

79-245, Fall 2019  
Classroom: Baker 237B  
Office: Baker Hall 236B  
Office Hours: Tues 8am-9am & by appt.

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### Capitalism and Individualism in American Culture

Are you what you do? Will your career choice and achievements define who you are, how you feel about yourself, and how others see you as a person? This course explores the cultural history of American capitalism through three ongoing themes: 1) the relation between work and identity; and 2) the concept of individualism; and 3) the historical origins of your opinions on 1&2.

Learning and skills objectives include:

- ❖ To be able to explain how work (and attitudes toward it) have changed from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century;
- ❖ To be able to read critically, relating different genres of writing, from different historical periods, to the main themes of the course; and
- ❖ To be able to write analytically, integrating multiple sources including your own judgments, in both formal (essays) and informal (journal) styles.

There are no exams (except short, unannounced readings quizzes, *if necessary*). Instead, students will keep a journal (collected at regular intervals) and write four essays, three short (750-1250 words) and one longer (1250-1500 words).

#### Grading criteria:

Grading weights are as follows: journal = 25%; first short essay = 10%; second short essay = 15%; third short essay = 15%; final essay = 25%; attendance and participation = 10%.

#### Required Readings:

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (Dover edition)  
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (Dover)  
Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance and Other Essays* (Dover)  
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Dover)  
Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays* (Dover)  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics* (Dover)  
Arthur Miller, *The Death of a Salesman* (Penguin)  
Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (Back Bay)

**Additional required readings are available (PDF) at <https://canvas.cmu.edu/>.**

**Personal note from Scott:** As I will talk about in class (and one-on-one, anytime you'd like you ask), I've been treated for mental illness all my life, since I was 11 years old. I will do my best to let you know me as a person and to get to know you. Please visit my office hours to talk about anything you wish (including but not limited to coursework, the news, you, me, history, or anything else you can think of).

### **Statement of Support for Students' Health & Well-being**

Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

*If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:*

*CaPS: 412-268-2922*

*Re:solve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226*

*If the situation is life threatening, call the police*

*On campus: CMU Police: 412-268-2323*

*Off campus: 911*

If you have questions about this or your coursework, please let me know.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

**Week One:**

Tue, 27 Aug: Introductory discussion

Thu, 29 Aug: Handouts: Benjamin Franklin, "The Way to Wealth"; and "Franklin's Outline" (pp. v-viii) from his *Autobiography*

**Week Two:**

Tue, 3 Sep: Franklin, *Autobiography*, Parts I & II (pp. 1-72)

Thu, 5 Sep: Handouts: Alexis de Tocqueville, excerpt from *Democracy in America* (1840); and Max Weber, "The Spirit of Capitalism" (1905), pp. 13-25

**Week Three:**

Tue, 10 Sep: Max Weber, "Spirit," pp. 25-37

Thu, 12 Sep: Handout: "The 1619 Project," *NYT Magazine* (August 18, 2019), pp. 30-42

***Journals due in class at 10:30 a.m.***

**Week Four:**

Tue, 17 Sep: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative* (1845), chs. 1-9 (pp. 1-34)

Thu, 19 Sep: *Narrative*, chs. 10-11 (pp. 34-69); and Canvas: Douglass, "Self-Made Men" (1893)

**Week Five:**

Tue, 24 Sep: No reading assignment

***First essay due by 11:59 p.m. at <https://canvas.cmu.edu/>***

Thu, 26 Sep: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance" (1841) in *Self-Reliance & Other Essays*, pp. 19-38

**Week Six:**

- Tue, 1 Oct: Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)  
Chs. 1-2 ("Economy," "Where I Lived, What I Lived For"), 1-64
- Thu, 3 Oct: *Walden*, chs. 4, 8, 10, 18 ("Sounds," "The Village," "Baker Farm," and "Conclusion"), pp. 72-84, 108-112, 130-136, 206-216

**Week Seven:**

- Tue, 8 Oct: Thoreau, "Life Without Principle" (1862) in *Civil Disobedience & Other Essays*; and Canvas: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Thoreau" (1862)
- Thu, 10 Oct: No reading assignment

**Second essay due by 11:59 p.m. at <https://canvas.cmu.edu/>**

**Week Eight:**

- Tue, 15 Oct: Canvas: Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1853) Part 1 (pp. 546-557)
- Thu, 17 Oct: Canvas: "Bartleby," Part 2 (pp. 609-615)  
Walt Whitman, "To a Historian" (1860)

**Week Nine:**

- Tue, 22 Oct: Canvas: Walt Whitman, "To a Historian" (1860); and R.H. Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills" (1861)
- Thu, 24 Oct: Canvas: Excerpt from Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick* (1865)  
Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth" (1889)

**Week Ten:**

- Tue, 29 Oct: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics* (1898)  
Intro, Proem, Preface, chs. 1-8
- Thu, 31 Oct: *Women and Economics*, chs. 9-15

**Journals due at 10:30 a.m.**

**Week Eleven:**

Tue, 5 Nov: Canvas: Excerpt from James Truslow Adams, *The American Epic* (1931); and Warren Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of 20th-Century Culture" (1973)

Thu, 7 Nov: Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949), Act I

**Week Twelve:**

Tue, 12 Nov: *Death of a Salesman*, Act II; and Canvas: John Lahr, "Making Willy Loman," *The New Yorker* (1999)

Thu, 14 Nov: No reading assignment

**Third essay due by 11:59 p.m. at <https://canvas.cmu.edu/>**

**Week Thirteen:**

Tue, 19 Nov: Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers* (2008), Intro and chs. 1-2

Thu, 21 Nov: *Outliers*, chs. 3-5

**Week Fourteen:**

Tue, 26 Nov: NO READING. NO CLASS?

Thu, 28 Nov: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week Fifteen:**

Tue, 3 Dec: Finish *Outliers*

**Journals due at 10:30 a.m.**

Thu, 5 Dec: READING TBA

**Your One and Only Warning:  
Zero Tolerance of Cheating & Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means using words, ideas, or arguments from another person or source without acknowledgment. Cite all sources consulted to any extent (including material from the internet), whether or not assigned and whether or not quoted directly. For quotations, four or more words used in sequence must be set off in quotation marks *and* the source must be identified by both a citation within the paper and on a separate page identifying all "Sources Consulted" -- *not* "Works Cited" (notice the distinction?).

Any form of cheating on assignments will immediately earn you an 'R' grade for *the entire course*. **By choosing to remain enrolled in my course, you consent to this policy.**

In addition, I will seek the harshest official penalties under CMU's cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized assistance policies at:

<https://www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/ocsi/academic-integrity/index.html>

*and*

<https://www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/ocsi/academic-integrity/statement-AI.html>

*and*

<http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/academic-integrity.html>

*and*

<https://cms-staging.andrew.cmu.edu/theword/academic/standards-for-academic-and-creative-life.html>

Many students are surprised that CMU's definition of cheating encompasses a wide range of actions that you might not expect to be prohibited. *One example is unauthorized collaboration with others.*

If you have never taken time to read these guidelines on these CMU webpages, it is in your best interest to do so today. Save us both a lot of time and grief, OK?

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: A e-copy of this cover sheet MUST be uploaded with all required essays.  
Check boxes to indicate that your paper meets all of the following requirements:**

Yes No

- My paper addresses all parts of the prompt.
- My paper develops a *challengeable* argument in **boldface type**.
- My paper does not begin "According to Webster's..." or "Blah blah blah is very interesting..."

Yes No

- I make an argument clearly in the first paragraph.
- Each subsequent paragraph advances my main argument.
- Each paragraph begins with a "topic sentence" and keeps my main argument somehow in view.
- My paper interprets and quotes from course readings to support my argument and insights.

Yes No

- I have proofread my paper with my eyeballs, not relying only on computer spell-checking.
- My paper has a title conveying or relating to my argument.

Yes No

- The pages of my essay are numbered.
- I understand that uploading to Canvas triggers a plagiarism check by [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).
- The words and ideas of others are clearly identified as such in my paper, by the use of quotation marks and citations of the sources of ideas, quotations, and paraphrases.
- My paper includes a page entitled "Sources Consulted" (*not* "Works Cited"), disclosing all sources consulted (not just those actually quoted) including libraries, internet, friends, parents, GCC, etc.

Yes No

- I have read the plagiarism warning on page 6 of the syllabus and I accept the definitions and penalties explained there and discussed in class.
- This paper is entirely my own work and meets the CMU honor code and policies on page 6.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**“To a Historian” (1860)**

by Walt Whitman

You who celebrate bygones!

Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the

    races -- the life that has exhibited itself;

Who have treated of man as the creature of politics,

    aggregates, rulers and priests;

I, habitué of the Alleghanies, treating man as he is in

    himself, in his own rights,

Pressing the pulse of the life that hast seldom

    exhibited itself, (the great pride of man in himself;)

Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,

I project the history of the future.



**STUDENT INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Disabilities, special needs, or accommodations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Class year: \_\_\_\_\_ Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Your hero(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite book(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Anything else you would like me to know about you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**RECORD OF SCORES AND GRADES**

Journal: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 25 points

First Essay: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 10 points

Second Essay: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 15 points

**MID-SEM LETTER GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Third Essay: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 15 points

Final Essay: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 25 points

Participation: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 10 points

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OUT OF 100 POINTS**

Comments on Participation: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Absent: \_\_\_\_\_ Total absences: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL SEMESTER LETTER GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_