

SCLA 102 Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking & Communication II: Modern World

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SCLA 102 is based on the fundamental premise that great texts, including novels, plays, speeches, essays, poetry, as well as film, art, and music, inform and inspire students, encourage their creative and imaginative capacities, help them see the world from different perspectives, and broaden their worldviews. Students will examine a series of texts, seeking to understand the context in which these texts were produced as well as what they mean to us today. What do our readings tell us about the pains and pleasures of being human, the use and abuse of power, and our relationship with nature and our communities? How do they advance our self-understanding? How do they increase our understanding of other people and their perspectives?

SCLA 102 fulfills the Oral Communication requirement in the University's Core Curriculum. It is dedicated to developing our students' ability to convey information through oral presentations, advancing their understanding of the importance of rhetorical situations and choices; analyzing and constructing presentations for different audiences; gathering and evaluating sources for presentations, and using visual aids effectively.

SCLA 102 also fulfills 3 credit hours of the 15-credit hour Cornerstone certificate program. Purdue's nationally recognized Cornerstone program shares the wisdom and vision of the Liberal Arts with all Purdue students, enhancing their foundational knowledge while deepening their ability to see unity across disciplines, appreciate ambiguity, and love learning. Cornerstone seeks to cultivate engaged Purdue graduates who can respond creatively and adapt flexibly to the challenges of a changing world.

SCLA 101 and 102 are humanities courses offered through Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts, housed in the College of Liberal Arts. The current director is Professor Melinda Zook (mzook@purdue.edu). If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact her.

COURSE THEME

Our theme: **goodness and evil in the meaning of life**. The presence of good and evil, happiness and suffering, are part of the human experience. How do these experiences contribute to (or take away from) a meaningful and fulfilling human life? Should we try to embrace suffering and evil as a normal part of human experience, or do what we can to fix or avoid these experiences? Throughout this course, we will discuss the power of human experiences – both good and bad – and the way they can transform one’s perspectives on what a purposeful and meaningful life is. Our discussion will draw from historical cases, works of fiction, philosophical texts, contemporary psychology, and present-day and expected future development of technology.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Demonstrate effective, professional delivery, designing and adapting appropriate verbal appeals through vocal intonation and non-verbal cues.
2. Distinguish and apply appropriate informative, persuasive, explanatory, interrogatory, and argumentative strategies and techniques in discussions and formal presentations.
3. Organize presentations with effective supporting materials.
4. Locate and evaluate effective sources of information.
5. Engage critically with transformative texts, drawing on multiple perspectives, including the individual, the historical, and the contemporary.

READINGS

Books:

[Camus, A. \(1989\). *The Stranger*. Vintage. ISBN 978-0679720201](#)

[Hesse, H. \(2002\). *Siddhartha*. Penguin Classics. ISBN 978-0142437186](#)

[Frankl, V. \(2006\). *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Pocket Books. ISBN 978-1416524281](#)

[Shelly, M. \(2018\). *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text*. Penguin Classics. ISBN 978-0143131847](#)

Excerpts, Book Chapters, Poems (available on Brightspace):

Mill, *Utilitarianism*

The Book of Job

Dostoyevsky, F. *The Brother's Karamazov*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your achievement of course learning outcomes will be assessed through a combination of participation, speeches, attendance, and responses to the course readings throughout the semester. The table below presents an overview of the assignments and points available for each along with the grading scale.

Assignments		Percent of Course Grade	Due Date
Discussion/Participation		20%	Every class
Oral Assignments	Introductory Speech	5%	Sept 9-18
	Persuasive Speech	20%	Oct 16 & 21
	Ceremonial Speech	10%	Dec 9 & 11
	Discussion Leader	15%	Varies, 1x/semester
Written Assignments	Reading Responses	15%	(Nearly) Weekly
	Speech Outline	10%	Oct 9
	Peer Feedback	5%	Oct 16 & 21 Dec 9 & 11
	Total	100%	

The grading scale for this class is as follows:

Final Average	Course Grade		Final Average	Course Grade
97.5% and above	A+		77.5-79.4%	C+
92.5-97.4%	A		72.5-77.4%	C
89.5-92.4%	A-		69.5-72.4%	C-
87.5-89.4%	B+		67.5-69.4%	D+
82.5-87.4%	B		62.5-67.4%	D
79.5-82.4%	B-		59.5-62.4%	D-

*Anything less than a 59.45 constitutes a failing grade (F) for the course.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Brief descriptions of graded assignments are below. Detailed instructions for each assignment including a schedule of due dates, rubrics to guide evaluation, and guidelines on participation will be discussed in class and made available on Brightspace.

Participation

Given our focus on oral communication, your participation is essential to your success. You will have regular opportunities in class to practice oral communication through discussion, group activities, and asking questions. Practicing in class consistently will help you develop these skills. To earn full credit for participation, you should (1) be prompt and attend all classes, (2) complete all assigned readings prior to class, (3) consistently engage in class discussion, and (4) display an understanding of the readings and an ability to apply discussion.

It is necessary for you to be present in class to receive credit for participation; *there are no opportunities to "make up" in-class activities.* This class is a face-to-face instructional class, so your attendance is vital. In addition to attending class meetings, you will also be responsible for meeting with Prof. Waggoner in a short one-on-one meeting on Sept 2 or Sept 4.

Oral Assignments

Speeches: You will deliver 3 oral presentations in this course. The first will be a 3-minute introductory speech which will involve you introducing yourself to your classmates, focusing on an instance in your own life where an experience of happiness and/or suffering contributed to your conception of yourself, a newfound meaning or purpose in your life, a shift in your outlook, etc. The third will be a 4-5-minute speech where you will develop an argument about whether a certain piece of technology or medicine, aimed at eliminating human suffering, ought to be created and made widely available. Your argument must draw from our class readings and aims to persuade the audience to either invest in the advancement or to take actions against its development and availability. The third speech will be a 3-minute ceremonial speech where you choose a character from our readings and deliver a ceremonial speech (e.g., wedding toast, eulogy, award presentation, introduction, etc.). A rubric for all oral assignment grading is available at the end of this syllabus.

Leading Discussion: You will practice oral communication with a partner by facilitating discussion among your classmates for a portion of one class meeting. You and your

partner should prepare a set of initial discussion questions and be prepared to react to impromptu turns in class conversation.

Written Assignments

Reading Responses: You are required to complete 8 weekly reading responses throughout the semester (e.g. you have 2 free 'skips'). Reading response prompts will be available on Brightspace. Responses should be between 300-400 words and respond fully to the prompt or question posed. Incomplete or brief responses will not receive credit. You may be asked to discuss your response during class.

Speech Outline: For the persuasive speech, you will submit an outline of the speech in the week prior to presentation.

Peer Feedback: In addition to practicing your delivery of oral communication, you must also practice engaging as an audience member. On speech days, you will be responsible for writing (a) a summary sentence of each classmate's message and (b) a question of them that engages with their presentation. Written feedback will be shared with presenters. If time allows, audience members may be asked to pose their questions in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
WEEK ONE				
Tues	Aug 26	Introduction to SCLA 102	Syllabus	
Thurs	Aug 28	The Value of Critical Thinking		One-on-One Meeting Sign-Up
WEEK TWO				
Tues	Sept 2	One-on-one Meetings w/ Prof. Waggoner	-No Class Meetings-	Meet in BRNG 7154
Thurs	Sept 4	One-on-one Meetings w/ Prof. Waggoner	-No Class Meetings-	Meet in BRNG 7154
WEEK THREE				
Tues	Sept 9		<i>Siddhartha</i> , pp. 3-39	Introductory Speech Round 1
Thurs	Sept 11		<i>Siddhartha</i> , pp. 41-88	Introductory Speech Round 2

				Student Lead Discussion Sign-Up
WEEK FOUR				
Tues	Sept 16		<i>Siddhartha</i> , pp. 89-132	Introductory Speech Round 3
Thurs	Sept 18	How to Make an Argument; Introduction to Utilitarianism		Introductory Speech Round 4
WEEK FIVE				
Tues	Sept 23		Utilitarianism (Mill)	
Thurs	Sept 25		<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i> , pp. XIII-50	
WEEK SIX				
Tues	Sept 30	Persuasive Speaking Assignment Instructions	<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i> , pp. 51-93	Student Lead Discussion
Thurs	Oct 1		<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i> , pp. 97-154	
WEEK SEVEN				
Tues	Oct 7		<i>Book of Job</i> , Ch. 1-9, 38-42	Student Lead Discussion
Thurs	Oct 9		"Rebellion," <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>	Student Lead Discussion Persuasive Speech Outline Due (via Brightspace)
WEEK EIGHT				
Tues	Oct 14	<i>No Classes – Fall Break</i>		
Thurs	Oct 16	Persuasive Speeches Round 1		
WEEK EIGHT				
Tues	Oct 21	Persuasive Speeches Round 2		
Thurs	Oct 23	<i>Class Canceled</i>		

WEEK NINE				
Tues	Oct 28		<i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 7-44	
Thurs	Oct 30		<i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 45-77	Student Lead Discussion
WEEK TEN				
Tues	Nov 4		<i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 81-112	Student Lead Discussion
Thurs	Nov 6		<i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 113-141	Student Lead Discussion
WEEK ELEVEN				
Tues	Nov 11		<i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 145-178	Student Lead Discussion
Thurs	Nov 13		<i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 179-216	
WEEK TWELVE				
Tues	Nov 18		<i>The Stranger</i> , pp. 3-24 (Pt. 1, Chs. 1 & 2)	
Thurs	Nov 20		<i>The Stranger</i> , pp. 25-59 (Pt 1, Chs. 3-6)	Student Lead Discussion
WEEK THIRTEEN				
Tues	Nov 25		<i>Class Canceled</i>	
WEEK FOURTEEN				
Tues	Dec 2		<i>The Stranger</i> , pp. 63-97 (Pt 2, Chs. 1-3)	Student Lead Discussion
Thurs	Dec 4		<i>The Stranger</i> , pp. 98-123 (Pt 2, Chs. 4-5)	
WEEK FIFTEEN				
Tues	Dec 9		<i>Ceremonial Speeches</i>	Ceremonial Speech
Thurs	Dec 11		<i>Ceremonial Speeches</i> <i>Class Wrap Up</i>	Ceremonial Speech

*** **Please Note:** I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus at any time. Revisions will be discussed in-class and shared via email/on Brightspace.

SCLA Oral Presentation Rubric

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Introduction				
How well did the beginning grab the audience's attention?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How effectively did the speaker introduce the topic?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Body				
How effectively did the presentation flow? Was the body well organized?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How well did the presentation utilize credible supportive evidence? Were there sufficient details (explanations, examples, illustrations, etc.) to support the principal ideas of the presentation?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How well did the presentation consider alternative viewpoints, outlooks, counterarguments, etc.? Did the presenter effectively address and deal with these alternatives?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Was the central message clear? Was there a clear main point/thesis/"take away" that was easy to identify?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Conclusion				
How well did the speaker bring the presentation to an end?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Delivery				
How effective was the speaker's eye contact?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How effective was the physical delivery? (posture, gestures, distracting movements, movement)	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How effective was the verbal delivery? (tone, rate, volume, vocal fillers)	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How well did the speaker use language (vocabulary, terminology if applicable, sentence structure)? Was the language appropriate for the audience and did it support the effectiveness of the presentation?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9

COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Office Hours and Communication: Please (!) come to my office hours or schedule an appointment if you have any questions about the course material, preparing for an assignment/speech, or just want to discuss interesting questions! I prefer to meet with students in-person in my office but can also meet via Zoom if need be. Please contact me via email if you wish to set up a meeting outside of my scheduled office hours.

What are office hours?

Office hours are a set time each week when I am available in my office to talk with you. You should come if, you:

- Have questions/are confused about the course material.
- Have questions about the requirements, or preparing, for an upcoming assignment.
- Have questions about taking other SCLA classes, philosophy classes, or ways to pursue your academic interests.
- Want to talk more about literature and philosophical questions!

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

The Purdue Honor Pledge: "As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue."

AI/Chatbot Policy: I will allow you to use AI-generated writing and research assistance for some assignment(s) in this class. In these cases, it will be explicitly stated on the assignment. For all other assignments and work in this class, the use of AI tools, such as chatbots, for writing and research is strictly prohibited. Submitting AI-generated writing or research as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as plagiarism.

For these assignments, if any portion of your assignment was generated by a chatbot, you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the university. Your case will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at this University.

Attendance Policy: This section is a face-to-face instructional class, so your attendance is vital. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and lateness will be noted. Being excessively late or leaving early will count as an absence. Students have three “sick days” you may utilize without penalty during the semester. Each absence after these three/four absences, however, will result in a 0% for that day’s participation grade. After **6 absences** (i.e. on the 7th absence), a student **may receive a failing grade for the course**. This means that not missing class more than 6 times is a **condition for passing the class**. The instructor shall be the judge in all cases regarding excused absences beyond the three sick days

If at the end of the semester, you have not used any of your sick days and have maintained perfect attendance, your final discussion score will be raised by 3 percentage points.

When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, you should inform me of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification is not possible, contact me as soon as possible. Purdue supports students who must miss class due to Grief/Bereavement, Military Service, Jury Duty, Parenting Leave, or the Medically Excused Absence Policy for Students. Please view the [Office of the Dean of Students \(ODOS\) website](#) to complete appropriate request forms. ODOS reviews these requests and, if granted, will notify all your instructors.

Brightspace. Access the course via Purdue’s Brightspace learning management system. Begin with the Start Here tab, which offers further insight to the course and how you can be successful in it. It is strongly suggested that you explore and become familiar not only with the site navigation, but also with content and resources available for this course. See the Student Services widget on the campus homepage for resources such as Technology Help, Academic Help, Campus Resources, and Protect Purdue.

All instructions, assignments, readings, and essential information will be posted on the Brightspace site. Check Brightspace regularly and [enable your notifications](#) at brightspace.purdue.edu. I will announce any course changes in class and via a Brightspace announcement with as much notice as possible.

Freedom of Expression: In this class, students are encouraged to exercise their right to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to express any view on the subject matter introduced by the instructor or other class members within the structure of the course.

While you are responsible for learning the content of this course, you remain free to take a reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, immoral, or unwise, you are encouraged to engage them with reasons, evidence, and arguments. Your course grade will be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. Our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds, but disruptive or disorderly behavior, threats, or harassment are strictly prohibited and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

See the University's "Commitment to Freedom of Expression" and "Bill of Student Rights" in the University Policies and Statements module on Brightspace.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access: Our classroom is composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those who are neurodiverse. I encourage all of us to recognize and embolden the unique strengths, perspectives, and ways of learning that each person brings to this space. All are welcome here, and together we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported in their academic journey. If there are ways that I can facilitate your learning style, please let me know.

Email Etiquette: Please use proper email etiquette. An email must begin with a salutation such as "Dear Prof. X" and end with a proper closing, such as "Sincerely," "Yours," or "Best." You should check your @purdue email daily as this will be the primary means of class communication.

Emergency Preparation Statement: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting Prof. Waggoner via email.

Late Work: Except for extenuating circumstances, late work will not be accepted. However, I am much more likely to make accommodations (if the class schedule allows) for due dates if asked ahead of time.

Nondiscrimination Statement: Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential. In pursuit of its goal of

academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. A hyperlink to Purdue's full Nondiscrimination Policy Statement is included in our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

Questions about a grade? Consultations about grades are welcome to clarify course standards and procedures and to provide guidance that might improve future performance. You have seven (7) days after a grade has been assigned to contest the grade.

There is no extra credit offered in this course. Please do not ask for it. Please also do not ask me to 'bump up' your grade at the end of the semester. This is an unfair request to ask, and would be unfair for me to grant, since many of your other classmates will not make such a request. **Any requests for 'bumps' or extra credit will result in a 1% overall grade penalty every time the request is made.**

Technology: In general, our SCLA 102 class will be a device-free zone. Please bring hard copies of the readings, with your notes and annotations. You should always bring a notebook or binder with a loose leaf for note taking, along with writing utensils, to every class.

Despite us typically using pen and paper, you should also bring your laptop or tablet with you. On occasion, I will ask you to get it out to research a question, look up a particular historical case, etc. Use of technology though, is limited to those instances where I request it. Otherwise, phones, tablets, laptops, etc. should be kept tucked away. If I see a student using their phone, tablet, laptop, etc. at a time when it is not permitted, they will lose 50% of their discussion/participation points for that day. If this occurs a second time during the same class period, the student will be asked to leave class for the day and they will receive a 0% for that day/s discussion/participation.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this policy, please email or meet with me.