



WCS 150 Rhetoric & Composition Course Themes (Fall 2022)

WCS 150 classes use different themes as a basis for readings, discussions, and writing assignments. The following is a list of current themes and the instructors who offer them.

IDENTITY (Variation I): The course theme of Identity is explored through study of the learning identity proposed by David and Alice Kolb; the connection between learning and change in the physical structure of the brain proven by James E. Zull; the Cultural Dimensions Theory of Geert Hofstede; the emergence of agency and identity through experience and action as studied by historian Lynn Hunt and the TedTalks literary author, Taiye Selasie; the Emotional Intelligence Theory of Daniel Goleman; the power of emotion in effecting change as studied by Antonio Demasio and Mary Helen Immordino-Yang; possible selves by Markus and Nurius; and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences of Howard Gardner. Through reasoned argument, supported by evidence from these approaches and other sources, with an audience and point of view in mind, reflection by course members throws light on the possibility of creating and self-defining one's own Identity.

- **Offered by** Jane Hoelker (Mon-Wed-Fri)

IDENTITY (Variation II): We will explore the ways various influences and expressions of personal and cultural affiliations affect one's identity and the evolution of one's identity over the span of a lifetime. Among these influences we will examine such aspects as place of origin or residence, the languages and cultures we are exposed to, physical appearance, modern technological advances, current events, and societal changes. By examining the works of different writers and thinkers, you will explore where you stand on topics related to your own identity. Within this topic, you will develop a point of view and arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Offered by** Marilyn Plumlee (Not available for Fall 2022)

DIGITAL MEDIA: In this course we will explore ways which digital technology and media (i.e., the internet and social media) have shaped modern society and daily life. Focus areas will include education, employment, journalism, politics, human rights, and privacy, among others.

- **Offered by** Shane Coates (Mon-Wed-Fri)

SOCIAL MEDIA: What are the effects and implications of media and social media in the realms of business, education, and society in general?

- **Offered by** Tom Hughes (Mon-Wed-Fri)

SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH: During Weeks 1-7, you will focus specifically on *social media and mental health*. During Weeks 8-16, you will continue to investigate social media, but you may choose any aspect of this theme that you wish to write about.

- **Offered by** Jeffery Carney (Not available for Fall 2022)

LOCAL CULTURES/GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES: We will explore various ways that living in a globalized world impacts conceptions of personal identity and constructions of culture. Course theme readings will address issues of cultural hybridity, locality, representation, online community, activism, tradition, language, and post-pandemic life. By examining the works of different writers and thinkers, we will discover where we stand as individuals on cultural issues that emerge in our interconnected world. With a topic and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Offered by** Kirk Peterson (Tues-Thurs)

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INTELLIGENCE: We will explore such questions as: What does it mean to be considered “intelligent”? Is intelligence inherent or does the environment affect its development? Who do we see as intelligent? Who decides that? What kinds of concepts of intelligence exist in our society and how are they constructed? Who do they benefit and who do they harm?

- **Offered by** Inzhuna Karazhanova (Mon-Wed-Fri)

CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS: In this section you will explore different examples of popular culture through the theoretical lens of Critical Geopolitics. This means examining how popular culture – movies, music, video games, anime – is shaped by, and shapes, ‘common sense’ ideas of geographical ‘space’ and ‘identity’. You will get to choose an example of popular culture you find fascinating and develop a convincing and well supported argument of how it does (or doesn't) reflect societal norms and values.

- **Offered by** Simon Land (Tues-Thurs)

TABOO: In this course we will explore various taboos surrounding animal rights, gender and sexuality, drugs, abortion, and prostitution. By analyzing arguments and rhetoric surrounding taboos, we can develop a reasoned and mature point of view on even the most controversial topics. With a topic and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and—hopefully—convincingly in writing.

- **Offered by** James (Jim) Swider (Not available for Fall 2022)

FOOD: In this section we will read articles discussing different topics related to food: the process of making food, food and identity, food industry and public policies, food and technology, etc. These discussions explored various issues, such as the purpose and definition of food, our relationships with food and eating, food choices, the future of food, and the food systems, etc. The theme of the course aims to provoke conversations, challenge your thinking, and develop your writing abilities. With a topic

and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Offered by** Ti Wu (Tues-Thurs)

AGAINST HOPE: HOW TO LIVE A HAPPY DESPERATE LIFE: Descartes said that we should “Conquer ourselves rather than the world.” Sartre’s interpretation of this phrase parallels his own philosophy that we should live with passion, but without hope. Essentially, what he means is that we should let go of wishful thinking, and instead, embrace despair with a positive attitude. One way to live a more hope-less life is to follow what Epictetus argues by learning to separate what is within our control from what is outside our control and only focus only on those things which we can affect. As a class we will first examine why people think that hope is beneficial, what problems might be associated with hope, and lastly how it might be that living without hope (or living in despair as Sartre says) will lead to a more fruitful and potentially happier life.

- **Offered by** Jonathan Dupuy (Not available for Fall 2022)

BOUNDARIES: We will explore political, national, physical, and psychological boundaries. By examining the works of writers across genres, we will investigate ideas about what limits us and ways those limits have been and might be surpassed. With a focused point of view and an audience in mind, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Offered by** Arlyce Menzies (Mon-Wed-Fri)

PERFORMANCE: This course focuses on the organizing principle of performance. We will look at definitions of performance and how and why certain aspects function as a tool of analysis. By examining the works of different writers and thinkers, we will discover where we stand as individuals on topics related to performance. With a topic and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and—hopefully—convincingly in writing.

- **Offered by** Patricia Coleman (Mon-Wed-Fri)