

Connections: Comparative Perspectives on Higher Education  
SOC 267-01 ♦ Spring 2015  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:50 AM, Craig-Lee 151

Prerequisites: Completion of FYS, FYW, SB general education course, and at least 45 credits; Connections courses may not be used as part of a major or minor.

Instructor: Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

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Office: 451 Craig-Lee Hall

Open Office Hours: Tues/Thurs immediately after class and 2:30-3:30 PM or by appointment

**This course uses the Blackboard course management system.**

### Course Description

This course will provide students with a comparative and interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary and historical issues in higher education. It will use the RIC experience as a case study for analyzing current controversies around colleges and universities through guest lectures, multimedia projects, and frequent reflective and analytical writing experiences. As part of the RIC General Education program, it is designed to fulfill five specific learning outcomes, which are detailed on page 2 of this syllabus.

### Course Materials

There are five required books in this course. Paperback or hardcover, new or used, paper or ebook versions are all acceptable; inexpensive used versions should be available online for all four titles. All are available at Adams Library on reserve.

Armstrong, Elizabeth and Laura Hamilton. 2013. *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*. ISBN: 9780674049574. (\$35.00 list)

Arum, Richard and Josipa Roksa. 2014. *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions on College Campuses*. ISBN: 9780226197289. (\$18.00 list)

Ehrenberg, Ronald. 2002. *Tuition Rising: Why College Costs so Much*. ISBN: 9780674009882. (\$29.00 list). This book will be available in its entirety as an unlimited-used ebook via Adams Library electronic reserves. If you prefer to read on paper, you should purchase it.

Nathan, Rebekah. 2006. *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. ISBN: 9780143037477. (\$15.00 list)

Stevens, Mitchell. 2009. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. ISBN: 9780674034945. (\$19.00 list) This book will be available in its entirety as an unlimited-used ebook via Adams Library electronic reserves. If you prefer to read on paper, you should purchase it.

Other required and optional course readings will be made available electronically via Blackboard. Students are encouraged to validate their RIC IDs at the library as soon as possible.

THIS SYLLABUS IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## Learning Outcomes

All courses that meet the Connections requirement for general education at Rhode Island College must enable students to meet a set of five general education learning outcomes. This section of the syllabus will outline these learning outcomes and describe how this course will enable students to meet those outcomes.

- 1) *Written Communication (WC)*: Students will understand the different purposes of writing and employ the conventions of writing in their major fields. Students will produce writing that is well organized, supported by evidence, demonstrates correct usage of grammar and terminology, and is appropriate to the academic context. In this course, students will complete a variety of writing assignments in different genres, including blog posts, reflective essays, and formal academic writing, and will write frequently throughout the semester.
- 2) *Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT)*: Students will be able to analyze and interpret information from multiple perspectives, question assumptions and conclusions, and understand the impact of biases, including their own, on thinking and learning. In this course, students will practice using data to evaluate arguments, will reflect on their own learning experiences, and will compare different disciplinary perspectives on common ideas.
- 3) *Research Fluency (RF)*: Students will demonstrate the ability to access, understand, evaluate, and ethically use information to address a wide range of goals or problems. In this course, students will learn to access empirical data and use it to evaluate claims made about higher education.
- 4) *Oral Communication (OC)*: Students will learn to speak in a clearly expressed, purposeful, and carefully organized way that engages and connects with their audience. In this course, students will participate in a group oral presentation and will serve as discussion leaders.
- 5) *Collaborative Work (CW)*: Students will learn to interact appropriately as part of a team to design and implement a strategy to achieve a team goal and to evaluate the process. In this course, students will work in teams on a major project and will collaboratively present the results of this work.

## Course Requirements

This course incorporates a variety of ways for you to demonstrate your engagement, learning, and competency regarding the course material. You will have some flexibility in choosing how and where to deploy your efforts; if you were to successfully complete all possible course assignments, you could earn 110+ points (the cutoff for an A grade is roughly 95 points). Because there are so many opportunities to earn points, most assignments cannot be made up or turned in late. If you experience an unusual or extraordinary circumstance, such as hospitalization, that requires an alternative plan for completing your work, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss this.

- A) *Weekly Blogs*. Most weeks during the course, students will author a blog post. These posts will not be public, but I may draw on your insights in class discussions (if you plan on writing something you do not want to have shared, just note that in your post) and I encourage you to share your thoughts in class. Specific guidelines and prompts for these posts will be made available each week, but in general these blog posts will ask students to evaluate the arguments made in course readings in light of their own personal experiences in higher education. Blog posts cannot be submitted late or made up. **Unless otherwise noted, blog posts are due Tuesday mornings by 9:30 am** so that you are fully prepared to participate in each week's discussions. Blogs will be graded on a scale of 0-3 with approximately 10 blog posts during the semester, totaling **30** points.
- B) *Group Project*. As part of a small group of 3-5 students, you will work on a group project throughout the second half of the course; this project will require a completed written paper or multimedia project, an oral presentation, and an individual reflective evaluation. Groups will be allocated according to student interest to one of two project types:
- ❖ RIC Marketing Plan—in this project, student groups will complete a multimedia marketing plan using video, web, and/or graphical elements designed to draw attention to some particular feature of Rhode Island College.
  - ❖ RIC Action Plan—in this project, student groups will use data to evaluate some program or policy at RIC and propose changes that will facilitate the resolution of any limitations discovered in the evaluation.
- The project as a whole will be worth **25** points, with 10 points allocated to the paper or multimedia portion, 10 points to the presentation, and 5 points to the individual reflection.
- C) *Op-ed Evaluation*. Near the midpoint in the semester, each student will select an op-ed published in a mainstream or higher education publication from a list of choices and will write an essay drawing on data and other sources to evaluate the claims made in the op-ed. **15 points**
- D) *Final Narrative Essay*. During the final exam period, each student will submit a narrative essay in which they reflect on their own educational experiences in general and on this course in particular by using the tools, data, and arguments developed during the semester as an analytical lens. **20 points**
- E) *Class Participation*. Class participation will be a major component of this course. Participation will involve not only the typical expectation of involvement in class discussions (measured using a rubric available in Blackboard), but also will involve two additional components. First of all, students will complete various individual or small-group activities in class; these will not be announced on the syllabus and cannot be made up. Second of all, each student will be assigned to a team which will act as discussion leaders for one of our visiting guest lecturers. This will happen twice during the semester. These students will be responsible for coming to class prepared with questions for the guest and the class as a whole to consider. In addition to those Remember that in order to participate you must be present in class; repeated absences will reduce your grade. In addition, remember that participation is dependent on preparation, which means you must read the assigned material *before* each class session. **20 points**

## Schedule of Topics

All readings and assignments are due on the **first** course date for which they are assigned. Readings that do not come from one of the four required texts can be found on Blackboard.

Tuesday, January 20                      **First Class Meeting**

- Read entire syllabus

Thursday, January 22                      **Introduction to the Study of Higher Education**

- Visit and become comfortable with the course Blackboard site
- Blackboard student survey due by noon on Friday, January 23
- Read Hout, "Social and Economic Returns to College," *Annual Review of Sociology*
- Read RIC history at <http://www.ric.edu/ric150/historical.html>

January 27 & 29                              **Historical and Cross-Cultural Comparisons**

- Haskins, *The Rise of Universities*
  - Delbanco, "From College to University," *College: What it Is, Was, and Should Be*
  - Weber, "The Chinese Literati"
  - Blog Post Due January 27 at 9:30 am
  - Discussion leader survey due January 27 by 6 pm
- Jan 29: Visit from Claudine Griggs of the Writing Center  
*February 2 is the Drop/ Add deadline*

February 3 & 5                              **Getting In**

- Stevens, *Creating a Class*, entire book
  - Blog Post Due February 3 at 9:30 am
- February 3: Visit from John McLaughlin, Director of Admissions

February 10 & 12                              **Paying for Education**

- Ehrenberg, *Tuition Rising*, pages 1-69
  - Monks, "The Role of Tuition, Financial Aid Policies, and Student Outcomes on Average Student Debt," Cornell Higher Education Research Institute
  - Gillen, "Introducing Bennett Hypothesis 2.0," Center for College Affordability and Productivity
  - Blog Post Due February 10 at 9:30 am
- February 10: Visit from Janet O'Connor, Financial Aid

February 17 & 19                              **Running a Campus**

- Ehrenberg, *Tuition Rising*, pgs. 157-70, 209-30, and 249-65
  - Ginsberg, "The Growth of Administration," *The Fall of the Faculty* pgs. 1-40
  - Smelser, "Accretion, Administration, and Higher Education Politics," *Dynamics of the Contemporary University* pgs. 58-66
  - Blog Post Due February 17 at 9:30 am
  - Select op-ed for critique & submit for approval by Friday, February 20 at 9 am
- February 17: Panel Discussion of administrative staff featuring Maggie Sullivan, Interim Director of Human Resources; Jayne Nightingale, OASIS; James Murphey, Sustainability Coordinator; Arthur Patrie, Associate Director of College Dining Services

Tuesday, February 24                    **Higher Education Workplaces**

- Bosquet, "Students Are Already Workers," *How the University Works*
- Perlin, "Cheerleaders on Campus," *Intern Nation*
- Tirelli, "Adjuncts and More Adjuncts," *Social Text*
- Blog Post Due February 24 at 9:30 am

Thursday, February 26                    **Clinic on Online Research Fluency**

*Today's class will meet in the Gaige 164 Computer Lab*

- Reading TBA (see Blackboard for more information)
- Bring a digital or paper copy of the op-ed critique worksheet to class with Part I completed.
- Group Project Admissions Letter due Friday, February 28 by 5 pm

March 3 & 5                                **Athletics**

- Branch, "The Shame of College Sports," *The Atlantic*
  - Ehrenberg, "Intercollegiate Athletics," *Tuition Rising*, pgs. 233-248
  - Shulman and Bowen, "The Admissions Game," "Key Empirical Findings," and "Propositions," from *The Game of Life*, pgs. 29-58, 258-67, and 294-309
  - Blog Post Due March 3 at 9:30 am
- March 3: Visit from Don Tencher, Director of Athletics
- Op-Ed Critique Due Friday, March 6 by 5 pm

March 10 & 12                            **Spring Break: No Class**

March 17 & 19                            **Student Life**

- Nathan, *My Freshman Year*, pgs. 1-132
  - Blog Post Due March 17 at 9:30 am
- March 17: Visit from Marissa Weiss, Assistant Director of Student Activities, and Teresa Brown, Director of Residential Life

March 24 & 26                            **Learning Something, Week I**

*Class on March 24 will meet in the Gaige 164 computer lab*

- Arum & Roksa, *Aspiring Adults Adrift*, pages 1-14 and 25-46
  - Arum & Roksa, *Academically Adrift*, pages 21-26 and 59-91
  - Chambliss & Takacs, *How College Works*, page 104-133
  - Blog Post Due March 24 at 9:30 am
- March 24: Skype visit from Josipa Roksa, author of *Academically Adrift* and *Aspiring Adults Adrift*  
*March 27<sup>th</sup> is the Withdrawal Deadline*

March 31 & April 2                    **Learning Something, Week II**

- Xu and Jaggars, "Online and Hybrid Course Enrollment and Performance," CCRC
  - Lual, "Neoliberalism and Higher Education," *Teaching Sociology*
  - Other reading/assignments TBA; see Blackboard for more information
  - Blog Post Due March 31 at 9:30 am
- March 31: Visit from Tish Brennan, Director of Reference at Adams Library

April 7 & 9

**After College, Week I**

- Arum and Roksa, *Aspiring Adults Adrift*, 46-119 and 133-136
- Schneider and Vivari, "The Earning Power of Graduates from Tennessee's Colleges and Universities," CollegeMeasures.org
- Blog Post Due April 7 at 9:30 am

April 9: Visit from Linda Kent-Davis, Director of the Career Development Center

April 14 & 16

**After College, Week II**

- Armstrong and Hamilton, *Paying for the Party*, pgs. 26-49 and 118-234 required (read the rest of the book, except for chapter 9, if you have time)
- Blog Post Due April 14 at 9:30 am

Tuesday, April 21

**Protest and Change on Campus**

- Arthur (hi), *Student Activism and Curricular Change on Campus*, chapters 1, 7, 9 and 10, though of course I encourage you to read the rest
- Final Blog Post Due Tuesday, April 21 at 9:30 am

Thursday, April 23

**Group Work Time/Consultations**

- Bring your works-in-progress to class
- Cottom, "Does Blanket 'Don't Go to Graduate School!' Advice Ignore Race and Reality?," *Chronicle of Higher Education*
- Arthur, "The Spectre of Class: Educating and Advising for Self-Efficacy," *Issues in Teaching & Learning*

Tuesday, April 28

**Group Presentations/Special Topics**

- Group written or multimedia projects due by 9:30 am

Thursday, April 30

**Concluding Thoughts: The Future of Higher Education**

- Armstrong and Hamilton, *Paying for the Party*, Chapter 9
- Group Process Evaluation due 9:00 am, Friday May 1

Tuesday, May 5

- Makeup date for group presentations, if needed

Thursday, May 7, 10:00 am

- ~~Final Reflective Essay Due~~ at 10:00 am

Late essays may result in grades of incomplete; for graduating seniors, late essays may prevent you from walking at graduation due to grade submission deadlines.

## Course Policies

### *Academic Integrity*

All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty. More information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, as well as RIC policies, can be found at <http://ric.libguides.com/integrity>. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or reference the RIC Sociology Term Paper Guide at <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/termpaperguide.php>.
- Turning in research reports that are fabricates or which do not accurately represent the research activities in which you engaged.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with another student on an assignment, or seeking assistance with the content of your work from professionals, parents, or peers, without prior permission. (The exception to this policy is proofreading.)
- Copying off of another student or off of materials you have brought without permission during an exam. This includes text messaging and use of the internet during exams.
- Destroying course materials or otherwise preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

You should be aware that I have caught many students who have engaged in academic dishonesty. Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC for all offenses. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

### *Extensions, Absences, and Attendance*

You are expected to attend class regularly, but I am aware that emergencies do come up and that this class is not the only priority in your life. It is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate (I do not provide notes to students) and to meet with me to clarify what you have missed. If you must be late to a class or if you must leave early, be sure not to disturb other students with your comings and goings. Be aware that repeated absences, even if excused, may imperil your ability to do well in the course, and that you cannot earn participation points (or points for in-class assignments, which cannot be made up) if you are not present.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard. Assignments that are not posted directly to an application (like blog posts) must be saved in \*.rtf, \*.doc, or \*.docx (preferred). Blackboard does log your submissions; you can return to an assignment yourself to see if you have submitted it correctly, and I am happy to show you how to

do this so that you will not need to email me to see if I have received your work. If unavoidable circumstances require you to seek an extension on your work, I am generally open to providing one **if** you request the extension via email at least 24 hours prior to the due date (unless the extension is due to a major emergency such as a health crisis or death in the family). Oral presentations cannot be rescheduled, but in cases of documented emergencies an alternative will be arranged.

### *Course Technology*

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently, at a minimum twice a week before each class meeting. If you primarily use another email account, you must forward your RIC email, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. Students are also responsible for being able to access Blackboard. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services (<http://www.ric.edu/uss/> or x8886) right away so that you do not fall behind in the course. You can also contact USS for more information about computer facilities for working on multimedia projects or practicing oral presentations.

### *Students with Disabilities*

If you have a disability that might interfere with your ability to perform at your best in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made. Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with Disability Services in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/>

### *Supplemental Services*

RIC provides a variety of supplemental services to help students succeed. At the Writing Center, trained peers will work with you to improve your writing. At OASIS, you can get tutoring and help with academic and study skills. The Counseling Center is available for students experiencing stress with school or personal life, substance abuse, personal crises, or other issues. See the links below for more information.

Writing Center: <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>

Academic and Study Skills: <http://www.ric.edu/oasis/>

Counseling Center: <http://www.ric.edu/counselingctr/>