

## Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category

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### ***Connections: Understanding Individual and Social Responsibility***

*Connections* courses direct students to apply and integrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills to the significant issues challenging our individual and shared responsibility as global citizens. Students will learn to analyze and evaluate cultural contexts, examine issues on both a local and global scale, and apply system-level approaches to the stewardship of our social and physical environments. Although they may be used with a major or minor program,

*Connections* courses are classes at the 200-level or above designed for the general student population, and may be taken *only after* students have earned at least 21 hours in **WKU**

**Colonnade Program** coursework or have achieved junior status. *Connections* courses may not have graduate components or prerequisites other than approved courses within the **WKU Colonnade Program**.

Proposed courses must be designed to address specifically the goals and outcomes of one (1) of the subcategories listed below. Students will take one course from each of the three following areas, selecting three different disciplines (usually defined by course prefixes).

- **Social and Cultural** (3 hours)

Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs.

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

- **Local to Global** (3 hours)

Students will examine local and global issues within the context of an increasingly interconnected world. Courses will consider the origins and dynamics of a global society, the significance of local phenomena on a global scale, and/or material, cultural, and ethical challenges in today's world.

1. Analyze issues on local and global scales.
2. Examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues.
3. Evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales.

- **Systems** (3 hours)

Students will examine systems, whether natural or human, by breaking them down into their component parts or processes and seeing how these parts interact. Courses will consider the evolution and dynamics of a particular system or systems and the application of system-level thinking.

1. Analyze how systems evolve.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.

3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

\*\*\*NOTE: The **Colonnade Program** is designed to incrementally build student skills in argumentation and the use of evidence beginning with discipline-specific coursework in the *Foundations* and *Explorations* categories. By extension, *Connections* courses are intended to be summative learning experiences in which students apply basic knowledge to larger and more complex social, global and systemic issues of concern. Proposals should address this summative purpose in the design of the course and the assessment of student learning.

Please complete the following and return electronically to [colonnadeplan@wku.edu](mailto:colonnadeplan@wku.edu).

1. **What course do your departments plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)**

History 320, English 320, Political Science 320; “American Studies”

Subcategory: Social and Cultural

2. **How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address all of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.**

*Learning Objective 1: Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.*

This team-taught course uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine and evaluate the following central themes in American society and culture (only one theme is considered each time the course is offered): justice; dissent; the American Dream; utopias/dystopias; heroes, leaders and demagogues; and land, wilderness and nature. Regardless of the theme, the American Studies course asks the question “what does it mean to be an American?” This course recognizes the multiple ways America has expressed, institutionalized and contested personal and national identity over its history and today. Students analyze and interpret the historical development of these aspects of the American experience and examine the contemporary implications for themselves, their community and the country as a whole in an international context. Key concepts of civic responsibility, citizenship, community, individualism, power and politics and how Americans shape and are, in turn, shaped by them will be explored through the broader themes.

*Learning Objective 2: Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.*

The themes of this course are chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the American experience. Justice, dissent, the American Dream and the other themes the class explores have been interpreted and institutionalized differently throughout history and with regard to particular groups in American society. The course pays particular attention to issues of class, race, gender, region, and religion in the American experience. The reading assignments, classroom discussions and research paper will provide students the opportunity for critical analysis, awareness and appreciation of this diversity.

*Learning Objective 3: Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.*

The American Studies course examines the development of the American experience and also provides information to evaluate this experience in relation to other states and societies. Themes such as justice, dissent and leadership forms and styles are central to the democratic experience and an examination of their development, interpretation and current areas of debate and struggle are essential for all students. Themes such as the American Dream, utopias/dystopias, and Americans relations to land and nature force examination of the various visions and designs for the United States. This allows students

to evaluate the current social, political, artistic and societal responses to issues of identity, civic responsibility, diversity, and liberties and rights as Americans and as global citizens.

**3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.**

American Studies is a unique interdisciplinary discussion seminar-style class in the historical and political dimensions and narrative explorations of a particular central theme in United States culture and society. Team-taught by faculty from the Departments of History, English and Political Science, it emphasizes two primary objectives of the Colonnade Connections courses: to provide students with ongoing opportunities to engage directly and regularly with central social and cultural questions and traditions, and to ensure their exposure to multiple disciplinary approaches to significant issues facing them as individuals and global citizens. The course focuses on a central theme in American culture and society (see brief introductions of themes below) and explores its historical evolution and current national and international dynamics from multiple conceptual and disciplinary approaches. The free exchange of ideas and viewpoints is at the very heart of the course and students engage the thematic topic through consistent and probing discussions of literature, scholarship and interpretative writings, films, and other primary sources from speeches to essays to images and advertisements. Furthermore, because students take the course for History, English, or Political Science credit, in addition to as a Connections elective, students also will represent at least three and often many more majors and interests, further ensuring that all participants encounter a wide variety of opinions and approaches, allowing them to better appreciate the complexity of the issues we discuss. Students will develop writing and critical reading and thinking skills first developed in earlier Foundations courses through regular class discussions, journaling assignments and a sustained research project.

Each time it is offered, the course will examine *one* of the following six themes on a rotating basis:

*1) Justice*

How has the abstract and universal concept of “justice” been defined, enacted, challenged, and symbolized in America. Who or what establishes and enforces justice? What is the relationship of justice to other concepts like equality, individual rights, fairness, desert, punishment, and property? Under what circumstances, if any, is violence, actual or virtual, justified? What specific issues, cases, and controversies are currently challenging the effort to ensure “justice for all”? Currently and historically, how have factors like race, gender, social class, age, nationality, ethnicity, etc. influenced the application of justice? We will examine speeches, court cases, essays, novels, films, and other forms of popular culture to explore the various meanings, manifestations, and consequences of the quest for justice in the American experience.

## 2) *The American Dream*

Many people think of a little house with a white picket fence; others imagine fabulous wealth and a life of ease; still others of religious or personal freedom: what exactly does the American Dream entail and what does it look like? Is it the same for everyone—men and women, old and young, all races, classes, and ethnicities? Is it strictly economic? Is it individual and familial or can it include social and communal elements? How is this dream symbolized in art and how is it codified in law and social practices? To what degree can it be achieved and by whom? How has its definition changed over time? Is it truly unique to America or do other nations have their own definitions of such a “dream” and how do they differ?

## 3) *Dissent*

We explore the people, movements, ideas, and events that have challenged the status quo and fought for change in American institutions, ideas, and values. We examine speeches, court cases, protests, fiction, films, and other forms of popular culture to explore the various meanings, manifestations, and consequences (good and bad) of dissent in the American experience.

## 4) *Heroes, Leaders, Icons and Demagogues*

What makes for a hero, or more specifically an “American” hero? What do we look for in heroes, real or fictional? Are we, as Americans, equally attracted to anti-heroes? What is the difference between a hero and a leader and an icon? What specific qualities and characteristics do we look for in each? What kind of leadership is most effective or appropriate in a democracy? When and how does leadership become demagoguery? This course will examine these and many other questions by studying heroes, anti-heroes, icons, leaders, and demagogues in American history, politics, and culture.

## 5) *Utopias/Dystopias*

The United States has always been viewed and viewed itself as a place where one can create “a shining city on a hill,” an ideal, even utopian society. But it has also often been criticized as the opposite, a dystopian land characterized by violence, bigotry and materialism. Through films, novels, and historical documents, we study real and imagined communities and how different groups have strived to create ideal American societies and to what extent they achieved their goals. We also look at contrasting dystopic visions of the American past, present and possible future as windows into fears about changing American conditions and values.

## 6) *Nature, Wilderness, Land, and America*

Through films, novels, and historical documents and essays, we study interactions between Americans and their environment and how these have been shaped by changing conceptions of the American land, be it pristine wilderness or suburban sprawl. We also look at the current clash of interests and ideologies in America over the environment--and the efforts to develop policies to reconcile these competing interests. Among the questions we tackle are: What role does conservation or environmentalism play in American thought and history? What does it mean to be an “environmentalist” or “conservationist”? What is “nature” and “wilderness” and how have they historically

been defined? What is "nature writing" and what can it offer to the increasingly virtual life of 21st-century America?

- 4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.**

History 101 or 102, and English 100, or permission of instructor

- 5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.**

Students will investigate the ethical dimensions of the history, politics and narrative representations of central themes in American culture and society. They will consider the role of the individual, institutions, and the broader community in constructing shared cultural values that shape societal norms, behaviors, and beliefs.

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

- understanding of a central theme in American society including its historical, political, cultural, global, and contemporary dimensions.
- ability to critically analyze and interpret both assigned texts and those they gather through their own research that pertain to the course's central theme
- awareness of the ways the central theme influences and shapes their own lives as well as our highly diverse national and global society.
- awareness of the ways in which their own civic engagement can contribute to solutions for societal problems.

- 6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.**

Students' research papers will be evaluated to assess their writing abilities and the development of their understanding of the central ideas and themes of the course. The evaluation will be based on the attached rubric.

- 7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.**

Building upon understandings and abilities they have begun to develop in Foundation courses, students will hone their skills in developing and advancing well-organized and persuasive oral and written arguments in seminar-style discussions about the week's readings that will constitute the bulk of each class meeting. Students will also be responsible (as part of small groups) for guiding the class discussion once during the semester and will write regular journal entries in which they analyze course materials and support their assertions with textual evidence. The exams and, particularly, the research project, are designed to help students develop their ability to select and interpret an array of primary and secondary sources and to make a compelling argument about what they reveal about the central theme of the course for that particular semester.

**7. How many sections of this course will your departments offer each semester?**

Approximately one section each year of 36-45 students (12-15 per instructor)

**8. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.**

**AMERICAN STUDIES**  
**(ENG 320, HIS 320, and POL 320)**  
**JUSTICE, CRIME and PUNISHMENT in AMERICA**

Professor Tony Harkins (CH 218; 5-3149; [anthony.harkins@wku.edu](mailto:anthony.harkins@wku.edu))

Professor Sandy Hughes (CH 11; 5-5766; [sandy.hughes@wku.edu](mailto:sandy.hughes@wku.edu))

Professor Roger Murphy (GR 308; 5-2890; [roger.murphy@wku.edu](mailto:roger.murphy@wku.edu))

**Introduction to American Studies:** American Studies is an interdisciplinary seminar in the history, culture, and politics of the United States. The materials it covers, while all related, will come from a wide variety of fields and perspectives, and will include historical documents, scholarly essays, novels, and films. This is not a lecture course, but one designed to exchange ideas, to share information, to discuss questions and issues, and to be fun. **The students and professors are equally responsible for the progress, success, and enjoyment of the course.**

**Introduction to Course Theme:** This class will investigate how the abstract and universal concept of “justice” has been defined, enacted, challenged, and symbolized in America. Who or what establishes and enforces justice? What is the relationship of justice to other concepts like equality, individual rights, fairness, desert, punishment, and property? Under what circumstances, if any, is violence, actual or virtual, justified? What specific issues, cases, and controversies are currently challenging the effort to ensure “justice for all”? Currently and historically, how have factors like race, gender, social class, age, nationality, ethnicity, etc. influenced the application of justice? We will examine speeches, court cases, essays, novels, films, and other forms of popular culture to explore the various meanings, manifestations, and consequences of the quest for justice in the American experience.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will investigate the ethical dimensions of the history, politics and narrative representations of central themes in American culture and society. They will consider the role of the individual, institutions, and the broader community in constructing shared cultural values that shape societal norms, behaviors, and beliefs.

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

- understanding of a central theme in American society including its historical, political, cultural, global, and contemporary dimensions.
- ability to critically analyze and interpret both assigned texts and those they gather through their own research that pertain to the course’s central theme
- awareness of the ways the central theme influences and shapes their own lives as well as our highly diverse national and global society.
- awareness of the ways in which their own civic engagement can contribute to solutions for societal problems.

**Required Readings:**

You should purchase the following books, available through the WKU Bookstore:

- Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice* (Henry Holt, 2004)
- Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* (Henry Holt, 2001)
- Steve Bogira, *Courtroom 302* (Random House, 2005)
- Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* (Penguin Classics, 2003)



- Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (Grove Press, 1999)

All other readings will be available through the course Blackboard site or will be handed out in class.

**Participation and Attendance:** Attendance is **required**. Your presence and participation (beginning at 5:30 sharp) is one of the most important elements of this course, and you will be evaluated on it accordingly. Except in extreme circumstances, missing more than two classes is unacceptable and will result in an “F” for the course. Simply attending class, however, will not result in a high participation grade. Come to class each week prepared to discuss any materials that have been assigned in advance. A key objective of our discussions will be to raise questions--however basic--about the materials we cover. Even if you don't have “answers,” it is your responsibility to help raise the questions that will stimulate further thought and conversation.

**Paper:** You will write one formal research-based paper of 8-10 pgs (12-15 for Honors students). It will require a minimum of six sources including scholarly/academic ones and several pre-assignments including a topic proposal, an annotated bibliography, and a formal draft. See syllabus for due dates; much more detail will be provided later this semester.

**Midterm and Final Essay Exams:** The midterm will cover the first half of the semester; the final will focus on the second half, but also cover selected topics from the entire semester. You will be given the questions one week in advance and exams will be due in class the following week. Detailed instructions to come.

**Journals:** You will be required to submit a journal 8 times during the semester on the weeks indicated on the course schedule. To receive credit, you **MUST** submit your journal to Blackboard for any particular week before or by that week's classtime or bring a paper copy to class.

Your journal entry each week will have **one of three related sections that will rotate over the course of the semester:**

**1) *Your comments on the assigned materials.*** These should be your personal thoughts and reactions rather than informational notes. However, include **direct references to specific passages** from the readings as a part of your response (these will be very useful to you in writing the essay exams). Be prepared to share the passages that you wrote about in class discussion.

**2) *Your comments on the most recent class discussion.*** First, describe what you felt were the **most important points** covered during that class period and explain why. Especially as the semester progresses, these “most important points” should examine both the specific material we cover and the larger themes/issues that run through the entire class. Second, raise any questions and issues (at least ONE) that we didn't have time to fully explore and explain why it should be brought up again in the future.

**3) *Your comments or reflections on a topic or material not assigned in class.*** This part might be on a TV show, music, a current event (local or global), a newspaper article, or anything else that touches on the themes, topics, and questions we are covering in class.

**Clearly date and label all entries!** Send an electronic copy of your journal entry to the Blackboard site. These will be graded on a ten point scale.

**Leading Discussion:** You will be assigned a discussion group that will be responsible once during the semester to help **lead discussion** on that week's readings (essays, book, film, etc) for most of the class period. Your preparation can take many forms include preparing questions or handouts in advance, selecting passages to focus on, breaking the class into groups, dividing up the class for a debate, etc. You will need to meet with the professors that evening at 4:45 to discuss your plans for leading class.

### **Grading Policies and Evaluation:**

Your final grade will be based on the following five factors.

Attendance and Participation:	20%
Journals:	20%
Midterm Exam:	15%
Research Paper:	30%
Final Exam:	15%

**Late work** will be accepted only in the case of prior consultation, or in the case of serious emergency. All other late work will be marked down 1 full grade (from a B to a C for example) for each day it is late.

**Plagiarism** consists of turning in work that is not your own, in all or in part. The consequences for plagiarism in this course are simple: if you are caught plagiarizing, **you will receive an "F" for the course**. No exceptions. For a definition and more information of academic honesty, see <[www.wku.edu/judicialaffairs/2004-05Handbook/AcademicOffenses.pdf](http://www.wku.edu/judicialaffairs/2004-05Handbook/AcademicOffenses.pdf)>

**ALL papers and exams must be completed in order to pass the course.**

### **Readings/Discussion Schedule**

Week 1 (Sep. 1)	<u>Introduction to Course</u> "What is Justice"	
Week 2 (Sep. 8)	<u>General Concepts</u> Brighthouse on Rawls; Mosque debate readings; <i>Courtroom 302</i> , Prologue; Bill of Rights; Dec. of Independence	<b>Journal 1 Due</b>
Week 3 (Sep. 15)	<u>FILM: <i>Stranger with a Camera</i></u> Trillin article/ <i>Arc of Justice</i> chs. 1-5	<b>Journal 2 Due</b>
Week 4 (Sep. 22)	<u>Racial Justice</u> <i>Arc of Justice</i> , chs. 6-Epilogue	<b>Journal 3 Due</b> <u>GROUP 1 leads</u>
Week 5 (Sep. 29)	<u>Free Speech?</u> "What's wrong with Hate"/ "Death for Dixie" / "Letter from Birmingham Jail"/ <i>Texas v. Johnson</i>	<b>Brainstorm Research Topics</b> <u>GROUP 2 leads</u>

- Week 6 (Oct. 6)      Economic Justice      **Journal 4 Due**  
*Nickel and Dimed* (ALL)/ “Economic Bill of Rights”; Nozick, “Anarchy, State, and Utopia”  
GROUP 3 leads  
**Preliminary Paper Topic Due**
- Week 7 (Oct. 13)      Equal Justice under the Law?  
*Courtroom 302* chs. 2, 9-10, 12-13, 15// *Terry v. Ohio*      **Midterm Due by Friday**
- Week 8 (Oct. 20)      FILM: *Dexter*  
Poe, “Pit and the Pendulum”; Abu Ghraib readings; *Jasmine*, 1<sup>st</sup> ½ GROUP 4 leads  
**Extended Paper Topic w/ Bibliography Due**
- Week 9 (Oct. 27)      Gender Justice      **Journal 5 Due**  
*Jasmine*, ALL      GROUP 5 leads
- Week 10 (Nov. 3)      Equal Justice under the Law?, cont.      **Journal 6 Due**  
*Courtroom 302* pgs. 138-142, chs. 11, 16, 18-19; Other TBA      GROUP 6 leads
- Nov. 6      Field Trip to National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis
- Week 11 (Nov. 10)      Death Penalty  
FILM: *Thin Blue Line*/ *Gregg v. Georgia*      **Paper Draft Due**
- Week 12 (Nov. 17)      Witch Hunts Then and Now and Justice      **Journal 7 Due**  
Miller, *The Crucible* (ALL); Mather, Trial History; Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown”; Miller, “Why I Wrote the Crucible”; Red Scare readings  
GROUP 7 leads  
**Opt. Conf. with Professor**
- Week 13 (Nov. 24)      No Class --Thanksgiving
- Week 14 (Dec. 1)      FILM: *Lone Star*      **Journal 8 Due**  
Reading on Arizona Immigration debate
- Week 15 (Dec. 8)      Culture, Crime and Justice  
Poe, “The Black Cat,” “The Tell-Tale Heart”; Mukherjee, “A Father”;  
**Final Paper Due**
- Week 16 (Dec. 15)      **Final Exam Due**

***RUBRIC for American Studies RESEARCH PAPER***

	<b>1. EXCELLENT</b>	<b>2. GOOD</b>	<b>3. NEEDS WORK</b>	<b>4. POOR</b>
<b>A. THESIS</b>	Thesis is easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, and clear.	Thesis is promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking insight or originality.	Thesis is unclear or unoriginal. Uses vague language. Provides little around which to structure the essay.	Thesis is difficult to identify, non-existent, or merely restates the question. Shows little effort or comprehension of the essay prompt.
<b>B. STRUCTURE</b>	Structure is evident, understandable, and appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.	Structure is generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. Essay may have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.	Structure is generally unclear, often wanders, or jumps around. Transitions are few and/or weak, and many paragraphs lack topic sentences.	Structure is unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Essay has little or no structure or organization. Transitions are confusing and unclear. Topic sentences are few or non-existent.
<b>C. USE OF EVIDENCE</b>	Primary source and historical context information is incorporated to support every point. Examples support thesis and fit within paragraph. Specific, explicit references to assigned readings are incorporated. Factual information is incorporated. Sources are properly cited.	Author uses examples to support most points. Some evidence does not support point or is out of place. Quotations are generally integrated well into sentences and paragraphs. Some factual information is incorporated. Some sources are properly cited.	Author uses examples to support some points. References to assigned readings unclear or incorrect. There may not be a clear point. Moderate amount of factual information is incorporated. Sources are improperly cited.	Very few or weak examples. Essay is weakened by a general failure to support statements. Evidence supports no particular point. Little or no factual information is incorporated, and primary sources remain mostly not interpreted or are merely summarized. No citations for sources.
<b>D. LOGIC AND ARGUMENTATION</b>	All ideas flow logically. The argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments. Makes original connections that illuminate thesis.	Argument is clear and usually flows logically and makes sense. Some counter-arguments are acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to evidence appear.	The argument may often be unclear or not make sense. Author may not address counter-arguments or make sufficient connections with the thesis. Essay may contain logical contradictions.	Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Essay displays simplistic view of topic, and no consideration of possible alternative views. Any attempts to relate evidence to argument are very weak. Argument is too incoherent to determine.