INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITIES:
FREEDOM, FATE, CIRCUMSTANCE

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Declaration of Independence (1776)

As a rational being, and consequently belonging to the intelligible world, man can never conceive the causality of his own will otherwise than on condition of the idea of freedom, for independence of the determinate causes of the sensible world (an independence which reason must always ascribe to itself) is freedom.

Immanuel Kant (1785)

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.

Karl Marx (1852)

Freedom is an essentially contested moral and political concept. While must of us would agree that freedom involves a measure of choice, this is not enough. Is it really true that we determine our own actions at the very least by the choices we make? Many peoples, the Ancient Greeks no less than any number of contemporary societies and cultures, believe that our lives are governed by fate, by Divine Will, or by a plan of nature. If this is the case, can we still speak of freedom? Furthermore, we always live in conditions we did not create and our actions always produce consequences we cannot predict. If we hold that freedom is indeed important, what kind of responsibility follows from our choices among options not of our choosing? By way of an exploration of the ideas and experience of freedom, fate, and circumstance, this course aims to provide an introduction to the humanities, an area of knowledge which aims to discover or convey meaning to our lived experience. Our enquiry involves texts from various genres and origins and a variety of other materials. We read, observe, reflect, and, most importantly, engage with critical passion of our own.

The humanities, broadly construed, offer unique insight into the particularity and the universality of human experience and expression. This, however, requires of us an openness of mind because the values and modes of expression associated with particular periods and places may be offensive in others, including our own. This openness will, I hope, provide us with unique rewards, not least of them a better understanding of our own minds and experiences.

This course examines a variety of texts and other materials. It aims to offer insight into values and modes of expression while offering systematic ways of thinking and critiquing them.

THE CORE
The Core program consists of a coordinated series of courses that represent the various
disciplines at the University. This course, along with the others in your cohort, fulfills one of the university’s general education requirements in each of the areas of knowledge plus composition. While introducing you to relevant topics in the social sciences, humanities, and sciences, Core courses are designed to support and challenge you as you develop the critical thinking, writing, research, and analytical skills you’ll need at UWT. In general the Core is designed to correspond with the interdisciplinary values of UWT.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Broadly speaking, the Core aims to enhance the following skills and orientations in students:

- **Inquiry and Critical Thinking Processes:**
  - Gathering - Collect, evaluate, and analyze information and resources to solve problems or answer questions.
  - Synthesis and Context – Make meaningful connections among assignments and readings in order to develop a sense of the ‘big picture.’

- **Communication and Self-Expression:**
  - Analysis — Identify, analyze, and summarize / represent the key elements of a text
  - Argumentation – Formulate an original thesis-driven argument and sustain it in both written and verbal communication
  - Disciplinary Awareness – Place yourself into an existing dialogue (intellectual, political, etc.)

- **Global Perspective:**
  - Think outside of cultural norms & values, including their own perspectives, to critically engage the larger world

Students who complete this *Introduction to the Humanities* will:

- Develop and demonstrate an ability to analyze a text by applying a theoretical or aesthetic framework,
- demonstrate an ability to read literary, historical, and philosophical texts critically,
- demonstrate an ability to situate themselves in relation to a broader human context,
- synthesize and evaluate information through the application of knowledge and methods across different disciplines.
- develop proficiency in writing and critical thinking about theoretical and cultural issues,
- understand the complexity of the concepts and experiences of love and freedom.

**TEXTS AND OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Our readings and materials express the values and experiences of a variety of cultures and epochs. In order to understand them, we may have to get past our immediate reactions when these materials run counter to the norms and expectations of our own cultures or backgrounds.

Please note that some of our readings are translations of complex and very old texts. Different translations are likely to be very different. For this reason and because we will be discussing these
texts in class, you must use and bring to class the exact editions I ordered through the University Bookstore:


Additional required materials include texts available on line or via Canvas, as well as podcasts. Instructions for access appear in the course outline.

Please bring to class the required reading as assigned in the course outline below. When the reading is an on-line html file, please print it out and number the paragraphs.

**DETAILS & POLICIES**

**Academic dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty will be treated without mercy. You should be aware of the policies set out in the UW and UWT Student Code of Conduct. Given the nature of this class, plagiarism is a potential issue. To plagiarize is to use ideas—or unique phrasing of those ideas—without acknowledging that they originate from someone or someplace other than you. Attributing where you get your information builds your own authority to speak on that topic and provides valuable backing to the arguments you make. Attribution also distinguishes your ideas and words from those of others who came before you. You are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from faculty and the Teaching and Learning Center as soon as possible. For further information see [http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/global/documents/library/plagiarism.pdf](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/global/documents/library/plagiarism.pdf).

**Rules of discourse and exchange:** This is a course about ideas. By signing up for this course you agree to abide by the general assumptions of discourse: that the arguments of our readings deserve serious consideration and that the same applies to the ideas of all other members of this class. The rules of discourse are (1) to respect the author or person who formulates a claim, (2) to approach claims with good will which means both contesting them if you disagree and holding open the possibility that you may be wrong in your disagreement. (3) Everyone is entitled to justification: if you express a view, others have the inherent right to ask that you defend this position by reference both to facts and to argument. In the end, we may not agree, but we must proceed from the premise that we might do so.

**Using electronic devices** such as cell phones, tablets, and computers during class is disruptive and impolite. Please turn them off and put them away. Anyone using an unauthorized electronic device for any purpose will be asked to leave. Any beeping, lighting up, buzzing, etc., by an electronic device during a test or quiz constitutes *prima facie* evidence of academic dishonesty.
leading to forfeiture of the test or quiz. Computers (etc.) may only be used by special arrangement.

**Canvas:** We will only use Canvas as a repository for files containing required readings and other materials. The only exception to this will be the survey for which you may volunteer.

**e-mail:** University policy requires that I only respond to your emails when they originate from your UW email account (i.e., your email address ends in @u.washington.edu or @uw.edu). There is a class LISTSERV (tcore114b_wi17@uw.edu) which automatically includes all students enrolled in this class. (For 5 bonus points out of 400 on the final grade, you may email me an image of a Chesapeake Bay Retriever no later than 8 a.m. February 20.) You are responsible for materials or other information distributed via this list. If you choose to forward your email to a non-UW email address, you do so at your own risk.

**Disabilities:** The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Located in MAT 354, Disability Support Services (DSS), functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. If you have a physical, emotional, or mental disability that “substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working],” and will require accommodation in this class, please contact DSS at (253) 692-4522, email at dssuwt@uw.edu or visit www.tacoma.uw.edu/dss for assistance.

**Inclement weather and other class cancellations:** In general, you should assume that there is class and that assignments are due as scheduled. I recommend that you sign up for text alerts via [http://www.washington.edu/alert/index.php](http://www.washington.edu/alert/index.php). If there is any doubt, check the UWT website or call the University’s information number, 253 383-INFO, or the IAS number, 253 692-4450. Also check your e-mail: if possible, I will post cancellations via our class discussion list. Of course, you should exercise your own best judgement about the safety of driving, etc.

**Library:** The UW boasts one of the world’s top research libraries. Take advantage of it! The library provides resources and services to support students at all levels of expertise. They guide students through the research process, helping them learn how to develop effective research strategies and find and evaluate appropriate resources. For assistance or to schedule an appointment, visit the Reference Desk in the Library, email tacref@u.washington.edu or phone 253-692-4442. For more information about the Library and its services, go to [www.tacoma.uw.edu/library](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/library) or [http://www.lib.washington.edu/](http://www.lib.washington.edu/). There are several ways of accessing and searching the UW libraries catalog. My favorite is [http://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=UW](http://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=UW).

The **Teaching and Learning Center** (TLC) offers free academic support for students at all levels. They also work with students on questions about English grammar & vocabulary, reading, and learning strategies, including note taking. They are located in Snoqualmie 260 and online. Schedules for appointments and drop-in visits are posted on the website at [www.tacoma.uw.edu/tlc](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/tlc). For special needs or subject tutoring requests, please email uwtteach@uw.edu or call (253) 692-4417.
The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 253-692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 253. Additional information can also be found by visiting http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/counseling.

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to accepted University of Washington criteria. As you complete each task, you accumulate points toward your grade in this course. I will convert your scores to UW number grades according to the following scale:

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<th>Letter</th>
<th>std</th>
<th>-Ea essay</th>
<th>Contribution 15%</th>
<th>Peer rev quizzes 10%</th>
<th>Focus resp. 5%</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Schedule and assignment changes: I reserve the right to make changes in assignments and schedules. I will announce such changes in class and via the electronic discussion list. You are responsible for keeping informed.

Late or missing papers: Drafts and final essays are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 5 points per calendar day of tardiness. Failure to submit a reasonably polished draft for peer review day will result in a penalty of 30% of the grade on your completed essay.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Our particular focus this term will be on constructing strong readings of literary and philosophical texts. While rich texts such as these permit an almost infinite range of valid interpretations, be aware that there are invalid interpretations. We will aim to learn how to construct and justify our interpretations by engaging with our texts. Engaging with a text requires that we first read it, then discuss it, finally write about it. The assignments below aim to develop these skills while also providing you with some “cultural capital” (Bourdieu).

**Contribution to class discussion (15%)**: Classroom participation is very important in this course. Typically, you are expected to come to each class meeting having completed all the readings or other tasks assigned for that day and to be prepared for active participation in class discussions. There are two ways to get participation points. One is to engage in general discussions connected to the readings; another is to complete in-class exercises related to course themes and readings. Students must engage effectively in both areas to receive full points. I do not expect that you “fully understand,” a given text. Rather, I expect that you will bring real questions about them. (Hint: if you have no questions about one of our readings, then you have not understood it at all so you should read it again.)

**Responses to focus questions (5%)**. For most, but not all, reading assignments, I will distribute a set of “focus questions” to help open up our texts. Each of you will sign up to write a short (one or two page) response to one question each for two sessions. Everyone who completes this assignment satisfactorily and completely will get full credit.

**Analytical and interpretive essays (40% — 20% each)**: You will construct two essays (4-6 pages) where you analyze and interpret some of our readings. I will give you more specific assignments one week before the first draft is due (see schedule below). On peer review day, you will bring enough copies of a complete draft (notes or an outline do not constitute a draft) so your assigned peers may give you feedback. The final version will be due along with the peer reviews you received on the date which appears in the course outline. All essays must follow Chicago Manual of Style conventions as outlined in Turabian. A bibliography page will not be required, but footnotes will be. I will only accept papers that denote your professionalism. These have titles, numbered pages, are double-spaced, in 12 point print, and the sheets are stapled together. You will return the peer reviews you received along with your papers.

**Peer reviews (10%)**: On peer review days, you will complete a form I will give you, providing meaningful and helpful critiques to your peers. While your responses should be respectful of your peers, their opinions and interpretations earn respect when they are well backed up by arguments and evidence, well-written, well presented. Your task is to help improve your peers’ essays. I will create peer review teams ahead of peer review days.

**Quizzes (10 %)** on the readings and class discussion will be given very frequently. I will drop your lowest quiz grade. There will be no make up quizzes. You must bring at least one 4x6 index card for each session of this class. Non-standard size and sticky (Post-it type) cards will not be accepted.
Final (20%): There will be a 35 minute long in-class test on the date that appears below. I will discuss the specific format (either short answer, multiple choice, or a combination) toward the last weeks of the term.

Reading bonus (30 points to total grade if done well): We are reading three plays this term. For two of them, I will ask for volunteers who would participate in a reading. Volunteers will not need to wear costumes or emote. Volunteers will stand before the class and read their parts in convincing ways. Students may only get credit for volunteering once.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Jan. 4: *Introduction: Mechanics and more*
- Please bring your copy of Turabian to class

*Inquiry and Freedom*

http://www.artoftheory.com/what-is-enlightenment_immanuel-kant/


Jan. 11: *Analysis, Explication, and Interpretation of Texts (Handout)*

*Fate, Choice, Responsibility*

Jan. 13: *Sophocles, Oedipus the King*

Jan. 16 **MLK Day no class**

Jan. 18: *Sophocles, Oedipus (continued)*

Jan. 20 **Writing day**

Jan. 23: *Peer Review and discussion of analyses*
**Draft Analysis of “What Is Enlightenment?” or Oedipus due in class**

Jan. 25: *Sophocles, Antigone*

Jan. 27: *Sophocles, Antigone (continued)*

Jan. 30: *Sophocles, Antigone (cont’d)*

*Freedom, Gender, and Education*

Feb. 1: *Wollstonecraft, Vindication, Introduction, ch. 1-3*

Feb. 3: *Wollstonecraft, Vindication, ch. 9, 12*
Feb. 6: TBA

Freedom and Responsibility

Feb. 10: • Sartre, Dirty Hands, Acts I-III
Feb. 13: • Sartre, Dirty Hands, Acts IV-VII
Feb. 15: • Sartre, Dirty Hands (cont’d)

Solitude, Freedom, and Tragic Love: Gabriel García Márquez

Feb. 20 Presidents’ Day no class

Feb. 22 • García Márquez, Of Love and Other Demons, xi, 4-61.

Feb. 24 Writing Day
Feb. 27 Peer review

March 1 • Of Love and Other Demons, 62-117

March 3 • Of Love, 118-end
ESSAY 2 Due

March 6 TBA


March 10 • Review and Conclusions

March 15 Core Final