FYSEM-UA 474 What is College For?
Professor Trace Jordan – Fall 2020

FYSEM-UA 474
WHAT IS COLLEGE FOR?
Fall 2020
Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Room TBA

INSTRUCTOR

Professor Trace Jordan
College Core Curriculum

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Office Hours: Thursday, 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 college education, this seminar will enable you to become more intentional 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 to 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 education at NYU to have a meaningful college experience?
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, podcasts, 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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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>College journal entries</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 2</td>
<td>September 16</td>
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<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>October 14</td>
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<td>Paper #3</td>
<td>4 - 5 pages</td>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>November 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #4</td>
<td>8 - 10 pages</td>
<td>November 16</td>
<td>December 9</td>
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FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

You may bring drinks to the seminar (water, tea, coffee, etc.). To minimize distractions, no food is allowed in the seminar room.
TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING

To gain the most benefit from this seminar, it is essential that you devote your full attention to the class discussions. Technology such as laptops, tablets, and cell phones can be valuable tools when used appropriately, but they are also a distraction from focusing on your learning. In order to create a positive learning environment, I have the following policies for using technology in this seminar:

- **The use of laptops and tablets are not permitted.** Research shows that taking notes by hand is a more effective way to process and learn course content. If you have a special accommodation that requires you to use a laptop or tablet, please meet with me to discuss suitable arrangements.

- **Do not use your phone during the seminar.** Using your cell phone to access the web, social media, or read/send text messages distracts your ability to focus and learn. It is also disrespectful to everyone else in the room. I encourage you to view this seminar as an “academic journey” and switch your phone to “flight mode” so you will not get distracted by social media notifications or other interruptions.

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. Educational research reveals that college students who take advantage of academic and/or wellness resources are more likely to be successful in their courses!

**University Learning Center**  [www.nyu.edu/ulc](http://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.

**Writing Center**  [cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/ewp/writing-center.html](http://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](http://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](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. 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. 2
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.

Paper #1 Guidelines
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper 1, which is due at the beginning of class on September 16. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.

LEGISLATIVE DAY - There is no seminar class on Wednesday, September 9.

WEEK 2 / Sept. 16
What is College For?

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

Louis Menand, “Live and Learn: Why We Have College,” The New Yorker, June 6, 2011 (14 pp.)

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

Paper #1 Due Date
Paper #1 is due today at the beginning of the seminar class. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.
WEEK 3 / Sept. 23
Origins and Growth of Higher Education in the United States

Reading
Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*
Chapter 2 (pp. 36 - 66) & Chapter 3 (pp. 67 - 101)

Thomas Jefferson, “Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia,” August 4, 1818 (13 pp.)

Weekly 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 October 14. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.

WEEK 4 / Sept. 30
Who Goes to College?

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


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

WEEK 5 / October 7
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)

Weekly Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.
WEEK 6 / October 14
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 Due Date
Paper #2 is due today at the beginning of the seminar class. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.

WEEK 7 / October 21
New York University: Past, Present, and Future (Part 2)

This class will be a visit to the Bobst Library Archives.

Reading
No assigned reading

Weekly Assignments
Two entries in your college journal.

Paper #3 Guidelines
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper #3, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, November 16.

WEEK 8 / October 28
How Do We Learn?

Reading

Weekly Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and two reading reflections posted to NYU Classes.
WEEK 9 / November 4
What Makes an Expert?

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

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

WEEK 10 / November 11
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.)

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

WEEK 11 / November 16
Tackling Messy Problems

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

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

Paper #3 Due Date
Paper #3 is due today at the beginning of the seminar class. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.

Paper #4 Guidelines
You will be provided with guidelines for Paper #4, which is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, November 9.

WEEK 12 / November 25
Peer Editing

Assignments
Peer editing of Paper #4 drafts.
WEEK 13 / December 2
Making the Hard Choices

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


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

WEEK 14 / December 9
Conclusion: Where Do You Go from Here?

Reading

Weekly Assignments
Two entries in your college journal and one reading reflection posted to NYU Classes.

Paper #4 Due Date
Paper #4 is due today at the beginning of the seminar class. The paper must be submitted in print and uploaded to NYU Classes.