**Linda Rogers**

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Office: **HM 204D *~*** Hours: **MW 1-2, TR 3:45-4:45,** & by appointment

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## Spring 2011: Liberal Studies 300 – *Forms of Interdisciplinary Inquiry*

## This class meets in Life Sci 130 on Thursdays at 1:00.

*Text:* **In Defense of American Higher Education** (Altbach, Gumport, & Johnstone, eds.)

***Course Description:*** This course investigates several forms of inquiry used in contemporary academic

disciplines, as well as providing an overview of higher education from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

***Goals / Learning Outcomes:*** Through our readings, discussions, and class presentations, we will gain a better understanding of Liberal Studies, of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to learning, and of significant

issues relating to higher education today, with special attention to issues of social justice. We will work toward

these projected outcomes: (1) learning to address complex issues from the point of view of a number of relevant

disciplines, (2) demonstrating your knowledge of the basic content and methods of your areas of concentration, and

(3) demonstrating the ability to write and speak about issues from the perspectives of the disciplines that make up

your areas of concentration.

***Work Requirements:*** Your work includes reading, reflecting, writing, and making presentations, as well as listening

to guest speakers during our class sessions. In keeping with the goals described in the section above, you will engage

in the following activities:

1. To further your awareness of complex issues in higher education, including interdisciplinary pursuits,

we will read and discuss *In Defense of American Higher Education* along with relevant outside material. As evidence of your engagement in the course work, you will keep a series of weekly journal entries\* reflecting on our course activities. I will respond to each entry and later in term, to your accumulated portfolio material. In addition to working with the text, we will generate an extended range of discussion topics enhanced by presentations on outside materials by you, your classmates, and our guest speakers.

1. To demonstrate knowledge of the content and methods of your areas of concentration, you will give a

brief presentation on your Liberal Studies program, including a discussion of your studies in each area of concentration. Like your program proposal, this presentation should touch on your academic motivation, sources of inspiration, learning goals, and desired outcomes for the future.

1. To demonstrate your ability to write and speak about issues from the perspective of the disciplines

that encompass your areas of concentration, you will make a major presentation that explores these areas in greater depth. Your goal is to help others understand your work, so you may want to explain how each discipline’s approach compares to and interacts with the others, as well as demonstrating how you plan to incorporate your areas of interest in the future. I hope you will discuss your project with me as you plan your approach.

\* Weekly journal entries to be turned in by the Wednesday before class: E-mail your entry if possible, or turn in 1 to 2 typed pages (standard font size). I expect informal but coherent responses to your experiences in the course, with a significant part of each entry reflecting on class readings and related issues. Other suggested topics include *GUEST LECTURES & OTHER CLASS ACTIVITIES* (explain which aspects of these events are most significant to you, especially in terms of your academic or vocational interests); *YOUR OWN WORK* (tell how your work is going and what you are learning in other courses related to your program and if you wish, discuss aspects of college life not related to Liberal Studies, while continuing to focus on the pursuit of a college degree); as well as *OTHER STUDENT PRESENTATIONS*. (To confirm a presentation of your own for the final portfolio, turn in a brief summary or other material relating to your talk.) Please note that all work should be represented by supporting material in your final portfolio.

*General Course Policies:*

* You are responsible for keeping up with all of the course work, including weekly journal entries and

presentations, so you need to **keep all the written work done for this class to demonstrate your fulfillment of the written requirements for the course.** To avoid losing data, **save your work on an external storage device and** **send a copy to your own e-mail account.**

* **Journal entries and presentations are due on the assigned dates. If you have a problem with a due date, discuss it with me privately as soon as possible.**

***Attendance:*** Your course work involves participation in discussions, attending lectures, and working with your

classmates, so **regular attendance is very important**. **Because we meet only once a week, I expect**

**to hear from you if you must be absent from class.** Send me an e-mail or call 852-4737.

***Grading Criteria:***

**A - work that is thorough, imaginative, and thoughtful, with full participation in class**

**assignments, discussions, and group activities**

**B - good work that moves beyond basic requirements to demonstrate active engagement in**

**assignments, discussions, and group activities**

**C - acceptable work; “just doing the minimum to get by”**

###### D - most of the course work complete

###### F - little or no course work complete

*With modifying factors:* A plus sign (“+”) indicates that the work exceeds the criteria for a grade;

a minus sign (“–”) indicates that the work falls below the criteria for a grade.

***Special Conditions or Disabilities:*** If you have a condition or disability that may impair your ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria, please arrange to meet with me to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modifications or accommodations. You should notify me as soon as possible if such a disability or condition is diagnosed. (Contact the Disability Resource Center, 852-6938, for further assistance.)

***Grievance Procedure:*** If you have questions or concerns about this class, see me as soon as possible. If you are not satisfied with our discussion, you may arrange to see Dr. John Hale (852-2247).

*Important Dates:*

Thursday, January 13**: First day of class**

Friday, January 14: **Last day to drop or add a class**

(Mon., Jan. 17: **Martin Luther King Day – no classes)**

Thursday, February 3: **Last day to apply for a degree**

Monday, February 28: **Last day to withdraw**

Mon.-Sun., March 14-20**: Spring Break – no classes**

Thursday, April 7: **Final portfolios may be turned in.**

Thursday, April 14: **Due date for final portfolios**

Thursday, April 21: **Last day of class (portfolios returned)**

Tuesday, April 26, **1 to 3 PM: Office hours for return of late portfolios in HM 204 D**

Wednesday-Tuesday, April 27-May 3: **Final Exam Period (no final in this class)**

Saturday, May 8: **Commencement & degree date**

*INITIAL COURSE PLAN:*

# 1/13 – First journal entry, syllabus distribution, sign-ups for the first presentations, and introductions. Today we will begin to look at various perspectives on higher learning and liberal studies, sharing our own observations and reflections with one another.

First journal entry: I’d like for you to write about the factors that brought you here and discuss some of your educational goals. Here are a few questions to consider:

1. *How did you develop the goal of pursuing your degree? Were there family members or others who encouraged you in the pursuit of higher education or of specific career goals?*
2. *What led you to consider the Liberal Studies program?*
3. *What are some of your post-graduate plans or aspirations? How do you hope to find meaning in your life and in your work?*

After the writing session, we will begin to discuss educational experiences and goals, especially personal learning aspirations. I will also ask you to look over the chapter topics in the text to decide which ones seem most significant to you. We will design our course plan together based on your interests as a class.