



Umoja formerly known as Daraja Project

**Engl
102**

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Description

Engl. 102 will focus on developing the skills needed to engage in college-level reading, critical thinking, and writing. It is an accelerated course so the workload will be moderate to heavy. This classroom is experiential and will engage you through group work, games, lively discussions, field trips and more.

Required Materials

Savage Inequalities, Jonathan Kozol *The Rich and the Rest of Us*, Tavis Smiley and Cornell West A class Reader will also be provided

Course Description

The overall theme of this course is going to be focused on but not limited to the African American identity. We will also be asked to examine what we can do to lift up African Americans as well as others who are predominantly underserved. We will explore the past and present contributing factors to the disconnections and connections of African American people. We will be reading a variety of

materials dealing with these topics, and your papers will be in-depth explorations of some aspect of the course theme. We will also work to discover your passion and how it will help you have ownership of your education and assist your college success.

This Class is specifically designed as part of Umoja , formerly known as Daraja..

Umoja Learning Environment

You will not be “banked” on here.

I feel the need to explain what kind of classroom this will be because you come to college with an expectation driven by past experience and media portrayals that I will absolutely and purposely fail to emulate. I do not run a classroom that is focused on me or what I have to say. I run a class that is focused on discovering what you have to say about what I put in front of you. We will engage in dialogue, conversations, most of the time that will hopefully lead you to a deeper understanding of your own thoughts, and where they come from, as well as cultivate a greater value for the thoughts of other. Most importantly, I don't want the critical thinking you do in here to be limited to books, only triggered by the sound of my voice, or the environment I provide. I want you to walk around reading, interpreting, connecting to, and picking apart the world. I want you to be hyper-conscious and you can't be if you are not involved in your education. This classroom will use the strategies of a problem- posing system, coined by educational theorist and teacher Paulo Freire. I always ask you to think deeply, I will ask you why over and over again like an annoying child. I will ask you where your thoughts come from, what are you connecting to, where do you see that thought going and every answer you have for me, as long as you really take yourself seriously, will be right. If you don't take yourself or your thoughts seriously you will only be making a joke out of yourself, which is an unfortunate act of violence African-Americans have inflicted upon themselves for a longtime. This does not mean that your ideas can't be silly, funny or playful. OWN your intellect; don't be afraid of it. Stay engage in classroom discussion, constantly process and connect the world you live in to what is happening in the classroom, and I am sure you will be successful in this class and beyond.

Umoja Community Purpose:

Umoja (a Kiswahili word meaning unity) is a learning community dedicated to the academic success, personal growth, and self-actualization of all students, especially first-generation and underrepresented students. All Umoja values and practices are inspired by African and African-American intellectual, cultural, and spiritual gifts. Informed by an ethic of love and its vital power, the Umoja Community seeks to educate the whole student—body, mind and spirit—and will deliberately engage students as full participants in the construction of knowledge and critical thought.

Course Description

[The description should be from the course catalog; for courses that are special topics your department should approve the description. Here you should also indicate whether the course meets a GE requirement, what the pre/co-requisites are, and how many credit hours the course is too.]

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of the course a student will be able to:

Rest in a metacognitive state Write and revise college-level essays, in and out of class, relying on text-based argumentative strategies. Comprehend and analyze critical essays of varying lengths. Identify and use key structural elements of an essay, including thesis, topic sentences, and supporting details. Perform the essential steps of the writing process. Accurately and effectively summarize different lengths of work. Organize and develop ideas in writing. Develop argumentation skills in writing. Demonstrate an ability to recognize grammatical patterns of error and revise accordingly. Demonstrate the ability to write complete sentences of some syntactic complexity. Integrate sources as evidence and use parenthetical citations.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Please remember that the classroom should be a safe and friendly environment, where we share ideas and learn from one another - so be respectful to others. This will be an active classroom. You will need to express your thoughts and opinions in class regularly and help your peers work their thoughts out. The best way to develop critical thinking skills is to take in the thoughts and opinions of others and put them up against your own. By doing this, you can develop your own beliefs, arguments and ideas. In order to be able to share with one another,

we have to agree to respect each other's ideas even when we have opposite beliefs. Disrespect of any kind will not be tolerated in this classroom.

Umoja Guiding Practices:

Our learning community is guided by practices, which are adapted from the Statewide Umoja Community. We seek to incorporate these practices into our words, our actions and our way of relating to each other. The first three listed below are Heartbeat Practices.

- We are Intentional and Deliberate– we know why we are doing what we do and nothing is random. We engage in a conscious dialogue about our practices and choices.
- We practice an Ethic of Love – we are willing to share ourselves, our stories, our lives, our experiences to humanize and make our learning real. We use a holistic approach and attend to our body, mind and spirit.
- We are Manifesting what we learn in our everyday lives – we bring what we learn in the classroom into our communities and put it into practice to help ourselves and others who can benefit.

(There are 15 more Umoja Practices. Find them here: <http://umojacommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/UmojaPracticesFinal.pdf>)

Umoja Village Space

Umoja Study Hall United we Stand, Divided we Fall

Umoja will provide you with a space to study with your peers and receive support from faculty to help can stay on top of your college work.

You are required to attend Daraja study hall to be a part of the Daraja program. You must be in study hall AT LEAST two hours a week. Not passing Daraja study hall will lower your english grade by one full letter grade.

You MUST sign-up for study hall in week one. Mr. Thompson is the study hall instructor. Meet with him to register for study hall after class during the first week of school.

Grading Policy and Course Expectations

70% Written Assignments (Essays, Final, Community Project, Midterm, In-Class Final) 30% Class Participation (attendance, homework, discussions, group work)

Passing the Class: You must complete every essay, including the midterm and final to pass the class. You must complete 75% of all other assignments to pass the class. You must complete a community project. You may complete all of the assignments, but if your essays do not average at least 75% or do not show significant improvement you will not pass the class.

Not passing Daraja study hall could jeopardize your ability to pass the class

Quotes from “If I Were Your Teacher”

James Baldwin

One of the purposes of education is to question the purpose of this education.

I began to be bugged by the teaching of American History because it seemed that that history had been accomplished without my presence and this had a very demoralizing effect on me when I was your age and younger and had a demoralizing effect for quite a few years thereafter.

Speaking as though I were your teacher, my responsibility to you would be to invest you with all of the morale that I could to prepare you for the terrible storm, which is called life, terrible and beautiful. But you must know that it is both.

It is my responsibility to give you as true a version of your history as I can, since it is through your sense of your history that you arrive at your identity.

Although society is under the obligation to educate all of its citizens, it is

also under the obligation to discourage people from educating them to think too much.

If I were your teacher, and I knew that you were beginning to wonder what you were doing in school in the first place, and what waited for you outside, what good was it for you to be here since nothing that happened here prepared you for outside. Knowing your bitterness and not trying for a moment to pretend that it not justified, I'd yet have to suggest to you that the problems that you face you have to make them personal.

We come back again to the war between society and thought; it is your responsibility as young American citizens to understand that the standards by which you are confronted and by which many of you are so visibly and obviously victimized, and others of you who are not so obviously but equally victimized, are not the only standards in the world.

Finally, if I were your teacher, I would beg you to insist to fight with me and not let me get away with anything. No matter how I may sound I am really only mortal, and I love you very much and feel responsible for you, I am not always right. We depend on each other, the old and the young; to learn from each other. I would beg you to ask me why for example, the history books are the way they are. And I would beg you to force me to answer if you asked me "what relevance your education has to concrete problems, such as...

If I were you, I would force me, I would put me on the spot, ask me the most difficult questions that you can. And I would not be able to answer them. My responsibility is to hear them. And when you ask your question, any question, you begin to know more about what you really think.

INTELLIGENCE IS EARNED but the work

can be hard so here are some tips to keep you going

Affirmation

Repeating an affirmation is a way of feeding the subconscious a positive suggestion to enhance wellbeing. One of the most famous of these was devised by the French psychologist Émile Coué (1857-1926) and is as follows:

“Every day in every way I am getting better and better.”

While the purpose of affirmation is self-improvement, it should be noted that an affirmation should always be a suggestion, and never a lie.

This doesn't mean that everything in our lives is perfect in the way that the materialist would think of as being perfect. It affirms the spiritual truth that, however much it may seem to the contrary, in essence everything around us is God – and that the whole of creation is governed by the all-pervasive and perfectly just law of karma.

Write your affirmation here: