

## **FYE 101 Introduction to Intellectual and Creative Inquiry**

Fall 2007 (sections 01N, 02N, and 03N)

Dr. Cynthia Stretch

**Office:** EN D243

**Phone:** 392-5525                      **email:** stretchc1@southernct.edu

**Office hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays 9:00-11:00; Fridays 12:00-1:00; and by appointment

American history is filled with stories of “self-made” men and women who taught themselves to read by the light of candles and whose education came largely from the school of hard knocks. We tend to admire those people for their strength of character, but very few of us would *choose* to follow their footsteps even if we would like to emulate their success. Although the self-help section of every bookstore overflows with texts that promise everything from a fabulous promotion to flat abs in just minutes a day, most Americans these days feel that when it comes to education, going it alone is not all it’s cracked up to be. That’s probably one of the reasons you’re here at Southern and not just spending all your free time in the public library. We know that we can and do learn outside of “school,” but a college education (and the diploma that says we “have” one) is, for more and more of us, a crucial component of independent adult life.

So here you are. And yet, you may be wondering what you have gotten yourself into. Though you may be certain that you *need* it, you may be wondering what a college education really *is*—how is it different from high school? from vocational training? from the History Channel? Like many other first-year college students, you may have real concerns about what it will take—intellectually, emotionally, financially—to become “educated” and how much the process will change you.

Because I believe that thinking critically and systematically about *what it means* to pursue a college education in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will increase your chances of success, I have organized the semester’s work for this course so that we can begin to answer those questions—and the questions that grow out of those questions. They aren’t as easy as they look, so along the way we’ll be honing the intellectual skills you already have and developing some new ones to apply to the task. We will work hard. But by the end of the semester, I hope you will have what you need to resist being a passive hoop-jumper and instead establish yourself as the engaged, creative subject of your own education.

Specifically, the objectives for this course as part of the First Year Experience program are:

- Students will contribute to and become engaged in learning communities by taking responsibility for their own education.
- Students will learn how to navigate the University and access both academic and social supports.
- Students will learn the connectedness between their general education courses, academic majors and personal and professional development.
- Students will develop an understanding of education in cultural contexts, both local and global.
- Students will investigate theories of learning in order to identify their own learning styles, as well as the variety of learning and teaching styles of others, including peers and teachers.
- Students will use inquiry-based learning to investigate an issue, reflect upon it, and form and defend a position.
- Students will use reading, writing, and speaking as a way to develop critical thinking, as well as a way to effectively communicate ideas to others.
- Students will become familiar with the array of information resources available, as well as gain an understanding of the research process.
- Students will participate in co-curricular, community-based opportunities offered by the

University and gain an understanding of the importance of these opportunities in relation to their educational goals and personal development.

- Students will explore issues of diversity and approaches to advancing social justice.
- Students will learn the importance of wellness in promoting, maintaining and enhancing the learning process.

## Materials

Texts are available in the SCSU Bookstore in the Adanti Student Center

***My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*** by Rebekah Nathan.

I chose *My Freshman Year* mostly because the book tells an interesting story about what it's like to be a first-year college student these days. But I also chose it because the author, as an "outsider," can pose questions and see patterns that you all may find difficult because you are *in* the experience. However, because she *is* an outsider and because of her professional ethics as an anthropologist, she does not give us the down and dirty version of the reality. That's where you come in. I hope that as we read the text together, you will be able to add to, correct, and complicate her version of the experience when necessary. When you feel she gets it right, I'll ask you to explain why; when she's off, we'll try to figure out how to account for that, too.

***They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*** by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birnstein.

I chose this book for the same reasons that Mike Rose, a writer I admire a lot, gives on the back of the book's jacket: "This book demystifies rhetorical moves, tricks of the trade that many students are unsure about. It's reasonable, helpful, nicely written . . . and hey, it's true. I would have found it immensely helpful myself in high school and college."

## A college dictionary.

You may need to buy a dictionary for another course; if so, don't buy two. But make sure that the dictionary says "College Edition" or something similar on the cover. College dictionaries contain usage information and etymologies (word origins) as well as definitions. Like all of your professors, I will expect you to look up words that you don't know in the readings for my course.

**One two-pocket folder** in which you keep EVERYTHING you do for this course.

You should get in the habit of keeping a hard copy (a printed out copy) of all the work you turn in. One little computer virus can wipe out a semester's worth of work.

By September 10, you will need to have **an active MySCSU email account**.

See the attached handout from the Academic Computer Center. In addition to reading *My Freshman Year*, I will assign other articles and essays. I will typically post them under Files or Links on the course page for your section. You will be responsible for printing them out and bringing your copy to the appropriate class session. I'll show you how this works in class.

## Course Policy

1. Active reading, participation, and attendance.

In order to reach the goals of this course, you must be present and prepared. FYE 101 is a performance course, which means that as a member of the **class you bear part of the responsibility for its success**. You can meet your responsibility by carefully reading the assignments, thinking and writing about them before we meet, and contributing your insights, questions, and interpretations to the discussion. In order to get the most from the course, you will need to be willing to explore ideas and push yourself intellectually. This involves a certain amount of risk, a willingness to raise a question, offer a response,

wonder out loud. Prepare to be called on. Prepare to be asked to respond to what another student just said. Prepare to reconsider a position. Prepare to explain yourself further.

If you must be absent, you can get informal assignments and other vital information *before returning to class* from the course homepage on MySCSU. I expect you to check the site regularly. **In-class work cannot be made up, and you will not get points for work that I check on days you miss.** I expect you to make every effort to attend and be prepared for all class meetings and to be absent only in rare and unavoidable circumstances. Beyond that, my attendance policy is as follows: **nine** absences *of any kind* are likely to result in an F for the course. In a course that meets three times per week, nine absences means that you have missed nearly 25% of the course.

## 2. Lateness

At the beginning of each class session, I will circulate an attendance sheet. If you are not present to sign the sheet, you're late. If tardiness becomes a problem, I will let you know and will begin counting late arrivals (and early departures) as absences. If you cannot turn in a formal assignment when it is due, you must arrange for an extension ahead of time. Otherwise, late formal assignments will "cost" points from your portfolio grade; formal assignments more than one week late will not be accepted.

## 3. Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses. Dishonesty in written work will result in an **F for the course**. In addition, dishonesty is adequate cause for disciplinary action by the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. If you have questions about how to incorporate the words and ideas of others into your own prose, please ask me. (See the section on "Academic Honesty" in the Student Handbook.)

## 4. Documents, Drafts, and Revisions

Students must complete all drafts of all formal assignments. Essays that are not distributed on time for workshops will be counted late. Plan to type/word process all assignments done outside of class, formal and informal, according to the following specifications: double-space, 1-inch margins, 11 or 12 point font, black ink.

## 5. Evaluation

Active and informed participation (you can lose points from your final grade for lack of engagement)	<b>mandatory</b>
Informal and in-class assignments	<b>15 points</b>
Midterm portfolio (including co-curricular analyses, informal assignments, survey essay, and self-assessment)	<b>25 points</b>
Case Study Project (presentation, annotated bibliography, process report, and reflection essay)	<b>20 points</b>
Final Portfolio (including co-curricular analyses, a selection of writing about reading, final essay, self-assessment, and revisions)	<b>40 points</b>

Informal assignments (including reading responses and quizzes) are geared toward generating thought and productive discussions as well as gauging difficulties with the readings and the skills we're practicing. I

do not expect informal writings to be "polished" prose, but I do expect them to demonstrate engagement with the problem or reading at hand. Save ALL of them. I reserve the right to give pop quizzes if, at any point in the semester, I feel that the class is not keeping up.

Informal assignments will not receive grades per se. Most will be read by myself and/or your peers. Some will be collected on the day the assignments are due, and some may reappear as part of the midterm or final portfolio. Informal assignments, quizzes, and workshop comments will be evaluated with a check-plus, a check, a check minus, or a zero according to their promptness and thoroughness.

**Self Assessments:** The SCSU Office of Assessment and Planning will administer three self-assessments through VISTA. These assessments will help the instructor understand what students are learning the course and help the university assess how well the FYE model is working. The Office of Assessment and Planning will enter and store the data for all students' self-assessments. The same Office may track the progress of the whole incoming class of first-year students through their years at SCSU and two years after graduation. Improvement of the university experience of students will be the only use to which student self-assessment data will be applied. In this way, both current and future students will benefit. Because of the potential for having data tracked, students are asked to write their student ID number on the self-assessments. The assessments are confidential. Only the instructor will have access to them. The Office will not report on individual students' responses, but will group the responses from the whole incoming class of first-year students together for analysis. *At any time, including the first entry into the tracking data file, students may request that the Office of Assessment and Planning remove their self-assessments from their analysis files. This may be done by sending an email to [assessment@southernct.edu](mailto:assessment@southernct.edu). If no requests are received from a student, it will be assumed that said student has given his or her consent to use the data as described.*

### **Office Hours**

I look forward to speaking with you individually during my office hours. If you can't see me during the posted hours, I am always willing to make appointments or schedule telephone conferences at mutually convenient times

### **Accommodations**

Before you receive course accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with the Disability Resource Office (EN-C 105A). However, if you have other information you would like to speak with me about, or if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

## Syllabus

I reserve the right to adjust the schedule. Informal writing assignments and readings often will be added or modified in class. Check the MySCSU course page for updates and weather-related schedule changes.

\*Readings and writing assignments are **due at the beginning of class on the date for which they are listed**. Be prepared to write in response to every reading assignment. Bring the appropriate text(s) and writings to class. MFY = *My Freshman Year*; TS/IS = *They Say / I Say*

### September

W 5 Introductions and Expectations

F 7 Turn in “What Others have Noticed and Missed” responses.  
(This assignment can be found on the last page of this syllabus and on the MySCSU course page)

*Who are we as a class?*

In class: Create a survey to administer to your classmates.

M10 Read: Jayson, “Generation Y Gets Involved” (MySCSU Files)  
CBS News, “The Echo Boomers” (MySCSU Files)  
Beloit Mindset List (MySCSU Links)  
SCSU Admissions data (MySCSU Files)  
TS/IS ch.1, pp. 17-27

*Who are we as a cohort? as a generation?*

In class: Discuss assumptions, point of view, expectations, etc.  
Begin idea mapping, categorizing

W 12 Read: Compiled survey for your section (MySCSU Files)

*Who are we? continued*

In class: Discuss controlling idea and thesis  
Organizing your thoughts about an “ill-structured problem”

F 14 Read: TS/IS ch.4, pp. 51-63  
In class: Crafting the claim  
Discuss workshop expectations

M 17 Draft of Survey essay due. Bring 3 hard copies of your complete draft to class.  
In class: Workshop

W 19 Revisions of Survey essay due in class.  
In class: Learning Styles Inventory

F 21 Bring *My Freshman Year* and your dictionary to class today.

*Active Reading!!!*

In class: Pre-reading exercise  
Begin MFY together—in-class writing TBA

M 24 Read MFY chapter 1 and respond in writing to reading questions.  
(NB: This assignment will take you a long time; please schedule accordingly.)  
In class: Discuss chapter 1 and reading expectations

W 26 In class: Continue discussion of MFY  
Quiz on chapter 1

F 28 Read “Lack of Curiosity is Curious” (MySCSU Files)  
“Hidden Intellectualism” TS/IS pp.142-148  
In class: *Engagement?*

\*\*\*Over the weekend or before, watch *Now and Then*, a documentary about students at Stanford University. The film is 87 minutes long.

### October

M 1 Read MFY ch. 6  
Watch *Now and Then* before class today (DVD on reserve in Learning Resource Center, Buley)  
In class: *Defining “Success” in college*  
Assign teams/territory for Campus Safari

W 3 *Where are we?*  
Meet your team in your designated location (not in the classroom).  
Email your photos to all team members and Cindy by 9:00 p.m. tonight.

F 5 Analysis of your safari notes due.  
In class: Discuss the university as an environment; what are the effects/meanings of the way space is organized, decorated, inhabited?

M 8 Read MFY ch. 2 and NYT photo essay (MySCSU Links) and respond to questions.  
In class: *Smackdown: SCSU vs. AnyU*

W 10 In class: Images of SCSU

F 12 Read TS/IS ch. 2-3 (pp. 28-47)  
In class: *The art of the summary*

M 15 Read MFY pp. 41-54 and write a one-paragraph summary of Nathan’s argument.  
In class: Is Nathan right?

W 17 In class: Hand out and discuss Midterm Portfolio Assignment

F 19 No class meeting: SCSU Women’s Studies Conference

M 22 Midterm portfolios due in class.  
In class: Self Assessment

W 24 Read the rest of MFY ch. 3  
In class: quiz on Nathan’s argument about diversity

F 26 Read MFY ch. 4 (all); Believing/Doubting assignment  
In class: *Perspective*: Discuss the implications of chapter 4

- M 29 Read MFY ch. 5  
In class: What is “The Perfect Class”?
- W 31 Read “Aim of a Liberal Education” from the Undergraduate Catalogue,  
“What Every Student Should Know” (MySCSU Files)  
“Employers Welcome Liberal Arts Grads” (MySCSU Files)  
excerpt from *Cultivating Humanity* (MySCSU Files)  
In class: *What’s a Liberal Education?*

*November*

- F 2 Read TS/IS ch.6, pp. 74-87  
General Education Task Force materials (MySCSU Links)  
*Why Do I Have to Take this Course?* (Booklet distributed at Orientation)  
In class: *Why do I have to take Astronomy?*
- M 5 Prepare your written notes for debate.  
In class: Debate—Resolved: A liberal arts education is a necessary foundation for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- W 7 Read packet on stress among college students (Materials TBA)  
In class: *Using Sources*: What can each genre do?
- F 9 Meet in Buley Library (room TBA)  
In class: *Evaluating Sources*
- M 12 In class: Distribute Case Study assignment; choose “subjects”
- W 14 Meet in Buley Library (room TBA)  
In class: *Using Electronic Databases*
- F 16 Case Study Team work: getting organized and dividing tasks
- M 19 In class: *The Annotated Bibliography*
- W 21 No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break  
F 23 No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break
- M 26 Team work
- W 28 Team work
- F 30 Team work

*December*

- M 3 Read MFY ch. 7  
In class: *Lessons from your first semester?*
- W 5 Presentations
- F 7 Presentations

M 10 Presentations

W 12 Portfolios due in class.  
In class: Course evaluations.

F 14 No class meeting scheduled: Reading Day (we may meet if there are snow days)

## **What Others have Noticed (and Missed) about Me as a Student**

*Due at the beginning of class on Friday, September 7*

Chances are that over the last 12-13 years you have developed a sense of yourself as a student. A large part of that perception may have to do with what others have told you—either explicitly or implicitly—about yourself. But perhaps that’s not the whole story. You may agree with some of those assessments, but you may feel that they don’t take into account some crucial elements of your attitudes, your abilities, or your performance. Write me a 2-3 page letter (yep, begin with “Dear Cindy,”) describing what others have noticed and missed about you as a student. Please be as specific as possible in your explanations and descriptions. *Use examples when you can.* This is my first opportunity to get to know you and your history, so be sure to include information that you feel I ought to have as we begin our semester.

When you have finished with the past, tell me about the future you envision. What are your goals? How are they related to your history? What do you plan to do in order to accomplish them? Try to be more specific than “I’ll work hard.” Look *carefully* at the course description and syllabus; what elements of the course do you anticipate enjoying? Which look like they might pose challenges? Why?

Like all writing for the course done outside of class, this should be typed, double-spaced, with 1” margins, and 10-12 pt. font. (But remember, it’s always more important to DO the work than to type it, so if it must be handwritten, be sure it’s legible.)