

HIS 151A: University Writing Seminar / The “American Dream”

Course Information

Course Credits: 3
Semester: Fall 2021
Prerequisites: None

Class Meeting Times:

#01: TR 8:00a-9:15a MER 347
#02: TR 11:00a-12:15p MER 347
Students are only allowed to attend the section for which they are registered.

Faculty Information:

Dr. Jennifer M. Black, History Dept.
Email: jblack2@misericordia.edu
Office: MER 339 / Phone: 674-1491

Office Hours: TR 9:30-11am, 3:30-4p & by appt
Not sure what office hours are? [Check out this video.](#)

Course Description

HIS 151A: University Writing Seminar introduces and develops skills and abilities fundamental to proficient academic writing. This course emphasizes the critical reading and the summary, synthesis, and analysis of primary materials in specific historical contexts.

Introduction

What does it mean to be “American”? This course will look at the changing, and often debated, understandings of “America” and the “American Dream” through literature and visual culture, at four distinct moments in American history: the Revolution, the Civil War, the turn of the twentieth century, and the 1960s. Students taking this course will learn to look critically at historical images and texts, and will learn to develop their own written arguments about the past through a series of writing assignments and exercises.

Course Goals & Objectives

This course addresses the following programmatic and university goals / objectives:

Course Objectives:	In completing this course, students will:	Assessment Methods
1. Write essays that establish a specific thesis and support that thesis through the use and explanation of evidence	Consider ethical issues and values and make reasoned judgments about them (through the study of US history)	Papers
2. Construct well-organized essays with a clear introduction, distinct conclusion, and a body structured by a logic that supports the essay’s thesis	Compose 12-17 pages of revised academic writing that is adequate and appropriate (in terms of focus, content, organization, and syntax/mechanics, etc.) for a first-year student	Papers
3. Use / apply the stages of the writing process (freewriting, drafting, revising) to improve their writing at all levels (focus, content, organization, grammar, etc.)	Communicate and interact effectively (through the study of US history)	Papers
4. Produce writing within fundamental contexts of academic writing (summary, synthesis, and analysis)	Think independently and creatively, analyze information critically, and solve problems (through the study of US history)	Papers
5. Summarize, synthesize, and analyze the arguments of primary sources	Respect and understand cultural differences (through the study of US history)	Papers

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Course Objectives:	Program Learning Outcome (Core)	University Learning Outcome
1. Write essays that establish a specific thesis and support that thesis through the use and explanation of evidence	5. Develop an awareness of ethical issues across disciplines	UG #3
2. Construct well-organized essays with a clear introduction, distinct conclusion, and a body structured by a logic that supports the essay's thesis	1. Communicate effectively utilizing oral, written and/or artistic presentations	UG #4, #7
3. Use / apply the stages of the writing process (freewriting, drafting, revising) to improve their writing at all levels (focus, content, organization, grammar, etc.)	1. Communicate effectively utilizing oral, written and/or artistic presentations	UG #4, #7
4. Produce writing within fundamental contexts of academic writing (summary, synthesis, and analysis)	2. Develop and enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills	UG #4
5. Summarize, synthesize, and analyze the arguments of primary sources	4. Develop an understanding of the central concepts of the humanities 6. Develop an awareness of and appreciation for global interdependence and diversity	UG #5, #8

Required Texts:

Bullock, Richard et al. *The Little Seagull Handbook, 4th ed.* New York: WW Norton, 2021.

ISBN: 978-0393-877939 (you may choose paperback or e-book if you prefer)

Locke, Joseph L., and Ben Wright, eds. [*The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open US History Textbook.*](#) San Francisco, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019. (free online)

*Additional readings on the Blackboard

Course Delivery

This course will be delivered in a traditional face-to-face format, with live instruction. Should we need to pivot to hybrid or online format midway through the semester, you will receive additional instructions about the mode of delivery.

Evaluation Methods & Student Assignments:

Your participation in course discussions and completion of the required assignments will determine your grade for this course. The final course grade will thus be comprised of the following:

1. Summary Paper (15%): a one-page summary of an assigned text
2. Document Analysis (20%): a 3p analysis of an historical document, placing it in historical context
3. Image Analysis (20%): a 3p analysis of an historical image, placing it in historical context
4. Synthesis Paper (30%): a 5p essay that compares and contrasts two historical documents or images, placing them in context to make an argument about the past
5. Participation (15%): In-class writing activities, homework, peer review, and discussions

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Discussions:

In this course you will be graded on your active participation in class discussions, peer reviews, and participation in paper conferences (see schedule below). In-class discussions give you a chance to verbally demonstrate your understanding of the course material; participation thus includes raising your hand to ask or answer questions during lecture, and to respond to other students' comments and questions. Each class, I will calculate a grade for your participation points based on your contributions to class discussion, according to the following distribution: full participation (A) = 4pts; some participation (C-B range) = 2.5-3.5pts; present but no participation (D) = 2pts; absences beyond the two freebies = 0pts. Under this rubric, a student who attends all class meetings but does not contribute to class discussion will receive a D for participation.

Papers:

Each paper will involve image and / or document analysis and demonstrating your understanding of the course material and objectives (detailed instructions on the papers will follow). Students may choose to rewrite one of the first three papers for a new grade, provided they turn in a hard copy of both the marked up original and rewrite to me by 5pm on 4/25/22.

Assignment Policies:

Formatting: All written work you submit should be typed, on plain white paper, with all the margins set to one-inch. You should double space the body of the paper only (not the headings and title). Please use Times New-Roman 12-point font size. You will be graded on both the style and content of your papers; thus, please be sure to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Make sure your paper is clearly organized with an introduction, argument (thesis statement), topic sentences, evidence, and conclusion. Papers must meet the minimum word-count requirement to receive full credit; no penalty will be given for papers exceeding the suggested limit. You are required to submit a hard copy in class AND upload a copy to the Blackboard (assignments listed under "Content") by the due date and time. Please note that papers must be submitted online as a .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf (these are the ONLY acceptable formats / file types). You are responsible for knowing how to use your own computer / software packages—this is especially important for Google docs users, and Apple users who use "Pages," who will need to convert their files before uploading.

Late Policy: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date due. You are also responsible for making sure the paper is submitted correctly and on time. Late penalties begin at the end of class, and papers will incur a grade deduction of five points for each day late with a maximum penalty of 25 points (i.e. if the original grade is 85/100 and the paper was submitted one day late, it drops to an 80/100). Students are expected to inform the instructor immediately via email or phone of any technical difficulties encountered in working on or submitting coursework to Blackboard.

Grading Scale for Course Grades:

<u>Superior:</u>	<u>Very Good:</u>	<u>Satisfactory:</u>	<u>Poor:</u>
A = 93-100%	B+= 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 65-69%
A- = 90-92%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	F = 64% & below
	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	

Course & Academic Policies:

You are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared—this means bringing writing materials (paper / pens, laptops, etc.) and the necessary books to class. Reading assignments should be completed before the date assigned on the calendar. Please come to class prepared to discuss the reading with any comments or questions you may have. Regular attendance will ensure your success in this course, as will your active participation in weekly discussions. Active participation includes listening to the material presented and thoughtfully engaging the class with your own observations or analyses. Our discussions will provide an opportunity for you to digest the course material—you are encouraged to question and think critically about the material presented and use class as a place for exchanging those thoughts and questions with other students.

If you have specific questions or concerns about the assignments or your performance in the class, please come to see me as soon as possible. Addressing these issues early in the semester is key to your success in this class and, more generally, as a student. I am happy to meet with students either in office hours or by appointment to discuss course assignments, paper drafts (within a reasonable time-frame), questions, concerns, writing mechanics, general history, or anything else you'd like to discuss.

Masking Policy

Per current university guidelines, **you are required to wear an approved mask at all times when indoors on campus**; this includes our classroom meetings and paper conferences. Cloth masks and gaiters are no longer permitted; you must have a 3-ply surgical mask or N95/N94 mask. Please see the University's [updated COVID-19 policies](#) for further information. Please make arrangements to acquire a supply of approved masks for the duration of the semester, and make sure that you understand how and are able to wear the mask properly. No eating will be allowed in class. If you have questions or concerns about this policy, including penalties for non-compliance, please visit <https://www.misericordia.edu/coronavirus/information/current-students>. A supply of approved masks will be available at various locations across campus for those in need; you may also retrieve a mask from campus safety when needed. You will be asked to leave the classroom if you are unable or unwilling to comply with these mask requirements.

Please also note that if you experience any symptoms of COVID-19, do NOT come to class, and immediately complete the [MU Symptom Tracker](#) to receive guidance from Cougar Care.

Diversity & Classroom Etiquette

The Department of History & Government embraces cultural, linguistic, and individual diversity in students. We believe that our program will be enriched and enhanced by diversity that includes but is not limited to gender and gender identity, race, ethnicity and national origins, sexuality, class, and religion. In this course we will discuss potentially controversial issues having to do with race, gender, sexuality, class, and politics. Some of the readings and other course materials contain objectionable material, including language that is demeaning of certain racial groups. You are all adults; I expect you to deal with these materials in a mature fashion with the understanding that their content can help us to better understand the past, even if the

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language is out-of-date and / or offensive. This does not mean that you can repeat such language without being appropriately sensitive to its offensive nature. Use your best judgement: if you must quote such language, then quote it and move on. If a less offensive term will do to make your point, then rephrase as needed. We each need to strive to maintain a tolerant and respectful environment. Moreover, open disrespect of another classmate will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to ask any student who is disruptive or disrespectful to leave the classroom.

Laptop Policy:

You will need access to a computer and the internet to complete your papers for this course. Although laptops are not required for in-class work, they will be permitted only as long as they do not become a distraction in the classroom. I also recommend that all students acquire a flash drive, if you don't already have one. It is your responsibility to find a reliable computer and internet connection to complete your work for this course ON TIME. Save your work often and always print or save a copy of your sources—do not rely upon the internet. Do not wait until the week the paper is due to begin preparing. Students who experience “technical difficulties” must notify me immediately, and may be subject to the late policy.

**Please Note that notes or recordings made by students in this class based on my lectures and / or classroom discussions may only be made for the purposes of individual or group study. You must seek my formal permission BEFORE making any such recordings. Notes and / or recordings may not be exchanged or distributed for any commercial purpose or compensation. As the instructor of this course, I retain intellectual property rights in the lecture material pursuant to US copyright law and University Policy, as outlined in the University's Policy Manual for the Campus Community (vol. II, section 2.6.6), and summarized here: misericordia.edu/IntellectualProperty. Misuse of course notes or recordings may subject you to legal proceedings.*

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism (i.e. submitting work for credit that is not your own) will not be tolerated. It is your responsibility to read and understand the University's Academic Integrity policy and its consequences during your time at Misericordia. Adhere to all posted assignment instructions; do not attempt to work with a partner on any assignments that are not group assignments; and do not utilize internet resources in completing your papers, outside of those approved for class use. Students who violate the University's Academic Integrity policy will receive an “F” for the assignment and may be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Multiple violations will result in your failing the course. If you have questions about this policy or what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me immediately. [The full text of the University's Academic Integrity policy can be found online in the University Catalog.](#)

Attendance Policy:

- You are expected to complete the readings on time, attend class regularly, and take notes.
- It is your responsibility to make sure you sign-in at each class.
- You will be allowed two absences without penalty. Additional absences will only be excused, at my discretion, for medical or other emergencies.
- You are also required to attend two paper conferences with me in my office. See the schedule below for dates. There will be sign-up sheets linked on the Blackboard, which will be available starting one week before the conference period. You are required to

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sign-up for an appointment through the link on the Blackboard AND submit a rough draft of your paper 24hrs before your conference appointment. You may change your appointment up to 5pm the day before your conference, but please note that the sign-up sheets are first come-first served. Failure to submit your rough draft on time and / or attend your conference will result in a loss of 10pts to your paper grade (for each offense).

- Should you need to quarantine during the semester, please notify me immediately.
- Students may choose to withdraw from the course before 75% of the course has passed, without academic penalty (a “W” will appear on your transcript). The Withdrawal deadline is April 8, 2022. Students who stop attending class before this deadline but who do not officially withdraw will receive an “F” for the course. Students whose unexcused absences total more than 35% of the course meetings will receive an “F” for the course.
- Please also note that if you experience any symptoms of COVID-19, do NOT come to class, and immediately complete the [MU Symptom Tracker](#) to receive guidance from Cougar Care. Email me to alert me of the situation.
- If you find that you will be absent for more than three days, for any reason, please notify the Assoc. Dean of Students (crimpfel@misericordia.edu) and / or the VPAA’s office (swinsock@misericordia.edu) as soon as possible, as they can help coordinate accommodations with your professors.

Email / Blackboard:

You are expected to regularly check your MU email account for course updates and communications from me. I check my email regularly during the week and at least once a day on weekends, and generally will reply within 24hrs. However, emails sent after 7pm will not receive a response until the following morning. Additionally, I will not discuss grades via email—you need to meet with me personally in my office to address any concerns regarding your grade. As per the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA), all email correspondence between the instructor and students must be addressed to the student’s institutional email address (@misericordia.edu) in order to maintain the student’s privacy.

Other Academic Policies

All Misericordia University courses follow standard academic policies, described [here](#), or on the portal under the students tab. Policies include: Credit Hour Statement, Disability Statement, Tutorial Assistance, Laptop Policies, Equipment requirements and support. Credit hour statements are specific to course format.

Writing Center:

You should all become familiar with the Writing Center, an invaluable resource for this course. More information can be found by clicking on “Student Success Center” under the Students Tab in MyMU, and scrolling down to the box for the Writing Center. The center offers drop-in assistance and its hours for this semester are as follows:

Monday – Thursday: 10am – 7pm; and virtual services only from 7pm – 9pm
Sunday: 1pm – 5pm; and virtual only services from 5pm – 9pm

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Emergencies / MU Alerts

Should an alert be posted by the MU alert system, I will keep my cell phone on to receive such alerts. All student cell phones should be turned off or put away during class.

**NOTE: It is your responsibility to understand the guidelines for this course. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me as soon as possible. Failure to address such issues connotes your implicit acceptance and agreement with these guidelines. I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus, if necessary.*

Weekly Schedule

AY= [American Yawp](#)

<u>UNIT I: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY</u>		
Wk 1 (1/18-20)	T: Introduction to the course Th: Looking at Images Churchwell discussion	<u>Read:</u> 1. Churchwell, Brief History of the American Dream (2021) 2. Harvard Guide to Close Reading 3. Start readings for next week
Wk 2 (1/25-27)	T: Colonial Society Th: The American Revolution	<u>Read:</u> 1. AY chs4-5 2. Declaration of Independence
Wk 3 (2/1-3)	T: Revolutionary Documents Th: Introduction to Summary, Prewriting / Outlines	<u>Read for Tuesday:</u> 1. Petition of Slaves to MA, 1777 (PDF on Bb) 2. Abigail Adams' letter to John Adams, & his reply (1776) <u>Read for Thursday:</u> 1. How to Write a Summary 2. Seagull W1-W3b (p1-12), R4 (p138-149)
Wk 4 (2/8-10)	T: Summary Workshop (Bring outline) **DRAFT Paper 1 due on Bb, Wednesday 2/9 3pm Th: The Problem of Slavery & Long-term Causes of the Civil War	<u>Read for Tuesday:</u> Seagull checklist p601 <u>Read for Thursday:</u> 1. AY ch11, parts I-III 2. AY ch13 Recommended: AY ch10, part V
Wk 5 (2/15-17)	T: The Civil War & Emancipation **Paper 1 due in class & Bb, Tuesday 2/15 Th: Civil War, cont'd	<u>Read:</u> 1. AY ch14 2. Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4th of July?" (1852) 3. TX Decl. of Secession (1861) 4. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (1863)

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Wk 6 (2/22-24)	T: Intro to Analysis / Prewriting / Avoiding Plagiarism Th: Thesis Construction & Analysis workshop	<u>Read:</u> 1. Seagull W4-5 (p17-39); W8-9 (p53-71); R4 (p138-149) 2. Harvard Guide, Topic Sentences *Homework for 2/24: Choose your document for paper 2 and prepare ideas for your outline
Wk 7 (3/1-3)	T: Reconstruction & the Memory of the War M, W, Th: Paper Conferences (sign up on Bb) **Paper 2 due on Bb, Friday 3/4 by 4pm	<u>Read:</u> IHH on Lost Cause Myth Recommended: AY ch 15
Wk 8 (3/7-11)	NO CLASS / SPRING BREAK	
<u>UNIT II: MODERN AMERICA</u>		
Wk 9 (3/15-17)	T/Th: Westward Expansion	<u>Read:</u> AY chs12 & 17
Wk 10 (3/22-24)	T/Th: Immigrants & the Working Class c.1900	<u>Read:</u> 1. AY ch18 2. DuBois, ch 1 from Souls of Black Folk, 1903 (“Spiritual Strivings”) *Homework: Choose your image for paper 3 and bring a copy to class next week
Wk 11 (3/27-29)	T: Film Discussion The Italian (1917)-Youtube Modern Times (1936)- Kanopy Th: Analysis workshop (Choose your image for Paper 3 & bring a copy / printout, along with your outline) *Writing Center worksheet due 4/12	<u>Read:</u> 1. Watch assigned films & take notes (*optional 500-wd summary & reflection, for extra credit) 2. Hughes, “Let America Be America Again” (1935) 3. Review Plagiarism guidelines *Homework: bring outline to class Thurs. Recommended: AY ch23
Wk 12 (4/5):	M, T, W: Paper conferences (sign up on Bb) *NO CLASS April 7 / Dr. Black away at a conference **Paper 3 due on Bb, Thursday 4/7 by 12pm	

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	*WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: April 8 th —Last day to withdraw without academic penalty	
Wk 13 (4/12)	T: Introduction to Synthesis * Writing center worksheet due 4/12 *NO CLASS April 14 / Easter Recess	<u>Read:</u> 1. Review Seagull W4, W5, & W8 2. Begin readings for next week
Wk 14 (4/19-21)	T/Th: Postwar Abundance & Civil Rights *Begin thinking about your selections for paper 4	<u>Read:</u> 1. AY chs26-27 2. MLK, "I Have a Dream" (1963) 3. Wallace, Inaugural Speech (1963)
Wk 15 (4/26-28)	T: Wrap Up Discussion / prewriting Th: Synthesis workshop (bring outline)	* Homework for 4/28: prepare outline
Wk 16 (May 3)	T, W: *Optional* Paper conferences (sign up on Bb) ** Paper 4 due Monday 5/9/22 on Bb and in MY OFFICE by 4:00pm	

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**Please refer to the following rubric as a grading reference for your papers in this course.*

WRITING PROFICIENCY RUBRIC FOR HIS 151

Criteria	A (90-100)	B (80-89)	C (70-79)	D (65-69)	F (0-64)
Thesis	Has a well-defined thesis that is appropriate to the assignment & demonstrates original analysis.	Has an appropriate thesis that demonstrates some original analysis.	Has an adequate thesis that is descriptive rather than analytical.	Has a thesis that is inappropriate to the assignment or is poorly defined.	Lacks a discernable thesis.
Development of Ideas	Consistently shows depth & complexity of thought by developing ideas that effectively support the thesis.	Shows some depth & complexity of thought by developing ideas that support the thesis.	Shows little depth or complexity of thought by developing ideas that only adequately support the thesis and/or largely describe/summarize the text.	Shows deficiency in thought by failing to develop ideas that support the thesis.	Lacks thought by failing to develop ideas that support the thesis.
Support for Argument	Consistently demonstrates effective use and analysis of text to support distinct ideas that relate to the thesis.	Demonstrates some effective use and analysis of text to support distinct ideas that relate to the thesis.	Demonstrates some use of text to support ideas, but analysis is superficial or limited to description.	Demonstrates limited use of and analysis of the text to support ideas and thesis.	Lacks use and analysis of text to support ideas and thesis.
Organization	Demonstrates a logical and compelling progression of ideas through effective paragraphs that are unified and developed.	Demonstrates a logical progression of ideas and paragraphs that are unified and developed.	Demonstrates a logic, but does not pursue it consistently and paragraphs lack effective development.	Logic of paper is vague or poorly defined, and paragraphs lack development.	Logic of paper is absent or inconsistent; paragraphs are undeveloped and lacking unity.
Writing Style	Demonstrates fluency & varied use of appropriate language.	Shows some fluency and language used is somewhat varied & appropriate.	Shows weak fluency & little variation in language; may be repetitive	Shows poor fluency and almost no variation in language.	Shows very poor fluency and no varied use of language.
Mechanics, Grammar, & Formatting	Paper is essentially free of mechanical, grammatical, and formatting errors	Paper has a limited number of minor mechanical, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.	Paper has a significant number of minor errors or a major mechanical, grammatical, or formatting error.	Paper consistently shows minor mechanical, grammatical, or formatting errors or a few major errors.	Paper has severe mechanical, grammatical, and formatting problems that frustrate comprehension.