Instructor: Alix Schwartz (alix@berkeley.edu, 642-8378)

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. Much of your work will be completed in the context of the course website: https://bcourses.berkeley.edu.

Course Requirements:

Watch 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.

Read one to two essays or articles per week: All 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 GSIs will be present online to help guide the discussion, as will the faculty members whose lectures you have watched in the given week, and some of the authors of the readings.

A large portion of our classroom activity will take place in discussion threads. Quality and quantity 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 and constructive 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).

**Grading:**

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: up to 5 points per week, with 40 possible overall

**Essays:**
- Berkeley Blog Assignment (up to 10 points possible)
- Value of a Liberal Arts Education research paper (up to 20 pts possible)
- Self-reflection essay (up to 20 points possible)

**Participation:** up to 10 points for miscellaneous assigned online activities

Students must earn at least 75 points to pass the course.

**Academic Integrity:**

**VERY IMPORTANT**

You won’t be able to access your course material until you read and make your pledge to Academic Integrity. Click the button below to navigate to and complete the Academic Integrity pledge, found in the Academic Integrity module.
Students with Disabilities:
Any students requiring course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability must contact UC Berkeley’s Disabled Students' Program (DSP), http://dsp.berkeley.edu/services.html. The DSP will review all requests on an individual basis. Please have your Disabled Student Program Specialist send the instructor a formal request BEFORE the course start date by email. In addition, inform the instructor, your GSI and Online Program Coordinator prior to the course start date.

Week-by-Week Syllabus*:

WEEK ONE (June 22): LIBERAL ARTS OVERVIEW; ARTS AND HUMANITIES, PART I

Pre-writing: what is the value of a liberal arts education? (1 paragraph, submit online)
Watch/discuss: Introductory lecture; Arts and Humanities Dean’s lecture; Arts and Humanities Alumni Panel
Read/discuss: Robert Hass, “Images,” from Twentieth Century Pleasures: Prose on Poetry
Prepare: Make it a habit to read at least two Berkeley Blog entries per week: you will need to write an essay in response to one of them in Week Four.

WEEK TWO (June 29): ARTS AND HUMANITIES, PART II

Watch/discuss: lectures by Professors Catherine Cole and Gail de Kosnik (TDPS), Ken Ueno (Music), John Campbell (Philosophy), Anneke Lenssen (History of Art) and Harsha Ram (Slavic Languages and Literatures)

WEEK THREE (JULY 6): PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Watch/discuss: interview with Physical Science dean and lectures by Professors Geoff Marcy (Astronomy), Richard Allen (Earth and Planetary Science), and Jamie Sethian (Math) plus a Physical Science Alumni Panel
Read/discuss: Walter Alvarez, Prelude and Chapter 1 from The Mountains of St Francis; Edward Frenkel, “Apprentice Mathematician,” from Love and Math
Prepare: Complete sections 1, 2, and 3 of the UC Library Research Tutorial

WEEK FOUR (July 13): SOCIAL SCIENCES, PART I

Watch/discuss: interview with Social Science dean; Alumni panel
Read/discuss: Kristin Luker, “Sex and Politics in American Life” and “A Note on Voice and Method” from When Sex Goes to School
Prepare: Complete sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the UC Library Research Tutorial
Assignment due: Berkeley Blog essay
WEEK FIVE (July 20): SOCIAL SCIENCES, PART II

Watch/discuss: Lectures by Professors Stefano DellaVigna (Econ), Jake Kosek (Geography), David Henkin (History), Serena Chen (Psychology), Sandra Smith (Sociology) and Na’ilah Suad Nasir (African American Studies)
Read/discuss: Rodolfo Mendoza Denton,”Framed!,” Greater Good, Summer 2008; Dacher Keltner and Jason Marsh, “We Are All Bystanders,” Greater Good, Fall/Winter 2006-07
Prepare/write: Find provide links to at least three academic journal articles that interest you, on the topic of the value of a liberal arts education. Submit a one-paragraph summary of one of these articles and one paragraph on why it interests you.

WEEK SIX (July 27): BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Watch/discuss: Interview with the Biological Science Dean and lectures by Professors David Weisblat (MCB), Eileen Lacey (IB), and Darlene Francis (Public Health), and an Alumni Panel
Read/discuss: Anthony Barnosky, Chapter 1 from Heatstroke: Nature in an Age of Global Warming; Marian Diamond, Chapter 1 from Magic Trees of the Mind
Assignment due: Value of a Liberal Arts research/reflection paper

WEEK SEVEN (August 3): INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Watch/discuss: Interview with the Undergraduate Studies Dean and lectures by Professors Max Auffhammer (Political Economy), Robert Knight (Cognitive Science) and Don McQuade (American Studies), plus an Alumni Panel
Read/discuss: John Searle, chapter 2, “Can Computers Think?” from Minds, Brains and Science; Michael Cohen, “Jim Crow’s Drug War,” from Southern Culture, fall 2006
Prepare: Obtain your Eureka password and explore Eureka or other self-assessment tools available through our bcourses site.

WEEK EIGHT (August 10): ENRICHMENT PANEL AND WRAP-UP
Watch/discuss: at least five of the seven enrichment program presentations (examples: Study Abroad, Undergraduate Research, UCDC, undergraduate journals, Cal Teach, Public Service, etc.)
Assignment due: Self-reflection essay