Letters and Science W1: Exploring the Liberal Arts, L&S W1

Two (2) semester credits

Purpose of the Course

Letters and Science W1 is a course for entering students, particularly those who are excited to be at Cal but uncertain of where to start their explorations. It provides an introduction to the intellectual landscape of the College of Letters and Science, revealing the underlying assumptions, goals and structure of a liberal arts education. Guest speakers, drawn largely from the faculty and recent graduates of L&S, will shed light on the nature and attractions of their disciplines. Topics will be both theoretical and practical: for example, you’ll learn why the L&S breadth requirement exists and also get a good sense of which disciplines would be most engaging for you to pursue while satisfying breadth. The ultimate goal of the course is to transform students into informed participants in their own educational experiences at Berkeley.

This is a special online summer version of the course, which means it will be very fast paced. Your work will be completed in the context of this course website.

Prerequisites

You must be an incoming Freshman at UC Berkeley.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to

- Describe the College of Letters and Science Programs
- Identify a personal area of interest in the College of Letters and Science

Instructor Information, Contact, Office Hours, & Communication

Course Instructor
Social Hour (Office Hours)

The course instructor and GSIs (graduate student instructors) will offer virtual social hours, when students can communicate in real time (synchronously) using Adobe Connect. While these online meetings are optional they can be valuable for discussion, answering questions, and coming to know one another on another level. Social Hours are optional; no points are awarded for participation.

The session will be for one hour. However, if no one shows up in the first 15 minutes, then that office hour will be cancelled.

Please see the Social Hour section for the schedule of days and times.

Course Mail

Make sure to check the Course Mail for messages from the instructor. You can access course email within the Learning Management System by selecting the Inbox icon in the sidebar navigation (see also Canvas Overview Video). You can also choose to have your course mail forwarded to your personal email account or your cell phone by setting your notifications in your personal profile.

General Question & Answer Forum

Please use this forum to post questions about the course material, assignments, the learning management system or online homework. The instructor and GSIs will monitor this forum, but you should also feel free to post answers to help other students. This helps to create a general FAQ so that all students in the course may benefit from the exchange.

Course Materials and Technical Requirements

Required Materials

This course is self contained. Required readings are made accessible in the course.

Recommended Materials
• Headset and microphone to participate in Online Office Hours

Technical Requirements

This course is built on a Learning Management system (LMS) called Canvas and you will need to meet these computer specifications to participate within this online platform.

Optional

Canvas allows you to record audio or video files of yourself and upload them in the course. Although doing so is not required for any of the activities, using these features will enhance your engagement in the course. If you would like to use these features, you will need to have a webcam and a microphone installed on your computer.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulties please alert one of the GSIs immediately. However, understand that neither the GSIs, nor the professor can assist you with technical problems. You must call or email tech support and make sure you resolve any issues immediately. Be sure to document (save emails and transaction numbers) for all interactions with tech support. Extensions and late submissions will not be accepted due to “technical difficulties”.

Select the ‘Help’ icon link on the sidebar navigation for support options.

Learning Activities

VERY IMPORTANT

You won't be able to access your course material until you read and make your pledge to Academic Integrity. As soon as you have access to the online course make sure to complete the Academic Integrity Pledge quiz.

You are expected to fully participate in all the course activities described here.

1. Read the assigned articles.
2. Participate in the discussion forums.
3. Watch and listen to all of the lecture presentations.
4. Submit questions to the professors through the weekly question form.
5. Complete all writing assignments.

Read web-based announcements and postings assigned during the course

Modules

Each week is a module, which is a grouping of topics related to one area of study, typically with readings, lectures and various kinds of assignments. Your assignments reflect the learning activities to perform each week. For an at-a-glance view of due dates and projects, refer to the course Calendar.

Course Requirements

Watch approximately six (or sometimes more) short lectures per week: These are mostly given by Berkeley faculty members, but you will also encounter deans, alumni, and some staff members who organize academic enrichment activities in these online lectures.

Complete the lecture "Answer the Question" quizzes Some lectures have short answer quizzes following the videos (or appearing between the two halves of a longer lecture). You must complete all of the lecture video quizzes.

Read one to two essays or articles per week: All but one of the readings are authored by Berkeley faculty members. This expands the number and range of Berkeley faculty whom you will encounter in the class.

Online discussions of the lectures and readings: Each week we will be focusing on one disciplinary or interdisciplinary area of the college, and the lectures and readings will all relate to that area. We will have online discussion boards where you will be expected to participate weekly. Your instructor and GSI will be present online to help guide the discussion.

A large portion of our classroom activity will take place in discussion threads. Quality and quantity of participation count in the online learning activities. Quantity includes the number of activities that you complete for the week and the length of your posts, as well as the
number of replies you make to other student posts. Quality includes, among other things:

- Thoughtful, insightful responses to the lectures and readings. A summary, for instance, would not count, whereas an analytical comment or thought-provoking question that assists in reshaping or furthering the asynchronous conversation would count.
- Insightful, constructive and respectful critiques of others’ contributions
- Integrative comments across activities and/or courses

You will find discussion topics and further clarifications of expectations within each week’s module.

**Essay Assignments:** There will be one short (2-3-page) and two slightly longer (4-page) essay assignments. (See below for details.) Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be typed and double-spaced, using 12- point font, and 1- inch margins, and submitted via the dropbox by the stated due date.

Late assignments will be docked two points for each day they are late.

**Participation:** You will earn participation points for completing a few shorter assignments (often just a sentence or a paragraph long).

**Reminder: Your Course End Date**

Your course will end on August 14, 2016 at 11:55 p.m.(PT). As you work through the course, please keep the end date in mind, and if you want to save any commentary or assignments for future reference, please make sure to print or copy/paste those materials before your access ends.

**Grading and Course Policies**

**Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:**

The course is graded on a Pass/Fail basis only. In order to pass the course you will be expected to watch the lectures regularly, keep up on the reading, participate actively in the discussion forums for both the lectures and the readings, and complete written assignments and exercises.

Discussion forum participation:
Discussions of lectures: up to 4 points each week
Discussions of readings: up to 6 points for each reading
Peer responses in lecture forums: up to 2 points each
Peer responses in reading forums: up to 2 points each

Essays:
Berkeley Blog Assignment: up to 35 points
Value of a Liberal Arts Education research/reflection paper: up to 45 points
Self-reflection essay: up to 45 points

Miscellaneous:
Includes "Answer the Question" quizzes after video segments, and smaller assignments such as the links and summary due in week 5: up to 32 points

There are 350 points possible. Students must earn at least 245 points, and complete all three essays, to pass the course.

It is important to note that not all components are graded online and included in the online course grade book. Because of this, the online course grade book will not convey your exact number of earned points at any given time, or your final grade. It should simply be used to assess your performance on the components that are included within it. Your final letter grade will be mailed to you by the registrar's office.

Late Work Policy
Late assignments will be docked two points for each day they are late.

Course Policies

Promptness
Homework assignments and discussion forum postings all have specific final due dates and times. You will not receive full credit if assignments are submitted after the indicated due date.

Further, each online activity must be submitted through the course website by the due date. Fax or mail submission will not be accepted. Students who wait until the final hours prior to a submission deadline risk having problems with their ISP, hardware, software, or various
other site access difficulties. Therefore, it is advisable to submit assignments and tests through the course website early. The multiple days allowed for submission are to accommodate the busy schedules of working professionals, not to accommodate procrastination. Students should plan accordingly and get into the habit of checking the course website several times each week, and submitting and posting early.

**Honor Code**

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The expectation is that you will adhere to this code.

**Collaboration and Independence**

Reviewing lecture and reading materials and discussing course content can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, unless otherwise instructed, course work is to be completed independently and materials submitted as homework should be the result of one’s own independent work.

**Cheating**

A good lifetime strategy is always to act in such a way that no one would ever imagine that you would even consider cheating. Anyone caught cheating in any course activity will receive a failing grade in the course and will also be reported to the University Center for Student Conduct.

**Plagiarism**

To copy text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, explore the resources linked below:

[UC Berkeley Library Citation Page, Plagiarism Section](#)

[GSI Guide for Preventing Plagiarism](#)
Academic Integrity and Ethics

Cheating and plagiarism are two common examples of dishonest, unethical behavior. Honesty and integrity are of great importance in all facets of life. They help to build a sense of self-confidence, and are key to building trust within relationships, whether personal or professional. There is no tolerance for dishonesty in the academic world, for it undermines what we are dedicated to doing - furthering knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

Incomplete Course Grade

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the essay, may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing or by email to the GSI and course instructor. You must provide verifiable documentation for the seriousness of the extenuating circumstances. According to the policy of the college, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

Students with Disabilities

Any students requiring course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability must contact the Disabled Students' Program (DSP). They will review all requests on an individual basis.

- Request your Disabled Student Program Specialist to send the instructor a formal request before the official course start date by email
- In addition, notify the instructor and your Online Learning Support Specialist, which accommodations you would like to use.
- Your Online Learning Support Specialist is Tracie Allen and her email is twgallen@berkeley.edu

End of Course Evaluation

Before your course end date, please take a few minutes to participate in our Course Evaluation to share your opinions about this course. You will be receiving the Course Evaluation via email. The evaluation does not request any personal information, and your responses will remain
strictly confidential. You may only take the evaluation once. It will close August 14, 2016.