

# English FYS I: Empathy and Justice

Lakeview 205  
Section 045  
Thursday 9:00-12:00

Fall 2022

**Instructor:** Santiago Sanchez Borboa (he/his/him)

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**Office Hours:** by appointment

## Description

We are often taught to look at arguments as an adversarial competition, with critical thinking helping us win fights. This course encourages students to engage in a more empathetic approach to argumentation that frames it as a cooperative endeavor where we help each other be more informed and think better. In this approach, critical thinking illuminates how our thinking is embedded and affected by social structures in ways that hinder this cooperative endeavor. We will pay special attention to thinking and writing critically yet empathetically about issues of social difference and social justice and about solutions to social problems. In class, we will engage deeply with course materials in discussions that foster critical thinking and inform student writing. Close reading of classic and contemporary texts by scholars/artists (including but not limited to William Clifford, William James, Maureen Linker, Sara Ahmed, Gregory Mantsios, Peggy McIntosh, and Patricia Hill Collins) will serve to inspire students to pursue their own reflections on social difference and justice. FYS I is an intensive writing course that prepares students for FYS II and other Liberal Arts courses. In class, we will engage deeply with course materials in productive discussions that will foster critical thinking and inform student writing. In addition to weekly homework assignments and in-class writing, students can expect to compose and revise 15-20 double-spaced pages of scaffolded, formal, revisable writing over the course of the term through a process that hones their argumentative skills and builds their confidence in their reasoning and writing.

## Learning Goal:

Students will learn to embrace the writing process and establish writerly habits, while developing guided critical reading, thinking, and writing skills necessary for their success in upper-level course work. Students learn to collaborate and to take their work, and the work of their peers seriously, thereby establishing best practices of critique.

## Learning Outcomes:

- **formulate inquiries** emerging from readings of texts
- **analyze and synthesize multiple texts** and **cite evidence**
- construct a **claim** and an **argument**

- practice the writerly process (i.e. revision, reflection, and peer review)

### Learning Outcomes for Written Communication:

- Students will be able to write an effective thesis statement.
- Students will be able to write an essay that makes a strong argument in the service of a thesis.
- Students will write in language that effectively communicates meaning to readers.
- Students will be able to integrate source material into their writing assignments.
- Students will be able to properly cite sources in a written assignment.

## Grading and Assignments

15%: Quality of participation and class attendance

20%: Short Written Assignments

15%: Weekly pre-class discussion posts (due weekly by 11:59 pm on Wednesday before each class)

20%: First Paper

30%: Final Paper

### Assignment Descriptions

#### **Pre-Class Discussion Board Posts:**

By 11:59 pm on Wednesday prior to each class, please post to the discussion board on the course Canvas page a short reflection presenting one or two questions, comments, thoughts, or issues raised by the week's reading, listening, and viewing. Alternatively, you may wish to link or attach a clip, track, news story, or artwork, which you feel connects to our weekly course topics. These posts will serve not only to prepare you to participate effectively in class discussion but will also provide you with a direct opportunity to shape our course discussions and content and potentially develop questions and arguments you may wish to further develop in your essays.

#### **Short Written Assignments:**

These are written assignments of varying lengths in which you will tackle focused issues (e.g., stating a claim, arguing for a claim, explicating a concept, integrating source into an argument). These will help as building blocks that will form a foundation upon which to build for the major paper assignments.

#### **First Paper:**

The first major paper is a chance for you to explore in a paper of 1000-1500 words the ideas from the first unit of the course via an argument-driven essay that explains the fundamentals of the concepts intellectual empathy and their relevance to social justice. You will have opportunities to turn in drafts of this paper and revise it in the context of peer editing and on the basis of instructor feedback.

#### **Final Paper:**

The final paper is a chance for you to explore in a paper of 1500-1750 words the ideas from the second unit of the course via an argument-driven essay that applies the concepts and method of intellectual empathy in an in-depth manner to a particular social justice issue of your choice. You will have

opportunities to turn in drafts of this essay and revise it in the context of peer editing and on the basis of instructor feedback.

#### **Course Credit:**

Receiving credit for this course means you have worked at a 'C' level or higher. We believe you should be working at an 'A' level, and will teach you accordingly.

## Participation and Preparation:

### Preparation:

The success of any class hinges on both the energy participants bring to class activities and participants' readiness to contribute. Holding you accountable for class preparation supports your best efforts to keep up with the work and ensures that we maintain lively, intellectually challenging discussions. I expect that you will:

- **complete the reading** for each class and show up prepared to write and talk about it.
- **annotate** and make note of questions as you read: confusion, uncertainty, and ideas that occur to you are invaluable for discussion and for your writing in the course. Successful writing relies on this kind of active reading.
- **complete all writing and activities** when they are due. See course calendar for details and deadlines.
- **demonstrate the preparation you've done** by contributing actively to full-class and small group discussion and activities.

### Participation:

- **Attend class every week** equipped with appropriate texts and materials
- **Arrive to class on time;** coming late is poor form and interferes with your own and with others' learning. That being said, during the pandemic it may take longer to get around, especially when traveling by public transportation. **If there is a reason you expect to be late on a regular basis please inform me as soon as possible.**
- **Contribute actively** to discussions, workshops, peer review, and group/partner work. This means ask questions, offer helpful, creative, and engaged comments, and take initiative when working in groups/ with partners; listen attentively when others are speaking; stay on topic and bring stray comments back to the text.
- **Be respectful to your classmates, the instructor, and course materials**
- **If you are concerned that you will not be able to participate fully in class,** you should arrange to meet with me to discuss alternatives.

**Class Attendance:**

Should you be absent from class for any reason, please send me an email before the start of that day's class.

I expect that you arrive on time to all class meetings. You are responsible for all information covered in class on any days for which you are absent. Please take the necessary steps and precautions to ensure that you have access to information conveyed in each class.

**Absence Policy:**

A writing studio is a space in which we work together to develop knowledge collaboratively. That means that each of us has a responsibility to attend class ready to listen, think, read, write, re-read, revise, speak and work with one another thoughtfully. To do all of that, you must complete the day's reading assignments and writing exercises conscientiously and on time and come to class prepared to work in the spirit of progressing your thinking and writing (and that of your classmates') forward. Every class session is meaningful; what we do in one session will build on what has come before, and, missing even a single class means missing a lot.

That being said, as a part of protecting one another and our larger community from COVID-19 and other forms of transmissible illness, students who are sick, have ANY symptoms of illness, or who have tested positive for Covid-19 even if they are asymptomatic should not participate in any in-person class activity. PLEASE STAY HOME.

All absences from class activity caused by illness or the need to self-quarantine WILL BE EXCUSED. Although the absence will be excused, students will be asked to communicate with the instructor (see "Student Responsibilities," below) and are required to participate in asynchronous independent work, to the extent that they are able to do so. If while at home a student feels too ill to make any progress on their coursework, they should reach out to their instructor to discuss an alternative plan. I am a resource for each of my students and want to support you in continuing to make course progress even when you must be out of class due to illness or self-quarantine.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Unless ill or self-quarantining, students are expected to attend class regularly and on time, every week. Punctuality is important.
- Students should contact the instructor (email: [ssanch10@saic.edu](mailto:ssanch10@saic.edu)) regarding any circumstances, including illness or self-quarantining, which will require them to stay home and/or which cause them to be unable to keep up with course activity/expectations. Students are expected to make up the missed work when feasible. Students should also be prepared to reach out and proactively ask their instructor if they are unsure of what is expected of them in the course, as related to absences or in general.
- SAIC recognizes the diverse religious practices of our community. Students are expected to notify their instructor in advance to discuss ways to meet all course requirements while observing religious holidays.

If a student registers late for a class (during Add/Drop) the student is responsible for any participation or work they have missed, and lack of progress due to missing this activity may negatively impact their standing in the course as it moves forward. As a result, students are encouraged to add courses after the semester begins only after a careful assessment of the situation and ideally a discussion with the instructor.

## Course Materials:

### Required Texts:

- Blair Imani, *Read This to Get Smarter: About Race, Class, Gender, Disability, & More*. Ten Speed Press.

You can purchase the textbook at many bookstores in-person or online:

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/678819/read-this-to-get-smarter-by-blair-imani/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Read-This-Get-Smarter-Disability/dp/1984860542>

All other assignments will be provided by the instructor via Canvas or in person.

### Required Materials:

- Laptop (or other electronic writing device) for in-person written work
- Writer's Notebook for use in this class only.

**Electronic Devices:** Use of laptops, phones, tablets, etc., should be limited only to appropriate use given the format of the class. Use of digital devices in class for any non-class related matters will not be allowed or tolerated at any time.

### **Turning In Assignments:**

All written assignments must be submitted electronically. Any audio or video examples may be submitted via email attachment or embedded in a link.

### **Formatting of Written Work:**

Please double-space your essay, and use one-inch margins with 12pt Times New Roman font. Please include a word count with each assignment you hand in.

## Academic Integrity:

Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one's own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place, including LDAP authentication, to verify student identity. Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed in the Student Handbook. Additional resources: "Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It: a short guide prepared by the Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee in 2004. Flaxman Library's quick guide titled "AVOID PLAGIARISM".

## Office Hours:

While I do not hold regular office hours, I am always here for you! If you have any questions and/or concerns about the class, the materials we're reading, your writing, thinking, or your engagement in general, please take them up with me as they arise. I encourage you to email to set up an appointment to meet over Zoom! Please email me directly at [ssanch10@saic.edu](mailto:ssanch10@saic.edu) rather than messaging me through Canvas. It is the fastest way to communicate with me as I check my email daily, and often. Please also use your saic.edu email address when sending me an email or your email may end up in my Junk folder and I will never see it.

## Statement on Disabilities:

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. **This letter must be presented to your instructor, and a conversation between you and your instructor must occur before any accommodations will be implemented.** You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible.

The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at [dlrc@saic.edu](mailto:dlrc@saic.edu). It is the responsibility of students with disabilities and/or personal circumstances that may impact their academic performance to inform the instructor as early in the term as possible, preferably before the end of week two. Without timely prior notification, it may be difficult or impossible to adjust the due dates of assignments or make other accommodations.

## Wellness Center:

The SAIC Wellness Center, which includes Counseling Services, Health Services and the Disability and Learning Resource Center, is also here to support students' mental health, health and accessibility needs. You may contact them at:

- Counseling Services: [counselingservices@saic.edu](mailto:counselingservices@saic.edu) and 312-499-4271 (press 1 to speak to a counselor after hours)
- Health Services: [healthservices@saic.edu](mailto:healthservices@saic.edu) and 312-499-4288 (After hours contact the 24-Hour Nurse Line at 877.924.7758)
- Disability and Learning Resource Center: [dlrc@saic.edu](mailto:dlrc@saic.edu) and 312-499-4278

## Additional Academic Support:

The Writing Center Lakeview Building, 116 S. Michigan Ave., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Fall and Spring Semester Hours Monday–Thursday 9:00 a.m.–7 p.m. Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:15 p.m.

All currently enrolled students are welcome, and they can work on essays, artist statements, application materials, presentation texts, theses, proposals, creative writing, or social media posts. The Writing Center tutors are kind, encouraging, and interested!

Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process. To schedule an appointment with a Writing Center tutor, students need to use **Navigate**. More information can be found at: <https://www.saic.edu/academics/writing-center/appointment>

## Course Schedule:

September 1:

First day of class

*Writing Exercise: Finding Claims and Arguments*

## Unit 1: Understanding Intellectual Empathy

September 8:

Imani, *Read This To Get Smarter*, Chapter on Class

Linker, *Intellectual Empathy* (selections on web of belief)

*Writing Assignment: Defining a Concept*

September 15:

Imani, *Read This To Get Smarter*, Chapter on Disability

Linker, *Intellectual Empathy* (selections on intersectionality of identity)

*Writing Assignment: Developing a Thesis*

September 22:

Imani, *Read This To Get Smarter*, Chapter on Race

Linker, *Intellectual Empathy* (selections on invisibility of privilege)

*Writing Assignment: Explicating a Concept (Argumentatively)*

September 29:

Imani, *Read This to Get Smarter*, Chapter on Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

Linker, *Intellectual Empathy* (selections on cooperative reasoning)

*Writing Assignment: Outlining a Paper*

October 6:

Linker, *Intellectual Empathy* (selections on conditional trust and recognition of mutual vulnerability)

*Writing Assignment: \*\*First Paper First Draft Due\*\**

October 13:

No New Reading, Focus on First Paper

*Writing Assignment: \*\*First Paper Final Draft Due\*\**

## Unit 2: Taking Intellectual Empathy Out Into the World

October 20:

Lang, "I'm Gay"

Lang "Why I'm Coming Out as Gay"

*Writing Assignment: Reflect on Phenomena of Injustice and Building Empathy*

October 27:

Chou and Choi, "And Neither Are We Saved: Asian Americans' Elusive Quest for Racial Justice

The Try Guys, "Why Don't We Care About Disabled People?"

*Writing Assignment: Outline of Oral and Visual Representation*

November 3:

McGhee, "Racism has a cost for everyone"

Al-Kadhi, "How do I embrace contradiction as a queer Muslim drag queen"

*Writing Assignment: Oral and Visual Representation Draft*

November 10:

Symposium: Visual Presentations

*Writing Assignment: Oral and Visual Representation (5-7 minutes) Due*

November 17:

McGhee, *The Sum of Us* (selections)

*Writing Assignment: Sharing with Broader Public*

**November 24: THANKSGIVING, NO CLASSES**

December 1:

Villanueva, *Decolonizing Wealth* (selections)

*Writing Assignment: Final Essay First Draft Due*

December 8:

Okun, "White Supremacy Culture and its Characteristics"

*Writing Assignment: Final Essay Revised Draft Due*

December 15:

Final Symposium: Taking Intellectual Empathy Out into the World

*Writing Assignment: Final Essay Final Draft Due*