

370, Contemporary Issues in the Humanities

Foundation Document

DESCRIPTION

IHum 370 engages students in the current practices, strategies and ways of thinking peculiar to the humanities and introduces them to more sophisticated methods and practices of writing within the discipline. As the concluding course in the 250, 311, and 350 sequence, 370 reinforces and synthesizes the skills developed in these previous courses by providing a focused encounter with a small selection of primary works, the current scholarly conversation surrounding those works, and the contemporary theoretical and critical background that informs the scholarly conversation. This will be accomplished by the close analysis of primary works (skills developed in 250), the reading and analysis of primary theoretical and secondary scholarly sources (skills developed in 350), as well as the engagement with contemporary theoretical and critical texts. This emphasis on contemporary theory and criticism as it develops and extends students' exposure to theory in 350 is a distinctive characteristic of 370. In addition to the above, 370 also introduces students to more sophisticated methods and practices of writing within the discipline, including the development and execution of a research program, so as to produce thoughtful and sophisticated papers (skills developed in 311). 370 thus provides a synthetic experience for students by combining the knowledge and skills gained throughout the humanities curriculum and by reinforcing the knowledge and skills at a more demanding level in preparation for senior seminars. Furthermore, 370 equips students with a more sophisticated understanding of the role of the humanities in relation to significant and pressing cultural issues and questions as well as how to go about engaging such. In doing so, it is hoped that students will acquire a better understanding of the nature of the humanities and interdisciplinarity in general and encourage them to see themselves not as passive readers and onlookers in the questions that engage the humanities, but as active participants, as interlocutors, involved in an ongoing conversation.

PREREQUISITES

IHum 201 & 202, IHum 250, IHum 311, and IHum 350 or equivalents.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- engage with contemporary theory and current scholarly discourse within the accepted methodologies of the humanities
- demonstrate the skills of humanistic study, ie. analyze, think critically, and write clearly and persuasively
- produce original arguments based on sound research methodology

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

- a focus on at least one contemporary issue, problem or topic in the humanities. Examples may include:

globalization	identity	the sacred	media
popular culture	gender	ethnicity	memory and history
the post-human	technology	trauma	the environment

COURE MATERIALS

- selection of a representative primary work or works exploring one or more of the problem(s) above
- selection of secondary sources: both primary theoretical works and secondary critical explorations of the above texts and problems.
- Wayne Booth's *The Craft of Research*.

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

- a 12-15 page final paper demonstrating close reading and analysis of a particular work and utilizing the theoretical knowledge, writing, reading, critical thinking and analytical skills developed during the course of the semester.
- smaller assignments that develop reading, writing, critical thinking and analytical skills. These may include summaries, informal reading responses, short thesis papers, drafts, revisions, etc.