Humanities 12: Freedom…and Responsibility

"The secret of the man who is universally interesting is that he is universally interested."
– William Dean Howells

"Only boring people get bored."
-Every Mom Ever

Contact Information: Lori Fisher

Email: lori.fisher@animashighschool.com
This is by FAR the best way to get in touch with me! I will not respond to emails after working hours (4:00 pm) until the following morning, but you may still send them!

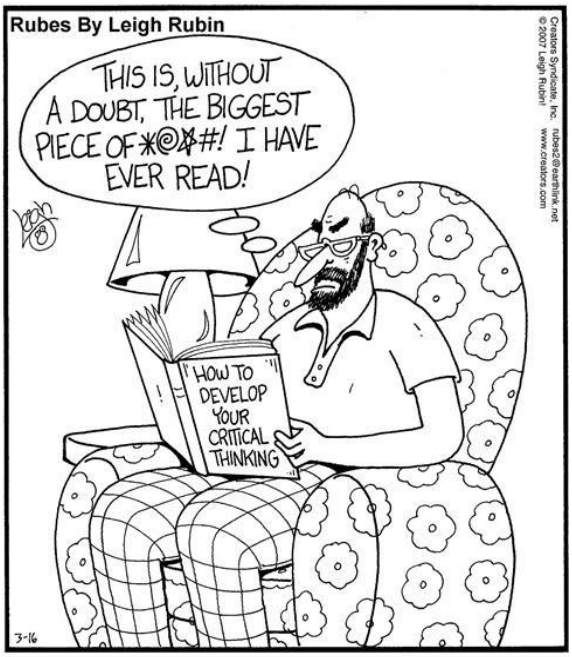
Website: http://animashumanities12.weebly.com/home.html

Office Hours: By appointment only! Set up an appointment with Lori via email or in person. I am available periodically throughout the day (my schedule is flexible beyond 5th and 6th periods), and before and after school most days..

Goals of the Course

The ultimate goal of this course is to help students grow into critical thinkers who can examine their own views, the views of others, and the way those views impact themselves and our society. While this initially seems simple, changing your own opinion based on evidence is one of the most difficult tasks students may encounter.

In the first semester, students will develop a framework to critically analyze a complex issue, and will develop their reading, writing, and research skills with an eye towards effective communication of complex issues. In the second semester, students will use the Senior Quest to put their critical thinking skills to work on a burning question they have. In the process, they will develop the research and writing skills necessary for success in college-level coursework.



In his own mind, Jerry quickly mastered the art.

Class Materials

Please bring the following materials to class EVERY DAY:

1. **Laptop**, with a **charger**
2. **Binder or accordion folder** with dividers for readings, documents, and handouts.
3. **Notebook** (for notes, brainstorms, etc.)
4. **Writing utensils**- I suggest regular pens/pencils and colored pens/highlighters
5. **Daily Planner** (Weekly/Monthly book form, or digital…whatever works best for you)
6. **Headphones** that can connect to your laptop
7. Your brain, in full working order ☺

Course Outline

<table>
<tr><th>Fall Semester</th><th>Spring Semester</th></tr>
<tr><td>College Essay Boot Camp
Students will engage in a 1.5 week intensive writing and revision seminar to help them develop a refined draft (not final!) of a college admissions essay.</td><td rowspan="2">PLEASE NOTE- These are not necessarily in linear order- we will be continuing to iterate and move back and forth between these components throughout the spring.

Senior Quest: The Thesis
Students will engage in a college-level research and writing assignment that will culminate in a 10-20 page formal research paper and oral thesis defense.

Senior Quest: The TED Talk
After the thesis is complete, you will give a 15 minute talk that presents the conclusions of your thesis in an engaging way. You will be asked to defend your conclusions in a Q&A session with the panel.

Senior Quest: The Action Project
Throughout the spring semester, students will continue to design, refine, and execute their ambitious self- designed project that is linked to the research in their thesis.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Senior Quest! Exploration, Iteration, and Development
We will dive right into senior project development in the fall- you will be learning the professional skills and tools of project design, beginning to do initial research and writing on a thesis question (don't worry, there's time to change if you hate your first topic choice!), and prototyping of a senior project idea. We plan to iterate all the components of senior project early, to provide ample time for revision, topic shifts, and reflection</td></tr>
<tr><td>Senior POLs: Project Tunes + Thesis Critiques
For senior POLs, we will be running two protocols- one will be a project tune to develop and refine your senior project ideas, and the other will be similar protocol designed to hone and focus your thesis now that you have done preliminary research.</td><td>Senior Year TPOL
For your final TPOL, we will ask you to reflect deeply upon your senior project and your experiences during senior year in a small group of your peers.</td></tr>
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Technology Expectations:

1. ***Cell Phones:*** Due to the increasing evidence that cell phones have negative impacts on learning, attention, community building, and mental health, cell phones will not be permitted in my class. At the start of class, they must be silenced and put in your backpage. If I see it, I take it. If it becomes a continual issue, you will be referred to Dave and Dreher for a larger conversation and consequences. If you need to use your phone in an emergency or for a project, please speak to me for explicit permission to do so. You will also need to leave your cell phone in phone daycare if you leave the classroom for any reason.

2. ***Headphones/Earbuds:*** These need to be out of your ears and put away unless you have explicit permission from the instructor. Again, if they are in without this, I will take them. If it becomes a consistent issue, you will be referred to Dave and Dreher for a larger conversation and consequences.

3. ***Music:*** You may listen to music (on headphones) during independent work time with explicit instructor permission. You may play music from your computer- yes, you can pull Spotify up on your computer.

Norms and Expectations:

1. ***We will read and write every day. Seriously. Every day.*** Keep whining about this immutable fact to a minimum.

2. ***We will be civil to each other.*** Mean, intolerant, or profanity-ridden speech will absolutely not be tolerated. We will be discussing many controversial topics and if you are incapable of doing so with empathy and poise, you belong elsewhere.

3. ***We will use evidence to support our opinions.*** Contrary to popular belief, not all opinions are created equal. While we welcome legitimate debates (and there are many!) opinions that are based on anecdotes, hearsay, or

ignorance will not be given credence.

4. ***We will exercise academic integrity:*** Any assignments that are plagiarized will follow the consequence chain on the next page. Generally, plagiarism is a result of panic. So prevent the temptation, and come talk to me if you are in a state of panic.

A Note About Academic Integrity and AI Tools

We need to acknowledge the elephant in the room, which is AI- specifically, large language models like Chat GPT and Grammarly revision tools. My policy in my class is that we will occasionally use specific AI tools to aid our processes. HOWEVER- we will not be using AI to replace thinking processes, or to replace skill development. AI can be a useful tool once you are a subject expert and a skilled writer. However, given that none of you as yet has a college degree, this does not apply. This means, in practicality, that we will be using AI tools to help us find and sort research, to format citations, and such things. **We WILL NOT be using AI to outline, compose, or refine our writing beyond simple grammar checks.**

If I suspect you have used AI for composing or revision, I will be using various tools that let me take a minute-by-minute look at your draft history, and I will be comparing the writing to in-class writing samples from our class. For this reason, it is crucial that you complete all composing and revision in the same document, without copying and pasting from another document- we will talk about ways to organize this using document tabs. If I find reason to believe that you have plagiarized from other sources, or have used AI to compose your writing, consequences will follow as below. Please note that this is not a court of law, and I am not required to prove this beyond a reasonable doubt with 100% certainty in order for these penalties to be applied. Just write your own stuff, and this won't be an issue. Please note that these strikes cut across all classes and years, so if a student plagiarizes in Kyle's class, then does it in my class, the second class would be strike two.

1. **Strike 1:** The student receives a 0 on the assignment. Students will be allowed to make up for partial credit through a process that will include a robust reflection and a re-do of the assignment on their own time. Parents/guardians are notified, and the academic dishonesty is reported to administration and college and career.

2. **Strike 2:** The student receives a 0 on the assignment that they cannot remediate. Parents/guardians are called in to meet with the student, teachers, and administration. The academic dishonesty is reported to administration and college and career.

3. **Strike 3:** The student receives a 0 on the assignment that they cannot remediate. Parents/guardians are notified, and an official flag of academic dishonesty is added to their transcript. The academic dishonesty is reported to administration and college and career.

4. **Strike 4:** The student receives a 0 on the assignment, parents/guardians and students are required to meet with the administration, and larger consequences may be assigned up to and including suspension and expulsion.

If you have a 504 plan or IEP, you may be able to use approved assistive AI tools to support your learning. These tools can help with tasks like organizing ideas, summarizing information, checking grammar, reading text aloud, or generating practice questions. AI should be used to support understanding and independence, not replace original thinking or required work. If you are unsure how or when to use AI, check your accommodations plan and ask your teacher or case manager. When in doubt, ask!

Frequently Asked Questions:

What do I do if I am late to class?

Come in quietly. Do not disturb others or try to make some flashy, fashionably-late entrance. Check the DP and read the daily blog. If you require further clarification, ask a neighbor. You should come see me *only* after doing all of the above.

What do I do if I am sick or miss school?

If you miss school it is your responsibility to read my DP, check Google Classroom, stay abreast of our course material, and contact me and let me know why you are absent.

Can I get extra credit?
No. But remember, you can always revise and re-submit any assessment or final draft.

What if I have questions about my grade?
Please contact me directly with any questions about your assignments and grades. Please do not have your parents contact me regarding your grades until you have asked the questions first, via email, speech, or writing. If you or your parents still have questions after you have talked to me, I would be happy to address your/their concerns at that point.

Can I eat in class?
You may consume only non-smelly/messy snacks during class time. Please do not spend your whole lunch time in line at Zia's expecting to eat your nachos during class time. It's gross, and it makes my classroom smell like a cafeteria. All snacks consumed in class are subject to teacher tax at varying rates of taxation depending on my personal preferences.

12th Grade Humanities Grading and Assessment

4 Point Grading Scale- Fall Semester ONLY

I will be grading all assessments on a 0-4 point scale. Essentially what this means is that the lowest grade a student can get for an assignment they attempt and turn in is a 50%, and then it will go up from there. This provides more accurate assessment, as well as more opportunities for students to succeed even if they have a rough start.

- 0 = Attempted part of the assignment, but it is far from complete, or shows very limited mastery of the skill/content. (F: 50%)
- 1 = Attempted most of the assessment, but pieces are not complete, or shows limited mastery of the content or skill being assessed. (D: 65%)
- 2 = Assessment shows they have a general grasp of the content knowledge or skill, but there are some key pieces missing. (C: 75%)
- 3 = Assessment shows mastery of the basic content or skill, but can still demonstrate increased complexity, depth, or application. (B: 85%)
- 4 = Assessment shows deep mastery of the content or skill--the student is ready to move beyond this! (A: 95%)

Retakes, Revisions, Resubmission.



Because my goal is student mastery of the content and skills in our subject areas, I am allowing students to retake, revise, and resubmit assessments. This will allow students to show their growth, to demonstrate ownership over their learning and their grades, and to move at a pace that is appropriate for their individual capabilities. Please note, this does NOT apply to daily assignments and drafts.
Any revision, retake, or resubmission must be submitted no later than a week after the assignment is returned, unless otherwise noted.

Late Work



Assignments should be turned in by the start of class on the day they are due, unless I communicate otherwise- check the date and time in Google Classrom!

- Late assignments and assessments will be automatically **docked 10%** and you will have one week from the deadline (or 5 school days) to turn it in and receive feedback.

- After a week, I will no longer accept late work and you will receive a **0** on the assignment. You are not able to remediate credit for assignments more than a week late. *Seriously. This could keep you from graduating. Don't test me on this one.*

Extensions



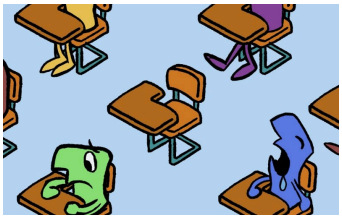
In many college environments, students are granted extensions only in rare and exceptional circumstances- illness, death in the family, significant life circumstances, mental health issues, etc. In moving towards a more college-like approach, I only grant extensions to students who have an exceptional circumstance that requires an extension. If you need to request an extension, you must use this form: **Extension Special Request Form.**

Things that do NOT qualify as exceptional circumstances include but are not limited to: Sports absences, procrastination, minor colds/injuries, failure to understand the assignment directions that we went over in class, lots of work/deadlines in other classes, family trips/vacations, general varieties of teenage angst.

The 1-per-student Extension Rule and Request Guidelines- HOW TO GET YOUR FREE EXTENSION
However, I also understand that you have busy academic and personal lives, and in order to help you be healthy humans, I will allow each student **ONE (1)** extension request per semester that is not due to exceptional circumstances. **The request should be submitted to me in an email the evening before an assignment is due.** Please indicate in your email: 1) the reason for your request, and 2) the date by which you think it appropriate to submit the assignment. **THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO EXHIBITION PRODUCTS, POLs, OR THE FINAL DRAFTS OF SENIOR THESIS, TED TALK, or ACTION PROJECT.**

Absent From School?

If you are absent from school, it is your responsibility as a student to contact me for missed assignments. For excused absences, you will be given the same amount of time to complete the assignment as the rest of the class had. When possible, plan ahead when you know you are going to be absent. If you are really ill, please let me know and I will work with you to develop an appropriate plan to get you caught up on the essentials.



Google Classroom vs. Digital Portfolio

I will be using two digital platforms for organizing our class content and assignment materials.

1. **Google Classroom** = the place to turn in digital assignments (make sure to turn off "view final grade" as your accurate grade will be stored in Infinite Campus).
2. **Lori's DP** = resources, daily lesson plans, etc.

How to Check Grades: Infinite Campus. Make sure to save your username and login and check your grades regularly to ensure you're keeping up with all your classes. This Tech Resources at AHS document has information on how to access Infinite Campus. If you catch a mistake (they do happen!) please let me know via email ASAP!

Grading Categories- Semester 1

I will have two categories of assignments in Infinite Campus, each weighted according as follows:

Category	Percentage of your grade	What is this assessing?	What types of work will be in this category?
Skills and Application	80%	Can you execute the skills necessary to be a Humanities scholar?	-Final Drafts -Data analysis -Research Notes -Annotations -Reflections -Benchmark Assignments
Process and Practice	20%	Can you consistently complete assignments on time and in a complete fashion?	-Daily activities/classwork -Starters -Drafts

Grading Categories- Semester 2

In the second semester, the categories will shift to reflect a more college-based assessment balance, and will be graded more traditionally on a 10 point scale.

Category	Percentage of your grade	What is this assessing?	What types of work will be in this category?
Senior Thesis	40%	Can you write a well-researched college-level essay?	Senior Thesis Final Draft
Senior Thesis Reflection	10%	Can you articulate how you have grown as a writer during the thesis process?	Senior Thesis Final Reflection
TED Talk	30%	Can you give a polished, professional, and engaging presentation?	TED Talk
Process Skills	20%	Are you developing the skills you need to complete the two assignments above?	Notes, drafts, critiques, in-class activities/practice, project drafts and records.

Senior Action Project: Semester 2

The senior action project piece will be assessed separately- it is a graduation requirement that is separate from senior core classes of Humanities and Stats. We will be co-creating a rubric and assessment criteria with you throughout the year for the Action Project Final Product. **If you do not pass the action project, you will not graduate.**

A Note to Parents and Guardians

The education of your child is a task shared by parents, teachers, peer groups, and other community members.

Please assist me in serving your child by reading the above and acknowledging its content by signing in the space below. Save my contact info or bookmark my digital portfolio: http://animashumanities12.weebly.com/home.html. I use this page to post daily lesson plans, so follow along! Also, feel free to use this opportunity to open a line of communication with me by writing in the space below.

Please also note that as these students are nearly adults, we are focusing this year on building their academic independence to ensure they are ready for their next step in education/training. This means that we expect students and families to stay informed of their academic performance without individualized emails or calls. We will not be reaching out to parents regarding academic progress outside of regularly updating grades in Infinite Campus.

If you have concerns about your student's academic performance, please start by having a conversation with them. If they cannot answer your questions, they should come talk to me. If, after this process, there are still outstanding questions, then by all means feel free to contact me. But help me put the student in the driver's seat this year- let's make them independent adults!

Please indicate that you have read and understand the content above by filling out the following information (more copies of the syllabus on my digital portfolio).

Student Name:_____ Student Signature:_____

Guardian Name: _____ Guardian Signature: _____

Anything you think I should know about your student that would help me to serve them better this year? Please write me a note in the space below or better yet, send a quick email to lori.fisher@animashighschool.com.