

**ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY CORE**

HUMAN IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

CORE 210.01 - FALL 2014

MWF 9:00 - 9:50 AM - BSB 115

PROFESSOR: Dr. Kelly Elliott
OFFICE HOURS: TR 9:20 a.m. - noon
and by appointment

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OFFICE HOURS: MWF 10-11 a.m.
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COURSE LIBRARIAN: Megan May

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITE

Prerequisites: CORE 110: Cornerstone and ENGL 112. Focuses on the intersection of the human self and community. Exploring a range of philosophical, ethical, and theological theories of human nature and society, students will learn how to think critically, globally, and missionally about themselves and the communities of which they are a part.

A range of theoretical questions are at the heart of the course. How can we speak truthfully about human nature and selfhood? What makes humans different from animals? Are humans naturally bad or good? What sources shape the kind of people we are? How do different visions of the self translate into different conceptions of the kinds of communities we hope to create? What is a good community, anyway? And what difference does the Lordship of Christ make to how we view ourselves, others, and the communities that we are born into? While the course hopes to equip students to think divergently-learning how to compare and contrast different ideas about the self and community-the goal is not simply to teach students how to regurgitate different theories. Rather, this course aspires to create opportunities for students to see the relevance of these ideas for their own lives and communities. This course is intended as the second course in the sequence for those who are continuing their Core Curriculum requirements.

COURSE MISSION

To enhance students' ability to reflect and critically evaluate the role of community in shaping values, attitudes, and engagements of the human person.

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE MISSION

To introduce students to and engage them in the process of thinking critically, globally, and missionally, preparing them for the rigor of academic excellence and university life at ACU.

ACU MISSION STATEMENT

To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- ResponseWare App (free from the App Store)
- Veronica Roth, *Divergent*, 2011.
- Assigned readings and media will be posted on OpenClass throughout the semester. It is recommended that students print these materials, or at least have them available on their laptops, for in-class discussion, incorporation into papers, and for review before exams.

This reading list includes the following:

- Catholic Catechism, “The Fall of Humanity”
- Pope John Paul II on Original Sin
- Selections from Confucius, “The Analects”
- Selections from the Hindu Shastras
- Schulweis, “The Duty to Disobey”
- Selections from the Quran
- Husain, “Using New Media to Know the ‘Other’”
- Website of the Monastery of Christ in the Desert
- Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery
- Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”
- Kant, “What is Enlightenment”
- The Declaration of Independence
- Postman, “TV News as Vaudeville”
- Marx, “The Alienation of Labour”
- Selection from Darwin, “Descent of Man”
- Sanger, “A Plan for Peace” and “The Children’s Era”

COURSE COMPETENCIES AND MEASUREMENTS

Competencies	Measurements
<i>Upon completion of the course, students should be able to</i>	<i>Mastery of competencies will be measured by</i>
Describe theories of the self and community from more than one field of study, recognizing the historical and cultural contexts of each.	Exams and Daily Work (discussions, blog posts, quizzes, etc.)
Demonstrate understanding of community contexts, including civic engagement and the cultivation of good communities.	Exams, Daily Work (discussions, blog posts, quizzes, etc.), and Research Paper
Demonstrate proficiency in the skills necessary to organize and write an effective research paper, including how to structure an argument and how to identify and use effective sources.	Research Paper and Exams
Propose solutions that indicate comprehension of a community-related controversy or topic.	Research Paper and Exams

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

Students are expected to attend each class period. Upon missing 20% of the course (9 absences in a MWF class), the student will be assigned a grade of an F. For any absence, you will be expected to be prepared for the next class. Three tardies will constitute one absence.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered and any assignments made. Ignorance of an assignment will not excuse late work. Tests and in-class assignments may be made up for documented excused absences, defined as (1) official university-approved absences (documentation given to your instructor in advance of your absence), (2) documented illness, or (3) death in the family. Paper drafts turned in late without an excused absence will receive a five percent deduction per school day for each day they are late. Assignments turned in on the due date, but after the class period, will be considered one day late. Papers turned in the day after the due date will be considered two days late, and so on. *No assignments will be accepted more than one week after the due date*, except under documented circumstances or at the professors' discretion. Should you become ill or having mitigating circumstances arise that impact your performance, please contact your professors immediately so that they can help you. Daily work (e.g., OpenClass journals and in-class quizzes) cannot be made up without documentation for an excused absence.

In-class discussion is a major component of this course. *Be advised that sitting in class, but failing to engage with and participate in class discussion and activities (e.g. working on homework for other courses, sleeping, or texting rather than taking notes and participating in class activities) will be considered as the equivalent of not attending class.* Please be aware that this element of your class attendance is based on our observation of your performance throughout the semester.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOU

Students should come to class on time, prepared, and ready to think through the full class period. Do not start packing up before the period ends. Read assigned texts before you get to class. Be ready to ask questions and participate in discussion. Apply yourself thoughtfully to your assignments, and turn them in on time. If you are engaged with the material, you will get more out of the class.

A significant portion of course time will be spent in discussion. Always, but particularly in discussion context, students are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and sensitivity towards other students, the professors, and the course material.

WHAT YOU MAY EXPECT OF US

We will come to class prepared to make the coursework as clear and as interesting as we can. We will start class on time and let you out on time. We will endeavor to return your assignments to you with thoughtful, helpful comments on them, and in a timely manner. As well, we will always be available to assist you in any way that we can. Email is the best way to reach us. We are always glad to meet with you during office hours or by appointment.

COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, students must be registered with Alpha Scholars Program, and they must complete a specific request for each class in which they need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call the Alpha office directly at (325) 674-2667.

ACU is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 93112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. Your professor is required by law to provide "reasonable accommodation" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. These include, but are not limited to: turning in any assignment written, wholly or in part, by someone else; failing to properly acknowledge the scholarly contributions of others with quotation marks and correct citation; cheating on exams by using electronic devices; cheat sheets; looking on someone else's paper; and working with others when individual work has been specified. **Violation of this policy will result in a grade of 0 on the assignment, and record of the violation will go in the student's personal file.** If a student commits his/her second integrity violation (in this class or others), the penalty will be more severe, up to automatic failure of the course. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in our lives.

Every member of the faculty, staff, and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research. The full policy is available for review on the Judicial Affairs' website: http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/studentlife/judicial/For%20Students/Academic_Integrity_P.html

GRADING

YOUR FINAL COURSE GRADE WILL BE DETERMINED AS FOLLOWS:

90-100 = A 80-89 = B 70-79 = C 60-69 = D 0-59 = F

BREAKDOWN OF COURSE GRADE:

Daily Work (OpenClass journals, quizzes, application activities, discussion, etc.) - 20%
Term Paper Drafts and Bibliographies - 15% (5% for each draft/bibliography assignment)
Scholarly Term Paper - 25%
Unit Exams - 20% (10% for each of two exams)
Final Exam - 20%

DAILY WORK (20%)

Completing reading assignments is vital in this course. Our goal is to create an interactive and engaging classroom environment, and we expect that you will come to class each day ready to discuss your reading assignment. Each week, students will be graded on their response to that week's primary source reading, either in the form of a quiz, blog entry, peer-editing assignment, or a response to be turned in during class.

TERM PAPER DRAFTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES (15%) - DUE SEPT. 15, OCT. 20, AND NOV. 17

To ensure that you are making progress on your term paper throughout the semester and offer you opportunities to edit and improve your paper drafts, we will have three in-class writing workshops. Prior to each of these workshops, you will be required to turn in drafts of your paper and bibliography to members of a peer editing group and the professors. On the day of these workshops, you should come to class with your peer editing work completed and be ready to participate in the workshop process. More information about the specific requirements for each draft will be provided in class.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH PAPER (25%) – HARD COPY DUE BY 9:00 AM, DECEMBER 1

For this major assignment, students will write 8-10 pages on a topic that falls within one of the following categories:

1. **Contemporary Cultural Influences on Identity** - Paper topics could include issues such as the influence of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), reality TV, marketing practices, music, consumer culture, or cultural narrative trends (e.g., dystopian novels, zombie movies, etc.) on human identity and the communities that humans create.
2. **Family Influence on Personal Identity** - Paper topics could focus on issues such as marriage and family therapy, nature v. nurture, how our parents' ways of doing things affect our decisions as adults, likelihood of agreement in political views between children and parents, Freud, topics related to family psychology, etc.
3. **The Place of the Self in the Nation** - Paper topics could include the discussion of questions such as: how should Christians view nationalism; can Christians participate in government; or how should faith influence voting decisions.

4. **Gender and Sexuality in Community** - Paper topics could focus on issues such as how definitions of masculinity or femininity affect behaviors, perceived gender roles or sexual identities within communities such as the family, the church, and/or the Christian college campus, how parents' gendered behavior informs children's decisions about marriage and career, family influence on sexual identity and behavior, the relationship between sexuality and religious faith.
5. **Global Ecology or Human Life within the Natural Community** - Paper topics could include the relationship between individual or national lifestyle choices and global resource use (i.e., How does American consumption of gasoline affect the rest of the world?), "green" religious faith, studies of individual/family impacts on local natural environments, etc.
6. **Religious Identity** - Paper topics could include denominational perspectives on church history, denominational views of gender roles, how religious differences affect interpersonal relationships, religion in the workplace, what role religion should play in education, navigating potential conflict generated by religious and cultural diversity.

Your completed paper must incorporate information from at least six scholarly sources (e.g., journal articles, monographs, etc.) and three primary sources (which may include course readings). The paper should also engage with Christian scripture to suggest a theological perspective on identity and community, and incorporate course readings.

EXAMS (40%)

Assessments during the semester (two unit exams worth 10% each and one final exam worth 20%) will include traditional multiple choice/essay question exam formats and more application-based discussion assignments. Dates for each exam are listed on our course schedule, and more information about each assignment will be given in class throughout the semester.