**IST 120: Section 202 4306 Connections (CT)**

Course Syllabus – Spring 2014

Marshall University

Morrow Library Commons

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30pm – 1:45pm

Instructor: Kit Anderson

Office: Morrow Library 102

Office Hours: by appointment only

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**Credit**

The course is 3 credit hours.

*The most valuable and indeed essential asset the student brings to any learning task is a willingness to adventure, to take risks. – John Holt*

**Course Description**

The title of this course is “Connections,” and it is listed as a Critical Thinking class. The cornerstones of this class, as a result, are thinking and perceiving. Considerable overlap exists between these two, of course, including the increasing difficulty to do either in this era of 24/7 media-internet-social media access. “Perception” is the first step of making a connection or the cross-disciplinary synthesis that is at the heart of the Integrated Science and Technology department.

The course is planned as a mosaic approach. Looking closely at each separate piece, we might not see how they all fit together.

* Perception of Time (aka time management)
* Perception of Risk (aka thinking through the pros and cons of security measures)
* Perception of Good and Bad Writing (aka thinking about your intended reader)
* The Five Perceptual Skills of Drawing (aka noticing what’s usually ignored)

Indeed, you might be wondering, “What do those have in common? And, why should I be learning those in this class?”

The common thread between these items is that every single one begins by stopping to think—or become aware—of our perceptions. Let some of the authors whom we’ll study have a say:

* “After almost two decades as a professional organizer, I’ve found that the single most common obstacle people face in managing their days lies in the way they view time. Therefore, one of the first steps in taking control of time is to challenge your very perception of it.” – Julie Morgenstern, from Time Management from the Inside-Out
* “Our perceived risks rarely match the actual risks.” – Bruce Schneier, from Beyond Fear
* “[A]dult students beginning in art generally do not really see what is in front of their eyes—that is, they do not perceive in the special way required for drawing. They take note of what’s there, and quickly translate the perception into words and symbols mainly based on the symbol system developed throughout childhood and on what they know about the perceived object.” – Betty Edwards, from The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain
* “[T]o persuade people with different perceptions, you must start with the notion that your “facts”—your ideas, thoughts, and perceptions—are invisible to them. What you see so clearly the other party may not see at all.” – Stuart Diamond, from Getting More
* “[A]ll it takes to begin moving from unconscious writing to genuine writing is a few moments’ reflection on what the writing/reading process ideally involves. Think about it. What it involves is one person earnestly attempting to communicate with another. Implicitly, then, it involves the reader as much as the writer, since the success of the communication depends solely on how the reader receives it.” – John Trimble, from Writing with Style
* “All education begins with humility.” –Bryan Garner
* “People get better at using language when they use it to say things they really want to say to people they really want to say them to, in a context in which they can express themselves freely and honestly.” –John Holt
* “Nobody should suppose that good writing—the kind that says what is means while being pleasant to read—has ever been easy….” – Jacques Barzun

**Texts**

The following books contain the required reading for the class:

Beyond Fear by Bruce Schneier

The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards (4th edition)

Books are available at Marshall University bookstore, where you can buy or rent new or (sometimes) used texts.

Because your instructor vividly remembers the pain of paying for a semester’s worth of college textbooks, the purchase of this course’s books is “recommended,” not “required.” As an inexpensive alternative, one copy of each these books has also been placed on reserve at Drinko Library, where you can borrow them for 2-hour intervals. (This short time interval ensures that your classmates can have access to them as well. Keep in mind, though, that using reserve books is difficult for chronic procrastinators. Especially if there are a lot of them in the class.)

Please keep in mind, though, that although purchasing the textbooks is “recommended,” doing the actual reading is “**required**.”

**Additional Reading**

More reading than what is posted in this syllabus will be required for the class—at the instructor’s discretion—and those readings will be distributed via email, posted on Blackboard, or (least likely) by passing out handouts in class.

Let me repeat that: **additional reading not outlined in the syllabus may be required**.

Your interests and abilities—as well as your classmates’—will help me determine what future readings will be. Not only will we be looking at the content of assigned readings, but we will also reflect on the style of the writings as well.

**Attendance Policy**

I don’t officially require any attendance, for a variety of reasons, including that I don’t want to take roll for each of the 28 classes this semester. But I will have frequent, unannounced, in-class assignments (e.g. pop-quizzes, essays, or other impromptu assignments). If you miss one of these, you will receive zero credit. These are not to be made up. If you have a University-approved excuse, your missing the in-class assignment will neither hurt nor help you—it simply won’t be factored in averaging this portion of your grade. Any other absences must be negotiated with me at least one week in advance.

If you miss class, you are expected to take responsibility for finding assignments from your classmates. I am getting better at using Blackboard, but please don’t skip class and then expect me to hold your hand and make sure you know everything you need before an assignment is due. I am not a frequent emailer.

**Homework Turn-In Policy**

Homework is to be turned in at the beginning of the class in which it is due. Because I prefer you do the assignment, even if late, I will accept late homework. Although it will be considerably marked down, it will be better than zero. Anything more than 2 weeks late will not be accepted; the instructor has the discretion to accept anything later than two weeks only for exceptional circumstances.

**Explanation of Assignments**

Individual Assignments – In the course of class throughout the semester, questions will arise, itching for further inquiry. I will either ask for a volunteer or assign a student to research such questions. The student who accepts the assignment will give a short answer or response at the beginning of the next class. Students may receive more than one individual assignment.

Papers #1 and #2 – These are papers that will range between 2-4 pages in length. For each paper, a mental map or outline, as well as a “zero draft,” (aka “writing in stages”) are required to be turned in beforehand. The more time and energy you spend on these preparation steps, the easier the final draft will be, and the better your grade will be.

Also, please note that expressing well-thought-out ideas both clearly and concisely are far more important to me than exact page lengths. If you, like many college students, are tempted to spend your final moments before turning in a draft changing margins and the font size of periods, we aren’t going to get along. In this class, you’ll be rewarded for spending many moments reviewing and editing your writing to make it read better. Proper review and editing of your papers should make them shorter.

Mid-term evaluations — At about the midway point of the semester, you will be asked to turn in 2 short essays evaluating

1) your instructor (me) and how the class is unfolding, and also

2) yourself, with respect to the goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the semester.

Unannounced In-Class Assignments — See the previous section (Attendance Policy) for more details. But the gist of these assignments is that they are unannounced and will usually be Pass/Fail.

Writing Analyses or Response piece — These assignments revolve around looking at others’ works and looking at what they do well or what they do poorly.

Perception (Drawing) Assignments – Yes, drawing assignments.

To those who can’t draw worth a lick: Don’t be afraid! The accompanying readings in Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain aren’t nearly as long as they look, due to the large number of illustrations in them. And, if you are like me, you’ll want to understand the reasons why you still draw as if in 4th grade. You’ll have nothing to lose, and you’ll be able to improve your drawing abilities beyond your wildest dreams. You will need to expend effort on these. Some assignments will take 2 or more hours to do.

 Assignments are pass/fail, but if you fail them, you will be required to repeat the assignment until you pass it. Because the skills are cumulative (e.g. Doing Exercise #10 is futile if you can’t do exercise 2, 3, or 4), you will not be allowed to turn in future drawing exercises until you pass the earlier drawing assignments.

To those who are already excellent artists: This doesn’t mean you can coast in this class. But it does mean that I hope you can share your experiences with the rest of us.

**Weighted Determinants of Final Grade**

10% Individual Assignments (Research & Present);

15% Quality of Work, or Quality of Participation/Preparation

20% Paper #1 & #2

10% Mid-term Evaluations

5% Lynda.com assignments

10% Unannounced In-Class Assignments (e.g. pop quizzes, essay, or exercises)

15% Tests

15% 10 Perception (Drawing) Assignments

Marshall University only issues whole grades, that is, no plusses or minuses. So all final grades will be assigned as follows, based on the weights listed above:

90%-100% = A

80%-90% = B

70%-80% = C

60%-70% = D

Below 60% = F

**Cell Phone Usage**

Little aggravates me more than cell phone interruptions or people texting during class. As a courtesy, please put your cell phone on ‘silent’ during class. Better yet, put them in your bag and don’t look at them. If you are expecting an important call, notify me before class, and then leave the room to take the call.

**Caveat Emptor**

No class is the same. Because I try to adapt my approach to what’s working with each unique class, and because I like to use current events, I need to maintain flexibility. As a result, my syllabus does \*not\* line up all assignments throughout the semester. I will try my best to give as much notice before assignments, so students can work ahead, as many students have tremendous responsibilities or time commitments outside of class. But I will still likely make some changes in readings and assignments (and due dates) as we proceed this semester.

**Students with Disabilities**

Marshall University is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with physical, learning, and psychological disabilities. University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) in Prichard Hall 117, phone 304-696-2271 to provide documentation of their disability.

**Affirmative Action Policy**

All students will be afforded equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, religion, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation. The course will follow Marshall University’s policy on Affirmative Action, p. 93 of the 2008-2009 Undergraduate Catalog: <http://www.marshall.edu/catalog/undergraduate/ug_08-09_published.pdf>

**Inclement Weather Policy**

Marshall’s policy regarding inclement weather is on p. 95-96 of the 2008-2009 undergraduate online catalog: <http://www.marshall.edu/catalog/undergraduate/ug_08-09_published.pdf>

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty**

All assignments must be the student’s own original work. Submitting an assignment which is not the student’s original work will result in a reduced or failing grade for the assignment. It may result in more serious sanctions. If you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty, you should consult with me before the assignment is graded. The policy on Academic Dishonesty will be followed in the course as listed in the current Catalog.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, the student should be able to apply concepts to think critically in the various core domains that comprise critical thinking:

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| Course Student Learning Outcomes | How practiced in this Course | How Assessed in this Course |
| Information Literacy: Show mastery of informational literacy by researching unfamiliar terms and concepts, researching scientifically established and perceived risks and exploring ethical, historical, multicultural and/or/ international aspects by applying concepts from Schneier’s Beyond Fear to think more critically. | Discussion, Written (Risk) Assignments, Exams, and Individual Assignments. | Quality of Work, Participation. Clarity, Effort, and Substance of Assignments. |
| Communication Fluency: Improve written, oral, and visual communication skills through written summary and oral comparison and presentation. | Written Assignments, Drawing Exercises, In-Class Assignments, Individual Assignments.Approach assignments as a multi-stage process incorporating drafts, feedback, and revision. | Clarity, Style, Effort, and Substance of assignments. |
| Integrative & Critical Thinking: Engage in informed discussion, demonstrating critical thinking and reflective judgment about risk, including historical, ethical, multicultural, and international perspectives and assumptions. | Classroom discussion. | Quality of commentary (which includes listening skills). |
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