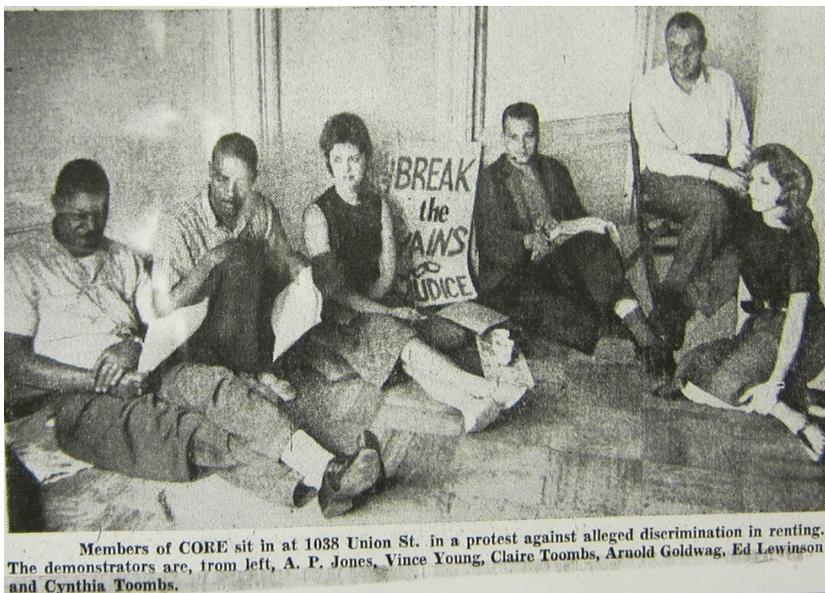


Long Island University
Core Seminar 50.018: The Idea of the Human
3 credits; Prerequisite English 16
W 1:00-3:30, Spring 2013, Pratt 421

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THE IDEA OF THE HUMAN: PATHWAYS TO FREEDOM



Every other organism we know about lives in the world as presented to them by Nature, human beings live in a world that they consciously symbolize and re-create in their own minds. Which is what makes us such fascinating – and dangerous – creatures.

Ian Tattersall, *Monkey in the Mirror*.

Welcome to Core Seminar, an interdisciplinary, writing-intensive course that inquires into the idea of the human: what makes us human; how do we perceive ourselves, others, and the world around us; what is the role of creativity in human experience; and what is the role of the social and historical context in considering all of these? During our time together in this seminar, we will continue to meet with other classes in joint sessions as well as explore off campus sites on small group fieldtrips. We will also continue to develop the academic writing, information literacy, rhetorical strategies, and research skills introduced to you in English 16C. We will focus on developing the particular objectives of Core Seminar—the cognitive skills necessary for inquiry, abstract thinking, and critical analysis; a general knowledge base that might serve as a foundation for further in-depth inquiry; and a respect for human commonalities and diversity. The course includes a research project.

Last semester, we focused on the debate on slavery in the United States, which began with the Declaration of Independence in 1776. That document's radical assertion that "all men are created

equal” fueled the debate between those who argued that Jefferson’s words did not apply equally to all people and those who vehemently opposed slavery and who felt the United States would not fulfill its promise until all men and women of all races were equal before the law.

This semester in Core Seminar we will investigate issues of race through three disciplinary perspectives: scientific, literary, and political. Our exploration of these issues will focus on the United States and will take us through the early twentieth century to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the other movements for social equality it inspired. You and your classmates will also have the unique opportunity to conceptualize, research, and frame issues at the very heart of the Civil Rights Movement by conducting oral history interviews.

This semester, as you and your cohort look at Brooklyn through the wider spectrum of History 2 and Coop 1, continuing to work with BHS and with the LIU library, we invite you both to particularize and to broaden the historical lens through which you see this place called Brooklyn and to reflect deeply on its historical relevance for contemporary “pathways to freedom” that you have experienced, observed, researched, or questioned.

Required texts and supplies

- ❑ Birchette, Mark G. et al. *Core Seminar: The Idea of the Human: Reading Anthology*.
- ❑ Wright, Richard. *12 Million Black Voices*. 1941. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Print.
- ❑ Photocopied & electronic essays to be supplied
- ❑ *Webster’s Dictionary* or equivalent
- ❑ A class notebook, pens, and a library bar code
- ❑ A flash drive to save all your work, much of which is included in your final portfolio

Required writing

- ❑ 3 blog posts and 2 responses to a classmates’ blog posts
- ❑ Responses to fieldwork
- ❑ Informal self-assessment journal on meeting course goals & objectives
- ❑ Research Project
 - One six-source final annotated bibliography with a research question.
 - One 6-8-page thesis-driven research project with drafts. The project will utilize a range of rhetorical strategies and a minimum of six sources, which must include one archival source from BHS, two library sources (e.g., academic database), and one Internet source (e.g., web page), or other medium (e.g., film), and two course readings.
 - Reflection on the research project
- ❑ Oral History Project
 - One 1-2 hour interview to be conducted as a team
 - Complete metadata information
 - Podcast including excerpted segment from the interview & reflection on it to be created by team (to be determined whether this assignment is optional for extra credit or required)
- ❑ Final Portfolio to be drawn from a variety of course content: one blog post, one photo of interviewee and one photo of interviewers; annotated bibliography; research essay with drafts; and final course reflection (personal statement about the impact of Pathways to Freedom on you as a first-year student)

Learning Goals

Because Core Seminar is an intensive writing, interdisciplinary course in critical thinking and not a composition course (as is English 16C), the learning goals apply to a wide spectrum of objectives found in many disciplines. This seminar aims specifically to help students develop the following cognitive abilities, which will require using the skills developed in English 16C:

- ❑ To understand, analyze, and interpret reading and other material critically
- ❑ To write organized, coherent, rhetorically driven, critical discourse
- ❑ To speak organized, persuasive discourse
- ❑ To listen critically in order to comprehend and interpret oral discourse
- ❑ To research efficiently and knowledgeably
- ❑ To reason abstractly in order to comprehend, interpret and synthesize course material; and
- ❑ To interpret numerical data

Grading

A/A-/B+/B/B-/C+/C/C-/D/F/UW/W/I. The “W” (Withdrawal) grade indicates that a student has officially withdrawn from the course, while a “WF” (Withdrawal Failing) indicates that a student has officially withdrawn with a failing grade. The “UW” (Unofficial Withdrawal) indicates that a student did not officially withdraw but stopped attending classes. The “I” (Incomplete) indicates that a student did not complete the requirements of the course and must complete them before the end of the next semester, at which time the grade will become an F. Please note that the Incomplete is reserved for students with good attendance records who have kept up with their work but experience an emergency that prohibits completion of the coursework.

You will be evaluated on the basis of formal writing, informal writing, one oral history interview (successfully completed with metadata, reflection on excerpt, and collaborative introduction), class participation, and attendance. Your final grade will be calculated as follows: research essay = 30%; oral history and podcast = 25%; blog posts = 20%; integrative, reflective essay = 10%; attendance and class participation = 15%.

Your final grade may be affected by failure to meet your responsibilities as follows:

- Every two times you are late to class will count as one absence.
- More than the equivalent of two weeks’ absences may result in failing the course.
- Repeated violations of any of your responsibilities, such as using a cell phone or texting in class, may affect your final grade.
- Coming to class without required texts or other materials will result in being marked unprepared and may affect your final grade.
- For every day an assignment is late, a half point will be deducted from your grade.

Student and Teacher Responsibilities

Your responsibilities as students are:

- ❑ To attend each class, arrive punctually, and participate actively
- ❑ To participate in all required Brooklyn Historical Society visits and other class trips
- ❑ To respect your classmates and me (e.g., do not talk when another person is talking, raise

- your hand, be courteous to everyone)
- ❑ To refrain from eating in class (drinks are allowed)
 - ❑ To turn off your cell phones and any other electronic devices at the door except when you are using them for class purposes
 - ❑ To bring all required texts to class
 - ❑ To be sure to have a library bar code in order to access electronic books and print copies of readings the day we are scheduled to discuss them
 - ❑ To bring a pen and notebook to every class
 - ❑ To complete and submit all reading and writing assignments on time
 - ❑ To be present and fully prepared to workshop your essay on scheduled dates
 - ❑ To notify me by email or phone if you are absent to find out what you missed
 - ❑ To **save all work** on a flash drive or some other electronic storage device

My responsibilities as your teacher are:

- ❑ To ensure a safe, supportive learning environment
- ❑ To respond to your writing regularly and in a timely fashion
- ❑ To discuss your writing or any other concern during office hours or by appointment

Blackboard and SAFA Electronic Sites

We will be using a combination of Blackboard and SAFA sites for course materials, blogging, and posting work. All course materials and electronic readings will be posted on Blackboard. You must use your LIU email address in order to access Blackboard. It is the only email address with which you may communicate to your classmates or me. If you do not have access to the Internet at home, please see me about using your LIU account and using computers on campus. **You must check Blackboard for this class on a daily basis. All class correspondence will be through Blackboard, and many resources will be posted there.** Blogs will be posted on the SAFA site. When a blog is assigned, you will post one initial response to the prompt within one week; you must then respond to at least two of your classmates. Initial posts should be between 250 and 300 words; responses may be shorter but should be reflective and analytical. Blog = “web” + “log” and is an online discussion. The more you engage in this web-based conversation with each other the livelier the blog will be!

BHS Archives, Class Trips, and Colloquia

One of the most exciting aspects of the SAFA project is the integral role the Brooklyn Historical Society archives play in it. We will be visiting the BHS library as a class once this semester to conduct primary research on archival materials from the 20th century. This visit is mandatory; missing it will put you at a great disadvantage in completing the required coursework. Because we are part of a larger learning community, we will also meet periodically with other sections of COS 50 to share ideas and collaborate on research plans. Please stay tuned for more information about the summer fellowship at BHS for which you *may* qualify. Selected students will create a public exhibition based on their research and receive a \$1,000 stipend.

Formatting and Submitting Formal Essays and Drafts

All drafts **MUST BE TYPED** and **DOUBLE-SPACED** (12 pt. Times Roman font, one-inch margins all around. Indent paragraphs; do not skip extra lines between them; be sure to number

pages). Write all drafts on a computer to make revising easier (although you may certainly start drafts with pen and paper if you prefer). First drafts should be as fully developed as possible and follow all formatting guidelines. All drafts and revisions must be submitted on Blackboard before class meets at noon the day they are due; late papers result in a half point deduction. If you are presenting an essay, you will need to submit your essay to me at least two days prior to the date of the workshop in order for me to circulate it to the class; everyone is responsible for printing drafts and bringing them or an electronic device on which they can be read to workshops.

WAC Statement

COS 50 is a writing intensive course and fulfills part of LIU Brooklyn's writing-intensive requirement. For graduation, all students are required to take nine credits of writing-intensive courses: English 16, Core Seminar (COS 50) and one writing-intensive course in the major.

Plagiarism

The Council of Writing Program Administrators defines plagiarism thus: "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source" (www.wpacouncil.org). This is a good definition, and you should keep it in mind as you write. *If the idea and/or the writing is not your own, you need to document it; if you are not sure and cannot ask me, document to be safe.* Plagiarism is theft and can lead to failing the class and even to suspension. If I find that you have plagiarized writing in this course, the plagiarized paper will be graded F. If you do it again, you will fail the course, and I will submit a report to the Dean.

LIU Writing Center

The LIU Writing Center is located in H218C. I urge all of you to utilize the Writing Center's resources, which include *free* weekly tutoring sessions, drop-in appointments, small groups, and workshops.

Student Support Services

If you have a documented disability/impairment and require accommodations, please provide me with an Accommodation Letter from Student Support Services (SSS). The office is located on the ground floor of the Pharmacy Building, Room B-04; (718) 488-1044. Hours of operation: Monday-Thursday 9-6, & Friday 9-5. Email address: studentsupportservices@brooklyn.liu.edu

Tentative Schedule

This is a rough outline of the course, including readings and due dates for papers. These dates may change; be sure to check on Blackboard for updates. If you must be absent and for legitimate, extenuating circumstances, email me the scheduled assignment before class begins and you will be credited for the work. Then also e-mail a classmate or me for the current assignment, which will be due when you return to class. Please make sure that you have the appropriate reading material in class on the day it is due.

DATE	IN CLASS	READING DUE	WRITING DUE
Unit 1: The “Myth” of Science: Researching Racial Superiority			
Week 1 1/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute syllabus • View Obama’s Inaugural speech & interview on MLK 		
Week 2 1/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss “The Space Traders” and follow up on discussion of Obama and King 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Space Traders,” Derrick Bell 	
Week 3 2/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Session: Oral History with Sady Sullivan • Discuss Thompson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Voice of the Past: Oral History,” Paul Thompson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post #1
Week 4 2/13	Discuss scientific racism and experimentation in relation to the commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” • Gould, “Racist Arguments & IQ”; “The Criminal as Nature’s Mistake” 	
Unit 2: Stories of Alienation and the Search for Identity			
Week 5 2/20	Discuss Blog 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purnell, “Drive Awhile for Freedom” • Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” • LeGuin, “Omelas” 	
Week 6 2/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHS VISIT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignatiev and Bradley, Intro to <i>12 Million Black Voices</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edits & Responses to Blog Post #1
Week 7 3/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Ignatiev & Bradley + research assignment & UDHR 1:00-2:15 • Library Visit: In class, 2:15-3:30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wright • UDHR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library assignment: (BHS visit + at least one assigned article for weeks 6 & 7 as preparation for research paper) • Note: Visit NYHS WWII Civil Rights & The Dream Continues exhibits before April 17. • Self-Reflective Journal #1
Week 8 3/13	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS		

DATE	IN CLASS	READING DUE	WRITING DUE
Week 9 3/20	Discuss Wright in relation to secondary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>12 Million Black Voices</i> • Hughes, “Harlem” and “Theme for English B” • Bailey, “The Creation of the UDHR” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question and annotated bibliography in progress (one archival source, one LIU library database source, one course reading) • Self-Reflective Journal #1 Due
Week 10 3/27	LIU Library Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frye, “Oppression” • Annotated secondary source(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated bibliography & research question.
Unit 3: Civil Rights and the Movements for Social Equality			
Week 11 4/3	Discuss Meier and Bracy, “The NAACP...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Petry, “In Darkness and Confusion” • Combahee River Collective Statement • Meier and Bracy, “The NAACP...” (recommended) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post #2
Week 12 W 4/10	Podcast Training & Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft 1 of research paper (will accept these anytime starting 4/3)
Week 13 W 4/17	Discuss King	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King: “Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return research drafts • Blog Post #3
Week 14 W 4/24	Discuss post-9/11 civil rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction & Chapter 1 from <i>We Are All Suspects Now</i>, Tram Nguyen 	
Week 15 W 5/1	Pathways to Freedom Program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolios due • Departmental response due • Self-Reflective Journal #2