

LIB 200: Humanism, Science and Technology

Day/Time | Room

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Hours
Prof. Francisco Medina	fmedina@gradcenter.cuny.edu	TBA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Description

Welcome to LIB200! The Liberal Arts Seminar explores aspects of the relationship between humanism, science and technology. Students apply knowledge and critical strategies developed in other courses to significant contemporary and historical issues. The Seminar draws on texts from the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Sciences as students explore ways developments in science and technology contribute to abuses as well as advances in civilizations. Students also reflect on the responsibilities of citizenship in a diverse society. As a capstone course, this seminar is designated writing intensive.

This course delves into the complex intersection of science and society by exploring scientific discourses about human beings and how these ideas have been misused throughout history. We will critically examine how science has been used to justify harmful ideologies, including eugenics, biological determinism, and various forms of discrimination such as ableism, sexism, and racism. Through reading and documentaries, we will assess the ethical implications of these scientific practices and theories, considering their impact on marginalized communities and the shaping of societal norms. We will engage in discussions that challenge the ethical boundaries of scientific inquiry, fostering a deeper understanding of how scientific knowledge can be both a tool for progress and a vehicle for harm.

Course Materials

All required readings and assignments will be uploaded to Blackboard under Course Materials. If you are having issues logging in, please contact support at Blackboardsupport@lagcc.cuny.edu

Core Competencies

LIB200 requires students to demonstrate competencies in two areas:

- **Critical Literacy:** The ability to read, write, and think about texts in a reflective manner. Developing critical literacy skills allows students to understand and think about the world

around them and encourages them to investigate and interrogate societal institutions and issues.

- **Oral Communication:** The effective interpretation, composition, and presentation of information, ideas, and values verbally. Developing oral communications skills allows students to become effective communicators on-campus, in the work place and in their communities.

Course Objectives

- 1) Enable students to critically evaluate and synthesize information from their lives and from liberal arts core and elective courses and to apply this information to issues examined in the course;
- 2) Provide students with the abilities and strategies necessary to evaluate and critique the role of science and technology in earlier periods and in contemporary cultures;
- 3) Demonstrate their understanding of “humanism,” “science,” and “technology,” through activities exploring how these concepts and their disciplines are reflected in the everyday life and arts of communities and cultures;
- 4) Reinforce essential concepts necessary for reflective reading, writing and critical thinking by providing students with in-depth writing and oral assignments intended to incorporate independent reflection about the uses of science, technology and cultural artifacts;
- 5) Enable students through a substantial written research project, to critically examine some aspect of science and/or technology, including its impact on the society as a whole;
- 6) Enable students to interpret the readings in a way that has a direct bearing on present experiences and values.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

The College’s Attendance Policy reads as follows: “Attendance in class is a requirement and will be considered in the evaluation of student performance. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance. The maximum number of unexcused absences is limited to 15% of the number of class hours [5.4 hours in a 3-credit course].”

You are expected to attend the lecture and studio hour regularly and to be on time.

Reading and Writing Assignments

This is a writing intensive course structured around weekly readings and writing assignments. You are expected to come to class prepared: reading and written assignments must be accomplished on time. You are expected to read all the assigned readings before each class session and participate in the discussions in addition to writing reading reflections.

Deadlines

You are expected to submit your work on time. If you experience an emergency which hinders you from submitting an assignment on time, please contact me via email at least 24 hours before the due date.

GRADING POLICY AND ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Attendance	--
Participation	15
Reflections	30
Final Proposal	10
Final Paper	25
Presentation	10
Media Analysis	10
Total	100

Attendance

See above statement on attendance.

Participation

Each and every one of us has unique ways of contributing to class, and therefore participation is not limited to verbal responses/questions. Being on time, engaging in the conversation, coming to class prepared, helping your classmates, forming study groups, emailing the instructor, being respectful, etc.— all count as participation. Texting, internet browsing, listening to music, and social networking during class will affect your final grade negatively.

Reading Responses

You will submit weekly reading responses based on topics from the readings and make connections across them. Reading Responses are NOT a summary of the readings but should compare and contrast ideas, make personal and relevant connections to your life and society, and engage critically with the material. Guiding questions will be provided weekly in class for each individual response.

Each reading response should be between 250-350 words and posted on Blackboard on due date before 11:59PM.

Final Paper

You will choose a topic related to the class and write an interdisciplinary research paper that explores the relationship between humanism, science and technology. The topic should relate to a societal issue and be explored from multiple disciplines such as history, sociology, media studies, literature, philosophy, and the natural sciences. Your research paper should include a problem statement, a thesis statement, a literature review, a methods section, and an argument section. It should follow APA guidelines and use at least 6 academic and peer-reviewed sources to support

your argument. In addition, you might use other sources such as documentaries, social media posts, art, literature, a movie, a news article, etc. to illustrate or build your claim.

The research paper will have 2 stages:

- A proposal (2 pages) where you will outline your argument and sources
- The research paper (8-10 pages)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Syllabus and Course Overview

Week 2: The Philosophy of Science

Reading: In the Name of Science

Week 3: Science and Eugenics

Reading: Eugenics and the Nature-Nurture Debate in the Twentieth Century

Week 4: Evolutionary Theory

Reading: Darwin Misunderstood

Week 5: What is Biology?

Reading: Beyond Biology and Culture

Week 6: Race as a Scientific Construct

Reading: Race as Scientific Fiction

Week 7: Racialization and Science

Reading: The Problem with Ancestry Testing or The Racialization of 'Health Disparities'

Week 8: Gender and Sex

Reading: Busting Myths about Sex and Gender

Proposal is due.

Week 9: Disability

Reading: Blood functions: disability, biosociality, and facts of the body.

Week 10: Contemporary Eugenics

Reading: Biological plasticity, abnormality, and new configurations of race and reproduction.

Week 10: Animal Rights

Reading: Animal rights, human wrongs

Week 11: Interdisciplinary Sciences

Reading: Integrating social sciences and humanities in interdisciplinary research

Week 12: Final Paper Workshop

Student Presentations

Week 13: Reading Week

Research Paper is due

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, POLICY, AND RESOURCES

Academic Integrity Policy

The college has established an Academic Integrity Policy that describes procedures and penalties for students who are suspected of academic dishonesty, which includes cheating, plagiarism, academic fraud, misconduct on internship or clinical affiliations, and bribery. This class will be conducted in compliance with LaGuardia Community College's academic integrity policy. There will be zero tolerance in academic dishonesty and students who engage in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "F" grade for the course. All violations will be reported to the college.

Support Services for Students with Disabilities

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodation, students must first be registered with the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities located in E-102. Students who have a documented disability or believe they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Office of Services for Students to determine your eligibility for accommodations astridn@lagcc.cuny.edu

Wellness Center

These are stressful times. Please prioritize your mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being throughout the semester. The Wellness Center at LaGuardia offers free and confidential counseling in a safe environment where individual and cultural differences are valued and respected, you can contact the center at WellnessCenter@lagcc.cuny.edu

Writing Center

There are tutorial services available for students who need help with their writing assignments (Rm. B200). Students must schedule meetings with the writing tutors ahead of time <http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/english/writingcenter/>