Course No. & Title:  HUM C201 IDDL2, The American Dream  
Semester and Term:  FALL 2017  
Day and Dates:  October 23 – December 16, 2017  
Time:  Online  
Campus Location:  Distance Learning

Course Description:  
An interdisciplinary course which employs history, literature and philosophy to examine and explain the cultures and values of a civilization over time and place. Works studied include primary historical and philosophical texts, as well as literary and artistic creations. Currently, the course looks at the civilization of the United States, focusing on the “American Dream,” its origins, growth and significance.

Instructor & contact information:  Joyce Stashenko

Email:  jstashen@bridgeport.edu

Office Hours:  Email at any time, online “live” office hours and phone conference by appointment. My cell phone number is 860.309.8999.

Biography:  I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in English from Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut, and a Master of Arts degree in American Studies from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. I have also done extensive graduate level liberal studies work at SUNY Stonybrook online, which was a revelation regarding online teaching and learning.

I taught both English and History at Granby Memorial High School for several years before retiring in 2013 to pursue college level teaching. While in Granby, I taught American Studies in the UCONN ECE program (AMST 1201), as well as, UCONN US History (HIST 1501, 1502), and Advanced Placement US and Comparative Governments courses. The study of America--its culture, its philosophy, and its politics-- has been my main interest. Writing has always been an interest of mine and a feature of my courses.

In addition to teaching Composition, Business Writing, and Humanities at The University of Bridgeport, I am teaching Composition II at Tunxis Community College in Farmington and English 099 at St. Vincent’s College in Bridgeport.
Required Textbooks:


In addition, we will read “Self Reliance”, Ralph Waldo Emerson, available in full on the Internet, and the following:

The American Nightmare, from Psychology Today. Mar/Apr, 2011 by Lauren Sandler 8 pp

https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/201103/the-american-nightmare

Rethinking the American Dream by David Kamp from Vanity Fair, April 2009


 Downsizing the American Dream, by Marianne Cooper, The Atlantic, 2015


I will also ask you to see Director Ron Howard’s 2005 film Cinderella Man, starring Russell Crowe, Renee Zellwegger, and Paul Giamati OR The Pursuit of Happyness, directed by Gabriele Muccino, starring Will Smith, Jaden Smith, Thandie Newton, and Brian Howe (2006).

Many of these books are available used, at the library, or online. It doesn’t matter which published version of the novels you purchase as long as you read them.

To order textbooks, go to the bookstore website at ubcampusstore.com

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Understand the concept of “The American Dream”
- Recognize that the evaluation of The American Dream very much depends upon who is doing the “dreaming,” what their background is, and what their expectations are.
- Appreciate how The American Dream has impacted every aspect of American life from art, music, literature, history and political science to sociology.
- Discern the contrasts between the earliest versions of The American Dream in the 19th century to the current 21st century views.
- Create a personal family narrative of The American Dream that places them at the center.
- Intelligently conduct online discussions via the Discussion Board in Blackboard.
• Think critically and analytically and draw upon textual references in expressing their thoughts and ideas.
• Appreciate the merits of primary documents, original materials from the period, in gaining a personal understanding of events.
• Attain a level of comfort expressing informed opinions on issues, both verbally and in writing.
• Contribute to the collaborative learning experience of the class by sharing their work and ideas and working in teams.
• Gain additional experience in writing and researching.

First Assignment:
Please be sure to have your books prior to class, as we will be pressed for time in this intense eight-week course.
For credit, write a two-page narrative on the American Dream and your place within it. Using your best writing skills and tell the story of your dream. What is it? How does it differ from the dreams of your grandparent or from those of your contemporaries? How does your concept act as a catalyst in your life? Or is the American Dream no longer a viable aspect of American life and philosophy? You can say anything, of course, but you must explain yourself. What do you base your feelings upon? What actions, realities, and happenings have caused you to feel the way you do? Upload this first assignment by Sunday at the end of the first week of class.

Assignments:
Check the weekly module for particulars, but assignments are of two types, Essays and Discussion postings.

Response Essays
There will be a two to three-page response paper due every other Sunday by midnight. That means you will be writing a paper every two weeks, including the first one, which is due at the end of the first week of class. Your response paper should answer some question about the text, which you can ask yourself or get from the discussion board. Your answer should be supported by quotes from the readings. You must reference the articles we are reading online as well as the work of literature we are working with. The response should be uploaded in the module where it was assigned and should be about 750 words in length (approx. two and a half double-spaced pages).

These 4 essays are worth a combined 60% of your grade.

Final Exam Essay
In addition, there will be a final exam essay in which you relate our study of the American Dream to ideas conveyed in a work of art, poetry or song lyrics for 20% of your grade.
Discussion Postings

The discussion boards are the “heart and soul” of an online course. Postings will be evaluated for effort, thoroughness, understanding of the assignment, spelling and grammar, and timeliness of posting. Late discussion postings will not be accepted. Timely online class participation is essential to this course.

Each student must post at least three times a week – once (by midnight on Thursday) to explore an idea based on the week’s reading assignment and the essential questions suggested by it (a “thread starter”) and twice (by midnight on Sunday) in detailed response to peers’ postings. It is expected that postings will demonstrate a close reading of and a thoughtful reaction to the assigned texts. This writing must be your own work and must not be taken from outside sources. Late work cannot be accepted, as this is a community forum -- which depends upon participation by all. Discussion board postings are worth 20% of your grade.

Description of Weekly Sessions:
Check the module each week for the reading, discussion board, and writing requirements. Every week we will read a book, essay, or see a film. Every week you will be asked to discuss the reading in discussion board and also to respond to the ideas of your peers. Every two weeks you will write a short response paper.

Grading Criteria:
Reaction / Response Essay

Description: A Reaction/Response Essay is a writing assignment where you express your personal thoughts, interpretation, and evaluation of a particular topic; which could be presented through the textbook, an article, a film, recorded music or speech, etc. It is not a research essay and investigation into other sources is not necessary.

Questions you might ask yourself:

- How do you feel about the topic?
- Do you agree with the author’s conclusion based on the presentation of facts?
- Could there have been another interpretation?
- How has this reading impacted your view of the topic?
- Did you realize something that was unknown to you before?
- Did the reading simply reinforce ideas and beliefs you already had about the topic?
- Did you in anyway identify with the topic?

In discussing your reaction/response, it is important to make references to evidence presented. For example, if you disagree with the point of view of the author, please reference the specific point you disagree with and support your claims with examples from the presentation. The intent of the essay is
for you to understand your reaction/response to the topic and express it in a logical, succinct and compelling manner.

**Essay Format:**

- **APA Style:** Refer to Purdue University’s OWL site for more if you need it.  
  https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
- **Length:** 2-3 Pages or 650-1,200 words.
- **Typed using 1” Margins; Double-spaced; 12 point font.**
- **Include:** Your Name; Course Name; Instructor’s Name; Title; and Date.

**Introductory Paragraph:**

- Introduce the presentation of the topic; Book or Article Title, Author, and the year it was published.
- Very brief summary of the topic.
- Thesis statement: Describe the specific issue that you are responding or reacting to; agree, disagree, connect with, evaluate etc.

**Organizing Ideas, Opinions, and Viewpoints:**

- Thesis statement forms the basis of the essay.
- Decide on a few key ideas that express your thesis statement.
- Describe at least three of these key ideas.
- Develop your ideas in each paragraph by using examples, giving details, and using material from the presentation.
- While the use of the first person “I” is generally not appropriate for academic essays, it is appropriate for a response/reaction essay since it is your personal response.

**Body of the Essay:**

Discuss the topic and your response/reaction to it referring to the presentation. If disputing the facts or the conclusions, give solid reasons to support your interpretation.

While this is not a research essay, you can certainly refer to class lectures, other readings or books. Always be accurate with the titles and authors. If you use any quotes from the text book, you may use parenthetical citation. If you quote from another book, then a footnote is necessary.

**Concluding Paragraph:**

Reiteration of your thesis statement and restatement of your response/reaction.

**List your sources in APA style.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introductory paragraph gives reference to the source of the topic by indicating the title, author and publication date, provides a brief and concise summary of the topic and has a specific thesis statement which reflects the writer's reaction and builds an expectation in the reader.</td>
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<td>Body of the essay has a well-written topic sentences and is well-supported with effective citations and clear, mature, and original ideas and refers to the original source whenever necessary. The concluding paragraph rephrases main points and ends with an original and meaningful concluding comment.</td>
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<td>Organization: All ideas are relevant to each other and to the thesis statement. Sentences and paragraphs are logically ordered and smoothly connected to one-another with a variety of appropriate linking devices and reference words, and/or repetition of key words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Mechanics: Sentence forms are accurate. Word choice is accurate and varied. Punctuation, capitalization, spelling, paragraphing, spacing, indentation, and margining are proper. The ideas have been properly cited with a variety of citation techniques (quotation/ summary/ paraphrase). In-text and end-text references are complete and in the right format.</td>
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## Grading Rubric for Discussion Postings

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<th>(Excellent)</th>
<th>(Good)</th>
<th>(Fair)</th>
<th>(Poor)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to the Classroom</strong></td>
<td>Posting is insightful, thorough, and interesting.</td>
<td>Posting is thorough and interesting.</td>
<td>Posting is interesting but lacks insight and depth.</td>
<td>Posting is uninteresting and/or too brief for the assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspires Reply Postings from Other Students</strong></td>
<td>A serious effort is made to frame the discussion posting in such a way as to encourage others to reply. Posting generates questions and opens up new avenues for discussion.</td>
<td>A serious effort is made to frame the discussion posting in such a way as to encourage others to reply.</td>
<td>Some effort is made to frame the discussion posting in such a way as to encourage others to reply.</td>
<td>No effort is made to frame the discussion posting in such a way as to encourage others to reply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrated Understanding of the Reading Assignment</strong></td>
<td>Posting demonstrates a thorough understanding of the reading assignment and is substantiated by several examples from the textbook and/or companion website.</td>
<td>Posting demonstrates an understanding of the reading assignment and is substantiated by at least one example from the textbook and/or companion website.</td>
<td>Posting demonstrates an understanding of the reading assignment but is not substantiated by examples from the textbook and/or companion website.</td>
<td>Posting demonstrates very little understanding of the reading assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling, and Sentence Structure</strong></td>
<td>Posting is highly polished; no grammar or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Posting is polished; maximum of one grammar or spelling error.</td>
<td>Posting is adequate; maximum of two grammar or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Inadequate posting; more than two spelling or grammar errors.</td>
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Course Activities and Grade Weights

Discussion Board Participation    20%

Paper Week 1      15%
Paper Week 3      15%
Paper Week 5      15%
Paper Week 7      15%
Final Exam        20%
Total             100%

Letter Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Points Earned</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>76-74</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>73-70</td>
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<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>86-84</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>83-80</td>
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<td>63-60</td>
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<td>79-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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