

## **FYE 101.09: Introduction to Intellectual & Creative Inquiry**

Instructor: Prof. Andrew Smyth  
Student Support Consultant: TBA  
TR 1:50-3:05 p.m.  
Temporary Building #8

Office: EN D278  
Phone: 203-392-5113  
E-mail: [smytha2@southernct.edu](mailto:smytha2@southernct.edu)  
Office Hours: TR 12-1 p.m., W 4-6 p.m., and by appointment

**Course Description:** FYE 101 introduces students to the academic and interpersonal skills and experiences necessary to become committed, competent, responsible, successful, and engaged learners. This course helps students become more familiar with *what* we do at the university, as well as offer them many occasions to explore *why* and *how* we do these things.

The course readings, discussions, activities, assignments, and presentations will address in one form or another a common theme and essential question: What is the impact of materialism on Western education? This question is particularly important as you make the transition from secondary to university education. With the amount of time, effort, and money you and others are devoting to your university education, you should ask and probably are already asking what the outcomes of your investment will be. The very terms of this query illustrate the materialist basis of education in the U.S. We speak regularly about investing in the futures of ourselves, our children, our company, our country—and education frequently lies at the heart of the enterprise. In this course, we will explore the practical and philosophical connections between education and a materialist, consumerist world view. From this perspective you will study the university system into which you are now entering, along with the K-12 system that has prepared you for higher education.

This course and the First Year Experience are new at SCSU. As a result, you will be asked regularly, and in different formats, to comment on the course and related matters. Please respond to these requests with thoughtful, candid answers and judgments, for your feedback will register strongly as faculty and staff continue to develop this first-year program.

Our section of FYE 101 is part of a cluster of classes that includes ENG 111 taught by Professor Van Ness and History 100 taught by Professor Hooper. This cluster design should allow all of you to get to know each other well, and it may lead to fruitful overlapping of thought, discussion, and assignments. As your FYE 101 teacher, I also serve as your advisor this year. Thus, I look forward to seeing you regularly to discuss your progress not only in my class but in all of your courses this semester. More than that, though, please do stop in during my office hours (or by appointment if my hours conflict with other school, work, or family obligations) to talk about adapting to college

life, making best use of resources on campus, deciding on a major, handling the work load, or anything else related to your academic tenure here.

### **Learning Outcomes for FYE 101**

- 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.

### **Required Materials**

- Anderson, M. T. *Feed*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2003.
  - This is a young-adult, dystopian novel that gives us a bleak view of the cyber age, commercialism, education, and the environment. We'll read this one as befits our theme, but also to demonstrate the different reading strategies required for high school literature and college analysis.
- Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006.
  - Graff and Birkenstein provide a series of templates for writing and speaking about academic issues. We'll use this text to structure the way we discuss materialism and education. In addition, I will ask you to critique this book itself as an introductory text to college writing.
- Nathan, Rebekah. *My Freshman Year*. New York: Penguin, 2005.
  - Rebekah Nathan is a pen-name of an anthropologist who, in her fifties, goes back to college and studies that strange, alien culture—the first-year

college-student life. We'll read this one early in the semester and then come back to it for the sake of comparison and critique as you go through your own first year experience.

- A variety of essays which you will access through the web, SCSU library databases, and my course page. Be prepared to read critically about Barbie Dolls, No Child Left Behind, and even Lego. If you have any Lego sets available, please let me know so we can all build and deconstruct a Lego community in October.
- Weekly or Monthly Calendar or Date Book
- SCSU Catalogue
- SCSU Schedule of Classes
- SCSU Student Handbook

### Some Useful Websites

- Paulo Freire, excerpts from *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:  
<http://www.marxists.org/subject/education/freire/pedagogy/index.htm>.
- *Rethinking Schools*, “Why We Banned Lego”:  
[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/21\\_02/lego212.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/21_02/lego212.shtml)
- *Rethinking Schools*, “Lego Fascists”:  
[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/21\\_04/edit214.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/21_04/edit214.shtml)
- *National Review Online*, Response to “Why We Banned Legos”:  
<http://article.nationalreview.com/print/?q=YmQwMGVjNTU5YTQ5ZWU3MDE1NjBjNjkwZTQ0MmJhNWE=>
- Hilltop Children’s Center response to blogs:  
<http://www.hilltopcc.com/news/2007/03/14/response-to-why-we-banned-legos/>
- Campus Writing Center:  
<http://www.southernct.edu/services/stsupport/index.php?file=writingcenter.html>
- Career Services: <http://www.southernct.edu/careerservices/>
- Counseling Services: <http://www.southernct.edu/services/counseling>

### Assignments and Evaluation

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|---|-----|-----|
| • Individual Research Project:  | 20% |     |
| • Written Assignments:  |     | 30% |
| ○ Informal (quizzes, journaling, free writing, in-class writing, bulletin board postings)—10% |     |     |
| ○ Formal (interviews; analyses; critiques)—20%  |     |     |
| • Self-Evaluative Piece:  | 10% |     |
| • Midterm Exam:   |     | 10% |
| • Final Exam:   | 10% |     |
| • Group Project: Advice Booklet and Video for Future First-Years:                             | 10% |     |
| • Final Portfolio (includes selected writings that have been revised):                        |     | 10% |
| • Self-Assessments (not graded)   |     |     |

### Explanation of Assignments

- (Not graded) Completion of self-assessments will help the instructor assess what students are learning in the course and help the university assess how well the FYE model is working to achieve its objectives. The SCSU 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 self-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 e-mail 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.
- Individual Research Project (20%): Starting in November, you will visit selected K-12 schools in our area to do observations and interviews on materialism, consumerism, and education in our schools. You will write up these observations in a standard format (to be given in class), along with reflections that should lead to a research topic. These observations, interviews, and reflections will provide a local foundation for your research project. You will use them, along with traditional academic research (articles from scholarly journals, books, newspapers, reputable web resources, etc.) to write a paper (5 pages) on the impact of materialism/ consumerism in our local public schools.
- Formal and Informal Writing Assignments (30%): This is a writing-intensive class, so you should plan to be writing in various genres at least twice a week. Formal writing should be carefully drafted, edited, proofread, and presented in a professional, academic manner. These assignments will be collected at the beginning of class when they are due; it is your responsibility to have them printed and ready on time. If you are having problems completing an assignment on time, you need to discuss the problem and a possible extension with me at least twenty-four hours before the deadline. This means that we communicate back and forth about the problem—no one-way emails at the last minute. Any work presented late (that means after the beginning of class) without prior arrangements with me will be docked half a letter grade per day.

Academic Honesty is one of the most important lessons to be learned from this and your other first year classes. You will find that we share information and work freely on a regular basis in class, but we will take pains to acknowledge each other's contributions in group work, discussions, and projects. In the assignments you do for this class—written and otherwise—you will learn to be

fastidious about giving credit to others for input into your work. Intentional plagiarism or willful ignorance about the practice of documentation in your work will result in immediate failure for the assignment, possible failure for the course, and a report to the Dean's office on your academic dishonesty. When you are working on assignments for this and other classes, I strongly recommend that you consult with your professors individually about their preferred style of documentation. In addition, you would be wise to work with your writing teacher and with the tutors at the Writing Center (Lower Level of Engleman Hall; walk-ins are okay, but it's better to call ahead for an appointment—392-6824) as you draft, edit, and proofread your written assignments. You will find that professors and writing tutors truly love to advise and assist you in questions about writing, research, and documentation when you ask them for help.

- **Self-Evaluative Piece (10%):** At the end of the semester, as you compile and revise selected works in your final portfolio, you will write a careful, critical self-evaluation in the form of an Author's Preface to your portfolio. This will give you an opportunity to assess yourself and your work, as well as your readiness to continue in the pursuit of a university education.
- **Midterm and Final Exams (10% each):** These tests will evaluate your understanding (not just recollection or comprehension) of the materials, readings, discussions, and presentations in the class. Pay particular attention to what your classmates present throughout the course—I value your work highly and consider it essential for final evaluation.
- **Group Project (10%):** At the end of the semester, you will work in groups to produce an advice booklet and video for next year's entering students. We will present the videos on the final day of class; they should be creative, earnest, and helpful.
- **Portfolios (10%):** Whenever you do any writing—formal or informal—for this class, save a copy of the original and/or a returned version with grades and comments in a portfolio. At the end of the semester, you will select certain key writings to revise and present in a final portfolio, along with your research project and self-evaluation.

### **Assistance for Students with Disabilities**

I believe in providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. If you are a student with a disability, the university's Disability Resource Center (DRC) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with you. Before you may receive accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with the Disability Resource Center, located in EN C-105A. To speak with me about accommodations, or other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment as soon as possible.

### **Some Class Guidelines** (others to be generated by the class during initial meetings)

- You must check your SCSU email regularly (once a day) for updates to our class. If you prefer using a home email account, it is easy to have your SCSU mail forwarded to it. Come by my office or check with the IT Help Desk if you need assistance in doing so.
- Some basic rules of academic etiquette:
  - When addressing in speech or in writing a professor or administrative official (e.g., a dean), use an appropriate title unless that person directs you specifically otherwise. In high school, you probably referred to your teachers as Mr. Thompson and Ms. Delamere, for example. At a university, your standard form of address should be Professor Smyth. Some professors may prefer another title—such as Dr. Glenthorn—or even to be called by their first name. That’s perfectly acceptable when you are communicating with that person, as long as he or she has made it clear to you and/or your class to do so.
  - Likewise, when you are responding to each other in class discussions, it is important to begin with a recognition of the previous speaker’s name and contribution. For example, you might say, “I disagree with James’s assertion that Legos are harmless toys; those things hurt when you walk on them in bare feet.” Beyond being a matter of courtesy, such a pattern of response keeps the discussion unified; it’s not just a matter of each person contributing his or her individual thought regardless of what else has been said.
  - We will work consciously during the first few classes to learn each other’s names, and I will try to call on you by name as soon as possible, too. If I get it wrong, don’t be afraid to correct me, and please do tell me if you go by a nickname, middle name, or some other form of address. Don’t be shy about asking each other to repeat your names in a discussion. Just say, “I want to add to that last comment by . . . what was your name?”
  - A large part of official university communication is by email. We’re all in too much of a hurry to write formal letters each time we need to pass information back in forth, but you still need to follow some basic protocols:
    - Include a specific subject line.
    - Include a proper salutation, such as “Dear Dean Fredeen:”
    - Try to keep clear of IM abbreviations; you’d be surprised how many people won’t get them.
    - Write with clarity, conciseness, and mechanical correctness.
    - Conclude your emails with, at the least, your name and contact info.
    - Help your professors and administrators out—tell them which class you’re in or what your situation is, especially early in the semester.
  - Phone calls and text messaging make up another significant portion of communications on and off campus. That’s fine, but it is inappropriate to

do either in a class or formal meeting. For all of your classes, turn your ringers off and put the phone away during class time.

### **Tentative Schedule (updated as needed with due notice to the class)**

#### September

4: Introductions; College Community; Class Guidelines; Materialism/Consumption; Langston Hughes, “Thank You, Ma’am.” HW for Thursday: Study the syllabus and read “The Purple Jar” (<http://amblesideonline.org/PR/PR00p000PurpleJar.shtml>) and Chs. 1 and 2 of *My Freshman Year*.

6: Quiz on syllabus, *My Freshman Year*, and “Purple Jar.” Compare and contrast attitudes toward materialism in Hughes and Edgeworth. HW for Tuesday: Go Shopping (full assignment given in class). Read Chapters 3-5 of *My Freshman Year*.

**Friday, September 7: Club Fair**

**Saturday, September 8: Freshman Day of Service** (Volunteer)

11: *My Freshman Year*; How to represent and respond to what you read (Bring *They Say/I Say* to this and following classes until no longer required). HW: Read Chapters 6 and 7 of *My Freshman Year*. **Note: Today is the last day to add or drop classes.**

13: *My Freshman Year*—**Group Test**. Discuss *Why Do I Have to Take This Class?* HW: Write up Professor Interviews.

18: **Professor Interviews due**. Technologies, Literacies, and Consumption. HW: Read first half of *Feed* and write a journal describing your reading technique.

20: *Feed*; Learning Styles. HW: Finish reading *Feed* and write a reflective journal on its satire of consumerism and education.

25: *Feed* discussion. What are the strengths and limits of adolescent literature?

27: Group Reports assigned.

#### October

2: **Group Reports**: Technology and University Education. HW: Read articles on the Lego controversy.

4: “Why We Banned Lego” and NRO response. HW: Read “Lego Fascists” and prepare for debate.

9: “Lego Fascists” and debate. HW: Read Karin Calvert, “Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood.”

11: Analyzing academic articles. HW: Study for Midterm Exam.

16: **Midterm Exam**. HW: Read “Out Out, Damned Spot: General Education in a Market-Driven Institution.”

18: Why Gen-Ed? Planning your curriculum.

23: Guest Speaker: Registrar’s Office Representative Lynn Kohn. HW: Read excerpts from Freire (<http://www.marxists.org/subject/education/freire/pedagogy/index.htm>).

25: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

30: Career Center Visit; Discovery Program.

## November

1: **Critique of Career Center Due**. I-search Assignment: Visit Schools this month and write observations on resources, clothing, food, health, and learning. These observations will provide one significant portion of your final research project.

**Friday, November 2: Last day for course withdrawals.**

6: Library Instruction: Meet in Buley Library, Rm. 317.

**Wednesday, November 7: Majors Fair**

8: Conferences; Planning the research paper.

**Monday, November 12: Registration for matriculated first-year students begins.**

13: Conferences; Critique of *They Say/I Say*; Documentation.

15: **Professor at NCTE Conference; No Class Today!**

20: Trip to Yale's Beinecke Library [?]

22: **Thanksgiving Holiday!**

27: Preparing for the end of the semester.

29: Portfolio Workshop.

## December

4: **Portfolios** (including final research project and self-evaluation) due.

6: Group Projects.

11: Group Projects.

13: **Presentations** and evaluations.

**Final Exam (Week of Dec. 15-21) TBA**

(see <http://www.southernct.edu/academics/finalexamschedule/> after November 20<sup>th</sup> for schedule)