SYLLABUS

Course Title: IDH 3005 Honors Seminar V / IDH 3006 Honors Seminar VI ¹

section    class no.

Semester:    Fall 2008 / Spring 2009
Instructor:  Stephen M. Fain
Office   Green Library 232B
Office Hours:  Tuesday: 12 noon -1:00 pm by appointment
               Wednesday 5:00 -6:00 pm by appointment
               other times may also be arranged
               All appointments should be made directly with Professor Fain
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Class Meetings:  Wednesday 2-4:45 pm
Room:    TBA

AESTHETICS, VALUES AND AUTHORITY: CONFRONTING AMERICA

In recent years it has become commonplace for American citizens to look critically at the
behavior of the nation and its people. The idea that it is a good thing for citizens to actively
critique and criticize the government and the people is alive and well in the United States.
Today there is a spirit in this nation that supports challenges to authority and individualism, and
there is a conflict between citizens as to what beliefs and behaviors define national loyalty and
patriotism. Clearly there is conflict within the nation. In the United States articulation of
conflicting views is protected by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The American experience
is grounded in this spirit and the authority associated with citizenship empowers all to participate
in the process of governing the nation. Evidence of this is obtained by considering the struggles
and changes which mark the evolution of the nation from its inception. Beginning with a reading
of Common Sense, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights we will examine personalities and
phenomena which give America meaning. Utilizing selected readings, films, and other cultural
artifacts, as well as through individual and group projects, we will examine the character of
America. The Fall semester will focus on the foundations of the American character and the
Spring term will focus on an analysis of more contemporary issues grounded in the foundations
central to the academic work done in the Fall.

Because the presidential election will take place in November the seminal will, in various ways,
consider current principles and issues raised in the presidential campaigns in relation to
fundamental American ideas found in documents that have provided a basis for the evolution of
the United States.

In the past this seminar has planned a four day trip to Washington, D.C. during the Spring term.
Early in the Fall seminar participants will decide if they wish to build such a trip into their Honors
experience. If the seminar decides to include this experience in the Spring term it will be
expected to earn money to help reduce out of pocket expenses for all.

FALL 2006: - THE AMERICAN CHARACTER

¹ This course is designed to span both the Fall and Spring semesters.
The seminar will begin by examining cultural artifacts, personalities and events that have shaped the character of the people of America from the founding of the nation to 1975. Recognizing that it is not possible to consider all of the forces that shaped the American character, specific themes have been identified which provide a basis for understanding aspects of this unique national prospective. These understandings will serve as a base-line for the analysis of contemporary issues in American life during the Spring semester.

Goals of the seminar are to:
- engage students in critical thought
- create and maintain a simulating intellectual experience for all seminar participants
- advance each seminar participant’s understanding of the importance of aesthetics, values and authority in establishing a national character.
- demonstrate the interrelationships linking aesthetics, values and authority in shaping a world view
- identify the issues which will serve as the central themes for the spring seminar

Format
This course is offered as a seminar. It is expected that meetings will include regular and lively focused discussions. The course instructor has the responsibility for setting the themes, making assignments and respecting the contributions of well prepared seminar participants in all discussions. The participants have the responsibility to come to meetings prepared, actively participate in discussions, act respectfully towards all seminar participants, and to complete all assignments on time. It should be understood that students who arrive at seminar meetings late and/or unprepared are by definition disrespectful to the entire seminar.

Because the seminar meets for 2 hours and 45 minutes there is plenty of time for discussion and the viewing of full length films.

Grading

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\begin{align*}
90-94 & = A- \\
85-89 & = A \\
80-83 & = B- \\
79-84 & = B \\
70-73 & = C- \\
69-74 & = C \\
60-69 & = D- \\
59-64 & = D \\
\text{BELOW 60} & = F
\end{align*}
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INCOMPLETE: The grade of IN (incomplete) will only be given when a student has successfully completed 2/3rds of all course work and has made contractual arrangements with the professor prior to the end of the semester.

Requirements

Reflective papers: 30%

At intervals noted on the seminar calendar students will submit reflective papers of no more than 3 pages. These papers are intended to provide seminar participants with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the evolution of the seminar up to a specific point in time. There will be three (3) reflective papers assigned. A forth reflective paper may be written by
students carrying an average below A- in this category. Students who elect this option can not earn a grade higher than A- for their reflective papers.

**Group project: 10%**
Participants will join a reading group and, after reading the selected novel, collectively prepare a paper of no more than 8 pages relating the story to the theme of *the need to assimilate while maintaining identity*. Additionally, the group will make a presentation of approximately 20 minutes in length to the seminar and entertain questions.

**Take home mid-term examination: 20%**
Students will respond to 2 of 3 questions on a take home examination. These questions will be drawn from the experiences of the seminar up to the point of the examination. Students will have two weeks to complete this task.

**Final synthesis project: 20%**
Each participant in the seminar will be expected to develop a project that synthesizes the seminar experience. Participants will present their projects to the entire seminar in a ten (10) minute presentation. (Presentations taking more than 10 minutes will be penalized .5 (½) grade for each minute over 10.

Those electing to develop a traditional paper will be limited to 10 pages of text. Students may also choose to develop a non-traditional project. All students should present the instructor with a written proposal (1 page limit). Projects should not be undertaken without the instructor's approval.

**Participation: 10%**
A seminar is only as good as the participants make it. Students will be graded on the quality of their participation in seminar activities. It should be understood that quality is significantly more noteworthy than quantity.

**University Citizenship: 10%**
As students in the Honors College you are expected to be involved as active citizens in our University community. During the course of the semester each member of this seminar will provide evidence of participation in at least five (5) diverse University sanctioned activities. The Honors College Parade and Convocation is one such activity and participation is expected.

**Guideline for all written work**

All papers and the mid term examination will be submitted electronically. This work should be produced in accordance with the guidelines below.
- Work will be submitted no later than 2 pm on the date it is due.
- Work should be formatted as if on standard 8½ x 11 paper, doubled spaced, with standard margins, and prepared using a standard 12 point font.
- All work done outside of the seminar will be proofread and corrected thoroughly.
- Students should follow a manual of style when preparing written. Any standard style is acceptable.
- Name and Panther ID number as well as page numbers should appear on to top of each page of all work.
- All work should have a title page. (not counted in page limits)
- Students should keep a copy of all written work submitted
- Work received after deadlines may be marked down for lateness
- **ALL STUDENT WORK IS TO BE ORIGINAL. PROPER REFERENCES ARE REQUIRED WHEN USING THE WORK OF OTHERS IN YOUR PAPERS. VIOLATORS OF THIS POLICY MAY BE AWARDED A GRADE OF “F” FOR THE COURSE.**

**Submission of written work**

All work should be sent electronically to fainhonors.fall.08@gmail.com

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


**GROUP PROJECT BOOKS** (only one required per student – assignments will be made in class):


Electronic Readings: go to http://www.fiu.edu/~honors/links.html

The Founding of the Nation
Thomas Paine; Common Sense
Second Treatise on Government; Chapter 2 - Of the State of Nature
Benjamin Franklin On the Federal Constitution
Time Magazine: Citizen Ben's Great Virtues
Securing the Republic: Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia
George Washington's Farewell Address
Last Will and Testament by George Washington

The Negroes and the Nation
The Emancipation Proclamation
A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand- 1858
The Avalon Project; Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln
Industrial Education for the Negro by Booker T. Washington
The Case of the Negro
The Talented Tenth by W.E.B. DuBois
Susan B. Anthony; Women's Right to Vote

An Emerging Nation Responds to Immigration
The New Colossus
Ancestors in the Americas; The Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act
United States Immigration Policy; Bill of Rights in Action
Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882

Unique American Art forms
Casey at the Bat
Isadora Duncan and The Dance
Louis Sullivan, The tall office building artistically considered
Louis Sullivan, Buildings Extant in Chicago
William James, What Pragmatism Means

The Spirit of a Nation
Frederick Jackson Turner. The Frontier In American History  (Chapters I and XII)
Franklin Delano Roosevelt; The Four Freedoms

RECOMMENDED READINGS FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THOUGHT ON THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICA AND AMERICAN IDEAS AND IDEALS


