490R Interdisciplinary Humanities Senior Seminars
Foundation Document

Description

Senior seminars are capstone courses that cover seminal readings in critical theory and/or analyses of literature, music, drama, film, or art that reflect on the theme for the class. Unlike the junior seminars, which are surveys of particular periods, authors, movements, genres, or regions, senior seminars are structured around concepts or issues that have broader interdisciplinary implications. The line separating junior and senior seminars need not be absolutely rigid, however. The main difference is the writing component: senior seminars require a final capstone paper of significant length and junior seminars require a strong research component without a final paper. Senior seminars also provide ample opportunities for class discussion based on the readings and analyses and require several short response papers throughout the semester, a midterm and/or final exam, an oral presentation of the student's research project, and the final research paper. Prerequisites are IHum 370, IHum 390R, or permission by instructor.

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate the skills of humanistic study, i.e. analyze, think critically, and write clearly and persuasively
- Produce original arguments based on sound research methodology
- Demonstrate advanced critical thinking, analytical and writing skills in oral and written assignments
- Each iteration of this course has more specific outcomes based on the subject matter at hand; those additional objectives are articulated in each instructor's customized syllabus

Assessment measures:

- Examinations are designed to demonstrate 1)mastery of factual knowledge relevant to the topic studied and 2)critical thinking
- Writing assignments include various formal and informal writing assignments
- The final writing project should be of significant length (14-20 pages) to demonstrate mastery of relevant scholarship, evidence of original thought, and construction of persuasive arguments
- An oral presentation of the student's research project is also required. The oral presentation is an opportunity for students to practice oral delivery skills and get student and instructor feedback before completing the final research paper
- A passing grade of B- or above is considered sufficient evidence of satisfactory acquisition of skills requisite for completion of major

Recommendations:

- When possible, students should be encouraged to submit their capstone papers to student journals for publication
- No less than two and no more than three senior seminars should be offered each semester