

Diversity, Intersectionality, Otherness (FYSM 10100-02)

<p>INSTRUCTOR: Brian Cope, Ph.D.</p> <p>EMAIL: bcope@wooster.edu</p> <p>OFFICE: Kauke 303</p> <p>OFFICE HOURS: M 1-2.</p> 		<p>MWF 12:00-12:50 KAUKE 305</p>  <p>COURSE WEBSITE: https://storiedlives.voices.wooster.edu</p>
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Course Description: This course explores the interrelated concepts of *diversity*, *intersectionality*, and *otherness* as they relate to the human experience, with an emphasis on Spanish-speaking populations in the United States. Students will practice critical inquiry, critical thinking, and critical argumentation as they work collaboratively with one another to build knowledge and generate insightful perspectives on topics related to personal identity, exclusion, belonging, global immigration, and systemic discrimination. We will read *Bird of Four Hundred Voices: A Mexican American Memoir on Music and Belonging* (Eugene Rodriguez, 2024), *This Land is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto* (Suketu Mehta, 2019), and short stories by authors of diverse backgrounds. Several class sessions will also be devoted to examining and discussing art, song, dance, film, and historical documentaries that invite exploration of the aforementioned topics. In addition, we will devote two class sessions to reading a selection of chapters from the first-year reading, *Inciting Joy* (Ross Gay, 2022), looking for intersections with the central topics of the course. This course is designed to fulfill the learning objectives of FYS and help students learn about and adapt to the learning philosophy of the liberal arts.

Required Materials:

1. Composition Book: 100 college-ruled sheets; for daily use.
2. *Bird of Four Hundred Voices: A Mexican American Memoir on Music and Belonging* by Eugene Rodriguez (2024)
3. *Inciting Joy* by Ross gay (2022)
4. *This Land is Our Land: An Immigrant Manifesto* by Suketu Mehta (2019)



Note: All additional texts will be made available on the course website.

Learning Objectives:

The learning objectives and outcomes for this course align with the following [Graduate Qualities](#) of the College of Wooster: Independent Thinking; Integrative and Collaborative Inquiry; Effective Communication; and Global Engagement. The learning objectives for this course are:

1. To develop, practice, and hone the ability to analyze and interpret complex theoretical and creative texts (whether written or visual), cultural artifacts, events and/or ideas.

2. To practice, develop, and hone the abilities that are essential to critical thinking, which include practicing objectivity, perspectival framing, self-awareness, and critical distancing.
3. To communicate effectively orally and in writing. Specifically, students will: 1) cultivate their ability to construct a coherent argument, support the argument with evidence, and defend the argument; 2) practice critical reflection keeping in mind their audience.
4. To practice, develop, and hone the ability to understand, value, and objectively critique multiple perspectives, including one's own.
5. To cultivate the ability to demonstrate information literacy by finding, evaluating, and using appropriate sources while conducting original research.

Expectations and Required Work: All assignments must be completed before class on the dates indicated on the agenda. Generally, preparing for class entails: 1) actively reading or viewing the assigned text and taking notes; 2) completing the homework assignments in your composition book. As a discussion-based course, it is expected that you come to class ready to share your thoughts and ideas and listen to those of your peers. It is also expected that you bring copies of the assigned readings to class along with your notes. **NOTE:** Each class session will require approximately 2+ hours of careful preparation.

Your responsibilities: (1) prepare all assignments thoroughly; (2) attend all classes; (3) engage with your peers and the professor in a productive and constructive manner, always demonstrating professionalism; (4) take ownership of your learning by preparing conscientiously for class and utilizing the resources made available to you on Moodle and on the course website.

Attendance: Regular attendance and participation are essential for success in this course. Therefore, attendance is required. Please be on time and remain engaged for the duration of class. Coming to class late or coming and going during class will result in a reduction to your participation grade. Similarly, for every absence you will receive a zero for class participation for that given day. More than TEN absences will result in an automatic F in the course, regardless of the circumstances. There are no excused or unexcused absences. It is not possible to receive participation points for the days missed nor recuperate missed class work. However, your class participation will be calculated based on the total number of scheduled class periods *minus* two, which means that TWO absences will be automatically forgiven at the end of the semester. I recommend being judicious about the way you use these absences, as they are intended to provide some relief for having missed class due to illness, co-curricular activities, or religious observances. If you become ill and the illness persists for such a length of time as to cause you to miss more than twelve classes, then you should withdraw from the course since it will no longer be possible to receive a passing grade. Keeping me apprised of the circumstances causing you to miss class or to not complete assignments on time is a welcome gesture. Although I cannot make exceptions to the rules outlined in the syllabus, my objective will always be to work with you to help you improve your performance.

Professor Cope's Teaching Philosophy: My role is to support students in their endeavor to learn as well as to challenge them to realize their maximum learning potential. I feel an obligation to hold my students to high (but reasonable) standards; but more than this, I expect my students to hold themselves to reasonably high standards. I invest my time in mentoring, tutoring, advising, and coaching any and all of my students who seek me out for these purposes. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think I can be of assistance. I also welcome any student who comes to me in the interest of advocating for him/herself.

A few things about Professor Cope: I hold M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Spanish. My scholarly work focuses on the 19th and 20th century Spanish novel, Spanish and Latin American film, immigration studies, and intellectual history. As an undergrad, I double majored in Art History and Spanish, and I direct-enrolled for one year at the University of Salamanca (Spain). I am from Prunedale, California (pop. 17,000). My maternal grandparents moved to CA from Nogales, Mexico and their first language was Spanish. I began learning Spanish as a teenager in an environment where bilingualism was and still is common. I genuinely enjoy helping students learn Spanish and other skills like critical thinking and argumentative writing, at all levels. This is my 21st year at the College of Wooster. My pronouns are he/him.

Grade Distribution (standard 10 point scale with + and -; below 60 is a failing grade):

Peer Engagement and Active Participation.....	20%
Journal.....	15%
Quizzes.....	10%
Argumentative Essays.....	30%
Digital Humanities Project.....	20%
Presentation of your Digital Humanities Project.....	5%

Peer Engagement and Active Participation: The success of this course depends on your daily preparation and active participation. In class, you will be asked to engage with your peers in structured conversations about the assigned readings and viewings. Your class participation grade will be calculated based on the *substance* of your contributions, your ability to remain focused and on task, and on your willingness to work constructively with your peers. You can expect to find a relaxed, informal atmosphere in the classroom. I view your willingness to volunteer as a sign that you are prepared and have completed the required assignments. Your reluctance to volunteer or unwillingness to participate will be viewed as lack of preparation. As the professor, my role is to facilitate and set the parameters of our discussion. In other words, the purpose of the course is not for me to share with you everything that I know about the subject matter, but rather to help you make your own discoveries in a controlled, systematic, and relevant way. Finally, I expect the full and equal participation of all of the students—not just a select few. Having little or nothing to say during class is the best way to lose what should be easy points. Conversely, you can do much to ensure your overall success by coming to class well prepared and willing to discuss and debate in a respectful and collegial manner. **Note:** Eating is not allowed in class because, in addition to being a distraction, it can interfere with your ability to communicate and do the assigned tasks. However, drinking a beverage is fine. Participation will be assessed periodically throughout the semester, and the following explains how the grades you receive should be interpreted. Receiving a particular grade means that all or some of the description for that particular range applies to you. Please note that absences, whether excused or unexcused, entail an automatic and cumulative reduction in your grade:

9-10 points (A): Student remained fully engaged and involved in the conversation for the entire class period; student participated regularly and voluntarily; student did his or her part to move the conversation along in a productive direction; student offered relevant and thoughtful comments on the assigned readings or viewings; student was noticeably well prepared.

8 points (B): Student was deficient in one of the above categories, but overall made a notable contribution to the discussion.

7 points (C): Student was deficient in two of the above categories, but overall made an acceptable contribution to the discussion.

6 points (D): Student was deficient in three of the above categories or made little overall effort to contribute to the discussion.

5 points (F): Student was noticeably unprepared, did not do his or her part to move the conversation along in a productive direction, and offered either no comments on the assigned readings or viewings or comments that showed little to no understanding of the assigned material. Student receives 5 points for being present, paying attention and not impeding the flow of the discussion.

1-4 points (F): Student was noticeably unprepared, did not do his or her part to move the conversation along in a productive direction, and offered either no comments on the assigned readings or viewings or comments that showed little to no understanding of the assigned material. Moreover, student's lack of preparation impeded the flow of the conversation or the productivity of his or her peers.

0 points (F): Student was absent. Or, student exhibited disruptive behavior that impacted negatively on the learning environment.

Journal: This project consists of writing in your Composition Book for a set period of time before each class session for the purpose of reflecting on the daily assignments and nurturing your argumentative writing skills. Writing in a journal will help you give order, structure, visibility, and depth to the ideas circulating in your head about the assigned readings and viewings. These daily homework assignments will give you an opportunity to reflect, make connections, and develop as a thinking person. Plan to write in the journal before each class, bring it every day, and refer to it during class. The journal will be collected periodically over the course of the semester in order to give you informal feedback on the quality of your entries. During the second half of the semester, each student will post **three** entries to the course blog that represent their best and most thoughtful work and write thoughtful comments for a minimum of **four** posts by other students in the interest of returning to particular threads explored in class and continuing the conversation outside of class. The deadline for completing the blog component of this project is **Friday, November 7**. Up to 10% may be deducted from the final overall score for not completing or fully completing the blog component. Students who go above and beyond the minimum required posts and show a genuine interest in engaging with peers via the *Blog*, however,

will receive a little bit of extra credit at the end of the semester. The following explains how the grades for the entries are assigned:

- 9-10 points (A):** Student has completed a thoughtful, well-written entry of at least one paragraph in length that demonstrates close familiarity with the assigned reading or viewing. Although this is not a formal essay, the entry contains a clear beginning, middle and end, uses correct grammar and punctuation, thoroughly explores an idea or spells out a valid and reasoned interpretation, is original and insightful, and serves as an excellent point of departure for the forthcoming class discussion. Entry does not appear to have been written in class, and more generally the entries are clearly much more than just class notes (although class notes can be written in the journal).
- 8 points (B):** Student's post shows some modest deficiencies but makes a substantive contribution.
- 7 points (C):** Student's post shows some notable deficiencies but makes a substantive contribution.
- 6 points (D):** Student's post shows some notable deficiencies and makes only a nominal contribution.
- 5 points (E):** Student's post shows some glaring deficiencies and makes no substantive contribution.
- 0 points (F):** Student failed to post anything.

Quizzes: Short quizzes on the reading and viewing assignments will be administered via Moodle and linked to the agenda. Because these quizzes are as much teaching tools as ways to measure understanding, you will be allowed two attempts to complete each one. These quizzes should be taken before class on the day they appear on the agenda in order to help you prepare for class.

Argumentative Essays: Throughout the semester, students will write and electronically submit **three** essays (750 words) in response to a given prompt. Students may revise and resubmit the first two assignments after meeting with the professor to set specific goals for their proposed revision. The grades for the two drafts will be averaged together 60/40, meaning the original draft is weighted higher than the revision. Papers must be submitted in **hard copy** at the beginning of class on the day on which they are due, and revisions are due within one week after completion of the initial grading. It is expected that each response paper will: (1) contain few if any grammatical or spelling errors; (2) be well organized and cohesive; (3) be argumentative or reflective in accordance with the instructions; (4) respond directly and effectively to the prompt without using AI; (5) follow the given instructions carefully.

Digital Humanities Project: Each student will create a website on Voices that imparts knowledge about a topic related to the course and selected in consultation with the professor. Your chosen topic should be meaningful to you and relevant to the class, and each website must have the following required components: 1) An overview of the topic presented with a critical frame that is informed and supported by academic sources; 2) visual content (still images, reels, videos) that successfully engages your audience and enhances the written content; 3) discussion (analysis, not description) of the visual content; 4) a bibliography of all sources consulted in accordance with MLA guidelines. The purpose of the project is to open an enticing window onto a topic related to diversity, intersectionality, and/or otherness that you deem to have special meaning. The focus may be on a space, a person, a group, an identity, a movement, a way of understanding, or an artistic or cultural artifact. More detailed instructions for the project will be given at a later point during the semester. Students in need of assistance while building their Voices website are encouraged to consult a Digital Media Assistant at the Digital Media Bar in Andrews Library (open Sunday through Thursday from 1-10 pm and Friday 1-5). The criteria of evaluation will be posted to the course website.

Final Presentation: Each student will give a 10-minute presentation on their Digital Humanities Project on the scheduled day of the final (Wednesday, December 10 from 4:00-6:30, in Kauke 305). Your presentation should summarize the written content and discuss the unique visual components that support the content. It is expected that your presentation will: (1) be well organized and cohesive; (2) be informative as well as argumentative or reflective; (3) provide learning experience for the other students on a topic related to the course; (4) make an original contribution to the class. The criteria of evaluation will be posted to the course website.

POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Inclusive Learning Statement: Your success in this course is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your academic performance or impact your learning in particular portions of the class, please let me know as soon as possible. You do not need to share specifics, but together we can develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Conscientious Religious Observances: Students whose conscientious religious observance requires their absence from class, campus employment, athletic practice, and/or game days or necessitates accommodations should notify the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement (DCAE) prior to the holiday using the online form. Although not required, it is highly recommended that students submit written notification to the DCAE of the pending religious holiday, preferably at the start of the semester or at least one week before the holiday. The DCAE will distribute written notification to faculty. Distributing the written notification during the first week of classes, campus employment, or at the start of the athletic season will give the student, faculty, coach, or supervisor the most time to prepare for the absence.

Names, Pronouns & Pronunciation: All people have the right to be addressed and referred to as they prefer. I will address and refer to each of you by the names and pronouns that you share with me and the class.

Discriminatory and Bias-Related Harassment Reporting: The College of Wooster is committed to promoting its mission of inclusivity and equity in all aspects of the educational enterprise. This commitment extends to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities, including housing, employment, admissions, financial assistance, and educational and athletic programs at the College. For more information about your rights and reporting options at Wooster, please visit the College's [Discriminatory and Bias-Related Harassment website](#).

Academic Integrity at The College of Wooster: The College's understanding and expectations in regard to issues of academic honesty are fully articulated in the Code of Academic Integrity as published in The Scot's Key and form an essential part of the implicit contract between the student and the College. The Code provides framework at Wooster to help students develop and exhibit honesty in their academic work. You are expected to know and abide by these rules. Dishonesty in any of your academic work is a serious breach of the Code of Academic Integrity and is grounds for serious penalties. Such violations include turning in another person's work as your own, copying from any source without proper citation, violating expectations for a group project, submitting an assignment produced for a course to a second course without the authorization of all the instructors, and dishonesty in connection with your academic work. If you are unsure as to what is permissible, please contact your course instructor.

Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the copying of a sentence (partial or full) or segment of discourse from another source without giving proper credit to its origins. Similarly, sentences copied from another source but with some lexical changes are also considered acts of plagiarism unless proper credit is given. Any intentional act of plagiarism will receive an automatic F on the assignment and will be reported to the Committee on Academic Standards, which can recommend that the student fail the course or be dismissed from the college. Evidence of intentionality includes but is not limited to uncovering the original source of the plagiarized material. If you have questions on what constitutes plagiarism, I encourage you to make an appointment with a staff member at the Writing Center (<https://www.wooster.edu/offices/writing/>).

Policy on the use of AI for writing assignments: Submitting AI generated written work as your own is considered academic dishonesty and is not allowed. If you are unable to verbally summarize the content of a given paper and provide definitions for the vocabulary used, I may assume that the paper was generated by AI. Points will be deducted at my discretion for submitting what I believe is probably AI generated work and may be reported to the Committee on Academic Standards.

Policy on Submitting Papers: Unless otherwise noted, all papers are due on the date specified on the agenda and must be submitted in printed form and stapled.

Policy on Acceptance of Late Work: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified on the agenda. Points will be deducted for work received during the first 48 hours after the deadline at the professor's discretion unless otherwise noted in the syllabus. All papers turned in more than 48 hours late without having consulted the professor will receive an automatic F.

Policy Regarding Conflicts with Academic Responsibilities: The College of Wooster is an academic institution, and its fundamental purpose is to stimulate its students to reach the highest standard of intellectual achievement. As an academic institution with this purpose, the College expects students to give the highest priority to their academic responsibilities. When conflicts arise between academic commitments and complementary programs (including athletic, cultural, educational, and volunteer activities), students, faculty, staff, and administrators all share the

responsibility of minimizing and resolving them. As a student you have the responsibility to inform the faculty member of potential conflicts as soon as you are aware of them, and to discuss and work with the faculty member to identify alternative ways to fulfill your academic commitments without sacrificing the academic integrity and rigor of the course.

Policy Regarding Smart Phones and Laptops: Smart phones may be used in class for the purpose of using applications that facilitate learning or engagement with peers. Points will be deducted from your class participation grade if I *hear* your cell phone, or for any disturbances caused by failure to follow proper cell phone etiquette. The use of laptop computers during class is permitted. Points can be lost, however, if it *appears to me* that a device is being used in a manner that doesn't facilitate learning or engagement with peers (keep in mind this is a very low threshold).

Academic Resource Center (academic Support and disabilities): The Academic Resource Center, which is in APEX (Gault library) offers a variety of academic support services, programs and 1:1 meetings available to all students. Popular areas of support include time management techniques, class preparation tips and test taking strategies. The Academic Resource Center also coordinates accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. Contact: Amber Larson, alarson@wooster.edu, (330) 263-2595, or ARC Website.