

# Identity and Perspective

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## Course Description:

*What does it mean to be human?*

That question underlies much of what we do in the humanities—in literature, philosophy, history, and the fine and performing arts. In this course, one of three in the interdisciplinary Humanities foundation sequence, we will investigate changing notions of what it means to be human, focusing broadly on the notions of “identity” and “perspective” in the modern world. We will ask what it means to have an “identity”: who are we? Is our identity defined individually, or is it defined collectively? We will think critically about “perspective”: about our own perspective on ourselves, our perspective on others, and the variety of perspectives on the human condition. (And all of this in eighteen days!)

### CAVEAT

Please note that the syllabus is subject to change: you will be notified if there are changes, but it is your responsibility to check CHP and your email regularly.

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## Instructor Information

**Tutor:** André Lambelet

**Email:** [ajl@questu.ca](mailto:ajl@questu.ca)

**Office:** A.424

**Office hours:** Drop in or by appointment

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## Required Texts: Available at the University Bookstore

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2009.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Edited by James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz: the Nazi assault on Humanity*. Translated by S. J Woolf. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

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## Methods of Instruction

- Discussion, both small group and whole class
- Lectures
- Peer reviews / workshops

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## Assessment

Task	Weight	Total
<b>Revised short essays (four)</b>	15% each	60%
<b>Close reading of poem</b>	20%	20%
<b>Class participation</b>	20%	20%

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## Participation

The tutor's role is to facilitate discussion and to act as a guide when necessary. Your responsibility is to be prepared to engage in serious discussion of the materials. Participation is a crucial part of this course — not only because you can show what you know and how you think, but also because your participation helps other students learn.

We will be working on writing and textual analysis in small groups; an essential part of what we will do is constructive critique. Part of your grade for participation will be based on your willingness to serve as a serious and constructive critic of other people's work.

You should come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion. This means that you must have read and reflected upon the assigned material.

A critical part of participation is your contribution to the development of questions that you and your peers will answer in your short essays. **You must write these questions down and bring them to tutorial.** This is particularly important on those days when we are beginning a new text; your questions will help frame not only the discussion, but also the work you will do in your essays.

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## Short essays

You must write six brief essays for this course.

### ESSAYS ON MAJOR WORKS

Five of these will treat one of the major texts (Marx, Freud, Woolf, Levi, and Achebe). These papers will be approximately two pages in length – no more than 600 words, not including footnotes and works cited. These will be based on the questions posed in class or on questions of your own devising.

Please note the following restrictions:

- At least one of your short papers must be focused on a *close reading of a passage* of your choosing from the text.
- At least one of your short papers must *contextualize* the work in its historical setting.
- At least one of your papers must discuss *recent scholarship* on that work.

The first drafts of these short papers will be graded **pass/fail**; you must turn *all* of these in to pass the course.

The revised drafts of these essays will receive **letter grades**. Only **four** of these will count towards your grade, so you may drop your lowest-graded revised paper.

### POETRY ESSAY

The sixth paper will be a *close reading* of one of the poems we read for this course. You may turn this essay in at any time before the end of the block. It should be no more than 750-800 (carefully chosen) words.

Task	Due Date	Time
Draft essay on Marx/Engels	Wednesday, February 5	Midnight
<b>Revised Marx essay</b>	<b>Friday, February 7</b>	<b>Midnight</b>
Draft essay on Woolf	Wednesday, February 12	Midnight
<b>Revised Woolf essay</b>	<b>Friday, February 14</b>	<b>Midnight</b>
Draft essay on Freud	Monday, February 17	Midnight
Draft essay on Levi	Wednesday, February 19	Midnight
<b>Revised Freud and Levi essays</b>	<b>Friday, February 21</b>	<b>Midnight</b>
Draft essay on Achebe	Monday, February 24	Midnight
<b>Final essay on Achebe</b>	<b>Wednesday, February 26</b>	<b>5 pm</b>
<b>Close reading of poem</b>	<b>Wednesday, February 26<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5 pm</b>

### Format of written work

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Written work must:

- be double-spaced
- be in a twelve-point font (Times New Roman is a good, readable font)
- have your NAME and the DATE and a PAGE NUMBER on every page
- have an informative TITLE on the first page (but no separate title pages).

All written work must be submitted *by email* by the time specified.

- The subject of the email must be of the format **LastName\_FirstName\_Assignment**
- File titles must be of the format **LastName\_FirstName\_Assignment.xxx**, where .xxx is .doc, .docx, or .rtf. If you use OpenOffice, save your file in Word or RTF format; I cannot read .odt files.

You must also bring *two printed copies* of your drafts to class on the day immediately after they are due for workshopping.

All of your work must have full and proper references in any of the following styles: MLA, APA, Chicago, or Turabian, with strong preference for Chicago or Turabian footnote styles. All submitted work must include a “Works Cited” or “Bibliography” page.

Assignments must be carefully proofread: careless mistakes in grammar, syntax, and formatting undermine your credibility. I will read your work attentively unless I encounter too many (>3) sloppy mistakes – at that point I will return it to you for revision and resubmission. It will then be considered late. Use spell check, grammar check, and each other to ensure we don’t waste each other’s time in this manner.

Failure to follow these instructions may have dire consequences, including the rejection of your work.

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### Useful references

Citing sources in the Chicago format: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

Citing sources in the MLA format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/>

Citing sources in the APA format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/03/>

On grammar and style: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/>

On reading poetry: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/ReadingPoetry.html>

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<sup>1</sup> The poetry essay is due anytime *before* this date. You may choose to write this essay earlier.

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## Course Schedule

Background reading for week:

Davies, Norman. "Chapter X: Dynamo - Powerhouse of the World, 1815-1914." In *Europe: A History*, xvii, 1365 p. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Available on CHP.

Monday, February 3

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IN CLASS:

Go over syllabus.

Read and discuss "The Silesian Weavers"

Tuesday, February 4

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QUESTION DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP:

Marx and Engels

READING FOR TODAY:

Marx and Engels:

"Prefaces"

Part I, "Bourgeois and Proletarians"

Part II, "Proletarians and Communists"

Wednesday, February 5 – **Marx draft due tonight**

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MUSICAL INTERLUDE AND POETRY READING:

Eugène Pottier, "L'Internationale"

READING FOR TODAY:

Marx and Engels:

Part III, "Socialist and Communist Literature"

Part IV, "Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties"

Thursday, February 6

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PAPER REVIEW WORKSHOP:

Bring two copies of your paper to class.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE: NATIONALISM

READING FOR TODAY:

Kropotkin, Peter. "An Appeal to the Young." In *The Communist Manifesto and Other Revolutionary Writings: Marx, Marat, Paine, Mao, Gandhi, and Others*, edited by Robert Blaisdell, 170-186. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003. On CHP.

Friday, February 7 – **Marx essay due tonight**

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READING FOR TODAY:

Fussell, Paul. "Adversary Proceedings." Chapter III of *The Great War and Modern Memory*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975. 75-114.

Poems by Anna Akhmatova, Wilfred Owen, Guillaume Apollinaire, Siegfried Sassoon, in *Poems for "Identity and Perspective"*

Céline, Louis-Ferdinand. *Journey to the End of the Night*. New York: New Directions, 1983. 3-38.

Monday, February 10

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READING FOR TODAY

Eliot, T.S., "The Hollow Men," in *Poems for "Identity and Perspective"* on CHP. (This is a very challenging poem—read carefully and slowly and look things up...!)

Tuesday, February 11

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QUESTION DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP:

Woolf

READING FOR TODAY:

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2008. Read (carefully): "Biographical Preface" (vii-xi), "Introduction" (xii-xxviii), and Chapters I-III (3-74). Please also skim the chronology at the beginning of the book.

Wednesday, February 12 – **Woolf essay draft due tonight**

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READING FOR TODAY:

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Chapters IV-VI (75-149).

POETRY READING:

Yeats, William Butler: "Byzantium" and "The Second Coming" in *Poems for "Identity and Perspective"* on CHP.

Thursday, February 13

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PAPER REVIEW WORKSHOP:

Bring two copies of your paper to class.

FILM: IN CLASS

*Metropolis* (Fritz Lang silent film)

Friday, February 14 – **Revised Woolf essay due tonight**

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QUESTION DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP:

Freud

READING FOR TODAY:

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2010. Read Peter Gay's short biography: "Sigmund Freud: A Brief Life," pp. ix-xxiii; the "Editor's Introduction" (4-9); and Chapters I-IV (10-63).

Monday, February 17 – **Draft Freud essay due**

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READING FOR TODAY:

Freud, *Civilization*. Please read Chapters V-VIII (64-112)

Tuesday, February 18

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PAPER REVIEW WORKSHOP:

Bring two copies of your paper to class.

READING FOR TODAY:

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1996. Read pages 9-86.

## QUESTION DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP:

Levi

Wednesday, February 19 – Draft Levi essay due tonight

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## FILM: IN CLASS

Alain Resnais, *Night and Fog*

## READING FOR TODAY:

Levi, *Survival*. Read pages 87-187 and interview with Philip Roth.

Thursday, February 20

Friday, February 21 – Freud and Levi revised essays due tonight

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## READING FOR TODAY:

Hines, Samuel. "Everybody's War." In *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War*. New York: Allen Lane / Penguin Press, 1997. 108-152.

## POETRY READING:

Jarrell, Randall. "Death of a Ball Turret Gunner"

Monday, February 24 – Draft Achebe essay due tonight

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## READING FOR TODAY:

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2009, chs. 1-14.

## POETRY READING:

Hughes, Langston, "Theme for English B"

Tuesday, February 25

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## READING FOR TODAY:

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, chs. 15-25.

## POETRY READING:

Brooks, Gwendolyn, "The Boy Died in My Alley"

Wednesday, February 26 – Revised Achebe essay due today

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## READING FOR TODAY:

Roosevelt, Eleanor. "The Struggle for Human Rights." Speech delivered 28 September 1948, Paris, France. Available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/eleanorroosevelt.htm>.Universal Declaration of Human Rights. December 10, 1948. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>.

## POETRY READING:

Atwood, Margaret, "This is a Photograph of Me"

Plath, Sylvia, "Mushrooms"

## Doing well in this course

### Reading

Reading is a vital part of your education. *It is not a passive activity.* You will be expected to understand and assimilate the assigned material. You will be asked to master the material in a comprehensive and sophisticated way.

Ask yourself the following questions when you read or study a work:

- Who wrote or created it? (If you don't know, look him or her up.)
- When was it written or produced? (Ditto.)
- What does the work say?
- How is the work structured?
- What is the form of the work?
- What kinds of imagery does the work use?
- What questions is it attempting to answer?
- What is the author's argument? What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses?
- What kinds of evidence does the author provide for her or his argument? What kinds of sources does the author use?
- To what kinds of arguments is the author responding?

Pay careful attention to the clues the author gives you:

- Read (and decipher) the title. What does it tell you about the piece you are reading?
- If the piece is a book, read the introduction and conclusion of the book; if the piece is an article or a chapter, read the first and last paragraphs. These should help you figure out what the piece's argument is. Ask yourself what the thesis of the piece is.
- Read the entire work (or all of the assigned portions). Try to decide which parts or passages are most important. If you own the work, make notes in the margins next to important or interesting parts. (Do not do this in library books!)
- Write down your responses to the work in a notebook. Think of note-taking as a way of organizing your thoughts. You need not write down everything; instead, jot down notes about interesting ideas, problems in the argument, or surprising aspects of the piece.
- Re-read the work. You will find that a second (and often, a third and fourth) reading greatly improve your understanding.
- Finally, summarize the author's argument in a few lines. If you can complete a sentence beginning "The author of this book/article argues..." you have read intelligently and productively.

If you do all this, you should be ready for *classroom discussion*.

### Writing

The heart of the humanities as intellectual disciplines is the written word. Successful students in these fields must be able not only to read carefully but write clearly. In other words, they must be able to understand and use words precisely. Sloppy expression—in writing and in discussion—is as big a problem in the humanities as getting formulae wrong is in chemistry; sloppy expression results in papers that fizzle out rather than illuminate.

You may consult your tutor if you have specific questions; we also urge all students to make use of the Learning Commons and Peer Tutors.

Writing well requires at least three things: *content*, *expression*, and *structure*.

**Content:** You need to have read carefully (and, it should go without saying, taken notes) before you begin to write. You must *think* about what you have read. You must *understand the question* you are asked to answer. And, of course, you must have something to say. All of this will give your paper *content*.

You must supply *evidence* in the form of (properly-cited) quotations. That evidence will, in the main, come from the assigned readings for this course. If you use evidence from elsewhere, you must be sure that the evidence is *reliable*. (Please do not think that Wikipedia, sources drawn haphazardly from the web, or other sketchy sources will help persuade your reader of the merits of your work!)

**Expression:** *How* you say things is crucial. If your writing obscures your meaning, then it is impossible for your reader to evaluate the content of your paper. Style matters: it makes your content accessible and your ideas intelligible.

Papers for this course must be written in formal, standard English. You must:

- punctuate properly;
- use proper grammar;
- make appropriate word choices.

If you are not certain of a word's precise meaning, look it up in a good dictionary before handing in your paper. (If you don't yet own a good dictionary, get one.)

**Structure:** Good papers will have a crisp **introduction**. This introduction will let readers know the topic or subject of the paper *and* will let readers what *problem* that the paper aims to discuss. (This is the *thesis statement*.) The introduction should let readers what the limits of the discussion will be.

Good papers will have a solid **conclusion**. A conclusion is not just a summary of what has been discussed before: it emphasizes the importance of the thesis statement, provides the essay with a sense of completeness (it *concludes*) the thoughts of the essay), and leaves the reader with a final sense of what the paper is about. (The conclusion should answer the dreaded “so what?” question—it should give the reader a sense of why s/he read it.)

Good papers will be built around solidly-constructed **paragraphs**. Paragraphs are the building blocks of good writing: they are built around one thought or idea.

Moving from paragraph to paragraph also requires good **transitions**. Transitions connect the ideas in an essay, and allow the reader to understand the flow of your ideas.

**Overall:** It takes time and effort to write well. Good writing, you will scarcely need to be reminded, is *re-writing*. Plan to write at least two drafts before you submit an essay. And ask for help: ask your peers to read your drafts critically and unsparingly; get advice from the Learning Commons; and raise questions in class.

## Course policies

Your tutor expects you to:

- **Have read the syllabus** and all handouts and therefore be aware of policies, homework, and due dates.
- If you have read the syllabus carefully, you will know that you may have *one* 24 hour extension on one of the revised essays provided you tell your tutor that you are invoking that privilege. (This does not count for essays due on the last day of class.)
- Check the Course Home Page and your Quest email account frequently; changes to the syllabus and to homework assignments will be posted there.
- Attend every class.
- Arrive on time.
- Be prepared.
- Obtain notes and handouts in the event of an absence.
- Have a completed rough draft in hand on writing workshop days.
- Turn in assignments at the beginning of class on the due date given in the syllabus.

**Please:**

- Be courteous.
- Turn off your cell phone before class.
- Help keep the classroom neat and tidy.

**Please do not:**

- Bring food into the classroom. (Beverages are ok; library rules apply for the academic building. If you are not familiar with those rules, it's time to go to the library and ask.)
- Use laptops, iPads, electronic tablets, netbooks, smart phones, stupid phones, Wii controllers, Gameboys, or other devices in class unless specifically authorized to do so by the tutors. (If you have a special need, please discuss this with the tutor.)

If you have a disability for which you seek accommodation, please let the tutor know. If you have a physical disability, please contact Student Affairs; if you have a learning disability, please consult the Directors of the Learning Commons.

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### Communicating with the tutor

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Email is a good and useful tool. Please remember, though, that you should treat email to your tutor as a formal means of communication, one that demands courtesy and respect: you must use proper salutations, forms of address, punctuation, grammar, and syntax. Good writing begins with everyday practices.

I check my email regularly. Do not, however, expect immediate replies, especially to late-night or weekend emails.

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### Absences

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There are—infrequently—valid reasons to miss class: illness, family emergencies, war, famine, pestilence, and so forth. If you have a really good reason for missing class, your case will be stronger if you notify your tutor *before* you miss class. You are in any event responsible for obtaining notes, handouts, and assignments. Missing class without a valid excuse may result in an “F.”

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### You must complete all assignments.

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Failure to hand in all required assignments will result in an “F” for the course. (This includes the drafts of the essays, which must be turned in by the time specified; you may opt not to hand in *one* of the revised drafts.)

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### Academic integrity

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As the Quest University Calendar notes, “Quest is committed to the principle of academic integrity, itself grounded in the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic work.” We depend on the honesty and responsibility of all of our members—scholars and teachers alike.

In keeping with the Quest Honour Principle, you will do your own work, and you will conscientiously and meticulously credit sources. Citing sources is not optional in academic work—it is a fundamental principle. As you should know, plagiarism is, broadly speaking, passing off someone else work or ideas as your own, failing to properly identify and credit the source of material you submit, or using cited material improperly. Please be aware that failure to observe the rules of citation will result in charges of plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

Charges of plagiarism or of academic dishonesty are not taken lightly, and may have dire consequences: failure on the assignment, failure of the course, and worse. To avoid this sort of unpleasantness, please be sure to read “University Policies: Quest Honour Principle and Protocol” in the University Calendar. If you have questions about citation, crediting sources, or anything else relating to academic integrity, please ask before you turn in the work. (Information about plagiarism can also be obtained from the Learning Commons.)

If the principle of citation is the same across academic disciplines, the particular format of citation varies from discipline to discipline, and even within disciplines. My own *strong* preference is for Chicago or Turabian footnote citations with a bibliography, but you may use MLA, APA, Chicago, or Turabian—if you cite correctly and consistently and provide a “Works Cited” or “Bibliography” page.