

BLHS 111 – 01 The New Millennium

Professor Michael Kessler, Department of Government and Berkley Center

mjk62@georgetown.edu

Tuesdays, 5:30 PM – 9:05 PM, Spring 2019

Berkley Center Conference Room, 3307 M Street NW Suite 200

Georgetown University (SCS)

Credits: 4

General Course Description:

This course is taken as the student's final course in the Core in that it draws on all the Core Courses and serves as a capstone experience. The class is a hybrid of traditional in-class seminar work and individual/on-line research and writing in directed exercises as part of the completion of a major research paper. The class is therefore composed of two parts: 1) we sometimes meet as a seminar that studies a comprehensive theme drawing together many themes from the other core BALS classes and that is intended to help refine your writing and argumentation skills; 2) students work individually and together in group/online exercises on the development of a significant research and writing project that the student completes, in collaboration with the professor and in dialogue with classmates.

- 1) The seminar portion of the course is designed to help you understand different types of academic writing and to refine your understanding of best practices of research, analysis, and writing. Our readings will be related to thinking and writing about contemporary issues from a wide variety of perspectives. When we meet as a seminar, students should be prepared to participate actively, based on a thoughtful reading of the texts. The readings are intended to display different types of writing and argumentation and to demonstrate best practices.
- 2) The main part of this course will be each student's work on a significant research and writing project. Over the course of the semester, students will develop an in-depth research topic and draft a substantial research paper on a topic the student chooses. Ideal papers identify a significant problem (whether about an idea, or a geo-political challenge, or a public policy issue, for instance), analyze existing approaches to the issue, and argue for a well-justified approach to or solution for the problem.

Course Goals

This course will allow the student to analyze and summarize issues in a broadly synthetic way across the range of topics discussed in the other BALS core courses. Student learning will be documented through in class discussions and the production of a major paper that will show how the student reflects synthetically and analytically on the issues. Successful students will gain knowledge about the theoretical and historical issues of the BALS core and be able to engage in analytical reasoning about the following issues:

- 1) Articulate the diversity of thought and ways of arguing seen across the intellectual, material, and historical material of the past four millennia.
- 2) Identify and describe a basic issue or problem and analyze it historically and theoretically.
- 3) Identify a methodology to address the problem or issue.
- 4) Construct a substantial research paper, including all of the appropriate steps of research and writing: choosing topics, problem identification, methodology, thesis development, outline production, and drafting.

Expectations and Assignments

- You should strive to achieve the **ideals of a liberal arts education**: free and candid exchange of ideas, rigorous critique of claims, and toleration for considering variant positions.
- **Thoughtful reading** of the texts in preparation for the class is expected and essential.
- Students should be prepared to participate actively in each week's seminar discussions.
 - **Participation** is worth 10% of your grade.
 - In the seminar, students are expected to be 'ready' to participate at each moment and to discuss and analyze the arguments of particular texts. I will take note of students who do well, poorly, or are not adequately prepared for class. To receive the full credit for class participation, students do not need to ask brilliant questions or answer questions correctly in all circumstances; rather, the credit will be received when it is clear that a good faith attempt has been made by the student to read and comprehend the material and the student can ask reasonable questions about the material, even if they may on occasion not be perfectly correct in their understanding of a particular case or issue. If it is clear that students did not make a good faith effort to read and understand material, and do not make a good faith effort to participate in class (either in passing when directly asked a question or in never voluntarily contributing on their own), then they will receive reduced or no credit for class participation.
- You may use your **Laptop Computers** in class for note-taking, for looking up relevant items on the web related to class issues, and for referring to related class readings. All other uses of laptops during class time are unacceptable.
- Students must adhere to the principles of conduct set forth in the Georgetown University **Honor System** unconditionally. I assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, "What is Plagiarism?", "Sanctioning Guidelines", and "Expedited Sanctioning Process."
 - Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:
 - *In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*
 - Any sign of violations, including plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating will be referred to the Honor Council and your Dean(s).
 - Any incident of plagiarism will constitute a failure in the assignment and zero credit for that portion of the grade. More severe sanctions may be administered by the Honor Council.
 - **Turnitin.com** Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers may be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely

- Ongoing throughout semester!: research relevant secondary and primary sources, including pertinent literature on the topic already in existence and within which you will contextualize your own argument
- Due Feb. 18: draft an outline and annotated bibliography (in which you identify important sources and how you will utilize them) worth 10% of your grade
- Due Feb. 25: Peer review of outline
- Due March 11: Write an introduction section
- Due March 18: peer review of introduction
- Due March 25: write a first draft of a section, part of which will serve as the basis of a peer review and assessment of your paper and argument.
- Due April 1: peer review of first section draft
 - The peer reviews will be worth 15% of your grade.
- Due April 8: write a first draft of a 2nd section
- Due April 15: peer review of 2nd section draft
- Due April 22: write a 3rd section draft
- Due April 29: peer review of 3rd section draft
- Due by email May 10 by 5pm: complete drafting of a 22-25 page research paper due at the end of the semester.
- The final paper will be worth 60% of your grade.

- More details about the individual assignments will be discussed in class.
- Papers, insofar as they need citations, will conform to the citation style outlined by Turabian and/or the Chicago Manual of Style.
- **Late submissions** will be penalized at a 1 grade step down (e.g. a B reduced to a B-) for every 3 hours the assignment is late.
- **No Incompletes** will be granted except in exceptional circumstances warranted by a family or medical emergency. Arrangements will be made with the appropriate dean and all work will have to be completed by a date set by the dean.

- **Grades:** The grading scale for the course will be:

- A 93-100 Excellent work
- A- 90-92
- B+ 88-89
- B 83-87 Good work
- B- 80-82
- C+ 78-79
- C 73-77 Average work
- C- 69-72
- D+ 66-68
- D 60-65 Poor work
- F Below 60 Failure to present satisfactory work

- **Recap of Assignments and Grade %**

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|---------------------------|-----|
| ○ Class Participation | 10% |
| ○ Research paper proposal | 5% |
| ○ Outline/Bibliography | 15% |
| ○ Paper Peer Reviews | 10% |
| ○ Final Draft | 60% |
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- **Request for Accommodation** based on a physical, emotional or cognitive disability will be referred to the Academic Resource Center. The center's staff will assess the extent of any disability and recommend appropriate accommodations. If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.
- **Instructional Continuity** During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means utilizing discussion exchanges and web-based assignments; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted electronically will not be changed due to campus closings. The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Readings

The seminar will involve close textual readings and discussion. Students are expected to attend class with the readings. All readings will be distributed via blackboard in .pdf format.

Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 15):	Introduction; researching preliminary topic ideas
Week 2 (Jan 22):	Kinds of writing and argument: persuasion. Reading: <u>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</u> ; Class discussion of paper topics; Refining paper proposal
Week 3 (Jan 29):	Constructing a good argument. Reading: <u>Lawrence v. TX</u> ; Individual Research Work
Week 4 (Feb 5):	Library Research meeting
Week 5 (Feb 12):	Constructing an outline/Outline as a guide to a good argument.
Week 6 (Feb 19):	Outline peer reviewing
Week 7 (Feb 26):	Effective Introductions/Framing the problem, the argument, and the paper

Week 8 (March 12): Introduction peer reviewing

Week 9 (March 19): Individual work: 1st Section draft

Week 10 (March 26): 1st section peer reviewing

Week 11 (April 2): Individual work: 2nd Section draft

Week 12 (April 9): 2nd section peer reviewing

Week 13 (April 16): Individual work: 3rd Section draft

Week 14 (April 23): 3rd section peer reviewing

Week 15 (April 30): Final class wrap-up.

Papers due by 5pm May 10 by email to professor.