

IDS 1689: Messages, Media, and the Social Self (formerly IDS 2930) 27939, Section 0178

Quest 1: The Examined Life

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2025
- T 8-9 (3:00-4:55pm) and R 9 (4:05-4:55) @ MAEB 229

Instructor

- Todd Best
- 2013 Farrior Hall
- Office hours: Wednesdays from 11am-12pm, (please make an appointment - just email me!)
- e: tabest@ufl.edu, p: 352-392-1521

Note about engagement with professors: don't be shy! Most professors are very interested in talking with students about things that are relevant to their class. I certainly am. We are in this class together, and I'm happy to extend the conversation in office hours as needed. Feel free to schedule an appointment with me by email.

Materials and Supplies Fees

NA/None

Course Description (Catalog)

Explores human engagement with the media-saturated digital landscape, including making sense of the information and narratives encountered there and understanding individual and social implications.

Course Narrative

Essential question: Considering the vast amounts of messaging and information delivered through all forms of media, how might we collectively understand and discuss perceived reality and its imprint on our humanity?

This is a class about "media literacy": how we make sense of the constant stream of "content" we receive. Entertainment and media streams of all kinds are among the chief industries of our society. All

forms of public discourse somehow get reduced to that which will tantalize and, ultimately, that which will sell. Our all-access media streams flow to us in a full range of devices from smartphones to laptops to flat screen tvs to billboards. They are a constant flow of information, opinions, emotions, stories, images, and sounds that often feel like an overflow. Infuse these inputs with various ideological perspectives and marketing-savvy nuances, and it becomes too much to take in and make sense of. What we are often left with is a wholesale inability to decipher and process all the information, leaving us “media illiterate”.

In short, our media overflow turns worthwhile and complex things into simple commodities for consumption, entertainment, or ideological battleground.

This course seeks to understand our engagement with the information and messages we encounter through our media landscape, including focus on perceptions of truth, public discourse, and the "social" self. We will especially probe the questions that arise in our efforts to make sense of digital environments and the human quest for understanding in social spheres like politics, journalism, religion, education, and more. We will explore the tools of media literacy to wade through information overflow and mis/dis-information. Finally, we will explore the individual and social implications of living in the midst of the media-saturated culture in which we find ourselves. Drawing broadly on the humanities and social sciences, we will explore four main sub-questions:

- 1) How might we make sense of the constant stream of “content” we encounter, when it is increasingly offered in a context of skepticism?
- 2) Is it possible to pursue healthy public discourse in different cultural spheres amidst a cacophony of mixed messages oriented by deep ideologies?
- 3) What does it mean to explore the question of what is true/real, what is not, and what might we find along the way? (Is “the truth” possible?)
- 4) How does our entwinement with digital devices and especially with social media help or hinder our humanity?

Quest Credit

- Quest 1

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) objectives. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest requirement cannot be taken S-U.

QUEST 1 OBJECTIVES

Quest 1 courses address the history, key themes, principles, terminologies, theories, or methodologies of various arts and humanities disciplines that enable us to ask essential questions about the human condition. Students learn to identify and analyze the distinctive elements of different arts and humanities disciplines, along with their biases and influences on essential questions about the human condition. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and evaluation of essential questions about the human condition from multiple perspectives. Students reflect on the ways in which the arts

and the humanities impact individuals, societies, and their own intellectual, personal, and professional development.

Required Readings and Works

Textbooks to purchase or obtain:

Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. Penguin.

All other readings and works are available in Canvas and are listed in the Weekly Schedule. Additionally, film – specifically creative non-fiction – will play a prominent role in helping us think about the issues. Access to streaming services will be helpful.

Course Structure and Flow

The class structure is unique, but it will be quite simple: this is a seminar style class driven by shared discussion about the material and questions at hand; it is not a lecture-information based class. To be clear, though, you will learn about things, but not simply by consuming information. Rather, you will learn as you digest, process, reflect upon, engage with the course material and the conversation that follows. The outcome of your learning is not predetermined; it is what *you do with* the material more than your possession of the material. Each week, students will be expected to come to class having read/listened to/viewed assigned content, entered a brief reflection of the content for the week, and formulated comments or questions they wish to contribute to the class. During class, we will unpack and discuss the reading TOGETHER. ****Come ready to TALK, listen, reflect, TALK.**** You have a contribution to make – please make the conversation better by offering your voice.

There will be minimal lecturing by the instructor, though sometimes a side bar at the white board will be used to enhance the conversation. Periodically, there will be additional assignments in the form of short Film/Creative Review essays.

Students might have rotating responsibility to lead parts of the discussion. In-class discussions will sometimes be led by the instructor, sometimes by class members, sometimes by the collective class. Each class member should come to class ready to contribute every week, and not merely to listen.

*Each session, students should come with 1-2 discussion questions or observations that you would want to ask if you were leading a discussion on the assigned content. As much as possible, questions should reference specific passages in the text. Questions should be included in the reflections (see below).

Film plays a unique and important role in this class as a cultural form to explore further the ideas we cover in the class. In fact, this course was inspired by a film festival - the [True/False Film Festival](#) in Columbia, Missouri which has a media literacy focus. Our course content will include short films and 1-2 full length films in class, and occasionally films will be assigned for viewing outside of class. Creative non-fiction will be our primary genre.

A Word About Academic and Human Discourse: Going Beyond Civility

This is a humanities class that raises existential questions related to the human experience. It probes issues that are sometimes thorny, don't always have clear answers and includes ones in which people can have strong differences of opinion. One way to think of the class is to see it as a big conversation about big issues. Optimal participation comes from the ability to be fully engaged:

- *observant*
- *reflective*
- *imaginative*

as we enter into conversation. In order for us to have a successful class, we need to be able to talk with each other well. That involves a conversation in which members are humble, respectful, thoughtfully engaged, and still free to critique (offer friendly push-back). We want to see the articulation and discussion of individual perspectives, while leaving room for disagreement and friendly critique. All of us should respectfully listen to the author's views as well as each other's, without becoming dismissive or defensive, a common default when disagreement is detected; and after listening, we need to be able to converse about what we hear. As these ideals are upheld we hope to create an environment where we all sense that, fundamentally, we are in this together in spite of our differences. (Please see article in Canvas: "[Read Charitably](#)".) All in all, it will be useful to grant ourselves a freedom to think in large terms about life - at the deepest levels of personal conviction. This is not a facts and information class, although we certainly hope to be learning something; this is a class in which we will think about our cultural and media discourse through a lens: pondering and learning about what it means to be human by processing, thinking well about, and interacting over the big ideas that come to us through our reading and discussion.

**This course's connection with the Department of Religion...this is a course that probes the deep questions about meaning and the human experience. Religion, most fundamentally, can be defined as the ways that human beings seek and make meaning among the quandaries of lived experience.*

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

Assignments and Grades:

Weekly Reflections 15%
Film/Creative Review 25%
Mid-term Essay 20%
Final Essay/Project 25%
Attendance and Participation 15%

Weekly Reflections, due weekly, 100-250 words

-short blogpost style reflections of summary and personal response to a weekly prompt:

Students will write a response to the assigned content that is brief, personalized, grounded in something of substance. It is not merely a summary, though there may be a single summary statement to kick things off. Top priority is to discuss one's own experience with the material. Questions to prompt thinking:

- Which of the author's thoughts most captured your attention this week?
- What do you find confusing or troubling in them?
- What do you find most compelling?
- How would you push back on the author's thought? (basing your critique on reasons)
- What other ideas does this spark for you? Does this relate to other things you find interesting?

Film Review Essays (4), due roughly every three weeks, 500-600 words (experiential)

-students will view films, discuss with others, and write a brief 500 word review:

1. Watch the film, engaging reflectively along the way.
2. Summarize the film's story - What is the story and how is the story told? ¼ of essay.
3. Explain/interpret the film's story - what is the film about at a deeper level? What ideas does the story point to beyond itself? ¼ of essay.
4. Offer student's own unique perspective and analysis – "make something" of the film. ½ of essay.

Midterm essay, due midterm, 1000 words

- essay prompt will be given that focuses on processing important questions covered so far
- essays will require the student to demonstrate their own engagement with the salient issues of the class conversation.

Final essay/project, 1000-1250 words (experiential)

- a creative salon project where students curate a social conversational event and write about it
- students will select a topic and relevant media content, host a salon where they invite 3-5 others to participate in viewing or listening to content, craft a discussion with participants, then write a reflective essay on the experience.

Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and verbal participation in class discussions are vital to the class' success. Students will be assessed on being present and making regular contributions to the conversation.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

**on days with multiple readings/content, students sign up to lead discussion in class*

Part 1: Understanding Our Media Landscape: History and Philosophy

Week 1 (meets only 1 time - classes start on Thursday)

Question/topic: What is media literacy and the media ecology approach? How does the communication of messages in our current context present a problem for meaning-making? What are the right questions we need to ask? What is the current state of our shared discourse?

Thursday 8/21: (day one): intro class – syllabus and discussion: “What is media literacy?”

(what interests you about this class?)

Week 2

Question/topic: How does the medium act like a metaphor when conveying messages or stories? In what ways do metaphorical media shape how we know things?

Tuesday 8/26: set up the framework for the discussion, begin Postman

Whatever needs covered from Day 1 (full syllabus, what is media literacy?)

Postman, Intro/Forward and Ch. 1 The Medium is the Metaphor (26 pgs)

Edmundson, [It's Complicated](#) (on state of public discourse) (7 pgs)

(short film in class: Balloonfest (6 min.))

Thursday 8/28: epistemology is messy

Postman, Ch. 2 Media as Epistemology (14 pgs)

Watch: [A very short intro to Hermeneutics](#) (Zimmermann) (4 min.)

Reflection 1 due Wednesday at midnight

Week 3

Question/topic: How did we get here? How should we understand the historical development of message communication in America and how do the changes along the way affect our communication and our interpretation of communications?

Tuesday 9/2: American's communication history

Postman, Ch. 3 Typographic America (14 pgs)

short film

Thursday 9/4: understanding the logic of communication types

Postman, Ch. 4 Typographic Mind (20 pgs)

Reflection 2 due Wednesday at midnight

*Film Review 1 assigned

Week 4

Question/topic: Where does the trajectory of message communication history leave us as Postman sees it? How do we envision this trajectory leading in the current moment, nearly 30 years after Postman wrote? What is the “show business” reality that Postman describes? Is it relevant now?

Tuesday 9/9: the new command center of information

Postman, Ch. 5 Peek-a-Book World (19 pgs)

Listen to podcast: [On Being, "Ezra Klein - How We Walked Into This..."](#)

Reflection 3a due Wednesday at midnight

Thursday 9/11: television then and now

Postman, Ch. 6 Show Business (16 pgs)

Reflection 3b due Wednesday at midnight

Film Review 1 due Friday

Week 5

Question/topic: How well does the news do in delivering reliable information about our world? Is there truth in news/journalism? Does it give us an ability to act in response to the news? How does religion as a realm of public discourse fair in the lens of our analysis? Can religion provide a critique?

Tuesday 9/16: news/journalism

Postman, Ch. 7 Now This (14 pgs)

podcast: <https://www.sceneonradio.org/s4-e11-more-truth/> (unpack this)

Reflection 4a due Monday at midnight

Thursday 9/18: religion

Postman, Ch. 8 “Shuffle Off to Bethlehem”(10 pgs)

+short film: [Drive-in Jesus](#) (9 min.)

+[director article](#)

Reflection 4b due Wednesday at midnight

*Film Review 2 assigned

Week 6

Question/topic: Is there any hope for accurate or helpful information in the realm of politics? How might education be a locus of media distortion? Is it possible to teach and learn with regard to getting accurate information?

Tuesday 9/23: politics

Postman, Ch. 9 "Reach Out and Elect Someone" (16 pgs)

??Orwell, [Politics and the English Language](#) (10 pgs.)

Short film: [The Price of Certainty](#) (6 min)

Reflection 5 due Wednesday at midnight

Thursday 9/25: education - (do NOT read Postman ch. 10)

Beth McMurtrie, [Teaching in the Age of Disinformation](#) (7 pgs.)

Jeffrey Bilbro, [Con Academy](#)

Julie Alexander, The Media Ecology Lens (3 pgs)

+[TEDx: Stephen Addcox - Storyscreens...](#) (14 min.)

Possible Case study: College campuses as powder kegs - academic freedom/free speech vs. campus safety

Reflection 5 due Wednesday at midnight

Film Review 2 due Sunday

Week 7

Question/topic: Who was right: Orwell or Huxley? What is Postman's solution to the problem he has been explaining? What do you think is the solution?

Tuesday 9/30: film salon

In-class film discussion: Feels Good Man

Thursday 10/2: Where does this leave us?

Postman Conclusion, Ch. 11 - Huxleyan Warning – conclusion (9 pgs)

Reflection 6 due Wednesday at midnight

*Midterm Essay assigned

Part 2: The media landscape and the self

Week 8

Question/topic: Interlude: Can we learn anything from ancient philosophy about our situation? and Navigating Mis/Disinformation

Tuesday 10/7

Plato, Phaedrus, excerpts
Postman, The Judgment of Thamus, in *Technopoly*

Thursday 10/9

Navigating Misinformation

Elitsa Dermendzhyska, [The Misinformation Virus](#) (7 pgs)
David Dunning, [“Why the Internet is not Making Us Smarter - And How to Fight Back”](#)
+article on bias: [“Misinformation and Biases...”](#) (3 pgs.)

Truth seeking in images:

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20240711-eight-photos-that-make-us-question-what-we-see>

On bias:

<https://blog.apaonline.org/2022/01/10/do-we-have-a-bias-bias/>
<https://psych.wustl.edu/news/understanding-your-biases>
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hovercraft-full-eels/202009/biases-are-neither-all-good-nor-all-bad>
<https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/bias-a-philosophical-study/>

Midterm Essay due Friday (or Sunday)

Week 9

Question/topic: How is it the human self shaped by participation in the digital media landscape? Specifically, what can we observe about the impact on the human faculty/capacity of attention?

Tuesday 10/14: Analyzing the impact on the self and assessing our capacity for attention

L.M. Sacasas, [The Analog City and the Digital City](#) (13 pgs) (a framing essay)
Nicholas Carr, [All the Little Data](#)
Stephanie Bennett, Endangered Habitat (3 pgs)
Alan Jacobs, [“Attending to Technology: Theses for Disputation”](#) (READ ONLY p. 1-5)(21 pgs total)
+ In class - short op-doc: [\(6 min.\)](#)

Thursday 10/16: digging deeper into attention as a moral virtue

+podcast: [Attention Please](#), TED Radio Hour (50 min)

Derek King, [Reading as Moral Formation](#) (3 pgs)

Alan Jacobs, [“Attending to Technology: Theses for Disputation”](#) (READ ONLY p. 6-10)

OPTIONAL BONUS ARTICLE: Talbot Brewer, [“The Great Malformation”](#) (12 pgs)

Reflection 7 (Media Inventory) due Wednesday at midnight

Week 10

Question/topic: How might the self experience dis-integration through certain digital habits? Is re-integration possible?

Begin podcast series: The Witch Trials of J.K. Rowling Ep1 (50 min/episode)

Tuesday 10/21: humanity unraveling

Andrew Sullivan, [I Used to Be a Human Being](#) (13 pgs)

*L. M. Sacasas, [Always On](#) (5 pgs)

Alan Jacobs, [“Attending to Technology: Theses for Disputation”](#) (READ ONLY p. 11-15)

In class: short film

Thursday 10/23: aspects of dis-integration

Frank Pasquale, [The Algorithmic Self](#) (12 pgs)

Matthew Crawford, [AI as Self-Erasure](#) (4 pgs)

In class video: [Why Strive? Stephen Fry Reads Nick Cave’s Open Letter on ChatGPT](#) (5 min)

Reflection 8 due Wednesday at midnight

*Film Review 3 assigned

Week 11

Question/topic: How does the digital experience affect how we understand our self-identity/perception? How does it affect how we offer ourselves to the world?

Continue podcast: Witch Trials of JKR Ep2 & 3

Tuesday 10/28:

Christine Rosen, Expose Thyself: On the Digitally Revealed Life (18 pgs)

Alan Jacobs, [“Attending to Technology: Theses for Disputation”](#) (READ ONLY p. 16-21)

Thursday 10/30:

Simon Blackburn, [Know Thy Selfie](#) (8 pgs)

Listen: [The Delusional Self-Making of George Santos](#) (22 min.) (Interview with Tara Burton)
-[Santos. Now Booted. How it Happened](#)

****Read/listen to E.M. Forester, "The Machine Stops"**

Text of the story: ["The Machine Stops"](#)

Audio version at LibriVox: ["The Machine Stops"](#)

Reflection 9 due Wednesday at midnight

Film Review 3 Due Friday

Part 3: The Social Quest for Reality and the Self: Towards Media Ecology

Week 12

Question/topic: How the self gets along with other selves in a digital context.

Continue podcast: Witch Trials of JKR Ep 4

Tuesday 11/4:

Firmin deBrabender, ["Shame on You: Baring and Sharing Online"](#) (8 pgs)

Miller and White: [The Warped Self: Social Media](#) (12 pgs)

Thursday 11/6:

Interview with Byung-Chul Han: [All that is Solid Melts into Information](#) (can art mend our disintegration?)

Interview with Jonathan Haidt: ["Social Media Messed Up Our Kids. Now it's Making Us Ungovernable"](#)

Reflection 10 due Wednesday at midnight

Film Review 4 assigned

Week 13

Question/topic: How, specifically, do we mediate reality? How might we access reality/truth collectively?

Continue podcast: Witch Trials of JKR Ep 5

Tuesday 11/11: NO CLASS - VETERANS DAY

Sophia Rosenfeld, Truth and Consequences (7 pgs)

Harry Frankfurt, "On Bullshit" (excerpt)

Thursday 11/13: Does virtual reality get us in touch with Reality?

Read: Jean Baudrillard, Simulation and Simulacra, "The Hyperreal and the Imaginary", p. 12-14

Watch: David Chalmers on [Virtual Reality as Potential Reality](#) (5 min. video)

William Hasselberger, [All Aboard for Virtual Utopia? The All-too-Human Virtual Traveler](#) (pdf) (web link)

Optional: Sean Illing interviews David Chalmers, [Virtual Reality is Reality Too](#) (60 min. podcast)

Check-in discussion: Witch Trials of JKR

Film Review 4 Due

Final Essay Assigned

Week 14

Question/topic: What are the vehicles within digital spaces we use to communicate about and understand the world? What social problems emerge as we pursue collective interaction in the digital or post-truth landscape? Can we do better than just getting along?

Continue podcast: Witch Trials of JKR Ep 6

Tuesday 11/18: AI and it's discontents

Memes: vehicles of social/digital expression of cultural meaning making

On AI - pick from: (or all?)

-Elizabeth Hlavinka, ["We're offloading mental tasks to AI. It could be making us stupid"](#)

-MIT study on AI and Critical Thinking: [The Conversation](#)

-Alan Jacobs, [Chatbots and the Problems of Life](#)

Podcast: NYT The Daily - She Fell in Love with ChatGPT

On memes:

Laura Glitsos, [Much wow, very meme: what the revival of the ancient doge meme tells us about the lifecycle of the internet](#)

Thursday 11/20: damage and repair from speech in digital communication

Alan Jacobs, [Injured Parties: Considering the Wider Effects of Harmful Speech](#) (8 pgs.)

Hugh Breakey, [Is Cancel Culture Silencing Debate?](#) (3 pgs.)

Reflection 12 due Wednesday at midnight

11/25 and 11/27: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 (FINAL WEEK - TUESDAY ONLY)

Question/topic: Is there a possibility of restoration of humanity in the digital landscape? Is there room for recovery? Are there models for healthier discourse and bridge-building in our digital-oriented society?

Tuesday 12/2 (FINAL CLASS SESSION)

Finish podcast: Witch Trials of JKR Ep 7 (discuss)

moving the conversation from online to the real (working off Jacobs):

Watch: [Monica Guzman talk](#) at UF's Bob Graham Center - STOP at 42:20
([background info](#))

Read: John Inazu, Confident Pluralism

Relevant again?

Read: [Filmmakers as Bridgebuilders](#) (written right after Trump was elected in 2016)

Read: David Dunning, ["Why the Internet is not Making Us Smarter - And How to Fight Back"](#)
(some last tips)

in class: models of social quest for common ground, shared reality

possibly draw from:

short film tba

Poem: Berry - [Enemies](#)

Poem: Frost - [Mending Wall](#)

Final Essay Due

Pulled out in f24 due to Hurricane Milton:

Thursday 10/24:

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Identify, describe, and explain the historical development of media technologies and the way different media shape their messaging.
- Identify, describe, and explain various public forums for discourse, culturally relevant conversations that can happen there, and ways that our media participation can hinder or help.
- Identify, describe, and explain the social dimension of our media participation and its implications for public discourse.
- Assessments: Reflections, Creative Review Essay, Mid-term Essay, Final Project, Participation

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Analyze and evaluate ideas and arguments made by authors and scholars on the problems we encounter in our current media landscape and public discourse.

- Analyze and evaluate how different media forms shape the meaning and frame the content of messages and information.
- Analyze and evaluate proposed suggestions from authors and scholars for tending public discourse in a restorative direction.
- Analyze and evaluate how one's own participation in media communications and forums for public discourse can be problematic as well as beneficial.
- Assessments: Reflections, Creative Review Essay, Mid-term Essay, Final Project, Participation

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- Communicate clearly that students are processing and engaging with the historical, philosophical, social, and personal components of the questions posed by the class.
- Communicate about how their own engagement with the material pushes their own understanding and practices beyond the mere content of the course material.
- Communicate with peers about the importance of the course content and to curate their own conversation about how we might move forward in our engagement with media and our participation in various arenas of public discourse.
- Assessments: Reflections, Creative Review Essay, Mid-term Essay, Final Project, Participation

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Connect and reflect on the ways in which media participation can be adjusted to be more humanizing to themselves and for conversation with others.
- Connect and reflect about how their own field of study is a venue for applying ideas that emerge in the class.
- Connect and reflect on how our own deliberate curation of media and thoughtful consideration of particular areas of public discourse might spur toward responsible civic engagement.
- Assessments: Reflections, Creative Review Essay, Mid-term Essay, Final Project, Participation

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Students will set up and host a creative salon project where students curate a public discourse event and write about it. Students will select a topic and relevant media content, host a salon where they invite 3-5 others to participate in viewing or listening to content, craft a discussion with participants, then write a reflective essay on the experience.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is a core component of this course in the form of encouraged personal engagement and response. Students will submit weekly Reflection pieces that ask them to move from summary information of the week's content to personal reflection on the way the content intersects their lives. A midterm essay assignment will not only assess the student's learning of the material, but more importantly will show their processing of the ideas discussed. Also, in a grand culmination of the class,

students will plan and execute a salon discussion with peers about a topic centered on the class's main questions.

VI. Required Policies

Attendance and Participation Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Specific expectations: *Attendance is required* and will be taken daily and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. Only those absences deemed excused according to UF policy will be exempted from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. After two unexcused absences, **25 points per absence** will be deducted from the final grade. Please be proactive in communicating with me about any absence that you anticipate; likewise, communicate with me if you have an unexpected absence.

Please Note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts the entire class.

Participation: students are expected to be *present* and *fully engaged* in each class session, *paying attention* to the class discussion from both instructor and classmates and *verbally participating* as much as possible. Again, this is not a lecture based class, but one that relies on our collective conversation.

Media Use In Class (Laptops, Phones, etc.)

This is a class that, in part, seeks to cultivate a wise and good use of technology which means giving proper attention and priority to the human beings and conversation here in the moment. Use of phones and other communication devices in the classroom fragments your attention and disrupts continuity in the community of learning. In a sense, the classroom culture we will work to cultivate is a form of “public discourse” that will likely take some effort to make a pathway for healthy conversation. Specifically, we will need to work to overcome technological distraction. Your full attention is expected while in class.

Please turn off or silence and store out of sight all cell phones, laptops, tablets, and electronic devices prior to class. No electronic devices should be turned on in class, without consent of the instructor. If you plan to access readings and course materials or take notes via laptop, that's fine; however, you are expected not to veer from the course content.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their

accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

The Honor Pledge

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the [UF Conduct Code website for more information](#), especially the [Honor Code book](#) itself. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

A note about plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from ChatGPT or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/student-responsibilities/>

ChatGPT and similar AI programs pose new and complicated ethical challenges for students and instructors. UF has some guidelines and information that can help you understand what might be acceptable uses of ChatGPT. It is never acceptable to submit written work that you did not create. Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from ChatGPT or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments will constitute plagiarism in this class and will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures. I am happy to talk about how you (and we) might use these programs for good, e.g. in creating outlines.

I will check references if I have any questions about authorship, and I may ask for notes, outlines, and other supporting material to demonstrate that you researched and wrote an assignment yourself. Please keep dated copies of your outline, notes, and rough drafts and be ready to submit them in case questions arise about the authenticity of your work.

If you do not have convincing evidence that you authored the work yourself, I will start the honor code process. Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy. In addition, proven plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for this class.

For more information, see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

A brief note about reading in community

Late Request

With love's confidence I'm asking,
if you should offer this book
to another, ask of him
as now I ask of you
to read slowly,
and thoroughly, tasting
each word's trouble.
Without doubt, certain passages
should never stand alone,
but will require assistance
offered by others to further
endow their meaning. I fear
for the reader who dabbles,
who gleans, who hurries to take
and flee, and who by doing so acquires
nothing but a novel form
of his current poverty and error.

—Anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*