SYLLABUS: What is College For?
Professor Trace Jordan – Fall 2017

FYSEM-UA 474
Fall 2017
WHAT IS COLLEGE FOR?

Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Academic Resource Center, Room LL02

INSTRUCTOR

Professor Trace Jordan
College Core Curriculum
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Office Hour: Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

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 more 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? This seminar examines historical and contemporary discussions about the personal and societal goals of higher education. It will also prompt you to be more reflective and purposeful about your own academic choices during your time as an NYU student. At the beginning of the 21st century, current models and practices of higher education are receiving increased scrutiny. During the semester, we will study issues that have the potential to profoundly transform the college experience. Does higher education need to redefine its academic mission? Should everyone attend college? Will new technologies change how professors teach and how students learn? Finally—and most importantly—how can students, professors, and administrators all contribute to creating a successful college environment?

REQUIRED BOOKS

The following two books are required reading for the course 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
These two texts provide the core reading for the seminar but additional readings, videos, etc., will also be assigned. The required materials for each week will be provided in the syllabus or announced in class.

**GRADE COMPONENTS**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>College journal entries</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Discussion questions</td>
<td>10%</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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**EXPECTATIONS**

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

- Complete all the assigned readings in advance of each seminar class.
- Submit study questions each week based on your assigned reading.
- 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.
- Write two entries each week in your college journal.
- 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](http://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity/honor-code.html))

**COLLEGE JOURNAL**

One of the seminar requirements is to keep a weekly college journal to 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 aspect of one of your fall semester classes (including 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 collect and read your journals each week and return them to you 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.**
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Each week you will submit discussion questions based on the assigned reading. These questions should highlight interesting points within the reading that can be used as the basis for our in-class discussions. The best discussion questions are thoughtful reflections on the readings that open the door for further exploration during the seminar sessions.

Your discussion questions 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. The forum posting will highlight the specific readings that should be used as the foundation for your discussion questions.

Discussion questions must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on MONDAY of each week.

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

An important goal of this Freshman Honors 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.

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<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Assignment given</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>September 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>October 4</td>
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<td>Paper #3</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>October 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #4</td>
<td>8 - 10 pages</td>
<td>November 15</td>
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WEEKLY SYLLABUS AND READINGS

WEEK 1 (September 6)
Introduction to the Seminar

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

Reading

WEEK 2 (Sept. 13)
What is College For?

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and study questions for the reading.

Reading
Delbanco, College
Prefaces (pp. xi - xx), Introduction (pp. 1 - 8), and Chapter 1 (pp. 9 - 35)

Paper #1: Assignment and Guidelines
You will be provided with details and guidelines for Paper 1, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, September 27. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to the NYU Classes site for the course.

WEEK 3 (Sept. 20)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and study questions for the reading.

Reading
Delbanco, College
Chapter 2 (pp. 36 - 66)

Thomas Jefferson, Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia.
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WEEK 4 (Sept. 27)  
Higher Education in the U.S. (Part 2): The Rise of the Research University  

Assignments  
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.  
Paper #1 submission deadline.  

Reading  
Delbanco, College  
Chapter 3 (pp. 67 - 101)  

Vannevar Bush, Science: The Endless Frontier.  

WEEK 5 (October 4)  
Who Goes to College?  

Assignments  
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.  

Reading  
Delbanco, College  
Chapter 4 (pp. 102 - 124)  


Paper #2: Assignment and Guidelines  
You will be provided with details and guidelines for Paper 2, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, October 19. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to the NYU Classes site for the course.
WEEK 6 (October 11)
What is the Future of College Education?

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.

Reading
Delbanco, College
Chapter 5 (pp. 125 – 149) and Chapter 6 (pp. 150 – 177).

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WEEK 7 (October 18)
New York University: Past, Present, and Future (Part 1)

This class will include a visit to Bobst Library Archives

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.
Paper #2 submission deadline.

Reading
No assigned reading

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WEEK 8 (October 25)
New York University: Past, Present, and Future (Part 2)

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.

Reading


Paper #3: Assignment and Guidelines
You will be provided with details and guidelines for Paper 3, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, November 16. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to the NYU Classes site for the course.

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WEEK 9 (November 1)
What the Best College Students Do: What Makes an Expert?

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.

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

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WEEK 10 (November 8)
What the Best College Students Do: Managing Yourself

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.

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


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WEEK 11 (November 15)
What the Best College Students Do: Tackling Messy Problems

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.
Paper #3 submission deadline.

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

Paper #4: Assignment and Guidelines
You will be provided with details and guidelines for Paper 4. This paper assignment is due in two parts:

- Wednesday, November 30 – upload a draft of the paper to NYU Classes
- Wednesday, December 14 – submit the final version of your paper

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November 22
No class – Thanksgiving break

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WEEK 12 (November 29)
What the Best College Students Do: Making the Hard Choices

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and discussion questions for the reading.
Upload Draft of Paper #4

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


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WEEK 13 (December 6)
Peer Editing of Student Papers

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal.

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. Make constructive edits to the papers and bring your edits to class.

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WEEK 14 (December 13)
Conclusion: Where Do You Go From Here?

Assignments
Two entries in your college journal.
Paper #4 submission deadline.

Reading