

PRIMARY TEXTS
“PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT”

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Course Description

“The function of the university is not simply to teach bread-winning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools, or to be a center of polite society; it is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization.” The function of this class will be to put these words into practice as we **read, discuss and write about a range of important primary texts with a variety of perspectives on the theme of personal empowerment:** what it is, what it’s not, and how to get it (both inside and outside of school). One of the authors we will read wrote the words just quoted; another author we will read disagreed. Other authors put the emphasis elsewhere entirely. Along the way, we will also focus on the development of **critical thinking skills, including the ability to understand, assess and formulate logical arguments.**

Reading List

1. Adler & Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*, Rev. ed. (Touchstone, ISBN 978-0671212094)
2. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, 2nd ed. (Hackett, ISBN 978-0872206335): *Apology, Meno*
3. Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Waveland, ISBN 978-0881334449)
4. Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Bantam, ISBN 978-0553212983)
5. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (Dover, ISBN 978-0486287386)
6. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Dover, ISBN 978-0486280417)
7. Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (Harvest, ISBN 978-0156030410)
8. Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Penguin, ISBN 978-0142437346)

Requirements

Reading, discussing and writing about a text are interdependent. Working at each task helps one do the others better. For this reason, students will be required to do all three. However, since this is a discussion course operated according to what is sometimes called the “Socratic Method” (see below) rather than a lecture course, **it is particularly important that all students prepare for, attend and actively participate in class discussions.**

Reading: Students are required to do all the assigned reading for each class in a thoughtful and open-minded manner that prepares them to participate in classroom discussion. This will require time and concentration. Questions raised by the reading are especially encouraged. Unless otherwise instructed, students are to turn in a “Reading Review Homework” (as described on the first day of class) for each reading at the beginning of the class in which the reading is discussed.

Discussing: Students are required to actively participate in each class discussion, sharing their own viewpoints and listening to those of others. Through this collaboration the class will try to get a better understanding of each work and its implications. Since we will

be referring to the reading during class, **students must bring the current text to each class.**

Writing: Students will be required to write several short papers on assigned topics and to write several in-class essays, including on the mid-term and final exams. Students should bring writing paper and writing instruments to every class.

Grading

Final grades will be based on an assessment of a student's:

- 1) Ability
- 2) Effort
- 3) Writing

as determined in approximately the following manner:

Class Participation	40%	Mid-Term Exam	15%
Papers	30%	Final Exam	15%

Class participation grades are based on attendance and active, thoughtful participation (as well as completion of assigned homework); unexcused absences, late arrivals, early departures and/or silent non-participation will lower this part of the grade. Homework assignments and papers are due at the beginning of the class on the day due. Late papers will be penalized one grade "step" for each part or whole day late (e.g. an "A" becomes an "A-" if it's up to one day late). Unannounced "pop" quizzes may be given at any time and will also influence the grade.

"Socratic Method"

This class is operated according to what is sometimes called the "Socratic Method" in which students are required to learn for themselves through the various class activities. The role of the teacher is primarily to facilitate discussion, pose questions, and offer occasional insights into the text and/or ideas under discussion—not to lecture on "what the book means". The success or failure of such a class therefore depends primarily on the combined contributions of all participants.

Etiquette

A collaborative exploration of ideas requires that participants treat the material and each other with respect. Participants may argue for or against any relevant idea as long as they do so based on the readings and an acknowledgement that others may hold different points of view. In addition, students should:

- 1) arrive for class on time and **not leave the room during the class session;**
- 2) **turn off cell phones,** pagers, and other disruptive devices;
- 3) not eat or drink to the extent that it will affect their or others' participation;
- 4) exercise common sense and courtesy in their dealings with others.

Students who do not abide by these rules will be marked down substantially in the "class participation" portion of their grade and risk not passing the course.

Schedule

WK	DAY	CLASS ACTIVITY	OTHER
1	Fri	COURSE INTRO (SEC 02)	
	Mon	NO CLASS	
	Tue	COURSE INTRO (SEC 07A)	
	W/R	<i>How to Read a Book</i> (1)	
2	M/T	<i>Apology</i> (17a-35e)	<i>How to Read</i> (2)
	W/R	<i>Apology</i> (17a-42a)	
3	M/T	<i>Meno</i> (70a-80d)	Paper 1 Due
	W/R	<i>Meno</i> (70a-86c)	
4	M/T	<i>Meno</i> (70a-100c) / PAPER 2 PREP	<i>How to Read</i> (3)
	W/R	<i>Prince</i> (E-V)	
5	M/T	<i>Prince</i> (E-XIV)	<i>How to Read</i> (4)
	W/R	<i>Prince</i> (XV-XXVI)	
6	M/T	<i>Macbeth</i> (1-2)	Paper 2 Due
	W/R	<i>Macbeth</i> (1-4)	
7	M/T	<i>Macbeth</i> (1-5) / PAPER 3 PREP	
	W/R	MID-TERM PREP	
8	M/T	PAPER 3 PEER REVIEW	Paper 3 Due
	W/R	MID-TERM EXAM	
9	M/T	NO CLASS	
	W/R	NO CLASS	
10	M/T	<i>Up From Slavery</i> (P-6)	
	W/R	<i>Up From Slavery</i> (7-12)	
11	M/T	<i>Up From Slavery</i> (13-17)	
	W/R	<i>Souls of Black Folks</i> (F-5)	Paper 3 Revision Due
12	M/T	<i>Souls of Black Folks</i> (6-9)	
	W/R	<i>Souls of Black Folks</i> (10-A) / PAPER 4 PREP	
13	M/T	<i>Room of One's Own</i> (1-3)	
	W/R	<i>Room of One's Own</i> (4-6)	
14	M/T	PAPER 4 PEER REVIEW	Paper 4 Due
	W/R	<i>Portrait of the Artist</i> (1-2)	
15	M/T	<i>Portrait of the Artist</i> (3-5)	
	W/R	FINAL PREP	
		FINAL EXAM	