

Exploring the Liberal Arts – Northwestern Summer Bridge Program, 2025

Tue-Thur (Lecture) & Fri (Discussion), 4-5pm
Room: Tech A110

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“Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students of the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is him [or her]self taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” – Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pg80.

Course Abstract: Over the course of four weeks, students will explore the liberal arts by working with professors from various disciplines including sociology, anthropology, history, and comparative literature. The course consists of three days of lectures from visiting professors, Tuesday-Thursday, and a discussion seminar on Fridays. By the end of the course, students will have a diverse understanding of the liberal arts as a diverse and multifaceted field. Students will also work on important research and writing skills, specifically forming research questions, identifying sources, and clearly communicating ideas in prose.

Learning Objectives: This course focuses on a crucial component of all liberal art disciplines and of intellectual inquiry in general: the ability to pose clear and well-informed questions that invite tangible research and further discussion. Students and instructors will develop interrogative skills through weekly writing assignments and in discussion sections. As a group, we will also aim to grasp the basic approaches of and recognize personal interest in different fields of study.

Evaluation and Assignments: Assessment is based on a combination of weekly written work (40%), attendance and participation in lectures and discussion (40%), and a final project (20%).

- **Written Work:** Each week, students will prepare a 1-2 page double spaced reflection that goes beyond a simple summary of the week's lectures and instead poses questions and insights for further discussion during Friday sections. This can take the form of a traditional essay, a journal entry, or bullet points. All forms

should feature complete sentences, correct punctuation and grammar, and focus on providing clear prose.

- **Participation and Attendance:** Participation varies from person to person but always includes attending and being attentive in lectures and discussions. Beyond this, students should aim to hone their listening and speaking skills by asking relevant questions, offering insights related to the ongoing discussion, or taking notes. Of course, public participation can be difficult, but as a group we will strive to make ourselves more comfortable with having honest intellectual conversations, with being wrong or having doubts, and with teaching and learning from our colleagues.
- **Final Project:** Your final project will address the idea of “asking a more beautiful question. Warren Berger describes a beautiful question as “an ambitious yet actionable question that can shift the way we perceive or think about something—and that might serve as a catalyst to bring about change.” In groups of 6, you will work together to generate beautiful questions on the same topic from 3 disciplinary perspectives. Your group will present your questions at our final meeting.

Course Policies (What We Expect from You)

Please familiarize yourself with the following policies for this class. They are intended to guide you, answer common questions, and provide help with common needs. Many of these statements are provided by the University Administration who have asked all faculty to include them in their syllabi while others are specific to this class. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Attendance

- Attendance at both lecture and discussion section meetings is mandatory. While we generally expect you to attend every lecture, please let us know if you are ill or have extenuating circumstances that prevent your attendance. Your general wellbeing is as much of a priority to me as your academic success. If you miss a lecture, we will make a plan together to get you caught up.
- Timely attendance is particularly important as late arrivals disrupt the conversations taking place and may require us to reorganize group activities. If you anticipate having difficulty arriving on time, see us.
- Individual students will not be granted permission to attend remotely except as the result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU
- If you are feeling unwell, please do not attend class! Your physical health is as important as your academic success.
- **Feel free to wear a mask in this class** if you have any health concerns that make you feel safer or more comfortable doing so.

Ground Rules

- Respect your peers, which includes using proper names to refer to one another (don't be afraid to ask if you don't know!).

- If something is unclear, don't hesitate to ask for clarification—chances are it's unclear for someone else, too.
- Come to meetings prepared to contribute and to discuss reading assignments and any other materials introduced in meetings.

Laptops and Phones: Use of phones, laptops, or other potentially distracting devices in class is prohibited, including in discussion sections. Mobile devices should be put away with the ringer turned off. We encourage you to take notes by hand but if you need to use a laptop to take notes for an accommodation, please contact us so that we can advise you on how to minimize distracting other students.

Academic Integrity and Generative AI

- Any form of cheating, including improper use of content generated by artificial intelligence, constitutes a violation of Northwestern's academic integrity policy. Students may not submit work generated in whole or in part by ChatGPT, Bard, or other generative AI, "machine learning" or "large language models" for any assignments. If we believe your use of AI to be a recurrent issue or prevalent in any assignment worth 10% or more of your grade, we will submit your assignment to the academic integrity office for review.
- Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide." All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professors. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide visit [Academic Integrity: Office of the Provost - Northwestern University](#)

Course Details Subject to Change

- Please note that the specifics of this course syllabus are subject to change in the case of unforeseen circumstances. Instructors will notify students of any changes as soon as possible. Students will be responsible for abiding by the changes.

What You Can Expect From Us

Availability: Outside of class hours, we are still available to support you! If you are not able to attend office hours, reach out and we will find a time that works.

Transparency and Feedback: We will provide clear guidelines outlining how we will assess each assignment. Our goal is to provide you with actionable feedback for future assignments as needed.

Reasonable Expectations: While of course we want you to do your best work, we also know that life happens. Not every assignment needs to be a brilliant, perfectly crafted piece in order for you to receive an A in the class. This also extends to discussion in class- not every thought has to be completely formed to be shared. You are taking this course to learn, which is often a messy process. We want to meet you where you are.

Additional Resources

Inclusion and Community: We are committed to building an inclusive intellectual community in this class. The university has several offices on which you may draw for support. Feel free to talk to us about any particular resources that you may find useful. Good places to start are the university's [Office of Student Enrichment Services](#) at and [Office of Community Enrichment](#) and using correct **names and pronouns** is a core part of developing a productive learning environment that fosters safety, inclusion, personal dignity, and a sense of belonging across campus. Please feel free to let us know your preferred name and pronouns at any point in the quarter. Do feel free to make use of Canvas's NameCoach tool to record the correct pronunciation.

Support for Wellness and Mental Health: Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. [TimelyCare](#), a virtual mental health platform that provides counseling, health coaching and 24/7 on-demand services, is free. Though [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) and TimelyCare offer similar services, TimelyCare is a good option for students who would like to access a provider outside of CAPS' normal office hours. Students can also access confidential resources through [Religious and Spiritual Life \(RSL\)](#) and the [Center for Awareness, Response and Education \(CARE\)](#).

The Writing Place: When working on writing assignments for this class, we encourage you to visit the **Writing Place**, Northwestern's peer writing center. You will work with juniors and seniors who have been trained to provide you feedback and assistance on any type of writing at any stage in the writing process. They will not edit your work. Rather, they will work with you to brainstorm ideas, organize or outline an essay, clarify your argument, document your sources correctly, or refine grammar and style. To book an appointment, register at <https://northwestern.mywconline.com/>.

Accessibility: Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467- 5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let us know as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Religious Observance: Northwestern is committed to fostering an academic community respectful and welcoming of persons from all backgrounds. To that end, the policy on academic accommodations for religious holidays stipulates that students will not be penalized for class absences to observe religious holidays. If you will observe a religious holiday during a class meeting, scheduled exam, or assignment deadline, please let us know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class.

Course Schedule

Week 1 **Observe** (August 5-8)

Tuesday - Discussion
Wednesday - Tony Chen (Sociology and Political Science)
Thursday - Myrna Garcia (Latina/o Studies)
Friday - Discussion

Week 2 **Critique** (August 12-15)

Tuesday - Abby Barefoot (Legal Studies)
Wednesday - Lane Fenrich (History and Gender Studies)
Thursday - Vilna Bashi (Sociology)
Friday - Discussion

Week 3 **Reflect** (August 19-22)

Tuesday - Rebecca Zorach (Art History)
Wednesday - Sarah Rodriguez (Global Health Studies)
Thursday - Zach Nissen (Anthropology)
Friday - Discussion

Week 4 **Express** (August 26-29)

Tuesday - Discussion
Wednesday - Conclusions
Thursday - Project Workshop
Friday - Final Discussion

Final Presentation - September 6 (Thursday)