

Course Outline

ARTS503 (W2023): Multidisciplinary Capstone

Faculty of Arts, University of Calgary

- **Instructor:** Dr Michael Ullyot
- **Office:** SS1044
- **Drop-in Hours:** Mondays, 13:30-15:30 or by appointment
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Description & Goals

According to the University Calendar, this seminar focuses on “completing and presenting individual research projects that integrate the primary and secondary focus within a student’s multidisciplinary degree program.” In practice, we will address questions about knowledge: its pleasures and purposes, its organization, and how — if we pursue knowledge right — it becomes wisdom. We will read two books (Hitz and de Botton) about the purposes of knowledge, pleasure and consolation; and we will read two books (Manguel and Carrión) about the organization of knowledge on bookshelves.

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- articulate your disciplines’ ontologies and epistemologies;
- evaluate the relative benefits of pure and applied knowledge;
- reflect on your disciplines’ relative organizations of knowledge;
- build cross-disciplinary ideal bookshelves.

Required Textbooks

Using other editions of these four books will complicate your life in various ways — so I recommend that you buy these editions, in print, ideally used.

- Zena Hitz, *Lost in Thought: The Hidden Pleasures of an Intellectual Life* (Princeton: 2020)
- Alain de Botton, *The Consolations of Philosophy* (Penguin: 2001)
- Jorge Carrión, tr. Peter Bush, *Against Amazon and Other Essays* (Biblioasis: 2020)
- Alberto Manguel, *The Library at Night* (Vintage Canada: 2007)

Recommended Reference Books

Occasionally students ask which books are worthwhile resources for expository writers. My [guide to Effective Critical Writing](#) has detailed advice, but here are some more recommendations:

1. Your prime imperative is to choose the right words, so consult the *Oxford English Dictionary* ([link](#)) and the *Oxford Thesaurus* ([link](#)) through the library website. Bookmark both, and consult them as you write.
2. Your next imperative is to use words correctly. For this I recommend *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage* ([link](#)), to resolve questions like that/which, who/whom, and other stumbling blocks.
3. Your ultimate imperative is to write clearly and succinctly; Verlyn Klinkenborg's *Several Short Sentences About Writing* ([link](#)) is a wise and readable guide to writing better sentences.

Evaluation

- Field Report
 - Presentation (10%)
 - Report itself (10%)
- Research Project
 - Proposal (10%)
 - Bibliography (10%)
 - Presentation (10%)
 - Project itself (35%)
- Participation Report (15%)

You must complete these 3 assignments to pass this course: Field Report itself, Research Project itself, and Participation Report. Detailed descriptions of each assignment are below. There is no Registrar-scheduled exam in this course.

I use percentages to grade every assignment, and use D2L to convert them to these letter-grade equivalents:

90+%: A+ (4.0); 85-89%: A (4.0); 80-84%: A- (3.7); 77-79%: B+ (3.3); 74-76%: B (3.0); 70-73%: B- (2.7); 67-69%: C+ (2.3); 64-66%: C (2.0); 60-63%: C- (1.7); 55-59%: D+ (1.3); 50-54%: D (1.0); 0-49%: F (0).

Only at the end of the course do I convert your final percentage grades into letters or GPA scores. As per the University Calendar, instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Policies

Submission & Due Dates

Please include your name and ID number on all written assignments and upload them to the D2L dropbox.

Due dates are always midnight of the day indicated in the Schedule of Readings and Assignments. Each student is permitted **1** free extension of 1 day without penalty, on **either**

the Research Project proposal, bibliography, or Project itself. **You do not need to ask permission for these extensions.**

I penalize late assignments — i.e. those submitted after midnight on the due date — at a rate of 5% daily for the first two days, and 1% daily thereafter. You must submit all assignments no later than one calendar week after the due date. Any later, and you will receive a zero grade on that assignment. Extraordinary cases of medical emergencies and other domestic afflictions may be subject to extensions, but only at my discretion.

E-mail

Use your @ucalgary e-mail for course communications. I will respond to e-mails sent via @ucalgary accounts within 48 hours. Do not follow up before 48 hours have elapsed.

Assignment Descriptions

Further details of all assignments will be released closer to their due dates.

Field Report

Based on one of two Field Trips, you will report on and compare your two disciplines' organizations of knowledge, and how they approach the pure/applied dichotomy.

- First (via e-mail) you will propose a library, bookstore, or other physical book collection to visit for Field Trip 2 on Feb 28th.
- After both Field Trips you will write a report of about 750-1000 words on how these collections organize knowledge in each of your two disciplines. Your report should include at least 1 photo of their bookshelves.
- In class on Mar 7th (the same day reports are due), you will give a very brief presentation (5-7 minutes) on your findings.

Research Project

Inspired by Jane Mount and Thessaly la Force's *My Ideal Bookshelf* project (Little Brown: 2012), you will create an ideal bookshelf that combines books from each of your two disciplines, and write a work of original research that cites each one of them. The question you will address is how knowledge becomes [wisdom](#) — as defined by some combination of humility, accuracy, knowledge, and rationality. There are three stages to this project:

1. First you will write a research proposal of about 750-1000 words, citing one or more of the books we have read thus far (Hitz, de Botton, Manguel). This is due Apr 4th.
2. Then you will annotate a bibliography of at least 5-7 books (excluding those we have read) from each of your two disciplines that you would put on your ideal bookshelf. In class on Apr 11th (the same day bibliographies are due), you will give a very brief presentation (5-7 minutes) on your project.
3. Finally you will submit a written paper of about 2500-3000 words that addresses the terms of your proposal and cites each one of the books on your ideal bookshelf.

Participation Report

Your participation grade depends on your engagement with every facet of this seminar: with our in-person meetings; and with all of the reading, annotating, writing, reflecting, researching, recording, revising, and other activities related to our texts and assignments. That means you make regular, substantive contributions to our discussions; and you attend the seminar with an annotated copy of the assigned texts, *ready to discuss a set of passages you have preselected*.

Participation is a self-reporting exercise. That means on April 14th you submit to the designated D2L Dropbox a 1-page account of how you engaged with the seminar, our readings, and our assignments. In other words, what evidence can you offer that you were present in both body and spirit during our meetings; that you did more than the required minimum to read, analyze, annotate, and think about our readings; that you reflected thoughtfully on your individual assignments; that you attended office hours?

Finally, on the basis on this evidence, award yourself a grade out of 15. Break down your score into components: 10 marks for synchronous activities in our meetings and 5 for asynchronous activities including your preparations for class and work on assignments. If I agree with your self-assessment and evidence, I will award you that grade.

Dos & Don'ts for Participation Reports

- Do define what 'engagement' means to you, and cite evidence of yours.
- Do be fair to yourself.
- Don't claim to have done more than you really did.
- Do address the terms of the assignment. It asks you for evidence that you did more than the bare minimum, so don't focus too much on how you met basic course requirements by attending class, doing readings, or working on assignments. How did you *exceed* these requirements?
- Don't start at a perfect score and deduct points; **start at zero and make a case for every point you earn.**
- Do put some effort into your report. The best ones tell an interesting story of your engagement through time. They confess your shortcomings without making excuses for them. They conclude by summarizing why engagement is worthwhile, and what you learned about yourself through your engagement with the course.
- Don't try to flatter me into giving you a grade higher than you deserve. I appreciate constructive self-criticism more than hollow self-praise.
- Do be credible; tell me not only what you did, but what more you could have done to earn a higher grade. For instance, did you always complete your assigned readings before class? (Be honest.) There is far more credibility in an honest, explicit report than in an overconfident, vague one.
- Do compare your engagement with this class to your engagement with other classes.

Academic Integrity

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension

or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre [resource links](#) or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) [Research and Citation Resources](#).

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. Book an appointment [here](#).

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see [the University of Calgary Calendar](#).

Student Accommodations

The student accommodation policy can be found [here](#). Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the [Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#). Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available [here](#). Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors as soon as possible. Extensions will not be granted without instructor approval.

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available [here](#).

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the University of Calgary Calendar on [writing across the curriculum](#).

Instructor's Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may **not** be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Copyright

All students are required to read [the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright](#) and [requirements of the copyright act](#) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see [here](#).

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the [relevant sections in the University Calendar](#).

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see [here](#) for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, see [here](#). IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Abbreviations

- AAOE: Jorge Carrión, *Against Amazon and Other Essays*
- LaN: Alberto Manguel, *The Library at Night*

W1:

Jan 10 Course Overview; Disciplinary Self-introductions; Carrión: Library of Babel (AAOE 104-7)

W2:

Jan 17 Hitz, *Lost in Thought*: Prologue, Introduction, Chapter 1 (1-112)

W3

Jan 24 Hitz, *Lost in Thought*: Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Epilogue (113-205)

W4

Jan 31 de Botton, *Consolations of Philosophy*: Unpopularity, Not Having Enough Money, Frustration (1-112)

W5

Feb 7 de Botton, *Consolations of Philosophy*: Inadequacy, A Broken Heart, Difficulties (113-244)

W6

Feb 14 Manguel: Foreword, Myth, Order, Space, Power (LaN 1-104); Field Trip 1 (collective, TBD)

READING WEEK

W7

Feb 28 (No class) Field Trip 2 (individual, TBD)

W8

Mar 7 Field Reports due; Presentations

W9

Mar 14 Manguel: Shadow, Shape, Chance, Workshop (LaN 107-90)

W10

Mar 21 Manguel: Mind, Island, Survival, Oblivion (LaN 193-266)

W11

Mar 28 Manguel: Imagination, Identity, Home, Conclusion (LaN 269-325)

W12

Apr 4 Carrión: I Dismantle My Library (AAOE 41-51); My Bookish Buenos Aires (AAOE 67-85); Against Bibliophilia (AAOE 167-71); Research Project proposal due

W13

Apr 11 Research Project bibliography due; Presentations

Apr 14 Participation Reports due

Apr 18 Research Project itself due