on principles of information literacy

THE MISSION OF FYS

The mission of FYS is to help the new student begin to practice an education that arcs over the whole course of the student's experience and across the curriculum, connecting the questions and perspectives one encounters and the skills one develops to each other and to the world. It is a concurrent rather than preliminary experience, focused on exploratory topics or themes that help students think about what they are learning in their other classes and their larger education. Seminars introduce and reflect upon intellectual skills common to the liberal arts: formulating cogent questions, forging connections between methods of inquiry, recognizing and challenging assumptions, seeking out and listening to multiple perspectives, and rethinking the role of reading, writing, and discussion in inquiry and student-centered learning.

REQUIRED TEXTS & TOOLS

TEXTS:

- Lunsford, Andrea A. and John J. Ruszkiewicz. 2016. *Everything's an Argument*. 7th edition. New York: Bedford / St. Martin's.

- Goldrick-Rab, Sarah. 2016. *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Delbanco, Andrew. 2012. *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*. Princeton University Press.
- Texts (readings and films) in Moodle

TOOLS:

- [Hypothes.is](https://www.hypothes.is/) is a (free) web annotation tool that we will use extensively this semester.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

- **SUMMER ASSIGNMENT**: reading responses + personal slide show – 5% / 25 pts
- **ANNOTATIONS** – 20% / 100 pts
- **ENGAGEMENT & SKILL-BUILDING PROCESSES** – 15% / 75 pts
 - Attendance
 - Writing-process & technique activities
 - Discussion- in-class and online
- **ESSAY: DEFINE A PROBLEM & PROPOSE A SOLUTION** – 30% / 150 pts
- **PODCAST EPISODE: EXPLORE THE PROBLEM / SOLUTION** – 20% / 100 pts
- **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY** – 10% / 50 pts

= 500 pts

Full descriptions of each major assignment will be provided. Short descriptions are below.

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

Over the summer, you will read a variety of articles and listen to podcasts from the unit of our course focused on "Who Should (Get to) Go to College?" You will write two short responses to the reading and make a brief slide show about yourself and your own educational experiences.

ANNOTATIONS

As you read, you will practice social annotation in your responses to texts. For one text this semester, you will serve as the annotation guide, developing discussion questions that others will respond to as they read.

ENGAGEMENT & SKILL-BUILDING PROCESSES

The most basic form of engagement is showing up for class. Additionally, you will practice discussion skills both through in-class and occasional online discussions, and we will practice writing and communication skills through a series of activities.

ESSAY: DEFINE A PROBLEM & PROPOSE A SOLUTION

You will write one analytical and research-based essay this semester, but you will do it in two stages. In the first stage, you will identify an issue or problem in higher education that needs more attention. To explore this issue, you will not need to do external research. Rather, you will draft and revise an argument using materials we have

read in class. Later in the semester, you will return to your topic and draft a proposal argument, in which you propose a possible solution to the problem you have identified. This second stage will add a library research component.

PODCAST: EXPLORE YOUR PROBLEM / SOLUTION

In a small group with other students, you will develop a short podcast episode about a course topic that is connected to your essay topic in some way. The podcast project will help you take your work beyond the classroom and out into the world, where it can have a broader impact. The podcast will be shared at the First Symposium and posted online as part of our class's podcast feed.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For your essay, you will submit an annotated bibliography, providing both information about and evaluations of the sources you used.

ATTENDANCE

Your learning benefits substantially from attending class. Our class meetings will also be participatory and interactive, and your presence is needed to make these discussions substantive!

- **BONUS POINTS:** Anyone with perfect attendance will have 3 points added to the final grade. And anyone who misses only one class will have 2 pts added to the final grade.
- **WITHDRAWAL:** Students who miss more than six classes without an excused absence may be assigned a WA (Withdrawal because of Absences) by the last day to drop a class.
- **EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Students presenting documentation for medical illness, intercollegiate athletics, class-related field trips, ensemble tours, interviews at graduate schools, or faculty-sponsored attendance at professional conferences will be excused from classes and have the option of making up assignments missed.
- **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:** I welcome students from a variety of religious and cultural traditions. If you expect to be absent due to cultural and religious observances: a) as far in advance as possible, notify me of the class(es) to be missed; and b) learn what assignments or exams are due and negotiate with me alternate times for fulfilling those requirements.

LATE WORK

- If you have an upcoming conflict and wish to request an extension on an assignment, I encourage you to see me *ahead of time*. I am happy to accommodate reasonable requests for extensions - but I require at least 48 hours advance notice.
- All other assignments should be submitted on time. For late work due to an unexcused absence, assignments will be accepted up to 7 days (week days, not class days) after the due date, but will be penalized. Assignments will be penalized 2% of the total points for each day late.
- LATE PASS: For most assignments, you have one free "LATE PASS" of 72 hours to use when you run into trouble. You do not have to explain yourself! Just tell me you wish to use the pass.

DISABILITIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

All students are welcome in this course, including students with learning, emotional, physical, cognitive, and/or hidden disabilities, illnesses, and injuries, regardless of diagnosis.

Access is a collective and collaborative project, and we all learn and process information differently; it is my goal to make this course as accessible as possible for everyone. If there is anything I or your classmates can do to facilitate your learning in this class, please let me know, and I welcome any suggestions for how to make the course more inclusive. It is never too late to have this conversation with me; not only do bodies, minds, and circumstances change over time, but it also can take time to find the language needed to describe your needs. I am happy to help with this process, too.

If you have documentation from the Center for Academic Success for specific accommodations, please let me know in advance of your needs. With or without documentation, we can discuss how to improve your access to course material and explore different possibilities for learning. If you have questions about documentation and accommodations, please contact the Center for Academic Success. (This statement is heavily indebted to Kafer 2018).

SCHEDULE

CONTROVERSY 1: WHO GETS TO GO TO COLLEGE?

	<i>Reading/Viewing Due</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
SUMMER		
<i>Due by one week before new student orientation</i>	<p><i>Access to college degrees - takes on defining controversies from multiple angles:</i></p> <p><i>Alana Semuels. 2016. "Good School, Rich School; Bad School, Poor School: The Inequality at the Heart of America's Education System." The Atlantic. August 26.</i></p> <p><i>Nikole Hannah-Jones. 2015. "The Problem We All Live With: Parts 1 and 2." This American Life. National Public Radio.</i></p> <p><i>Eric Hoover. 2017. "Where the Journey to College is No Fairy Tale." The Chronicle of Higher Education.</i></p> <p><i>Jaye & Adam Fenderson. 2018. Unlikely.</i></p> <p><i>More Perfect. 2017. "The Architect." [Podcast]</i></p> <p><i>Yee, Vivian. 2017. "Affirmative Action Policies Evolve, Achieving Their Own Diversity." New York Times, April 5.</i></p> <p><i>Elissa Nadworny and Anya Kamanetz. 2019. "Does It Matter Where You Go To College? Some Context for the Admissions Scandal." National Public Radio. March 13.</i></p>	<i>See summer assignment for details on what to submit.</i>

	<p>Masha Gessen. 2019. "How I Would Cover the College-Admissions Scandal as a Foreign Correspondent." <i>The New Yorker</i>. March 13.</p> <p>Look up your high school's data in <i>GreatSchools.org</i>. Pay extra attention to college readiness and equity sections.</p>	
<p>Week 1 - Intensive 12-contact-hour Week during Orientation - for universities that do not employ this format, the summer and Week 1 activities should be spread across the first month of the regular semester, with writing and project deadlines adjusted.</p>		
<p>Mon, Aug 19 10-12</p>	<p>Introduction to course and to one another</p> <p>Curzan, Ann. "20 Things Students Say Help Them Learn." <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>. Oct 11, 2016.</p>	
<p>Tues, Aug 20 9-12</p>	<p>Cox, Gregor, Amanda Aisch, and Kevin Quealy, "You Draw It: How Family Income Predicts Children's College Chances." <i>The New York Times</i>, May 28.</p> <p>"A Profile of Freshmen at 4-Year Colleges, Fall 2016." 2017 <i>Almanac</i>. <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>.</p> <p>Myers, Ben and Joshua Hatch. 2016. "50 Years of College Students." <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>. Dec 21.</p> <p>Wesch, Michael. 2007. "A Vision of Students Today." YouTube</p> <p>In-class viewing: Rossi, Andrew. 2014. <i>Ivory Tower</i>. part 1</p>	<p>Due by class: Hypothes.is account set up Syllabus quiz</p>
<p>Wed, Aug 21 10-12</p>	<p>Goldrick-Rab, Sara. <i>Paying the Price</i> - Intro + Chapter 1 (pp 1-38)</p>	<p>Due by class: Summer essays & video shared with small group</p>
<p>Thur, Aug 22 9-12</p>	<p>Watch summer slide shows from your small group members</p> <p>Princeton University Center for Teaching and Learning, "Participating in Class Discussions: Contributions That Count"</p> <p>In-class: watch <i>Ivory Tower</i>, part 2</p>	<p>Bring your laptop or phone</p> <p>Due by 5 pm: topic proposal for Essay part 1</p>
<p>Fri, Aug 23</p>	<p>Goldrick-Rab, <i>Paying the Price</i> - Chapter 2 (pp 39-65)</p>	

10-12		Sign up for annotation guide slots.
Week 2		
Tues, Aug 27	Gladwell, Malcolm, <i>Revisionist History</i> . "Food Fight" - Season 1, Ep. 5 and "My Little Hundred Million" - Season 1, Ep. 6 <i>Everything's an Argument</i> , ch. 7, 121-149 & ch. 11, 240-262.	
Thur, Aug 29	Goldrick-Rab, <i>Paying the Price</i> - Chapter 3 (pp 39-65) In-class: Mellow, Gail. "The Biggest Misconception about Today's College Students." <i>The New York Times</i> . Aug 28, 2017. "Some Colleges Have More Students From the Top 1 Percent than the Bottom 60. Find Yours." <i>The New York Times</i> . Jan 18, 2017. Institutional research data from the university about the university's own student demographics.	
Week 3		
Tues, Sept 3	<i>Everything's an Argument</i> , ch. 20, "Using Sources," 436-453 and ch. 21, "Plagiarism and Academic Integrity," 455-463. In-class: Peer review workshop for Essay part 1	Due by class: Essay (pt 1) full draft Due in class: Revision plans based on peer rfeedback Sign up for essay conferences
Thur, Sept 5	Goldrick-Rab, <i>Paying the Price</i> - Chapters 4 (pp 83-118) Check <i>Everything's an Argument</i> , ch. 22, "Documenting Sources" - MLA	Due before class: WC Online account set up
Fri, Sept 6		Due by 5 pm: Final Essay part 1

CONTROVERSY 2: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF COLLEGE?

<i>Reading/Viewing Due</i>		
Week 4		
<i>Tues, Sept 10</i>	<p><i>Delbanco, Andrew. College. Intro, pp. 1-8 + Ch. 1: "What is College For?", sects 1, 4, 5, 6</i></p> <p><i>Menand, Louis. 2011. "Live and Learn: Why We Have College." The New Yorker, June 6</i></p>	
<i>Thur, Sept 12</i>	<p><i>Nussbaum, Martha. 1994. "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." Boston Review. July 6.</i></p> <p><i>Elements of Podcasts (choose 1 or 2 to listen to) - to prepare for podcast project</i></p>	<i>Due by class: review of podcast samples</i>
<i>Fri, Sept 13</i>		<i>Due by 5 pm: podcast planning worksheet</i>
Week 5		
<i>Tues, Sept 17</i>	<p><i>Nelson, Stanley and Marco Williams. 2017. Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities. PBS Independent Lens. -film</i></p> <p><i>Carol Dweck, "The Power of Believing That You Can Improve"</i></p>	
<i>Thur, Sept 19</i>	<p><i>NO CLASS -- Field trips to conduct interviews with students at other area colleges:</i></p> <p><i>Alternative: video call interviews</i></p>	
Week 6		
<i>Tues, Sept 24</i>		

	<i>Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1837. "The American Scholar: An Oration Delivered Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1837."</i>	
Thur, Sept 26	<i>Everything's an Argument, ch. 12, "Proposals," 272-293 Delbanco, Colledge. Ch. 2: "Origins"</i>	<i>Due at 5 pm: Podcast script</i>

CONTROVERSY 3: WHAT (AND HOW) SHOULD STUDENTS LEARN IN COLLEGE?

	<i>Reading/Viewing Due</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
Week 7		
Tues, Oct 1	<i>Arum, Richard, and Josipa Roksa. 2011. "Your So-Called Education." The New York Times, May 14. Association of American Colleges & Universities. 2007. College Learning for the New Global Century. A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise. Read the introduction, part 1, and part 2. In class: AAC&U VALUE Rubrics</i>	<i>Join your NEW Hypothesis group to post annotations</i>
Thur, Oct 3	<i>Podcast showcase</i>	<i>Due in class: Podcast final episode + other components</i>
Week 8		
Tues, Oct 8	<i>Everything's an Argument, ch. 2-4 (Pathos, Ethos, and Logos), pp. 28-38, 40-48, and 51-70 In class: Library research session</i>	<i>Due in class: Topic proposal + outline for Essay part 2</i>
Thur, Oct 10	<i>PBS. 2005. Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk.</i>	

	<i>Watch on your own or get together with classmates!</i>	
Week 9		
<i>Tues, Oct 15</i>	FALL BREAK	
<i>Thur, Oct 17</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>In-class: peer review of Essay part 2</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In-class: Comparing two styles of core curriculum:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Columbia University Core Curriculum.</i> https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/lithum.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Brown University Open Curriculum.</i> https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/curriculum</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Due in class: Essay part 2 full draft</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Due by end of class: Revision plans based on peer review feedback</i></p>
Week 10		
<i>Mon, Oct 21</i>		<i>Due 5 pm: Combined essay full draft</i>
<i>Tues, Oct 22</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Goldrick-Rab, Paying the Price - chapter 7, pgs 164-91</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Note: You may also be interested in chapter 10, though it is not required. But if you're curious about possible ways to solve the affordability crisis, this is where Goldrick-Rab advances her own proposal arguments. See esp. pp. 242 - 252.]</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Everything's an Argument, Ch. 19, "Evaluating Sources," 427-435</i></p>	
<i>Thur, Oct 24</i>	<i>Delbanco, Ch. 6: "What Is To Be Done?" (sections: 1, 2, 4, 5)</i>	
<i>Fri, Oct 25</i>		<i>Due by 5 pm: Annotated bibliography</i>
Week 11		

Tues, Oct 29	<p>Wesch, Michael. 2010. "From Knowledgeable to Knowledge-able." TEDx.</p> <p>Koller, Daphne. 2012. "What We Are Learning from Online Education." TEDTalks.</p> <p><i>In-class: writing workshop on intros, conclusions, transitions.</i></p>	
Thur, Oct 31	<p><i>Final Class Day: Informal proposal presentations + reflection</i></p>	<p><i>Due 5 pm on Saturday, Nov 2: Combined final essay</i></p>
FINAL EXAM: NONE		

ASSIGNMENT: SOCIAL ANNOTATIONS

Summary

For one text this term, you will serve as the annotation guide and reporter. For every other text we read or listen to, you will annotate it in a shared space.

Components

- Guide annotations + class report
- Response annotations

Goal

This assignment aims to strengthen your ability to read critically, meaning that you not only understand what you are reading but also ask questions about it, connect it to your existing knowledge, and evaluate its arguments. Through the annotations you write, you will also develop your own ideas and arguments about texts – work that will show up in your writing and podcast projects. With *social* annotation, you also learn from your classmates, by seeing their questions, ideas, and arguments.

Requirements

1. Be an ANNOTATION RESPONDER for every text this term.

For every online text, students will be annotation responders unless they are the guide for that text. You will add 10 annotations to each text. They should include:

- brief responses to the 4 guide questions**, posted as replies. Guide questions are posted to the text or the annotation document at least 4 days before the day in which the reading is due.
- + 5 or more additional annotations of your choice**, which may include:
 - **connection**: Connect an idea or example from the text to something else: either something we have studied in class (from a reading, film, or podcast, or an idea raised by a classmate) or something you've experienced in your own life.

- **question:** A question annotation could include:
- **playing devil's advocate** by challenging the author's argument or examples (for example, "These cases all come from large, public, state universities, but is this really a problem at small colleges?")
- **expressing curiosity** about something you read (for example, "If that's true in Connecticut, I wonder what policy makers are doing in Texas?")
- **reaction:** share your experience of reading about the topic. For example, "I'm really surprised about this paragraph. I thought . . ." or "Yes, that is so true! That happened to me." Or "No, I disagree. I think the problem is actually ____."
- **synthesis:** synthesize what you found most significant from the reading.

2. Be the ANNOTATION GUIDE for ONE text this term. Guides will:

- Read the text completely at least 4 days before the reading is due.
- Add 4 "guide" annotations visible to your group at least 4 days before the reading is due.
- Spread your guide questions across the text
- Report back to the whole class on the questions + your group's responses and other annotations - This job entails reading through *everyone's* annotations on the text before class meets to discuss your text and making notes of the key points from the annotations. At the beginning of class, you will summarize the key points that your group discussed.

Write at least one guide question for each of the 3 question categories:

1: Identify at least 1 passage that seems to encapsulate a key argument, main idea, or major question raised by the text. For each, pose a question about the argument. Here are some options:

- Your question could take the form of exploring the argument: "The author says that complex financial aid processes keep students from attending college. What should be done about this?"
- OR, you could challenge or question the argument: "The author says complicated financial aid processes keep students from attending college and that states should do more. Is this the responsibility of the states, or should colleges themselves provide better financial aid?"
- OR, you could ask students to connect the argument to other texts or voices. "The author says that complex financial aid processes keep some students from attending college. Does this contradict what Gladwell argues about Bowdoin's vs. Vassar's financial aid policies?"

2: Identify at least 1 passage that, for whatever reason, you want to students to consider further and pose a question. You might write: "Wow. This is an important example and really made me stop to consider this issue in a new light. What did you think when you read this?"

3: Identify at least 1 place to play devil's advocate with the text and ask others to respond. For example: "Here she says that everyone needs to get some kind of training after high school. But is that really true? What about people who just want to do a trade?"

GRADING

Annotation Responder – Grading total = 10 points (per day annotations are due)

- +1 pt for each annotation
- -1 pt if you don't have at least one for each of the 3 categories (connection, question, reaction) or include the synthesis annotation

- late penalties apply

Annotation Guide - Grading *total = 10 points*

- +2 pts for each guide question
- +2 pts for summarizing group discussion for class
- -1 if you don't have at least one for each of the 3 categories (critical question, further consideration question, devil's advocate question) or if you don't spread them across the text

Calculating total points:

- *Taking the best 10 of 11:* You have the option to either *skip one* annotation activity, or you may do them all and I will *drop your lowest score*.

ASSIGNMENT: PODCAST

Due Dates

<i>Planning worksheet</i>	Sat, Sept 14, 5p
<i>Interviews</i>	Sept 15-26
<i>Script - final</i>	Thu, Sept 26, 5p
<i>Final mp3 & materials</i>	Thu, Oct 3, class

Goal

This assignment will expand your communication and argumentation skills beyond written papers. You will learn to make and support arguments in audio—using your own voice and those of others as well as sounds and music—to engage a broader, public audience. Podcasts are a journalism genre, and you will learn to do research beyond the library, which will help ground your final essay. Finally, you will deepen your expertise in an aspect of our course topic that matters to you.

Summary

In a 7-10-minute podcast episode, your group will identify a problem or need related to higher education in America and explore it, producing an engaging audio essay for a general audience.

Submission Components

- Script
- Audio mp3 file
- Producer's statement (include references)
- Show notes
- Cover photograph

REQUIREMENTS

Tell a story that defines or explores a problem related to one of our course topics

Support your narrative with evidence. After laying out your thesis, you should support your argument with relevant evidence. For this course, two types of evidence may be necessary:

a) *Evidence from 3 or more course texts or additional, outside sources.* You can use:

- data or examples included in the texts
- arguments (reasons, logic) included in the texts
- quotations from experts

b) *Evidence from interviews or field work* Conduct at least two interviews or a survey or other field research about issues related to your problem or solution.

Make sure you offer enough evidence, and the right kind, for each point you make.

Discuss and Explain. It is not enough to include evidence for your points or key topics. You need to discuss them, explaining why and how they support your thesis. (Consider how Malcolm Gladwell discusses and breaks down what he thinks is important about the audio interview clips he includes from his various guests.)

Follow an organized sequence.

- a) *An introduction* - that gets your listeners' attention and guides them into the topic
- b) *A well-organized body* - that sequences the sub-topics you wish to discuss in a logical order, with focused discussions of key ideas or issues, and with clear transitions between ideas
- c) *A conclusion* that discusses the implications of your observations, points to future directions for the controversy or research related to your problem, or identifies some possible solutions to your problem.

Use radio-friendly English, including "non-standard" grammar, if appropriate, but avoiding offensive language.

Format:

- Submitted in an mp3 file
- Contain 7-10 minutes of audio

Additional Components:

SCRIPT

You will submit a complete script before you begin recording the podcast.

SHOW NOTES

Show notes consist of a text summary of your episode suitable for posting on Soundcloud, along with your references.

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Complete a brief (200 to 400 word) producer's statement, in which you reflect on the choices you made creating your podcast episode.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

This photograph will accompany your episode if it is published. You may take a photograph of your team, of a college-related object / building, or choose another image to represent your episode.

Podcast – Grading Criteria			Your Name	
	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Very good
Content (30 pts)	0-3	3.5	4	5
Explores a problem in higher education that deserves attention				
Identifies what is significant about the topic, as well as what is debatable or controversial about it				
Supports narrative with evidence -- from 3 or more course texts or additional sources -- that are relevant to your topic				
Includes information about each source (introducing who is speaking, or who produced the research, or where data came from)				
Supports narrative with evidence -- from at least 2 interviews or a survey or other field research				
Discusses and explains what's important about the points you make, or the evidence or interviews you include				
Storytelling (20 pts)				
Tells a clear story, with all parts of the podcast connecting to this story.				
Uses radio-friendly English, including non-standard grammar, if appropriate, but avoiding offensive language				
Includes features designed to make the podcast interesting for a listener				
Demonstrates creativity - including how it organizes evidence and discussion, or in the range of voices, or in the use of sounds.				
Organization (20 pts)				
Provides an introduction that gets attention and guides listener into topic				
Includes a well-organized body, that sequences the subtopics you wish to discuss in a logical order, with clear transitions between ideas				

Includes a conclusion that discusses the implications of your observations, points to future directions for the controversy, or identifies some possible solutions				
The content's sequence makes sense and has a through-line that listeners can follow				
Format & Sound Quality (15 pts)				
Episode runs 7-10 minutes,				
Sound quality is consistent; music/sounds do not compete with narration.				
Editing smoothly connects segments of the audio.				
Additional Components (15 pts)				
SHOW NOTES - provide a 100-200 word text description of your episode, explain the driving question, and introduce topics you explore or voices you include. Written following standard academic grammar conventions and in a readable style				
PRODUCER'S STATEMENT submitted according to guidelines				
COVER PHOTOGRAPH submitted.				
TOTAL SCORE				
COMMENTS				

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