

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY

ENGLISH 185

DR. SARAH HIGINBOTHAM

OXFORD COLLEGE

In the last 220 years, the Supreme Court has invoked the word “dignity” in more than nine hundred opinions, including the landmark 2011 case mandating prison population reduction in California (*Brown v Plata*). The concept of dignity undergirds mandates to respect people’s legal personhood, their equality, their liberty, and their personal integrity. The way we understand human dignity informs how we think about people’s fundamental rights: How do we punish people? How do we distribute goods and services? How do we treat those with limited political, cultural, or socioeconomic power? This writing course will examine how human dignity — the fundamental and innate value of a person — is explored in great works of literature.



Guest Lectures



Sandra Barnhill
Founder & CEO
Foreverfamily



Danny Shoy
President & CEO
East Lake Foundation



Sammie Byron
*Shakespeare
Behind Bars*



Fall 2019

TTH 10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

Seney 310

E-mail: sarah.higinbotham@emory.edu

Office Hours: TTH 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.



Important Dates

SEPTEMBER 24

OCTOBER 3

OCTOBER 8

OCTOBER 29

NOVEMBER 21

FIRST ESSAY

BARNHILL & SHOY

SAMMIE BYRON

SECOND ESSAY

RESEARCH ESSAY



Materials

REQUIRED

King Lear, William Shakespeare

Unflattering, Nick Sousanis

The Little Seagull Handbook

Articles, chapters, and poetry
assigned on syllabus

WEBSITES

[Dr. Higinbotham's Website](#)

[Canvas](#)

[Oxford Library](#)

EVALUATION

Every assignment will have specific and thorough guidelines that explain the project. You can always discuss an assignment with me before it's due. While the assignments themselves are challenging, you should never feel lost or confused about the actual parameters of an assignment or my expectations. If you do, please ask questions in class, check in with the teaching assistants, or e-mail me.

The **reading quizzes** will occur regularly at the beginning of class. Sometimes the reading quiz will be an impromptu essay on the reading. Sometimes it will be a participation quiz. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, which includes a 0 received for a quiz given during a class absence. The grade includes your attentive and active participation in class (explained more fully below in "Classroom Policies").

In the **research essay**, you will closely engage with a topic that intersects with either *King Lear*, human rights, or *Unflattering*.

The first **essay** will be on Shakespeare and the **second short essay** will connect *Unflattering* to another discipline. These papers will not use outside sources.

The **Final** reflection will be a survey and reflection of what you learned and how you developed as a critical reader and writer.



ASSIGNMENTS



KING LEAR



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Plagiarism,” from the Latin word for kidnapping, is presenting another person’s work as your own. When you use someone else’s language, ideas, images, or other original material or code without fully acknowledging its source by quotation marks as appropriate, in footnotes or endnotes, in works cited, and in other ways as appropriate, you will be in violation of Emory Oxford’s Honor Code.

The Honor Code applies to all assignments, in and out of the classroom. All work in this course must be entirely your own and entirely original to the requirements of this course in this semester. For more info, visit: <http://oxford.emory.edu/catalog/regulations/honor-code.html>



COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate awareness of the connection between writing and inquiry across a range of disciplines and purposes.
2. Adapt reading strategies for a diverse range of texts, attending to the purpose and context of both the reader and writer.
3. Ask meaningful questions about writing situations and unfamiliar genres using rhetorical concepts such as audience, purpose, exigence, situation, and community.
4. Make purposeful choices about multiple dimensions of writing such as argument, organization, evidence, language, and design.
5. Locate, evaluate, and integrate research sources ethically and fittingly for a writing purpose.

THE QUALITY OF FAILURE

One of the greatest obstacles to learning is the fear of failure. Students have sometimes been taught that they need to be perfect—or as close to perfect as possible—in order to be validated, approved, and rewarded. But I think that there are things far more important than perfection: curiosity, risk taking, persistence, integrity, self-awareness, and often failure itself. I want you, in the words of Edward Burger, to make for yourselves “a mind enlivened by curiosity and the intellectual audacity to take risks and create new ideas, a mind that sees a world of unlimited possibilities.”

For this reason, part of the course will involve addressing how you handled failure this semester. Have you been willing to challenge yourself and take risks that might result in failure? Have you been aware of when you have failed, and refused to give up in the face of failure? Have you found ways to use your failure to create something new and interesting? Have you grown from your failures? I hope that you will allow yourself to take risks and learn from them.

DISAGREEMENTS

I think most of what I have learned that is of any consequence has arisen from disagreeing with someone else. I welcome your respectful disagreements with me. If we all interpret what we read and discuss in the same way, we have a problem, because no true thinking will occur. Disagreements make the classroom environment more interesting, productive, generative, and challenging. Our classroom is not Plato's Cave.

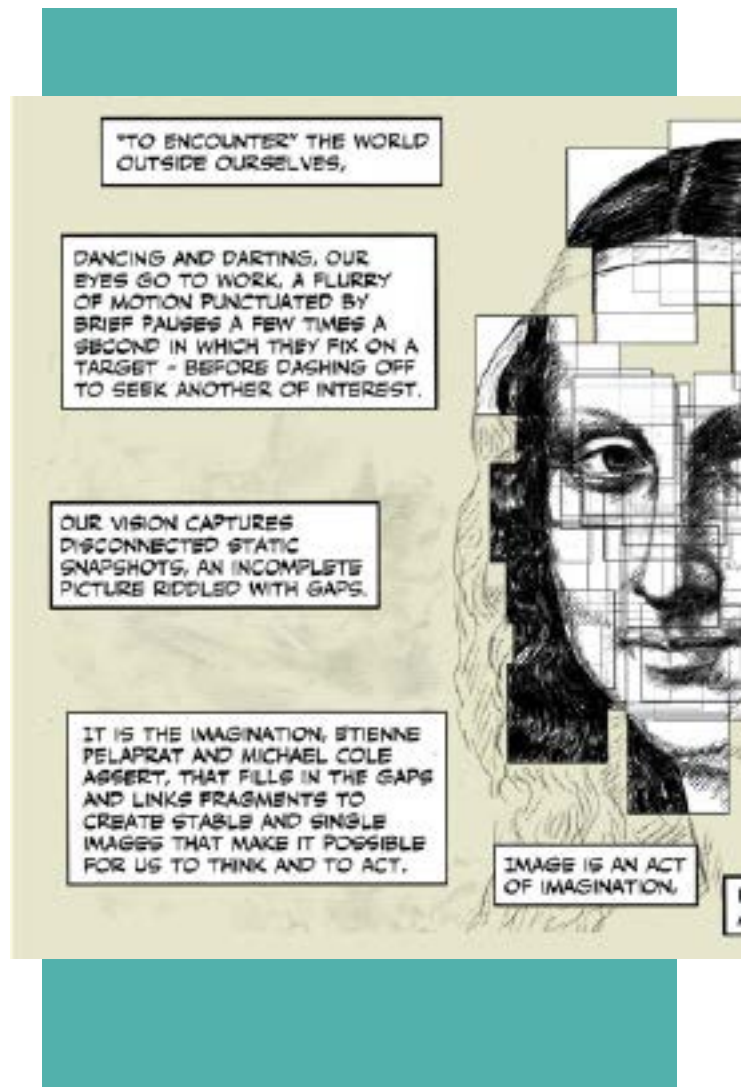
Please note that the college classroom is a place where ideas are exchanged respectfully. I look forward to an environment where this will occur, but I have almost no tolerance for distracting behavior, such as rudeness, texting, sleeping, or talking to others during class. If your participation is disruptive to the classroom discussion, if it creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment, you are subject to removal from the classroom at my discretion.

Religious Holidays Arrangements

I will work to accommodate your religious holidays. Students must inform me by the end of the second week of class each semester of any planned religious observances that conflict with our class and make mutually agreeable arrangements to complete any work missed. If you need guidance negotiating your needs related to a religious holiday, the College Chaplain, Rev. Lyn Pace, ppace@emory.edu, Candler Hall 202, is willing and available to help. **Please be aware that Rev. Pace is not tasked

REVISION

You have the opportunity to revise any of your projects this semester. The ability to accept and act on criticism is one of the most important critical abilities you can develop. Can you hear constructive criticism with an open mind, build on lessons learned, and make revisions in response to suggestions? If so, I will assess your revised project a second time. A revision isn't just a quick fix of the obvious errors, but a "re-vision," or another look at your project, in which you address feedback. The revision must include a cover letter, in which you explain to me what and why you revised. Please email me a revision and cover letter within one week of the date you received the project back from me.



TITLE IX REPORTING

As an Emory employee, if I am informed about an allegation of sexual misconduct involving any student, I am required to notify a Title IX Coordinator either directly or through their relevant reporting structure. Emory employees who serve in a professional role in which communications are afforded confidential status under the law (e.g., medical providers, therapists, and professional and pastoral counselors) are not bound by this requirement but may, consistent with their ethical and legal obligations, be required to report limited information about incidents without revealing the identities of the individuals involved, to a Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

For more information, visit: <http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu/policies/index.html>

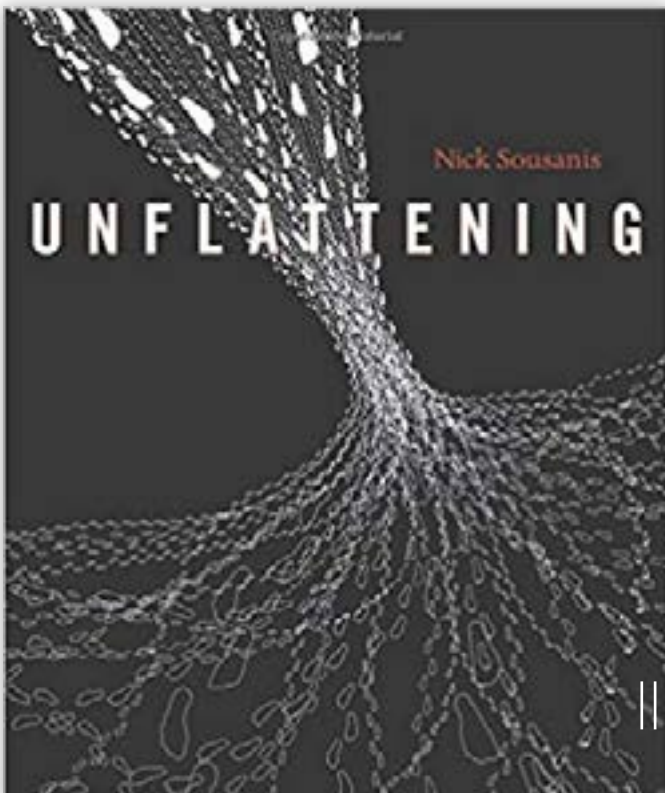
ACCOMMODATING DISABILITY

If you have a documented disability and have anticipated barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, or presume having a disability (e.g. mental health, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), and are in need of accommodations for this semester, I encourage you to contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) to learn more about the registration process and steps for requesting accommodations.

If you are a student that is currently registered with OAS and have not requested or received a copy of your accommodation notification letter, please notify OAS immediately. Please make accommodations with me during the first week of the semester, to communicate specific needs for the course as it relates to approved accommodations.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

In addition to respectful, engaged participation, I have the following classroom policies: 1) no laptops unless we are specifically using them, for example during the writing workshop days; 2) cell phones on silent and in your bags; 3) you should ask at least two questions or make two comments in each class. If speaking during class is extremely uncomfortable for you, you may write down your comments and/or questions and give them to me at the end of class. Alternatively, if you are very enthusiastic about speaking in class, please refrain from making more than five comments or asking more than five questions. You may write down what you were not able to say and I will read it after class. This is to keep the entire class equitably participating during the time we have together.



CURIOSITY

“Continually seeking what lies beyond your horizon is curiosity.” -- Nick Sousanis

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29	<u>"ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE," PLATO</u>
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3	<i>KING LEAR</i> , ACT 1
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5	<i>KING LEAR</i> , ACT 1
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10	<i>KING LEAR</i> , ACT 2
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12	<i>KING LEAR</i> , ACT 2
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17	<i>KING LEAR</i> , ACTS 3-4
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19	<i>KING LEAR</i> , ACT 5
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24	IN-CLASS ESSAY, OPEN BOOK
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26	CHOOSE HOMELESSNESS ARTICLE, IN SOCIAL SCIENCES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1	<u>"THE CAGING OF AMERICA"</u>
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3	RESPONSE DUE: <u>"CAGING OF AMERICA"</u> (POST ON CANVAS -- NO CLASS MEETING) 7:30 P.M. DANNY SHOY AND SANDRA BARNHILL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8	SAMMIE BYRON VISITS, MEET SENEY, SECOND FLOOR
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10	REFLECTION ON HOMELESSNESS ARTICLE DUE: COMMENT ON AUDIENCE, PURPOSE, EXIGENCE, SITUATION, AND COMMUNITY
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15	FALL BREAK
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17	<i>UNFLATTENING</i> (PP. 1-67)
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22	<i>UNFLATTENING</i> : CHOOSE ONE IMAGE AND BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS SIGNIFICANCE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24	NO CLASS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29	SECOND ESSAY DUE, CONNECTING <i>UNFLATTENING</i> TO ANOTHER DISCIPLINE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31	COOKING FROM MANUSCRIPT
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5	RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7	WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12	ANNOTATED SOURCES DUE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14	WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19	WORKSHOP
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21	RESEARCH PROJECT DUE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26	VIRTUAL CLASS, <u>POST REFLECTION ON JFK SPEECH ON CANVAS</u>
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28	THANKSGIVING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3	CONFERENCES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5	REVISIONS DUE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10	FINAL REFLECTION