

SYLLABUS

How To Change The World



I. Course Description

“Here’s a door opening on a new world: what will I find there?” We will take the words of author Ursula K. Le Guin as an invitation in this class. Because there are things that others can’t imagine for us, each of you will pick the books you will read in this class, books with powerful messages of social change: real stories of the trials and dreams of those who navigate social barriers, voices of authors who help us “imagine some real grounds for hope” through creative fiction and sci-fi and fantasy books, and books by visionaries – social activists – who provide in-depth examinations of social issues, who suggest alternative ways of looking at things, and who imagine new policy agendas. Each unique story will reveal universal messages about humanity.

You pick your books. You select books from the class 100+ contemporary book list (one title per student). Three books for the semester: fiction, non-fiction, and social analysis. Consider books within your interests *and* books you would not have thought of. Books as mirrors (that you can see yourself in) *and* books as windows (to see the lives of others).

In-class time to read. You will have 20-30 minutes to read in class and will be expected to read 20 minutes every day outside of class. Keep weekly notes in a Reader’s Notebook” to share with me during *individual conferences*. Submit a compilation of your notes in three Reflections Papers, one per book, 2-3 double-spaced pages each. The reflections should *respond to the Reader’s Notebook prompts* that I will provide for each book.

All assignments drawn from your Reader’s Notebook. After background work the first month, all assignments will be drawn from your notes in your Reader’s Notebook: (a) a 3-page Research Note using scholarly sources on one interesting question that arises for you as you read your first book, (b) a 3-page Multiple Book Book Review *drawn from your Reader’s Notebook Reflection Papers* on intersecting themes across your three books that stood out for you, and (c) an oral presentation of your Book Review. You will have time in class to start your writing assignments. Expect to do revisions (for a grade up to an 85).

In-class, informal Book Clubs. Regular Book Club meetings made up of small informal groups will be held during class. The purpose of the Book Clubs will be to discuss your various books connected by the broad theme of social change. Once or twice during the semester we’ll meet at a coffee shop, and I’ll treat you to coffee and pastries. (See [The Any Book Book Club](#) for more on independent reading book clubs.)

Brief experiential learning activity. Choose from a list of experiential events (e.g., lectures, on campus. Write a ½ to 1-page reflection on how the event expanded your thinking on social, economic, and cultural barriers and, more broadly, on the theme of social change.

To center our study of social barriers associated with social disparities and inequality – which are all around us, in the news, in social media, in our communities – we will approach our inquiry from a critical literacy perspective. Critical literacy “involves making connections between the text and the world, questioning the author and the text's purpose, and understanding how we are influenced by the text” (*Critical Literacy*, McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2005).

II. Required Readings

Student Book Selections

Each students will select three books on social change from a 100+ list of contemporary books, or books from different periods in history that deal with contemporary issues, curated by the instructor.

Short Background Readings

Hip Deep: Opinion, Essays, and Vision from American Teenagers, by Able Louise Young, Ed. (Providence RI: Next Generation Press, 2006). Selected essays.

“The Cycle of Socialization,” by Bobbie Harro, in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, Maurianne Adams et. al., Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000).

The Sociological Imagination, by C. Wright Mills (Oxford University Press, 2000, First ed. 1959). Excerpts.

Antiblack Racism and the AIDS Epidemic: State Intimacies, by Adam Geary (Springer, 2014). Excerpts from Chapter 1.

Lyndon B. Johnson's Speech Before Congress on Voting Rights, March 15, 1965 (Video).

Seeing is Believing: The Enduring Legacy of Lyndon Johnson, address by Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Washington, DC, May 19, 2008.

“Moral Development: A Review of the Theory,” by Lawrence Kohlberg and Richard H. Hersh, in *Theory Into Practice*, 1977 (16:2, pp 53–59).

III. Course Requirements

Submit writing assignments in hard copy, all double-spaced, except first one.

Cycle of Socialization Outline (3-page)	15%
Reflections on LBJ Museum Tour Essay (3-page)	15%
Reader's Notebook Reflections (Three, 2-3 pages each)	30%
Research Note (2½ to 3-page)	15%
Book Review (3-page) and Oral Presentation	15%
Experiential Activity	10%
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	100%

IV. Course Schedule by Week [Each class session is 1 hour and 15 minutes]

<u>DAILY IN-CLASS PRACTICE</u> Read: Time to read (Book Club every other week) Write: Reader's Notebook (use paper take notes during reading time) Create: Writing assignment draft Conference: Reader's Notebook (periodic)	<u>DAILY OUT-OF-CLASS PRACTICE</u> Read 20 minutes Reader's Notebook: 1 entry per week Work on writing assignment draft
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Date	Class theme and activity	Readings	Due today
Day 1	Course launch!		Book Preferences

Part 1. Background Study

Day 2	<i>What do personal stories tell us about the way society works? Reframing private troubles as public issues</i>	<i>The Sociological Imagination</i> <i>Antiblack Racism and the AIDS Epidemic</i> "The Cycle of Socialization" <i>Hip Deep: Opinion, Essays, and Vision from American Teenagers</i> (Select one essay)	Bring your laptops or paper to work on your evolving writing assignment.
Day 3	MEET AT: Perry-Castañeda Library, Lab 3		Socialization Essay

Part 2. Narrative Non-Fiction: Books that recount factual stories, windows into people's personal journeys

Day 4	<i>Themes of social change in non-fiction</i>	START NON-FICTION BOOK	Daily practice
Day 5	<i>A vision of a Great Society</i> LBJ Presidential Library & Museum Tour	Johnson's 1965 Voting Rights speech (video) "Seeing is Believing: The Enduring Legacy of Lyndon Johnson"	

Day 6		Non-fiction book	Daily practice
Day 7		Non-fiction book – BOOK CLUB	LBJ Essay
Day 8		Non-fiction book	Daily practice
Day 9	A visit by Peers-for Pride	Non-fiction book	Daily practice
Day 10		Non-fiction book	Daily practice
Day 11		Non-fiction book – BOOK CLUB	

Part 3. Fiction: Books that tell stories based on imaginary events and people – providing “alternatives to how we live”

Day 12	<i>Themes of social change in fiction</i>	START FICTION BOOK	Reader’s Notebook Reflection 1
Day 13	Meet at the Perry Casteñada Library (Research Workshop)	Fiction book (reading the first 30 minutes)	
Day 14		Fiction book	Daily Practice
Day 15		Fiction book – BOOK CLUB	Research Note
Day 16		Fiction book	Daily practice
Day 17	<i>The human experience through art</i> UT Blanton Museum of Art Tour		Daily practice
Day 18		Fiction book	Daily practice
Day 19		Fiction book – BOOK CLUB	Reader’s Notebook Reflection 2

Part 4. Social Analysis: Books that systematically examine a social issue with the aim of prompting change

Day 20	<i>Themes of social change in social analysis</i>	START SOCIAL ANALYSIS BOOK	Daily practice
Day 21	<i>Moral development and social ethics</i>	Social analysis book "Moral Development: A Review of the Theory"	Daily practice
Day 22		Social analysis book – BOOK CLUB	
Day 23		Social analysis book	Reader's Notebook Reflection 3
Day 24	No class today - Thanksgiving Holiday		
Day 25		Social analysis book – BOOK CLUB	
Day 26	Intersecting themes across your 3 books	Social analysis book	Book Review Book Review Oral Presentations
Day 27/28	Intersecting themes across your 3 books		Book Review Oral Presentations Experiential Activity Reflection