FRESHMAN INQUIRY: HUMAN/NATURE
UNST 117Y (CRN 13916)
MW 12:30 – 1:45, CH 103
FALL 2012

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Office Hours: W 2:00 – 4:00
and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
In Human/Nature, we explore the complex connections between humans and nature. In what ways are we humans “natural”? Is there such a thing as human nature, and if so, what is it? How are we related to nature and our larger natural surroundings? How have humans over the course of time understood and interacted with the natural world? How have we described and represented nature to ourselves? How have our understandings of nature changed? Do humans have unique responsibilities toward the natural world and if so, what are they? Over the course of the year we will attempt to answer these questions, drawing on the resources of the social and biological sciences, history, literature, and the arts.

Key Concepts and Learning Objectives for this course
• Explain and discuss how perception shapes our understanding of being human and of nature, from the neurological understanding of perception to theories on the social construction of reality
• Identify disciplinary approaches to understanding humans and nature in art, the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences, and explore how experts in these fields communicate their knowledge
• Understand how individual and social group identities shape our perception of “human,” “nature,” and “natural”
• Examine variations in ideas and policies about “human nature” regarding gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, ability, religion, and age
• Critically assess the production and dissemination of knowledge by social institutions such as the state, corporations, academia, religion, the scientific community, and the media
• Critically evaluate the pivotal role of media in shaping and manipulating beliefs about humans and nature
• Explain and discuss historical and contemporary attitudes towards individuals and groups who challenge accepted beliefs about nature (and human nature)
• Understand ethical frameworks that shape or limit the actions of citizens and institutions within social structures and towards our environment
• Develop possible solutions for social and political issues
• Present the results of independent and group research to peers through diverse means of communication, especially writing and oral and/or visual presentation
UNIVERSITY STUDIES AND ITS GOALS

Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) is PSU’s freshman year program in University Studies. University Studies’ approach to learning and general education relies on a philosophy of participation and collaboration among faculty, peer mentors, and students who together develop a learning community characterized by mutuality and responsibility. University Studies seeks to develop and reinforce skills that will promote your success at the university and in your professional life. In this regard, the program has four central goals:

• **Critical thinking and inquiry:** Students will learn various modes of inquiry through an interdisciplinary curriculum. Skills developed will include problem solving, investigating, and conceptualizing.

• **Communication:** Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways, including writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means. They will learn to collaborate effectively with others in their work groups, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

• **The variety of human experience:** Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

• **Ethics and social responsibility:** Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society.

For University Studies goals and rubrics, see [http://www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-goals](http://www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-goals); for the instructor’s general grading rubric, see the ‘handouts’ module on Desire 2 Learn (D2L, explained below).

These learning objectives are the central goals of the University Studies program. In Human/Nature this quarter, to enhance your mastery of these objectives, you are expected to:

• Practice the conceptualization and expression of ideas
• Summarize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate media and data
• Recognize and respectfully defend and/or challenge the underlying assumptions in our discussions, readings, and other practices
• Collaborate with peers on written, oral, and computer-based projects

**Mentor Sessions:** Students registered for this class must also be enrolled in one of the three associated Mentored Inquiry Sessions:

- **UNST 117Z 001 (CRN 13917):** MW 2-2:50 p.m. CH 147
- **UNST 117Z 002 (CRN 13918):** MW 3-3:50 p.m. CH 147
- **UNST 117Z 003 (CRN 13919):** MW 4-4:50 p.m. CH 147

Peer mentor Kathryn Hutchinson-Miller will facilitate these 12-person mentor sessions. In mentor sessions, students work individually and collaboratively to complete assigned projects, discuss issues, and explore different learning approaches and techniques. The mentor works with the instructor to guide and assist students in developing their skills in research, writing, and
presentation, and to introduce students to PSU's various support systems. Work in mentor session forms an integral component of the course and your grade.

REQUIRED READINGS
1. Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect by Paul R. Ehrlich
2. Ways of Writing: A Guide to College Composition by PSU Writing Center
3. A Pocket Style Manual (Sixth Edition) by Diana Hacker
4. Library E-reserves (http://psu-eres.lib.pdx.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?&page=search) & materials posted on D2L (https://d2l.pdx.edu/) as assigned—see course schedule
5. U.connect website <http://www.uconnect.unst.pdx.edu>

Also required: A system to back up and store your computer files – e.g., a jump drive, CD, and/or your space on the PSU H: drive. Note: You are asked to save copies of ALL of your work throughout the year for use in end-of-term and end-of-year portfolios.

Desire 2 Learn (D2L): The course syllabus, links to online readings, writing-suggestion documents, plagiarism information, handouts, assignment sheets, and other important materials will be available on D2L. Students can access D2L at https://d2l.pdx.edu/ using their Odin login username and password. Use of D2L will be demonstrated on the first day of class. Please contact the instructor or the mentor if you encounter difficulties in accessing this resource.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS
Grades for the quarter will be calculated according to the percentages below. Assignments will be described more fully in separate handouts.

- Participation (25%). Participation will be calculated based on attendance (absences affect your grade), all in-class and mentor session-related work (including credible drafts for peer review), informal free-writes and assignments, assembly of term portfolio, etc.
- Essay on education (15%). Draft due 10/10; final due 10/15
- Creative writing and reflection on perception (20%).
  - MS 1: Draft due 11/5, final due 11/7.
  - MS 2, 3: Draft due 10/24; final due 10/29
- Presentation, bibliography, and class discussion leadership on human evolution (15%).
  - MS 1: 10/31
  - MS 2: 11/5
  - MS 3: 11/7
- Race Excel assignment (10%). Due 11/9
- Essay on race (15%). Draft due 11/28; final due 12/6
- Portfolios. Due 12/6

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
Come Prepared: Always have pen/pencil and paper and be ready to take notes. Always bring your copy of the syllabus and assigned reading materials. There is an extensive body of research showing that actively interacting with a text increases one’s understanding and retention of its
information, so we expect to see readings and hand-outs underlined, marked up, highlighted with notes in the margins…anything that helps you more fully engage with the material. (We will therefore interpret you not bringing the texts, or having a pristine, unmarked text, as a sign that you probably didn’t read the material in preparation for our class meeting.)

**General Conduct & Creating a Respectful Learning Environment:** It’s your responsibility to read the Student Conduct Code (see [http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct](http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct)). It details your rights and responsibilities as a member of the Portland State community. These codes are strictly enforced. Further, we will do our best to facilitate a classroom atmosphere based on mutual respect. To this end, the students, mentor, and professor will jointly create discussion guidelines to foster meaningful discussion of diverse opinions and ideas. Personal attacks, disruptions, and rudeness will not be tolerated; students engaged in such conduct will be asked to leave and will be marked absent.

**Technology:** To foster a positive, respectful environment, free of distractions for all participants, there is a zero-tolerance cell phone policy. (This includes text messaging.) When you enter the classrooms, turn off or silence your phone and put it away. Similarly, laptops and other hand-held devices are only to be used during class to access electronic course material. Checking email, football scores, or Facebook are inappropriate in-class activities. Additionally, in mentor sessions, checking email or using the Internet is considered non-participation (and will be counted as an absence), unless such activities are indicated by the mentor as part of the day’s projects.

**Attendance:** Because consistent, class-wide participation is necessary to achieving the University goals and course objectives, attendance and punctuality are a factor in your final grade. Class participation forms an important aspect of the learning experience in this class, and is therefore both expected and required. Attendance will be taken in both the main class and the mentor session. Legitimate reasons to miss class are few and dire, and should if at all possible be reported to the instructor before the start of the class period. Excuses received after the start of class require documentation such as a note from a doctor or a police report of an accident.

If you feel ill (fever, sore throat, runny nose, headache, cough, aches), please stay home until you have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Let the instructor and mentor know about your illness. You will not be penalized for illness-related absences, and you will have the opportunity to make up missed assignments.

More than 10 unexcused absences (1/4 of the course) constitute grounds for failing the course. **Main session and mentor sessions are considered separate absences, therefore missing both in the same day is considered two absences.** Late arrivals are disruptive to the learning environment and are considered an absence if you are more than 10 minutes late, unless prior arrangements are made with your instructor.

**Course Schedule and Campus Closures:** The course schedule is subject to change depending on the needs of the class and in the event of inclement weather. Call the main switchboard at 503-725-3000 or go to [www.pdx.edu](http://www.pdx.edu) to find out if campus is closed during inclement weather.

**Assignment formatting:** All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. Use MLA style citation format when appropriate. (Refer to the
Writing Center or Hacker manual for details.) Students are responsible for turning in a hardcopy of their work; email submissions will be accepted only under emergency circumstances and then only to document a ‘time stamp.’ Save e-copies of all assignments throughout the year for inclusion in your e-portfolio.

Due Dates & Lateness Policy: All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Formal assignments: Grading criteria for formal assignments are based on how well you follow instructions. Assignments turned in late will be reduced a full letter grade for each day late. Assignments will not be accepted more than a week after their due date, except in cases of emergency. (Your computer crashing without your having backed anything up is considered poor preparation, not an emergency.) If you are having trouble understanding or completing an assignment for any reason, it is your responsibility to talk with the instructor and/or mentor in a timely manner BEFORE the due date.

Informal assignments (for example, pop-quizzes or exercises done in class) are due in class on the assigned day and will not be accepted late, except in cases of emergency or pre-arranged absence.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty: University policy calls for severe sanctions for plagiarism or any form of academic dishonesty. Although we encourage you to discuss assignments with others, the final product must be the work of the individual or team writing it. The authors have the responsibility to include citations to any work on which they base their ideas, including class lectures. Students who cheat or plagiarize are subject to a failing grade for the assigned paper, will be reported to administration for further action, and are likely to have a notation of plagiarism placed in their permanent record. Plagiarism is relatively easy to do – it is, however, quite easy to prevent. For details, see Student Conduct Code: 577-31-135 <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct>. For more information on plagiarism, refer to the Writing Center <http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/ >

Ability: Students with disabilities will be accommodated. Students with a documented disability needing accommodations in this course should immediately inform the instructor. If you need assistance obtaining resources or documentation, please contact the instructor.

Advising: You are encouraged to make use of the advising services at Advising and Career Services. See http://www.pdx.edu/uasc/ for more information.

PSU Resources for Students: Because college isn’t just a classroom experience, you may find yourself in need of tutoring, health services, legal aid, public safety, or other resources while at PSU. You can find some resource listings at https://my.pdx.edu, and you can talk with your instructor and mentor for help in locating others.
COURSE OUTLINE

Section 1: Education


Section 2: Perception, Perspective, Common Sense, and Truth


Section 3: Evolution and Human Evolution


Recommended sources on evolution


Recommended source on human evolution


Section 4: Biological and Social Consideration of Race


Statement by Alabama Clergy, 12 April 1963.

King, Martin Luther. Letter from Birmingham Jail, 16 April 1963.

King, Martin Luther. “I have a dream.” [Video of live speech, 28 August 1963] <http://www.blinkx.com/watch-video/martin-luther-king-i-have-a-dream-speech-17-min/_a3Jnslz1d1QHyavGyDjew>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Schedule and readings are subject to revision and change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings and assignments</th>
<th>Topics to cover</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mon. 9/24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed. 9/26</td>
<td>Read: Gatto, Marr, Gladwell</td>
<td>Liberal arts education</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mon. 10/1</td>
<td>Read: Plato</td>
<td>Allegory of the cave</td>
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<td>Wed. 10/3</td>
<td>Read: Freire</td>
<td>Politics of education</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mon. 10/8</td>
<td>Read: Le Guin, Lamott</td>
<td>Perspectives</td>
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<td>Wed. 10/10</td>
<td>Read: Schine, Bohannan</td>
<td>Culture and perception</td>
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<td>Due: Education essay draft</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mon. 10/15</td>
<td>Film: Secrets of the Mind</td>
<td>Biology and psychology of perception</td>
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<td>Wed. 10/17</td>
<td>Read: Zerubavel, Lakoff, Fillingham</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mon. 10/22</td>
<td>Read: Ahearn, Harrison</td>
<td>Language and culture</td>
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<td>Wed. 10/24</td>
<td>Read: Schwartz, Colombo</td>
<td>Critical thinking, morality</td>
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<td>MS 2, 3: Due: Perspective essay draft</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mon. 10/29</td>
<td>Read: Ehrlich Ch. 1</td>
<td>Science and religion: The debate about evolution</td>
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<td>Film: Judgment Day</td>
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<td>MS 2, 3: Due: Perspective essay</td>
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<td>Wed. 10/31</td>
<td>Read: Ehrlich Ch. 2, 3</td>
<td>Evolutionary biology</td>
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<td>MS 1 Due: Class presentation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mon. 11/5</td>
<td>Read: Ehrlich Ch. 4</td>
<td>Human evolution</td>
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<td>MS 1: Due: Perspective essay draft</td>
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<td>MS 2: Due: Class presentation</td>
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<td>Wed. 11/7</td>
<td>Read: Ehrlich Ch. 5</td>
<td>Human evolution</td>
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<td>MS 1: Due: Perspective essay</td>
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<td>MS 3: Due: Class presentation</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mon. 11/12</td>
<td>Read: Marks, Jablonski &amp; Chaplin, Gill, Brace</td>
<td>Biology of race</td>
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<td>Wed. 11/14</td>
<td>TBA – possible field trip or advising</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mon. 11/19</td>
<td>Read: Pfaelzer</td>
<td>Cultural construction of race – Chinese Americans</td>
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<td>Due: Race Excel assignment</td>
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<td>Wed. 11/21</td>
<td>Read: Siskind</td>
<td>Invention of Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>No mentor sessions today</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mon. 11/26</td>
<td>View before class: King speech</td>
<td>Race and the civil rights movement</td>
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<td>Read: Alabama Clergy, King, MacIntosh</td>
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<td>Film: TBA on US race relations</td>
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<td>Wed. 11/28</td>
<td>Due: Race essay draft</td>
<td>Political aspects of race/ethnicity</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Thurs. 12/6</td>
<td>Due: Portfolios</td>
<td>CLASS RUNS 12:30-2:20, CH 103. Activity: Portfolio essays</td>
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<td>Due: Race essay</td>
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