

Reading Contemporary Cultures in English I

Class Time: 9:10-12:00 Tuesday
 Classroom: C109 Humanities and Social Sciences Building I
 Instructor: Shu-Ling Chen
 Office: A407 Humanities and Social Sciences Building I
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 Tel.: 890-5309
 Office Hours: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Tuesday

Books Used:

Ackley, Katherine Anne, ed. *Essays from Contemporary Culture*. 5th edition. Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2004.
 Bergstrom, Carl T. & Jevin D. West. *Calling Bullshit: The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World*. New York: Random House, 2020.
 Diamandis, Peter H. & Steven Kotler. *The Future Is Faster Than You Think*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020.
 Epstein, David. *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2019.
 Foroohar, Rana. *Don't Be Evil: The Case against Big Tech*. New York: Currency, 2021.
 Gates, Melinda. *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*. New York: Flatiron Books, 2019.
 Grant, Adam. *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*. New York: Viking, 2021.
 Huang, Laura. *Edge: Turning Adversity into Advantage*. New York: Penguin, 2020.
 Khanna, Parag. *The Future Is Asian: Commerce, Conflict, and Culture in the 21st Century*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019.
 Mac Donald, Heather. *Diversity Delusion: How Race and Gender Pandering Corrupt the University and Undermine Our Culture*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2020.
 Sinek, Simon. *The Infinite Game*. Portfolio/ Penguin, 2019.
 Sunstein, Ass R. *Conformity: The Power of Social Influences*. New York: New York University Press, 2021.

Course Description:

This course aims to increase students' English reading comprehension and strengthen their ability to use English efficiently. Students will also learn how to read and think critically. We will study chapters from eleven books published in recent years on topics, such as learning, rethinking, bullshit, bias, gender, inequalities, values, business, technology, and the future. We will also read various articles from *The New York Times*, *Time*, *openDemocracy*, *Aljazeera*, and *TED* on many important global issues, e.g., Covid-19, student debt, Russia, Cambodia's cyber slaves, Afghan refugees, Pope Francis's Apology in Canada, global food crisis, oil, abortion in America and Europe, gun violence, economic recession, African sweat shop, next generation leaders, opportunities in global crisis, and a new world order. We will read the selected chapters and articles critically and discuss them cross-culturally. Students need to give two group presentations on the texts and another on the world. In addition, to enhance their critical thinking and presentation skills, students have to make three short individual presentations on the issues studied in this class. They are expected to attend class prepared and participate vigorously in English in class discussions.

Schedule:

Week 1. 9/13/22: Introduction

Week 2. 9/20: **Reading and Thinking Critically:** “Reading Critically”, “Critical Reading”, “Critical Thinking”, “How to Write Less but Say More”, “We Can Make COVID-19 the Last Pandemic”

Week 3. 9/27: **Learning & Rethinking:** (1) Epstein: Ch. 7 “Flirting with Your Possible Selves”, (2) “The Art of Choosing What to Do With Your Life” & “To Tackle Student Debt, Fix Ineffective Colleges”

Week 4. 10/4: (3) Grant: Ch. 1 “A Preacher, a Prosecutor, a Politician, and a Scientist Walk into Your Mind”, (4) “On Russia, Europe Weighs Competing Goals: Peace and Punishment” & “Russia’s Repressed Independent Media Is Vital to Building a Post-Putin Era”

Week 5. 10/11: **Calling Bullshit:** (5) Bergstrom & West: “Preface” & Ch. 10 “Spotting Bullshit”, (6) “Meet Cambodia’s Cyber Slaves”

Week 6. 10/18: **Bias:** (7) Mac Donald: Ch. 5 “Are We All Unconscious Racists?”, (8) “Afghan Refugees on the Racism They’ve Faced in Their First Year in Europe” & “Witnessing Pope Francis’s Apology for Abuses against My People”

Week 7. 10/25: (9) Huang: “Introduction” & Ch. 10 “Turning Biases and Stereotypes in Your Favor”, (10) “It’s Time We All Come Together to Address the Global Food Crisis” & “Why We Can’t Quit Oil”

Week 8. 11/1: Learning Culture from a Movie

Week 9. 11/8: **Midterm Examination**

Week 10. 11/15: **Gender & Inequalities:** (11) Gates: Ch. 7 “Seeing Gender Bias: Women in Agriculture”, (12) “A Country Fractured” & “What Overturning Roe v Wade Could Mean for Abortion in Europe”

Week 11. 11/22: **Values:** (13) Sunstein: Ch. 3 “Group Polarization”, (14) “Our Gun Myths Have Held America Hostage for Too Long” & “America’s ‘Psychic Numbing’ to Gun Violence”

Week 12. 11/29: **Business & Technology:** (15) Sinek: Ch. 1 “Finite and Infinite Games”, (16) “Our Global Economic System Is Broken. Are We Headed for a Mass Revolt?” & “Why a Middle-Class Lifestyle Remains Out of Reach for So Many”

Week 13. 12/6: (17) Foroohar: Ch. 14 “How to Not Be Evil”, (18) “Inside Facebook’s African Sweat Shop”

Week 14. 12/13: **The Future:** (19) Khanna: Ch. 5 “Asians in the Americas and Americans in Asia”, (20) “Next Generation Leaders”

Week 15. 12/20: (21) Diamandis & Kotler: Ch. 13 “Threats and Solutions”, (22) “The Opportunities in Global Crisis” & “We Need a New World Order”

Week 16. 12/27: Presentations on the World

Week 17. 1/3/23: **Final Examination**

Grading Policy:

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 15%

Two Group Presentations: 20%

Group Presentation on the World: 5%

Three Individual Presentations: 5%

Mid-term Examination + Final Examination: 45%

Two Rules:

If you miss class over 3 times, you will get 0 for Attendance unless you have a good reason.

Please be on time. Being late 3 times equals 1 absence.