COURSE OVERVIEW

In order to learn about human biology and behavior, researchers often have to study people directly by having them participate in their studies as research subjects. On the one hand, scientific research on humans has produced many social benefits – finding cures for life-threatening illnesses, improving human decision-making, identifying effective treatments for mental illness. On the other hand, there is the risk that the experimental procedures leading to these discoveries might somehow harm the study participants. In this course, we will learn about psychological and biomedical studies that have pushed ethical boundaries, consider their costs and benefits, and analyze why they were done in the first place and whether they could be done differently to minimize the risks to the human participants.

Above and beyond being a course about the ethics of human experimentation, this course is an introduction to academic writing. It is guided by the Expos philosophy “that writing and thinking are inseparably related and that good thinking requires good writing” (Harvard Writing Program website). Thinking is a process, and writing is a process. The course is designed to engage you in these processes throughout the semester. You will work on organizing, composing, and revising your ideas as you craft your arguments into essays.

The course is structured around three units:

Unit 1: We will begin with an analysis of Milgram’s classic social psychological study of destructive obedience and consider its ethical challenges and its contributions to the study of human behavior. For your first essay assignment, you will compare Milgram’s study to a recent replication. You will write a critical analysis of these studies in light of the foundational federal guidelines for the protection of human research subjects.

Unit 2: We will next turn to a historical account of a medical study that was clearly unethical (Tuskegee Syphilis Study). For your second assignment, you will use social psychological theory and research findings as a “lens” through which to view this study and to shed light on why the study was done and why it went on for so long. You will also read selected chapters from Bad Blood by James Jones, which provides a historical/cultural analysis of the study.

Unit 3: In the final unit of the course, you will have an opportunity to explore and evaluate the ethics of human experimentation from the perspective of a future researcher. In the third essay, you will use your and your classmates’ experiences as well as your own search of the literature to evaluate whether or not a current practice in human experimentation makes sense – scientific sense and ethical sense. In this multisource research paper, you will use evidence you find to answer questions that researchers actually face (e.g., should I use deception, should I collect data via social networking websites, should I use undergraduates as subjects, etc.).
Important Due Dates

Essay 1 Draft due: Thursday, February 18, 9:45 p.m.

Essay 2 Draft due: Thursday, March 24 9:45 p.m.

Essay 3 Draft due: Thursday, April 21, 9:45 p.m.

HOW THE COURSE WORKS

Required Text and Other Materials

Please note: Although you will need to purchase only two things for this course: one composition notebook and one required text, you will need to print many documents, so plan accordingly.

• A composition book for in-class writing assignments and for note taking.
• James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment – A Tragedy of Race and Medicine*. (It is available for purchase at the Harvard COOP, but you can certainly purchase from some online source as well.)
• Required readings for Units 1, 2, and 3 (handed out in class or available on the course website).
• Optional: A writing handbook to consult about questions of grammar, mechanics, and style. (For example, *Rules for Writers* by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers.)

Grades

The majority of your grade comes from your three essays, according to the following breakdown:

• Essay 1 = 25%
• Essay 2 = 30%
• Essay 3 = 35%
• Class Participation & Ungraded Work = 10%

The standard for each essay also becomes more demanding as we progress, because you are building on certain fundamental skills and techniques with each essay. This is a writing course, so most of your grade will depend on your essays. The remaining 10% represents a serious measure of the quality of your ungraded work (exercises, response papers, drafts, turning in work on time, bringing and using your composition notebook), your constructive (and undistracted) participation in class discussion and conferences, and the care with which you respond to fellow students' work. Although individual exercises and response papers count for a relatively small portion of your final grade, they are crucial to the essay-writing process and, when added together, they can definitely impact your final grade.
Class Participation

One of the benefits of Expos is its small class size. However, to get the most out of this benefit, every student needs to participate fully in the class. We all learn much more from formulating, articulating, and questioning our own thoughts than from simply listening to what others have to say. Our time together is largely devoted to discussion and small-group work. Therefore, you are responsible for being in class, on time, and prepared each time we meet. “Being prepared” means that you have given careful thought to the reading and writing assigned for the day and that you are ready to offer ideas and questions to open our discussion.

Communication

The course works best when we treat it as a semester-long conversation about your writing. To make that conversation possible, there are a few important things to remember:

- **Conferences:** We will have three conferences throughout the semester, in between the first draft and final version of each essay. These conferences are our chance to work closely on your writing and to focus your work in revision. They are most worthwhile when you are the one to guide them. Please come to each conference prepared. You need to have reviewed your essay, considered your questions, and begun to think about revision possibilities and strategies. You should plan on taking notes during our discussions. Because the schedule during conference days is so tight, it might not be possible to reschedule missed conferences.

- **Electronic Communication:** I will rely heavily on email and the course website to communicate with you. It is also the best way for you to communicate with me. As part of your participation in the course, you need to check your email and the course website daily. You are responsible for the information I post there. To avoid the evil distractions of the Internet, I aim to be online between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. every weekday. Please note that I will also check email in the mornings before class but I might not have time to respond. In general, you can count on me responding within 24 hours.

Because much of the communication for the course will be done electronically, you need to make sure you have access to the Internet if you go out of town. I will not accept computer breakdowns or lack of email access as excuses for not being prepared for class or for not completing assignments. On a side note: you should always back up your work.

Canvas Course Website

The course website is an important resource best accessed through canvas.harvard.edu. We will use the website in a variety of ways, so check it often. The website is where you’ll access:

- Class announcements.
- Course handouts and most readings.
- The Assignments tab for turning in work (response papers and essays).
- The conference sign-up tool (Scheduler on Canvas). This will take you to the online sign-up list where you can choose a time slot.
WRITTEN WORK

Submitting Essays

All drafts and revisions must be uploaded to our course website. The document must be in Microsoft Word. Please pay careful attention to the instructions and the general guidelines about format and other details that are explained on each unit assignment.

Please note: You will submit nearly all your work electronically. As you upload each document, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have saved the document as a Word document (.doc or .docx). It is also your responsibility to ensure that the document you upload is not corrupted or damaged. If I cannot open or read your document, the essay will be subject to a late penalty.

Revision

Because of the emphasis this course places on revision, the schedule is designed to allow you as much revision time per essay as possible – usually at least five days after your draft conference. Since you’ll have a significant span of days in which to revise, the expectations for this aspect of your work in the course are high.

COURSE POLICIES

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Other Portable Electronic Devices

Even though many of our readings will be in digital form on the course website and even though much of our communication will done electronically and even though I love my iPhone as much as the next person, for the most part, there will be no need for students to use any electronic devices in class. This is the case even if you are only three moves away from passing level 323 on Candy Crush. On the rare occasions when you might need to use a laptop in class or need to have access to something on the course website during class, I will certainly let you know ahead of time. Otherwise, please close your computer and put away your phone during class. That way we can all make eye contact.

We all know that electronic devices offer many temptations for distraction. In small classes such as this, but even in larger classes, professors can usually tell when you are doing something unrelated to the class on your computer. However, even if you “get away with it,” you lose. Even worse, those around you lose too. Research suggests that we are not as good at multi-tasking as we like to think we are (for more details, see unicycling clown study by Hyman, Boss, Wise, McKenzie, & Caggiano, 2010). Further research shows that electronic device distractions affect not only the user, but also those around her or him (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013). If you find that resistance is futile, consider using one of the self-control applications available (e.g., selfcontrolapp.com).
Deadlines

For many class meetings, you will have due a preliminary assignment (e.g., response paper, presentation) or some other reading or writing exercise to help you develop your thinking and writing for that unit. Our work together in class will often be based on those assignments. For those reasons, it is imperative that you turn your work in on time. Turning preliminary assignments in late will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

Essay drafts or revisions turned in after the deadline will be penalized a third of a letter-grade on the final essay for each day they are late. If you cannot meet a deadline due to a medical emergency, you must contact me as soon as physically possible, and you might be required to produce a note from UHS. In the event of a family emergency, you must contact me right away, and you might be required to ask your dean to contact me by email or phone.

Of course, even in the most carefully organized semesters, unexpected circumstances can arise. Therefore, each student is allowed ONE 24-hour extension (a “wild card”) for a response paper or an essay draft or an essay revision. To avoid being penalized for your late work, you must let me know you are taking your wild card extension, you must submit the assignment to me (via Canvas) within 24 hours of the original due date and time, and you must be on time with the other work due on that day as well.

Other than this single wild card extension, all deadlines in the course are firm. I do not grant further extensions, except in the case of medical or family emergency.

Harvard College Writing Program Policy on Attendance

The Harvard College Writing Program has a clear and firm policy on attendance. It is the same across all sections.

Because Expos has a shorter semester and fewer class hours than other courses, and because instruction in Expos proceeds by sequential writing activities, your consistent attendance is essential. *If you are absent without medical excuse more than twice, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.* On the occasion of your second unexcused absence, you will receive a letter warning you of your situation. This letter will also be sent to your Resident Dean, so the College can give you whatever supervision and support you need to complete the course.

Apart from religious holidays, only medical absences can be excused. In the case of a medical problem, you should contact your preceptor before the class to explain, but in any event within 24 hours: otherwise you will be required to provide a note from UHS or another medical official, or your Resident Dean. *Absences because of special events such as athletic meets, debates, conferences, and concerts are not excusable absences.* If such an event is very important to you, you may decide to take one of your two allowable unexcused absences; but again, you are expected to contact your preceptor beforehand if you will miss a class, or at least within 24 hours. If you wish to attend an event that will put you over the two-absence limit, you should contact your Resident Dean and you must directly petition the Expository Writing Senior Preceptor, who will grant such petitions only in extraordinary circumstances and only when your work in the class has been exemplary.

Please note: If you get to class more than 13 minutes late three times, that will be counted as an absence.

Harvard College Writing Program Policy on Completion of Work
Harvard College Writing Program has a clear and firm policy on completion of work. It is the same across all sections.

Because your Expos course is a planned sequence of writing, you must write all of the assigned essays to pass the course, and you must write them within the schedule of the course—not in the last few days of the semester after you have fallen behind. You will receive a letter reminding you of these requirements, therefore, if you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of an essay by the final due date in that essay unit. The letter will also specify the new date by which you must submit the late work and will be copied to your Resident Dean. If you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of the essay by this new date, and you have not documented a medical problem, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.

**Academic Honesty**

In this class, we will talk about and practice approaches to working well with sources, developing your own ideas, and avoiding plagiarism or misuse of sources. Throughout the semester we will work on the proper use of sources, including how to cite and how to avoid plagiarism. You should always feel free to ask me questions about this material. *All the work that you submit for this course must be your own work, and that work should not make use of outside sources unless that is explicitly part of the assignment or you have discussed it with me and I have approved the outside source.* Any student submitting plagiarized work is eligible to fail the course and to be subject to disciplinary action by the Honor Council.

**Collaboration**

Students in writing courses often receive feedback on their ideas and written work from their peers, their instructor, and possibly from tutors in the Writing Center. Such collaboration, which also includes developing or refining ideas in conversation with other students and through peer review of written work, is permitted in this course. Scholars customarily turn to their colleagues for feedback on their ideas and their work. When the help is significant, the colleague is thanked in a footnote or endnote. It is expected that you'll follow that convention in Expos. That said, students do not need to acknowledge discussion with others about general approaches to assignments or assistance with proofreading. Most importantly, all the work you submit for this course must be your own; in other words, writing response papers, drafts, or revisions with other students is prohibited and can result in disciplinary action by the Honor Council.

**WRITING CENTER**

At any stage of the writing process – brainstorming ideas, reviewing drafts, approaching revisions, etc. – you may want some extra attention on your essays. The Writing Center (located on the garden level of the Barker Center) offers hour-long appointments with trained tutors. I can't stress strongly enough the benefit of the service they provide. Regardless of the “strength” or “weakness” of the essay, any piece of writing benefits from further review and a fresh perspective. Visit the Writing Center's web site at http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr to make an appointment. Tutors also hold drop-in office hours at other campus locations; see the Writing Center website for details. In addition, each semester one or two tutors are available specifically to work with freshman for whom English is a second language.