FYSEM-UA 474  
WHAT IS COLLEGE FOR?  
Fall 2019

Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.  
GCASL, Room 374

INSTRUCTOR

Professor Trace Jordan  
College Core Curriculum

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. and by appointment

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

Why did you decide to attend college? To broaden your intellectual horizons and become a more open-minded person? To gain specialized knowledge in a specific subject? To achieve a successful and financially rewarding career after graduation? To have a fun social life and make new friends? To become an engaged participant in a democratic society? To satisfy your parents’ plans for your future? Or perhaps some combination of these reasons that you are still figuring out?

By examining the purpose of a college education, this seminar will enable you to become more reflective and purposeful about your own academic choices as an NYU student. We begin by studying the historical development of college education in the United States and how it has changed under the influence of societal and political factors. At the beginning of the 21st century, current models and practices of higher education are receiving increased scrutiny. Does higher education need to redefine its academic mission? Should everyone attend college? Will new technologies change how professors teach and how students learn?

The seminar also examines the attitudes and habits that promote success in college. Why do we multitask when research shows that it is ineffective and detrimental for learning? How will you respond to your first failure in a college course? In what ways do your general education courses complement your specialization within a major? Finally—and most importantly—how can you take personal ownership of your educational experience at NYU?
REQUIRED READINGS

The following two books are required reading and they can be purchased at the NYU Bookstore.

Andrew Delbanco, *College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be*  
ISBN: 9780691165516

Ken Bain, *What the Best College Students Do*  
ISBN: 9780674066649

Additional readings, videos, etc., will also be assigned. The required materials for each week are provided in the syllabus and posted on the NYU Classes site for the seminar.

SEMINAR EXPECTATIONS

A college seminar course is an opportunity to explore new topics, actively engage with complex ideas, critically examine and challenge your own assumptions, and learn from the diverse perspectives of other students in the course. Here are the expectations for your participation in this seminar:

- Complete all the assigned readings in advance of each seminar class.
- Submit reading reflections each week based on your assigned reading.
- Write two entries each week in your college journal.
- Attend all seminar classes and actively participate in discussions.
- Be respectful of all ideas raised during class discussions, even if they disagree with your own viewpoint.
- Complete four paper assignments.
- Follow the academic principles of the CAS Honor Code  
  (http://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity/honor-code.html)

COLLEGE JOURNAL

One of the seminar requirements is to keep a college journal that will prompt you to reflect on your academic experiences inside and outside the classroom. I will provide you with these journals at the first seminar meeting.

I expect you to complete **two journal entries each week** of approximately **one page each** (a little more or a little less is okay). Each journal entry should contain a **thoughtful reflection** on some type of academic experience during the week (which can include this seminar). Your reflection could be based on an assigned reading, a lecture, a classroom discussion, a homework assignment, a lab experiment, a group study session, or a discussion with friends or family about your courses. I will read your journals each week and return them at the next seminar class.

**Your journal must be delivered to the College Core Curriculum Office (Silver 903) by 4:00 p.m. on TUESDAY of each week.** Place your journal in the wire basket by the reception desk.
READING REFLECTIONS

Each week, you will submit reading reflections based on the assigned reading. These reflections should highlight what you found interesting, surprising, and/or contentious in the readings. Each reflection should be one-paragraph in length. I will use your reflections as the basis for our weekly seminar discussions.

Your reading reflections must be submitted online to the WEEKLY DISCUSSION FORUM on the NYU Classes site. I will post a new discussion forum for each week of the semester.

Reading reflections must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on MONDAY of each week.

GRADE COMPONENTS

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>College journal entries</td>
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<td>Reading reflections</td>
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<td>Paper #1</td>
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<td>Paper #3</td>
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<td>Paper #4</td>
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PAPER ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

An important goal of this First-Year Seminar is to develop your ability to effectively communicate your ideas in writing. There will be four essay assignments during the semester with the dates given below. The final paper of the course (Paper #4) will be submitted as a draft for peer critique before you submit the final version.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Assignment Given</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>3 - 4 pages</td>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>September 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>October 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #3</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>November 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #4</td>
<td>8 - 10 pages</td>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>November 27 (draft) / December 11 (final)</td>
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RESOURCES

At some point in the semester you may need some help for an academic, health, or wellness issue. NYU provides excellent support resources, and I encourage you to use them.

University Learning Center
www.nyu.edu/ulc

The University Learning Center provides free tutoring services and workshops on general study skills. Visit the website for the schedule of tutoring and workshops.
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Writing Center  
cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/ewp/writing-center.html

The Writing Center provides individualized assistance to help you develop your skills as an effective writer.

NYU Wellness Exchange  
www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html

The NYU Wellness Exchange provides an access portal for the university’s health resources, including mental health services.

Moses Center for Students with Disabilities  
www.nyu.edu/csd

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

WEEKLY SYLLABUS

WEEK 1 / Sept. 4  
Introduction to the Seminar

Reading  

Pre-Class Assignment  
One-page (single-spaced) response paper: "Why am I going to college?"
Bring your response paper to the first class.

WEEK 2 / Sept. 11  
What is College For?

Reading  
Delbanco, College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be  
Prefaces (pp. xi - xx), Introduction (pp. 1 - 8), and Chapter 1 (pp. 9 - 35)

Assignments  
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

Paper #1 Guidelines  
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper 1, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, September 25. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.
WEEK 3 / Sept. 18

Reading
Delbanco, College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be
Chapter 2 (pp. 36 - 66)

Thomas Jefferson, Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia (13 pp.)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

WEEK 4 / Sept. 25
Higher Education in the U.S. (Part 2): The Rise of the Research University

Reading
Delbanco, College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be
Chapter 3 (pp. 67 - 101)

Vannevar Bush, Science: The Endless Frontier (20 pp.)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.
Paper #1 submission deadline.

WEEK 5 / October 2
Who Goes to College?

Reading
Delbanco, College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be
Chapter 4 (pp. 102 - 124)


Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

Paper #2 Guidelines
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper 2, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, October 16. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.
WEEK 6 / October 9
What is the Future of College Education?

Reading
Delbanco, *College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be*
Chapter 5 (pp. 125 – 149) and Chapter 6 (pp. 150 – 177).

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

WEEK 7 / October 16
New York University: Past, Present, and Future (Part 1)

Reading

Morgan Lewis & Hugh Maxwell, *Considerations Upon the Expediency and the Means of Establishing a University in the City of New-York* (Grattan: New York, 1830). (32 pp.)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

Paper #2 submission deadline.

Paper #3 Guidelines
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper 3, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, November 13. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to the NYU Classes site for the course.

WEEK 8 / October 23
New York University: Past, Present, and Future (Part 2)

This class will include a visit to Bobst Library Archives

Reading
No assigned reading

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal.
WEEK 9 / October 30
What the Best College Students Do: What Makes an Expert?

Reading
Bain, *What the Best College Students Do*
Chapter 1 (pp. 1 - 31) and Chapter 2 (pp. 32 – 63)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

WEEK 10 / November 6
What the Best College Students Do: Managing Yourself

Reading
Bain, *What the Best College Students Do*
Chapter 3 (pp. 64 - 98) and Chapter 4 (pp. 99 – 132)

David Glenn, “Carol Dweck’s Attitude,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 9, 2010. (6 pp.)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

WEEK 11 / November 13
What the Best College Students Do: Tackling Messy Problems

Reading
Bain, *What the Best College Students Do*
Chapter 5 (pp. 133 - 163) and Chapter 6 (pp. 164 – 198)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

Paper #3 submission deadline.

**Paper #4 Guidelines**
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper 4. This paper assignment is due in two stages:

- Wednesday, November 27 – submit a draft of the paper to NYU Classes
- Wednesday, December 12 – submit the final version of your paper
WEEK 12 / November 20
What the Best College Students Do: Making the Hard Choices

Reading
Bain, What the Best College Students Do
Chapter 7 (pp. 199 - 220) and Chapter 8 (pp. 221 – 247)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.

November 27
No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Assignments
Paper #4 draft deadline.

WEEK 13 / December 4
Peer Editing of Student Papers

Reading / Peer Editing
Your reading assignment this week involves peer editing of student papers. Read the draft papers of 3 – 4 other students in your assigned group.

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal.

WEEK 14 / December 11
Conclusion: Where Do You Go from Here?

Reading

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.
Paper #4 submission deadline.