

# ***TX100: Critical Thinking, Communication, & Transformative Texts – Antiquity to Modernity***

Room: *Morgan Hall 138 – (M/W 1pm-2.15pm)*

Professors:

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Welcome to the Great TEXTS certificate program and to TX 100. This first-year course introduces students to the great questions and problems of humankind through discussion-based exploration of transformative texts from a variety of disciplines and genres. These texts will be examined in the context in which they were created and explored for what they mean today. The course helps students practice the critical thinking and communication skills they will need for success in college and in life. Throughout the course, students' understanding and enjoyment of the selected texts will be supplemented by extracurricular activities and presentations, such as visits to historic and cultural sites, plays, musical performances, films, galleries, poetry readings, public lectures, and community engagement.

This semester, we will pay particular attention to texts that grapple with history or, rather, the telling of history. We will ask what is history and who gets to decide? What histories get told and who gets to tell them? In what ways do historical claims empower some while disempowering others? How do such forces as the media shape how we understand history and historical "truth"? And how do we critically evaluate histories and, even, knowledge itself in light of fake news and bad arguments? The readings below were selected because they explore these and other topics (focusing mostly... ok, exclusively... on European and North American contexts). We will also apply what we learn from examining these texts to tell our own histories.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Engage critically with transformative texts, drawing on multiple perspectives, to reflect on one's position in the world
2. Develop a carefully reasoned argument with support from close reading of a variety of sources
3. Write effectively
4. Present and discuss ideas verbally with clarity

## **Washburn Statement of Inclusivity**

Washburn is committed to cultivating an inclusive learning, living, and working community, facilitating the success of all people, and supporting all individuals. An inclusive community values diversity in culture, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, nationality, place of origin, language, ability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religious and non-religious identity, political and social ideology, family background, veteran status, and age, as well as the intersections of these identities. The University strives to provide opportunities for its members to reflect upon their own perspectives while examining the perspectives of others, resulting in a culture of empathy and respect for all. (*Adopted by the full faculty December 2018.*)

## **Student Rights, Responsibilities, and University Policies**

See here: <https://www.washburn.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-resources/policies-forms/forms/master-syllabus.pdf>

## **Course Assignments**

1. Pre-class preparation (reading assignments)
2. Individual Readiness Assurance Tests (I-RAT): 10% of course grade
3. Team Readiness Assurance tests (T-RAT): 50% of course grade
4. Team Project: 15% of course grade
5. Peer Review: 25% of course grade

**Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs):** Students will complete an individual RAT (I-RAT), consisting of 5 to 10 multiple choice questions based on the assigned reading. After submitting individual answers, students will take the same RAT in pre-assigned (semester-long) teams (T-RAT). All members of a team will share the same team T-RAT score, and both I-RAT and T-RAT scores will count towards the student's course grade. Teams will have the opportunity to submit a written appeal for any question that they felt was poorly written, had a mistaken answer, or for which they think their answer choice is better. Because RATs are also taken in teams, *no make-ups are allowed*, but missed quizzes will not count against those students with official absences.

**Team Project:** The final course assignment will be a team-based project. Details of the content and aims of the project will be decided, in consultation with teams and the instructors, later in the semester.

**Team Review:** In the last week of semester, you will provide a peer-review for each of your team-mates. Relevant criteria will be provided. Half of your grade will be based on the average of the scores you receive from your team-mates. The other half of the grade will be provided by us based on how accurate and fair we deem your reviews to be. Given the importance of peer-review scores for your team-mates, failure to submit reviews by the relevant deadline will result in a zero score for this assignment.

**Hall Passes:** You can use a "hall pass" for two missed classes without grade penalties. You cannot make-up I-RATs/T-RATs as they are both time-sensitive, and team-related. Instead, you will receive a 'bye' for the I-RAT/T-RAT on those days. For any other missed quizzes, your score will be zero unless you can provide *compelling* grounds for

not attending class, e.g., a doctor's note, and we are the sole authority on whether or not your absence will be excused. Our advice, is to contact us ahead of time, where possible, to inform us that you will be missing class. Furthermore, it will likely be in your best interests to inform your team-mates, too. Because assignments in this course are team-based, you have a responsibility to your team-mates. When you miss class, your team-mates are at a competitive disadvantage.

### **Required Texts:**

The following texts are required and will be provided to you at no cost thanks to a generous contribution by a private donor:

- William Shakespeare, *Richard III*
- Rebecca Hall, *Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts*
- W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
- George Orwell, *1984*

Additional assigned readings will also be made available on D2L.

### **Tentative Course Schedule:**

Please note that the course schedule is subject to change during the semester. Typically, these changes will be the result of time constraints, and/or to accommodate student interests. We will announce all changes in class and, when necessary, alert you by (official Washburn) email. It is ultimately your responsibility to keep track of all changes.

Week 1: W. 1/18: Course introduction

Week 2: M. 1/23: Stereotype Threat & discussion guidelines

W. 1/25: Intro to Team-Based Learning

\*\*Stay tuned for details about a special class outing this week to see a production of *The Lifespan of a Fact* at Theater Lawrence

#### **Part I: What is History?**

Week 3: M. 1/30: Bloch—*The Historian's Craft* (pp. 3–19); Carr—*What is History* (pp. 1–5; 7–10; 23–24; 27–35) and Dubois, "The Propaganda of History"

W. 2/1: White—*Tropics of Discourse* (short excerpt) and Deloria—"Thinking about Self in a Family Way"

#### **Part II: Some Case Studies**

Week 4: M. 2/6: Herodotus—*Histories* (excerpt) and Livy, *History of Rome* (excerpt)

W. 2/8: Deloria—*Red Earth, White Lies* and examples of Indigenous sources/objects

Week 5: M. 2/13: In Our Time podcast "Is Shakespeare History?" and begin reading Shakespeare—*Richard III*

W. 2/15: Shakespeare—*Richard III*

Week 6: M. 2/20: Hall—*Wake*  
W. 2/22: Hall—*Wake*

Week 7: M. 2/27: DuBois—*The Souls of Black Folk*  
W. 3/1: Field trip to *Brown v. Board* National Historic Site

Week 8: M. 3/6: Hannah-Jones, *The 1619 Project*  
W. 3/8: Reactions to *1619*

Week 9: M. 3/13: **Spring Break – No class**  
W. 3/15: **Spring Break – No class**

### **Part III: Memory, Media, and Madness**

Week 10: M. 3/20: Huxley – *Brave New World*  
W. 3/22: Huxley – *Brave New World*

Week 11: M. 3/27: Orwell – “Politics & the English Language”  
W. 3/29: Orwell – *1984* book (excerpts) & Movie

Week 12: M. 4/3: Postman – “Amusing Ourselves to Death”  
W. 4/5: Chomsky and Herman – “Manufacturing Consent”

Week 13: M. 4/10: Chomsky & Herman – “Precis of Propaganda Model”  
W. 4/12: Kirsch – “The Emperor’s New Drugs”

Week 14: M. 4/17: Moncrieff – “The Myth of the Chemical Cure”  
W. 4/19: Epistemology – What is knowledge?

Week 15: M. 4/24: Conspiracy Theories  
W. 4/26: TBA/Final Team Project

\*\*Stay tuned for details about a special class outing this week to see a production of Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* at the Topeka Civic Theater

Week 16: M. 5/1: TBA/Final Team Project  
W. 5/3: TBA/Final Team Project

**\*\*Due date of Final Project TBA**