

LINDA ROGERS

<linda.rogers@louisville.edu>

Office: **HM 204D** ~ Hours: **MW 4:45-5:45 & TR 1:30-2:30**

Phone: **852-4737**; Mailbox in **HM 315** (English Dept. office)

FALL 2009: LIBERAL STUDIES 300, *Forms of Interdisciplinary Inquiry* – HM 106, Thurs. at 4:00

REQUIRED TEXTS:

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

Oral Presentations in the Composition Course (M. Duncan & G. W. Friedrich)

Course Description: This course will investigate several forms of inquiry used in contemporary academic disciplines, as well as giving an overview of higher education from both historical and contemporary perspectives. You will be required to read, reflect, write, and make presentations, as well as attending guest lectures or other activities arranged for our class sessions.

Goals / Learning Outcomes: Through our readings, discussions, and class presentations, you will gain a better understanding of Liberal Studies, of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to learning, and of significant issues relating to higher education today. 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 comprise your areas of concentration.

Work Requirements: (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 weekly journal* of reflections on our course activities. I will respond to your journal entries each week, 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.**

(2) **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.**

(3) **To demonstrate your ability to write and speak about issues from the perspective of the disciplines that comprise your areas of concentration, you will make a major presentation exploring these areas in greater depth. Your goal will be to help others understand your work, so you might explain how each discipline's approach compares to and interacts with the others, and demonstrate how you plan to incorporate your areas of interest in the future. The *Oral Presentations* text will help you to fulfill this requirement successfully.**

* Turn in a weekly journal entry by the Wednesday before class. Each entry should be equivalent to 1 to 2 typed pages in length (preferred font size: 11 to 13); it may be e-mailed, turned in during English 309 on Tuesday, or delivered to my HM 315 mailbox. I expect coherent but informal responses to your experiences in the course, with a significant part of each entry reflecting on **class readings** and related issues. Other possible topics include (1) **guest lectures or other university activities:** Respond to aspects of these events that are significant to you, especially in terms of your academic or vocational interests; (2) **your own work:** Explain what you are studying, how your work is going, and what you are learning in the process. If you wish, discuss aspects of college life not related to Liberal Studies itself, while continuing to focus on the pursuit of a college degree; and (3) **student presentations:** Comment on presentations by your classmates; for a presentation of your own, turn in a brief summary or other material relating to your talk.

Completed work requirements should be represented by supporting material in your final portfolio.

General Policies:

- You are responsible for keeping up with all of the course work, including weekly journal entries and presentations. **Keep all the written work done for this class to demonstrate your fulfillment of the written requirements for the course.** (To avoid losing track of your completed journal entries, **save each on a 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 essential. **Because we meet only once a week, I expect to hear from you if you must be absent from class.** Send a message to <linda.rogers@louisville.edu> or call 852-4737.

Grading Criteria:

A - WORK THAT IS VERY 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 no later than the second week of this semester, or no later than the end of the second week after a disability or condition is diagnosed, whichever occurs earliest. (Contact the Disability Resource Center, 852-6938, for further assistance.)

Grievance Procedure: If you have questions or concerns about grades, the class, or any assignment, see me as soon as possible. If you remain unsatisfied, you may arrange to see Dr. John Hale (852-2247).

IMPORTANT DATES:

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27: First day of class

FRIDAY, AUG. 28: Last day to drop/add

MONDAY, SEPT. 7: Labor Day – no classes

MONDAY, SEPT. 14: Last day to apply for December degree

MON.-TUES., OCTOBER 12-13: Midterm Break – no classes

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15: Last day to withdraw

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19: Due date for final portfolios

WED.-SUN., NOVEMBER 25-29: Thanksgiving Break – no classes

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3: Last day of class; portfolios returned

TUESDAY, DEC. 8, 1 TO 3 PM: Office hours for return of late portfolios (HM 204 D)

WED.-TUES., DECEMBER 9-15: Final Exam Period (no final in this class)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15: December degree date

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17: December Commencement

TENTATIVE COURSE PLAN

8/27 – First journal entry, syllabus distribution, introductory material, and sign-ups for the first presentation. 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 & individual introductions: Write for 20 minutes or so about how you came to be here today (see the suggestions on the next page). After the writing session, we will begin to discuss our educational experiences and goals, as well as areas of interest in higher education.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. *How did you develop the goal of pursuing a college degree? Were there family members or others who encouraged you in the pursuit of higher education?*

2. *Were specific schools or courses of study recommended to you? How did you come to attend U of L?*
3. *What led you to consider the Liberal Studies program?*
4. *What are some of your post-graduate plans or aspirations?*

Syllabus: I will go over this briefly but will welcome additional comments or questions at any time.

Introduction to the course material: We'll discuss focal points of the course and some of our primary concerns as participants in higher education.

Sign up for the first presentation on your individual Liberal Studies program; these will begin on Sept. 17th.

Homework:

1. Note the date for your LBST presentation so that you can prepare for it.
2. Begin to read the Introduction and the first chapter dealing with a "Comparative Perspective" (1-37), and tell me about your reactions to the reading. Were you aware that our system was seen as "the worldwide 'gold standard' for higher education"? The author, Philip Altbach, reminds us that the U.S. was the first to focus on mass education at the college level rather than allowing only a few select individuals to move beyond primary and secondary education, as had been the tradition in other countries. After giving a bit of historical background, Altbach sets up a context for understanding our system and discusses some of our current challenges.
3. **Turn in the 2nd journal entry**, equivalent to 1 or 2 double-spaced pages, by **Wednesday, Sept. 2**. Turn it in during Eng. 309 on Tuesday, or turn it in by Wednesday, either by e-mail or as a printout delivered to my mailbox in HM 315.

PLEASE NOTE: Class sessions will often include guest speakers and student presenters as well as class discussions. Your journal entries should include responses to some of speakers or notable presentations after they take place. Also, if you know people who are knowledgeable about and willing to discuss situations or events under discussion, please ask if they are willing to share some of their observations and experiences with you to extend the exchange of thoughts available in class.

9/3 – We will discuss Ch. 1 on "The American Academic Model." In "Historical Perspectives," the section on pp. 14-16, Altbach provides an overview of our collective history in higher education. He explains that traditions in the U.S. began in Europe and were strongly influenced by the emergence of British colleges like Oxford and Cambridge in the Middle Ages. We will take a closer look at the historical overview and discuss other parts of the reading that seem most informative or interesting to the class. **Homework:** Read Ch. 2 and turn in the 3rd journal entry by Wednesday, 9/9; begin to look over *Oral Presentations* (Duncan & Friedrich).

9/10 – Discussion of Ch. 2 on higher education as a "mature industry." Here Levine offers an interesting and somewhat unusual perspective on higher education. To his discussion we will add our own observations about current economic pressures on colleges and college students. We will also begin to discuss the text on presentations. **Homework:** Prepare for your presentation, read Ch. 3, continue to look over the text on presentations, and turn in the 4th journal entry by Wednesday, 9/16.

9/17 – Discussion of Ch. 3 on the "crisis" question in higher education. The authors are certainly correct in noting that the word "crisis" has been overused here, but we will continue to look at our own observations about current conditions in higher ed. We will also begin the brief presentations on individual LBST degree programs and continue to discuss the text on presentations. **Homework:** Prepare for your next presentation, skip to and skim through **Ch. 10** on graduate education, and turn in the 5th journal entry by Wednesday, 9/23. **If possible, please focus more on your own post-graduate interests or aspirations than on Ch. 10 in your journal response.**

9/24 – Ch. 10 and individual responses on graduate work; continued presentations; discussion of text on presentations. **Homework:** Prepare presentation; read Ch. 5, and turn in the 6th entry by Wednesday, 9/30.

***NOTE:** By Sept. 30th you should have turned in 6 journal entries—one for the first day and for Chapters 1-3, 10, and 5—as well as summaries of each presentation you have made. Six more chapter responses will be due by Nov. 19th for*

Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 13.

10/1 – Discussion of Ch. 5 on “Universal Access” and the ways that access to college is—or is not—made available to high school students. Today we will also complete the short presentations and continue to discuss plans for the longer ones. **Homework:** Prepare for your next presentation, read Ch. 6, and turn in the 7th journal entry by Wednesday, 10/7.

10/8 – Discussion of Ch. 6 on the costs of higher education. We will compare tuition rates and continue to discuss college costs. Major presentations may also begin today. **Homework:** Prepare for your presentation, read Ch. 7, and turn in the 8th journal entry by Wednesday, 10/14.

10/15 – Discussion of Ch. 7 on “Liberal Arts.” Although this chapter focuses primarily on small “elite” schools, we will look at the way that LBST functions as a Liberal Arts program within the university. Major presentations will continue. **Homework:** Prepare your presentation, read Ch. 8, and turn in the 9th journal entry by Wednesday, 10/21.

10/22 – Discussion of Ch. 8 on technological innovations. How have technological innovations in educational software and online course availability affected you? Major presentations will continue. **Homework:** Prepare your presentation, read Ch. 9, and turn in the 10th journal entry by Wednesday, 10/28.

10/29 – Discussion of Ch. 9, written by a former university president on the role of the president in higher education. We will also look at the work of other college presidents as we discuss this chapter. Major presentations will continue. **Homework:** Prepare your presentation, read Ch. 11, and turn in the 11th journal entry by Wednesday, 11/4.

11/5 – Discussion of Ch. 11 on “College Students Today” and how students have changed in terms of behavior and expectations over time. Major presentations continue. **Homework:** Prepare your presentation, read Ch. 13, and turn in the 12th journal entry by Wednesday, 11/7. If possible, please turn in your final portfolio during Thursday’s class (I will return the last journal entry and you may include short statements about the last presentation, if you have not yet completed it).

11/12 – Collection of portfolios, discussion of Ch. 13 on college professors, and presentations. **Homework:** Prepare your presentation, if necessary, and complete your final portfolio.

11/19 – Final presentations and collection of portfolios.

11/25-29 – **Thanksgiving Break – no classes**

12/3 – **Last day of class; portfolios returned.**

On Tuesday, 12/8, the “reading day” before final exam week, I will hold two extra hours in **HM 204 D** from **1 to 3 p.m.** to return portfolios as needed.

Please note: *I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus as necessary to meet our learning objectives, to compensate for missed classes, or for similar reasons. I will make every effort to notify you of such changes in class and by postings to Blackboard.*