

MALS 70000: Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies (56547)  
CUNY Graduate Center      Fall, 2020  
Meeting time: Thursday: 6:30 to 8:30 (via Zoom)

Dr. David T. Humphries

Email: [DHumphries@qcc.cuny.edu](mailto:DHumphries@qcc.cuny.edu)    Office hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

Proposed Course Description:

This course will introduce students to graduate level research, reading, and writing, with a loose theme around the idea of “parallax,” or the ways in which different perspectives can seem to change the very position and values of our objects of study. The course will be organized into three broad units: The first unit will include various foundational texts from critical theory, more recent writings on aesthetics and institutional politics, and an application case study to one or more cultural texts. The second unit will look at how fascist and anti-fascists movements in the United States have been defined in relation to international reference points and how these definitions can limit our understanding of the dangers and possibilities inherent in domestic politics. The third unit will be based on critical university studies and include current analyses of the ways in which higher education reproduces both aspirations for social mobility and the reality of social class structures. In addition to our normal class sessions, students will be asked to attend one or more events at the Graduate Center and at least one other cultural institution in New York City. By the end of the term, students will be able to define key critical concepts, apply them to various texts, and acknowledge and consider multiple critical frameworks and perspectives. Students will be able to consider how academic disciplines define knowledge and topics and modes for further research. Students will also demonstrate the ability to write in different genres, from life writing, to a review, to an annotated bibliography, to self-reflection and self-evaluation, and in the culminating writing for the term, they will demonstrate the ability to incorporate additional sources which they have identified and evaluated using the university library. In addition, students will also choose and select an approved text to present to the class as a work relevant to their planned studies and chosen concentration, as a first step towards mapping their next steps in the program.

Required Texts:

- 1) Anderson, Sherwood. *Winesburg, Ohio*. 1919.
- 2) Cottom, Tressie McMillan. *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*. The New Press, 2017.
- 3) Glaude, Eddie S. *Begin Again: James Baldwin’s American and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own*. Crown, 2020.
- 4) Vitale, Alex S. *The End of Policing*. Verso, 2018.

\* You need to obtain the Cottom, Glaude, and Vitale books. The GC library has obtained additional full length books in recent months, and you can read more from many of the works and authors we are discussing for free in digital form, including the full text of *Winesburg, Ohio*. Short readings not available through the library will be provided in our private CUNY Commons site.

Required Accounts:

- 1) A CUNY Academic Commons Account: <https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/>
- 2) Once you create your account, review a resource for writing and writing, MALS Writes: <https://malswrites.commons.gc.cuny.edu>
- 3) Course Group: <https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/groups/mals-70000-seminar-in-interdisciplinary-studies-fall-2020-humphries-1424316869/>
- 4) Course Site: <https://mals70000f20dh.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>
- 5) A free Zoom account: <https://zoom.us/>

### Course Requirements:

This course requires your active and engaged class participation, numerous short writing assignments, and four longer writing assignments totaling at least 30 pages. Required reading and online posts need to be done before class time, as indicated.

### Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to become familiar with some of the methodologies, current debates, and issues common to different aspects of graduate liberal studies; and consider different subjects, disciplinary boundaries, interdisciplinary perspectives, institutional settings, and perspectives. To accomplish this, our reading assignments will cover a number of different kinds of primary and critical texts. Students will work on sharing their ideas through online posts, low-stakes group work and presentations, shared class discussions, and one formal presentation. The writing assignments and discussions will address different aspects of scholarship and professional development by covering different genres and conventions of academic writing and by reviewing the foundational elements of conducting research, evaluating sources, and incorporating others' ideas in an effective way.

### Learning Goals:

Students successfully completing the course should be able to:

- 1) Understand the conventions of graduate coursework, including how to engage with others' ideas and conduct self-guided research.
- 2) Understand the requirements and conventions of different disciplines and genres of academic discourse and different communication and writing situations.
- 3) Understand how liberal studies scholars address a number of social, cultural, and political concerns through various methodologies and critical frameworks.
- 4) Undertake close reading and critical interpretation of diverse primary and secondary texts, including those addressing social institutions and cultural artifacts.
- 5) Undertake conduct research through the library on self-identified topics and locate, evaluate, and cite a variety of sources.
- 6) Develop advanced reading and writing practices and understand the requirements of different genres and venues.
- 7) Apply critical frameworks to other primary texts and topics currently debated in public life.
- 8) Express an understanding of the MALS program, including the required thesis or capstone.

### Academic Integrity:

As noted in the Student Handbook, "Any student who has submitted a paper, examination, project, or other academic work in part or in full not their own without appropriate attribution is subject to disciplinary charges. Such charges may result in the imposition of a grade of 'F' or other penalties and sanctions, including suspension and termination of matriculation." The Graduate Center provides a helpful guide called "Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism," which is available at:

[www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Policies/General/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf](http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Policies/General/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf)

The current Student Handbook, which provides more information about the definitions and policies regarding Academic Honesty and Academic Integrity, is available at:

[https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/Student\\_Handbook\\_web.pdf?ext=.pdf](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/Student_Handbook_web.pdf?ext=.pdf)

### Incompletes or "INC" Grades and Late Work:

Incomplete (INC) grades will only be given at the discretion of the instructor and with a clear timeline for completing the required work. As noted on the GC website, "After one year, an incomplete ('INC') will automatically become a permanent incomplete," and "Students will not normally be regarded as making satisfactory progress toward their degrees if they have more than two 'INC's on their records." A complete statement of the policy is available on the GC: <https://www.gc.cuny.edu/About-the-GC/Governance.-Policies.->

[Procedures/Detail?id=4335](#) All late work will be marked down one letter grade unless there is a valid reason for an extension. If possible, the extension should be discussed and agreed upon in advance.

Attendance:

Students are expected to contribute to each class session, and students are responsible for coming to class prepared and communicating with their instructors about any extenuating circumstances which result in two or more absences. Given present circumstances, some flexibility is permitted by making up any missed classes with asynchronous contributions to the course or other mutually agreed upon assignments.

Accommodations:

CUNY Policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Students who require adaptive technologies or any other accommodations should contact the office of Disability Services for assistance:

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Current-Students/Disability-Services>

Writing Assignments and Evaluated Work:

Please identify your citation style when you submit written work. You can choose a citation style, but if you have no preference, MLA is preferred.

1) Low-stakes writing and communications: Participation in weekly groups, including shared notes and posts, workshoping others' papers, informal pre- and post-class writing, and communicating with the instructor as required. Work evaluated for being complete and on-time.

10%

2) Paper 1, University values and goals: For this paper, you will consider the key reasons you chose to pursue the academic path you have followed, whether you focus on your undergraduate experience or your graduate studies. You might begin by describing a key moment, person or experience to use as a template. From there, you will have two choices, either to go back and reflect on what values, people, and experiences informed your choices or look ahead to what you hope your education will do for yourself and our society. In your writing, you need to cite at least two of our readings, one of your classmates, and one additional source which need not be scholarly – you can draw on popular media, journalism, or use an additional personal interview. For this assignment, you will have the opportunity to rewrite your paper once to respond to my feedback before receiving a final grade.

6-8 pages, 20%

3) Paper 2, Critical Application: Using either Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* or James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues," apply two or more of our critical readings to an analysis of the text. You might focus on questions of genre, gender, race, class, the power of the gaze, definitions of culture, or the tension between foundational myths and historical reality. Drafts will be workshoped by two classmates.

6-8 pages, 20%

4) Paper 3, Book Review and Presentation: Identify a book that you consider to be either foundational to your proposed MALS concentration and course of study or a key example of current issues and debates that interest you and you find relevant to your studies. Your review cannot be longer than 1,000 words and should begin with a key example from the text or related example from a well-known event or cultural or artifact, include 3-4 key examples, and end with a short evaluation of the book and an identification of what audiences will find it useful. During a 10-12 minute presentation, you will share your findings to the class and make connections to one or more readings and items from our class discussions.

4 pages, 20%

5) Paper 4: Annotated Bibliography and Seminar Paper Proposal: You should identify a topic of inquiry related to your proposed concentration and identify 5-7 relevant sources, writing a short entry for each. These entries should be mostly peer-reviewed articles but may also contain books, primary texts, and no more than two non-scholarly texts, and you may use the book from your review as one of your sources. Each entry should include 3-4 sentences in which you identify the main point or arguments of the source material and its most pertinent examples and 1-2 sentences in which you evaluate your source and possibly connect it to other entries or examples. You should also write a short introduction (1-2 paragraphs) identifying your topic and what you discovered about your findings, and a conclusion (1-2 paragraphs) proposing a possible seminar paper based on your research thus far and outlining how you would likely organize your further research and argument. In addition to our class discussions, you can these web sites provide useful introductions to the annotated bibliography: Cornell University Library: How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography> and Purdue OWL: Annotated Bibliographies <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>  
6-8 total pages, 30%

	<u>Course Outline*</u> *Any changes or updates will be posted in advance.
Week 1 Aug. 27	<b>Chapter 1: The University Described and Lived</b>  <b>Reading:</b> Carey, Kevin. "Meet the Man Who Wrote the Greatest Book About American Higher Ed." <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i> . 29 Oct. 2015. (.pdf)  <b>Writing Assigned:</b> Email me a document in which you identify a) your educational background (your past degrees, majors, and institutions) b) your main reasons for enrolling in the MALS program c) what you hope to gain from taking our the course d) any concerns you have in taking the course.
Week 2 Sep. 3	<b>Chapter 1: Institutionalized</b>  <b>Readings:</b> 1) Carey, Kevin. "Meet the Man Who Wrote the Greatest Book About American Higher Ed." <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i> . 29 Oct. 2015. (continued) (.pdf)  2) Chuh, Kandace. "It's Not About Anything." <i>SocialText</i> , vol. 32, no. 4, 2014, pp. 125-134. (.pdf)  3) Delblanco, Andrew. <i>College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be</i> . "Chapter One: What is College For?" Princeton UP, 2002, pp. 9-35. (.pdf)  4) Dzuback, Mary Ann. "Professionalism, Higher Education, and American Culture: Burton J. Bledstein's <i>The Culture of Professionalism</i> ." Rev. of <i>The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America</i> by Burton J. Bledstein. <i>History of Education Quarterly</i> , vol. 33, no. 3, 1993, pp. 375-385. (.pdf)  5) Semenza, Gregory Colón. "The Seminar Paper." Chapter 5 of <i>Graduate Study for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities</i> . Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 90-115. (.pdf)
Week 3	<b>Chapter 1: The University and Its Values</b>

<p>Sep. 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Family and College Values</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Cottom, Tressie McMillan. <i>Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy</i>. The New Press, 2017.</p> <p>2) hooks, bell. “keeping close to home: class and education.” <i>75 Readings: An Anthology</i>, edited by Santi Buscemi and Charlotte Smith. McGraw-Hill, 2003, pp. 100-112. (.pdf)</p> <p>3) Leslie, Naton. “Chapter 5: A Carpenter’s Daughter.” <i>This Fine Place So Far from Home: Voices of Academics from the Working Class</i>, edited by C. L. Barney Dews and Carolyn Leste Law. Temple UP, 1995, pp. 66-74. (.pdf)</p> <p>4) Christopher, Renny. “Chapter 10: You Were Raised Better than That.” <i>This Fine Place So Far from Home: Voices of Academics from the Working Class</i>, edited by C. L. Barney Dews and Carolyn Leste Law. Temple UP, 1995, pp. 137-150. (.pdf)</p>
<p>Week 4 Sep. 17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 1: Critics and Consumers</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Chuh, Kandace. “Pedagogies of Dissent.” <i>American Quarterly</i>, vol. 70, no. 2, 2018, pp. 155-172. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Cottom, Tressie McMillan. <i>Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy</i>. The New Press, 2017. (continued)</p> <p>3) Hegeman, Susan. “Oppenheimer’s House; or, the Contradictions of Academic Life from the Cold War to Neoliberalism.” <i>Journal of Academic Freedom</i>. vol. 8, 2017, pp. 1-15. (.pdf)</p>
<p>Week 5 Sep. 24</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 2: Critical Theory and Practice Applications</b> <b>A Critical Approach to Culture</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” <i>Illuminations</i>, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, 1969, [1935], pp. 217-251. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Walker, Alice. “Everyday Use.” (.pdf)</p> <p>3) Williams, Raymond. “Culture.” <i>Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society</i>. Oxford UP, 1985. (.pdf)</p> <p>4) Yudice, George. “Culture.” <i>Keywords for American Cultural Studies</i>. 2nd Edition, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, NYU P, pp. 68-72. (.pdf)</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Paper 1 due.</p>
<p>Week 6 Oct. 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 2: The Nation</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Anderson, Benedict. “Chapter 3: The Origins of National Consciousness.” <i>Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism</i>. 1991. Verso, 1998. (.pdf)</p>

	<p>2) Lowe, Lisa. "Chapter 2: "Autobiography Out of Empire." <i>The Intimacies of Four Continents</i>. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015, pp. 42-71. (.pdf)</p> <p>3) Miller, Karen R. "Thin, Wistful, and White": James Fugate and Colonial Bureaucratic Masculinity in the Philippines, 1900-1938." <i>American Quarterly</i>, vol. 71, no. 4, December 2019, pp. 921-944. (.pdf)</p> <p>4) Weinbaum, Alys Eve. "Nation." <i>Keywords for American Cultural Studies</i>. 2nd Edition, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, NYU P, pp. 175-180. (.pdf)</p> <p>5) Sacks, Sam. "First-Person Shooters: What's Missing in Contemporary War Fiction." <i>Harper's</i>, Aug. 2015, pp. 84-89. (.pdf)</p> <p>6) Williams, Raymond. "Myth." <i>Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society</i>. Oxford UP, 1985. (.pdf)</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct. 8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 2: Regulating Identity</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Butler, Judith. "Chapter 2: Gender Regulations." <i>Undoing Gender</i>. Routledge, 2004, pp. 40-56. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Foucault, Michel. Translated by Alan Sheridan. "Panopticism." <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i>. Vintage Books, 1995, pp. 195-228. (.pdf)</p> <p>3) Warren, Kenneth W. "Historicizing African American Literature." <i>What Was African American Literature?</i> Harvard UP, 2011, pp. 1-43. (.pdf)</p> <p>4) Žižek, Slavoj. "Introduction: Dialectical Imperialism at the Gates." <i>The Parallax View</i>. MIT Press, 2006, pp. 2-13. (.pdf)</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct. 15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 2: Applications, Anderson's <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>, Identity, Genre, and the Nation</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Anderson, Sherwood. <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>. 1919. (Available in various formats from the GC Library).</p> <p>2) (Background reading) Humphries, David T. "Gender Fantasies, Sexual Adventures, and Imagined Communities in Sherwood Anderson's <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>." <i>Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio</i>, edited by Precious McKenzie, <i>Dialogue Series</i>, edited by Henry Veggian, Brill / Rodopi, 2016, pp. 51-76. (.pdf)</p> <p>3) Nagy, Peter. "The Woman in the Man: Male Modernism and Cross-Gender Identification in Sherwood Anderson's <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>." <i>College Literature</i>, vol. 45, no. 4, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, pp. 773-800, doi:10.1353/lit.2018.0047. (.pdf)</p>
<p>Week 9 Oct. 22</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 3: James Baldwin, American Icon for Troubled Times</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p>

	<p>1) Baldwin, James. "A Talk to Teachers." (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Fleetwood, Nicole R. "Chapter 1: "I Am Trayvon Martin": The Boy Who Became an Icon." <i>Racial Icons: Blackness and the Public Imagination</i>. Rutgers UP, 2015, pp. 13-29. (.pdf)</p> <p>3) Fleetwood, Nicole R. "Coda." <i>Racial Icons: Blackness and the Public Imagination</i>. Rutgers UP, 2015, pp. 111-120. (.pdf)</p> <p>4) Glaude, Eddie S. <i>Begin Again: James Baldwin's American and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own</i>. Crown, 2020.</p> <p><b>Writing: Paper 2 Due</b></p>
<p>Week 10 Oct. 29</p>	<p><b>Chapter 3: Library Session and Further Connections</b></p>
<p>Week 11 Nov. 5</p>	<p><b>Chapter 3: James Baldwin, American Icon, continued</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Alexander, Michelle. "Introduction." <i>The New Jim Crow : Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness</i>. The New Press, 2020, pp. 1-23. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Alexander, Michelle. "The Fire This Time." <i>The New Jim Crow : Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness</i>. The New Press, 2020, pp. 275-325. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Glaude, Eddie S. <i>Begin Again: James Baldwin's American and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own</i>. Crown, 2020.</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov. 12</p>	<p><b>Chapter 3: Social Justice and States of the Nation American Fascism?</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Marshall, Stuart. "The Contemporary Political Use of Gay History: The Third Reich." Rpt. In <i>The U.S. Antifascism Reader</i>, edited by Bill V. Mullen and Christopher Vials. Verso, 2020, pp. 311-325. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Szalvai, Jennifer. "The Debate Over the Word 'Fascism' Takes a New Turn." <i>The New York Times</i>. 10 June 2020. <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/books/fascism-debate-donald-trump.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/books/fascism-debate-donald-trump.html</a></p> <p>3) Vials, Christopher. "Introduction: Antifascism and the United States." <i>Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left, and the Fight against Fascism in the United States</i>. U of Massachusetts P, 2014, pp. 1-11. (.pdf)</p> <p><b>Presentations</b></p>
<p>Week 13 Nov. 19</p>	<p><b>Chapter 3: Policing</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Vitale, Alex S. <i>The End of Policing</i>. Verso, 2018.</p> <p><b>Writing: Paper 3 Due</b></p> <p><b>Presentations</b></p>

Nov. 26	Thanksgiving
Week 14 Dec. 3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 3: Politics online</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1) Boudana, Sandrine, Paul Frosh, Akiba A Cohen. "Reviving Icons to Death: When Historic Photographs Become Digital Memes." <i>Media, Culture &amp; Society</i>, vol. 39, no. 8, 2017, 1210-1230. (.pdf)</p> <p>2) Phillips, Whitney. "Chapter 6, Race and the No-Spin Zone: The Thin Line between Trolling and Corporate Punditry." <i>This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the Relationship Between Online Trolling and Mainstream Culture</i>. MIT Press, 2015, pp. 95-113. (.pdf)</p> <p><b>Presentations</b></p>
Week 15 Dec. 10	<p><b>Reading Day – No class – Individual conferences during the week</b></p> <p><b>Writing: Paper 4 Due</b></p>