I. General Education Review - Writing Course

| Dept/Program Subject | Davidson Honors College | Course # (i.e. ENEX 200) | HC 121 |

Course Title: Ways of Knowing

II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

Please type / print name | Signature | Date
--- | --- | ---
Instructor | Multiple instructors, teaching assignments vary by semester (see explanatory note, page 10 below) | 
Phone / Email | james.mckusick@umontana.edu | 
Program Chair | James McKusick, Dean | 2/6/09

III. Overview of the Course Purpose/Description:

Provides an introduction to the subject matter and explains course content and learning goals.

Description: What do we know, and how do we know what we think we know? This course draws from key works in Philosophy, Science and Literature in exploring a variety of answers to these questions. The course is structured into three sections: Knowledge and the Divine, Knowing the World, and Knowing the Self. Students will be required to compare and contrast aspects of works read in each of these sections, and to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of the positions presented.

IV. Learning Outcomes:

Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student learning outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose</td>
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<td>Revise written work based on constructive feedback</td>
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Find, evaluate, and use information effectively (see [http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/](http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/))

All freshmen in the Davidson Honors College receive a one-hour information literacy session in the Mansfield Library during their first autumn semester at UM through their mandatory enrollment in HC 120, *Introduction to Honors*. HC 121, *Ways of Knowing*, builds upon those information literacy skills through writing assignments that reinforce library and online research skills while also emphasizing the importance of academic integrity and appropriate citation of sources.

Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions

Students receive instruction and are expected to practice the MLA citation style in all writing assignments for this course. They also learn how to use quotations effectively to advance an argument in the context of an interdisciplinary liberal arts seminar.

Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Papers are graded for compositional skill as well as content, and instructors will comment on students' grammar, punctuation, diction, and logical coherence.

### V. Writing Course Requirements Check list

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Is enrollment capped at 25 students? If not, explain how outcomes will be met for this number of students. Justify the request for variance.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are outcomes listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Are expectations for Information Literacy listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are detailed requirements for all written assignments included in the course syllabus? If not how and when will students be informed of written assignments?</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>What instructional methods will be used to teach students to write for specific audiences, purposes, and genres?</td>
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Students are required to summarize, compare, analyze and assess the views of the central figures covered in the course. Through in-class discussion and peer review of student essays and writing assignments, students learn how to make their writing engaging and accessible to a “live” audience of inquisitive and often skeptical fellow-students. In addition to expository essays, students in this course have opportunities to write in other genres, such as a “haiku book,” a film review, an art exhibit.
review, or a description of one’s own primary or preferred way of knowing.

Will written assignments include an opportunity for revision? If not, then explain how students will receive and use feedback to improve their writing ability.  

Yes ☐ No

VI. Writing Assignments: Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 16 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment.

Formal Graded Assignments

Students are required to write a minimum of three five-page papers and an 8-10 page take-home final exam, for a total of 22-24 pages of formal graded assignments.

Informal Ungraded Assignments

Some instructors also require students to submit an informal journal in which they offer written critique and reflection upon each reading assignment. Submitted at the end of the semester, this journal assignment is not graded, but it does contribute to the instructor’s qualitative assessment of each student’s development as a writer.

VII. Syllabus: Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html

Below is a sample syllabus for HC 121 and a complete set of writing assignments from Autumn 2008 semester. By way of explanation, this course has an established “skeleton syllabus” of required reading assignments that are expected to appear in all versions of the course, including:

• Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*
• William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
• Selections from the Bible: *Genesis* and *Job*
• Rene Descartes, *Discourse On Method*
• Plato, *The Allegory of the Cave*
• Aristotle, selections from *Metaphysics* (including the section on the four causes) and *Nicomachean Ethics*
• William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey"
• Robert Frost's "The Wood Pile" and other selected poems
• Wendell Berry's "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front" or selections from Emily Dickinson's poetry.

Standard expectations for required writing assignments in HC 121 are described in the Writing Course Review Form (above). All HC 121 instructors are expected to submit their syllabi to the HC 121 Course Director for review and constructive feedback. HC 121 instructors meet regularly in the DHC to discuss course content, develop shared norms for the evaluation of writing assignments, and to assess student learning outcomes.
Here is a sample course syllabus for HC 121 from Autumn 2008:

**HC121, WAYS OF KNOWING**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**
Using a diverse selection of readings representing more than three thousand years of history and numerous cultures, we will explore various ways of knowing, including rational/quantitative, relational/sympathetic, sensory/empirical, and narrative/mythological ways of knowing. In the process we will become acquainted with some of the great ideas about the divine, the natural world, and the self in solitude and society. We will be alert for cracks in our apparent certainties and consolations in the midst of our doubts. As we look into our texts, we will also consider the ethical implications that flow from their various perspectives. Informed by class readings, plenary lectures, and discussions, students will work toward a deeper understanding of their own ways of knowing.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

**REQUIRED TEXTS**
- *The Discourse on Method*, Rene Descartes
- *Ceremony*, Leslie Marmon Silko, Penguin Books
- Facpac (available at the University Bookstore)

**Key to Abbreviations**
- FP= FacPac
- *=Joint session (two sections of HC 121 meet together in DHC 116)
- ERes=Electronic Reserve in the Mansfield Library

**Class Plan**
T 8/26: Introduction (getting acquainted; class themes, approaches, and outline of course)
  - Assignments and Guidelines for WOK papers
  - FP: Robert Michael Pyle, "Moonlight Redux: or, Gone for Good"

*Th 8/28: Epistemological Problems
  - FP: Lakoff and Johnson; Meinig; Kiass
*T 9/2: Genesis 1.1-2.4a

Th 9/4: *The Book of Job* (Introduction and 1-75)

Sat 9/6: 1 p.m. Missoula Art Museum (335 N. Pattee St.) for a tour of the Feddersen exhibit

T 9/9: *The Book of Job* (Encountering the Whirlwind)

Th 911 1 : *Tao Te Ching* (Introduction and Poems)

T 9/16: FP: Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and L. Mueller, "Blind Leading the Blind"
First Essay Due

Wed 9/17: Plenary Lecture: Prof. Perrin, "The Passage from Mythology to Philosophy in Ancient Greece" Gallagher Business Building, Room 123, 7-8 p.m.

Th 9/18: Descartes, *Discourse on Method*. Read Introduction and Sections 1, 2, 3, 5 (26-30 and 35-38) and 6

T 9/23: FP: Selections from Darwin, *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*

*Th 9/25: Evolution Made Visual: "The Queen of Trees"

T 9/30: FP: Darwin's Defender: Selections from Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*

Th 10/2: FP: You and Evolution: L. Betzig, "People Are Animals"

T 10/7: FP: W. Berry, "Two Minds" and Selected Poems


*T 10/14: S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Chapters 3-5) and film "Crash."

Wed 10/15: Plenary Lecture: Prof. John Glendening, "Darwinian Evolution: Galapagos and Beyond" GBB, 123, 7-8 p.m.

Th 10/16: 5. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Chapters 6-8)

Short Paper on Plenary Lecture due

Th 10/23: A Different Way of Knowing: Presenting Passages We Memorized. Discussion.


T 11/4: No Class—Election Day

Th 11/6: FP: Selected Poems by Emily Dickinson. Essay or Haiku book due!

T 11/11: No Class—Veteran's Day


Short Paper on Plenary Lecture due!

Th 11/20: L. M. Silko, *Ceremony* (pages 1-100)


Th 11/27: Thanksgiving! (No class)

*T 12/2: L. M. Silko, *Ceremony*, conclusion

T 12/4 (ERes): R. M. Rilke, Chapter 4 from *Letters to a Young Poet* and FP: "I Live My Life."

12/10 Final Take-Home Exam Due in Class (8-10 pages; see assignment below)

**Assignments and Grades:**

**Attendance and Active Participation:** Regular attendance and participation in the class is expected. Your attendance is vital to the other students and the educational process. If you must miss class, notify the Instructor in advance. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (7 or more unexcused absences result in course failure).

**Experiential Assignments:** On September 6, we have arranged for a special tour of the Feddersen exhibit at the Missoula Museum of Art, 335 N. Pattee St. You may use this experience to help you formulate your first essay.

On October 23, all students will present or perform a short passage, poem, or excerpt from any of the assigned readings. You may work in pairs to help each other prepare. We see memorized material as an important, internalized way of knowing. Discussion will follow.
Written Assignments: This year there are three "Plenary Lectures" given by Ways of Knowing faculty. On the Tuesday following the last two lectures (see class plan) submit a two-page paper in which you address the following questions: What was the speaker's main point? What is the most interesting or significant connection between the lecture and our readings and discussions? Include quotes or paraphrased ideas from the lecture to explain and support your ideas. If you cannot attend the lecture, you may view a video of the lecture that will be available in the DHC office.

On September 16, submit a 5-page essay in which you address the main issues that confront us as we try to know something. This essay must bring together the ways we claim to know something and our first few texts: Lakoff and Johnson; Meinig; Klass; Genesis; The Book of Job and Tao Te Ching. (See below for further details.)

On November 6, submit either a "haiku book" (details below) or a 5-page essay that addresses some of the main ideas and problems posed by Civilization and its Discontents, the film "Crash," the short stories by O'Connor and Carver, and the poetry assigned for October 23 and 28. (A more detailed essay assignment follows below.)

This course will meet during the scheduled Final Examination period. Bring your completed Take-Home Final Examination Essay (8-10 pages) to the final exam session. Be prepared to spend a few minutes sharing with the class some of the main points of your essay.

Using Quotations and Outside Sources:
You must properly acknowledge and document any outside sources used in preparing your paper. Direct quotations must be accompanied by exact page numbers; everything you cite must be included in a list of “Works Cited.” MLA format is preferred for all citations. If you are not sure how to do this, visit http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research and choose the link for “Using MLA Format.”

Ways of Knowing Grades:
Assignments will be given the following values as we determine grades:
1) First Essay–25%
2) Plenary Lecture Responses–10% each (20% total)
3) Haiku book or Essay–25%
4) Take-Home Final Exam–30%

If you want to try to improve your grade, you may choose to rewrite any one of the first three assignments. The final grade on this assignment will be an average of your first and second efforts. The quality of your writing and the care with which you express yourself will be factors in determining a grade.

In assigning your final grade for the course, we will be comparing the strength of one student paper in relation to those of other students. In some cases the final grade may be influenced by the quality of student participation and noticeable signs of improvement and development over the course of the semester.
Papers are due in class on or before the date listed in the syllabus. Unless you have made a prior agreement, we will take off one grade level (A becomes A-) for each class day an assignment is late.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online: http://life.umt.edu/VPSA/name/StudentConductCode

Ways of Knowing: Essay #1
In the Fac Pac, under the heading "Unbraiding Some Ways of Knowing," we suggest language for nine possible ways of knowing. In the period August 26 through September 11, we have explored a variety of texts (Pyle, Lakoff and Johnson, Meinig, Klass, Swetnam, Genesis 1.1-2.4a, The Book of Job, the Tao Te Ching, and the Feddersen exhibit at the Missoula Art Museum). Different ways of knowing are embedded, more or less explicitly, in each of these texts. Write a five-page essay in which you explore the relationship between various ways of knowing and some of our texts. To help you formulate the essay we suggest that you take the following approach:

- Describe your own primary or preferred way of knowing. Why does this way of knowing the sacred, the world, yourself, and society make sense to you?
- Pick one text or the experience at the Missoula Art Museum and describe the way(s) of knowing that it illustrates. Show why you think this text or experience illustrates a particular way of knowing. What is your evidence?
- Because every way of knowing has both strengths and limitations, what second way of knowing do you want to remind yourself to respect or honor? Which text or experience best illustrates this second way of knowing?
- In a conclusion to your essay tell the reader how exposure to these texts has strengthened or challenged your own ways of knowing.

Haiku Assignment (Writing Assignment #3)
Drawing on your experiences and close observations, use the haiku form to express your reflections on the natural world. Create a booklet containing at least five haiku that you compose. Use the haiku page of our FacPac and the principles of haiku on this sheet to guide your writing. Make your booklet beautiful by including such things as drawings, photographs, or leaves. Make it communicate what you know and honor of the things you describe. The most basic booklet would be one sheet of paper folded in half, but yours may certainly exceed this minimum and may be bound with thread or another way of connecting sheets of paper. The front should contain a title and your name. Make the design of your booklet reflect the ideas that your haikus express.

To show your understanding of the art of haiku, write and turn in with your booklet a one-page typed and doubled-spaced commentary and explanation. You should write about what you were trying to accomplish with your haiku and booklet design and illustrations. While your haikus and illustrations may not feel completely successful, you can take this opportunity to write about your efforts in order to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the project you undertook.
Some Principles of Haiku

1. Be concise. Use a three-line form and consider using a seventeen-syllable limit. Use few adjectives—or none.
2. Look outward at the natural world for reflections of your thoughts, but do not focus directly on your thoughts.
3. Place your poem in the here and now. Write in the present tense. Haiku often make a seasonal reference. This reference, if you decide to make it, may be explicit or implicit.
4. Write concretely instead of abstractly. Focus carefully on details. Describe plainly and simply what is there when you look.
5. Watch for juxtapositions and contrasts such as light/dark, sight/sound, earth/sky, and stone/water.
6. Hold in mind the goal of feeling fully aware by trying to release yourself from awareness of your self. Focus on the moment. Aim for depicting what the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson called a "decisive moment," that moment when you see the conjunction of the form and meaning of what you observe. Show the form, as if it were a photograph, and leave the meaning for your reader to see.

Ways of Knowing Essay (Alternative Writing Assignment #3)
In this part of the course we have considered a very wide range of readings-Plato's "allegory of the cave," Lisel Mueller's "Blind Leading the Blind," Descartes's Discourse on Method, selections from Darwin's The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man, a film about a fig tree in Africa, selections from Huxley's Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, an article on human evolutionary biology by Laura Betzig, Berry's essay "Two Minds" and a few selected poems, Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents, the film Crash, short stories by O'Connor and Carver, poems by Wordsworth and Frost, along with selected haiku. Following our guideline, "Papers for Ways of Knowing," write a five-page essay on either of the following topics:

1. Directly or indirectly, several of these texts deal with what Darwin called "the struggle for existence." Using two or three of these texts, explain this struggle. What evidence do you find for it? What responsibility, if any, do we have to counter, mitigate, or ease this struggle for ourselves and others? What are the duties and limits of this responsibility?
2. The motif of illumination runs through several of the texts we have been considering. Cite some examples of this gradual or, in some cases, sudden process. As you explore this motif, address these questions: Is illumination for ourselves alone or do we have a responsibility to share the light that comes to us? How might the experience of illumination sharpen our sense of the darkness? In the process of writing this essay, feel free to consider moments of your own illumination in relation to some of the texts. In other words, have there been moments when you said, "Aha" or "Eureka!"?

Ways of Knowing, Final Take-Home Examination Essay
For your first in-class writing assignment in "Ways of Knowing" you were asked to write an essay in response to the question, "What ways do I know reality, including knowing the divine, the natural world, society, and the self? What counts as authoritative sources for these ways of knowing and why?" before we had encountered many of the materials in the course.
For your final examination essay, revisit these questions, this time at the end of the course, looking back at all we have read and discussed. Write an 8-10 page essay that readdresses these questions, this time drawing on materials from the course to illustrate the arguments and claims you make.

Make sure to cite at least two texts from each of the three sections of the course: knowing the divine, the natural world, self and society. Your essay will be evaluated in terms of (1) the cogency and logic of your arguments, (2) how well you support your claims with examples from the text, as well as (3) the breadth, depth, and accuracy of your engagement with the texts you cite.

In developing your essay, it might be helpful to think about the following questions:
- How does your response to these questions compare to your previous position, and why?
- Where have you changed your mind or developed further your previous position, and why?
- Where do you hold the same position as in your first essay, and why?
- Which texts have been most influential in shaping your views, and why?
- With which texts do you most disagree, and why? How does this disagreement help you to clarify your own position?

Bring your completed essay to the final exam session. Be prepared to spend a few minutes sharing with the class some of the main points of your essay.

Additional Note on Instructional Faculty and Class Size for HC 121
This course is taught in multiple sections each semester by well-qualified and highly experienced regular, adjunct, and emeritus faculty from various departments at UM. The multidisciplinary nature of the course is ideally suited to the assignment of instructors from across the disciplines. The course is typically offered in sections of 20 students each. Here are the names of faculty members teaching the course in autumn 2008:

- Sec. 80 Robert Pack TR 11:10-12:30 p.m. DHC 117
- Sec. 81 John Glendening TR 11:10-12:30 p.m. DHC 118
- Sec. 82 Ron Perrin TR 11:10-12:30 p.m. DHC 120
- Sec. 83 Donna Mendelson TR 2:10-3:30 p.m. DHC 117
- Sec. 84 Gary Bevington TR 8:10-9:30 a.m. DHC 118
- Sec. 85 Judith Johnson TR 8:10-9:30 a.m. DHC 120
- Sec. 86 Gary Hawk TR 2:10-3:30 p.m. DHC 120