

Ideas to Start Thinking About

So What is Honors Colloquy?

You're not the first to ask that question. I'll try to start answering but you and your classmates will provide the answers over the course of the semester. First, Colloquy isn't a content course, such as biology or history, and it's not a standard skills course, like speech or composition.

The subject of Colloquy is thinking, or more specifically, different ways of thinking that we already use but can use and improve. Colloquy is also about communication (which is close to the root word colloquy, which means dialogue), because, while self-knowledge is one of our goals to improve, developing communication skills will also be a key aspect of this course.

The Search for truth

Now, about that "t," the one that is not capitalized. You would normally capitalize any key word in a title, but I want to emphasize the definition of truth that we will be considering this semester. Generally, when we talk about Truth (with the big T), we are referring to the concept of absolute truth, a kind of understanding that underlies the personal belief system that many people have. That kind of truth, often based in spiritual faith or a system of philosophical belief, already provides answers, or at least the means of finding answers that can be seen as final.

That's not the kind of truth we are interested in exploring in our class. I'm going to borrow a description from Parker Palmer, who is a highly respected teacher and writer about thinking and learning.

Truth is an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline....[It is] the passionate and disciplined process of inquiry and dialogue itself, the dynamic conversation of a community that keeps testing old conclusions and coming into new ones (104).

I appreciate Palmer's definition because it gives us a means of working together, as classmates, to search for various truths. By the way, the quotation is from Palmer's book *The Courage to Teach*, which I recommend for anyone interested in teaching as a career.

Expectations and Course Policies

Class Participation

Speaking of working together, it is absolutely essential that we spend our very limited class time together, fully and productively. The thinking and communication that we engage in collectively are fundamental components of the course experience. In an ideal world, we could assume that everyone would be at every class meeting, on time, fully prepared, and engaged.

Attendance and Class Participation

I'm still waiting for that ideal world to appear, so in the meantime, we have to have policies. Below are our course policies on attending class, arriving late and leaving early, and being fully prepared for class.

Class Participation Grade

For attending all classes on time and being fully prepared for all class meetings, you will earn 100% for this component of your course grade.

For each class that you miss completely or miss more than 60 minutes of, due to being late or leaving early, your Class Participation grade will be reduced by 50%.

For every class meeting that you are more than 10 minutes late, leave more than 10 minutes early, or come unprepared for class, your Class Participation grade will be reduced by 25%.

English Division Drop Policy

If you miss more than 2 class meetings (missing more than 60 minutes of a class meeting also counts as an absence), and are not granted an exception from me, you will not be able to receive a passing grade and may be dropped from the course. Any exception to this policy must be a genuine emergency that you communicate as quickly as possible to me.

Communication with your Instructor

It is essential to communicate promptly with me if you are having any problems in this course (do this with all your instructors and classes). No one can help you, or understand your problems, if you do not communicate. This includes, but is not limited to, missing or being late to class or not having assigned work completed. If at all possible, contact me before class. You can e-mail or leave a phone message if you can't reach me directly.

If you don't communicate when having problems, I can only assume that you do not really care about your success in the course.

Learning Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that affects your academic performance, and need an academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services in D-102. The telephone number is 686-9330.

Be sure also to communicate with me about this disability and how it might affect you in the course.

Coursework and Assignments

Notebook

Throughout the semester, I will ask you to record notes, observations, and thoughts in a notebook. Many of the notebook assignments will connect to more organized journal writing. Your notebook should be portable and comfortable to

write in. Make sure that it is big enough to hold a semester's work. I will collect notebooks on occasion to look through them, though I will not grade your notebook on any factor other than the degree to which it reflects thorough and thoughtful work. That grade is part of your journal grade.

Journal

You will be using your journal to reflect in depth and detail and to communicate your thoughts to me. Your journal, therefore, is more organized and formally written than your notebook. Use an informal voice and relaxed style in your journal, and you need not do multiple drafts, but do follow these format guidelines:

1. Use standard size, college-ruled paper and type or write legibly in pen, not in pencil;
2. Write your name and the number of the journal at the top of the first page;
3. Write in Standard English in terms of punctuation and capitalization;
4. Use an effective paragraph structure for organizing your discussion;
5. If you have multiple pages, staple them;
6. Keep and turn in all journals in a loose leaf folder with your name on the outside cover.

I will grade your journal primarily on the degree to which entries directly, thoughtfully, and completely meet the assignment guidelines.

Projects

You will have two major projects to complete this semester, which will ask you to apply means of thinking and communication that we will focus on in our course. Both projects will include substantial written compositions and will have other components as well, including class presentations.

You will be given thorough content and development guidelines, a schedule of drafts and related assignments, and grading criteria for each project.

The written components of both projects need to completely follow these format guidelines:

1. All drafts need to be typed, double-spaced, with a one-inch margin;
2. Include a header in an upper corner of the first page, with your name, the date your draft is completed, and the draft stage (such as Discovery, First Advanced, Final). Single space your header;
3. Give each draft your own creative title, which is centered two spaces below your header;
4. Use an effective paragraph structure;
5. Follow standard conventions for grammar, punctuation, and spelling (unless you have specific, logical reasons for doing otherwise);
6. Staple multiple pages;
7. You do not need, but you can include, a cover page.

Grades and Related Information

Late Coursework Policy

All assigned work is due at the beginning of class. Any assignments turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class time and within the next 24 hours, will receive a 10% reduced grade. Any assignments turned in after the first 24 hours and before the beginning of the next class meeting will receive a 20% reduced grade. No assignments will be accepted for credit more than one week after the due date.

Final Course Grades

At the end of the semester, I will use the following formula to calculate your course grade:

Class Participation	10%
Journal and Notebook	30%
Project One	30%
Project Two	30%

Here is the grade breakdown by percentage of total points:

93-100% = A	90-92% = A-	87-89% = B+	83-86% = B
80-82% = B-	77-79% = C+	73-76% = C	70-72% = C-
67-69% = D+	63-66% = D	60-62% = D-	-60% = F

Questions About Grades

I will provide you with progress reports during the semester, but I encourage you to see me at any time you have questions about an individual assignment or your overall course progress.

Academic Honesty

Please be aware that any kind of dishonesty, including plagiarism, violates the Delta College Academic Integrity Policy and the policies of this course. Any instance of dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the assignment affected and may result in failure of the course. All instances of academic dishonesty are reported to the College and become part of your permanent record.

Be certain to see me if you have any questions or concerns about your own work or any issues related to these policies.

