

# DIS/CONNECTED

Fall Semester, 2003

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## *Course Overview*

Welcome to tutorial! Look around you now. You are in a room filled with amazing people. Together, we will be a small community of fellow learners and questioners engaged in conversation about some great books. The tutorial is unlike any other course at Grinnell College. This course has two purposes. It is your introduction to college-level scholarship, especially reading, discussion, and writing. It is also a way for me to get to know you well, as I will become your advisor for the next two years. This means that I will be your guide, your coach, and your number one fan as you find your path through Grinnell's open curriculum. Together we will explore what it means to be liberally educated, and to seek an education that taps into your interests and talents. I hope you find that Grinnell is a place where you develop your entire self, with intense interest and enjoyment.

## *Writing is the primary goal*

This course is founded on the three pillars of reading, discussion, and writing. Having said this, we should emphasize that your development as a college-level writer is our primary concern. The idea is that our readings and discussions will fuel your writing. We will not put too much on our plate by trying to master everything from library research to global information services to public oratory. There will be time for such things in your college career, but here we need to stake out enough intellectual space to foster good writing. This writing should follow from personal reflection and engaging discussion centering on meaningful texts.

Certainly reading noteworthy and powerful literature is essential to developing as a writer. Acquiring the habit of writing and keeping a certain rhythm is also important. So, I have tried to choose books that you will love and to alternate our attention between the books and the writing. You will write six papers over the semester, beginning with short 1 or 2 page papers and progressing to 4 - 6 page papers. These papers will not involve library research and secondary sources. Rather, they will focus on the texts we will be reading together, allowing you to interact with them more fully.

## *Class Meetings*

Unlike many tutorials that begin at 8:30 a.m., our class meetings will always begin at 8:00 a.m. I know this last sentence may have come as a shock. You may even be in denial about what it apparently said, so you better read it again if you need to. Okay, now trust me – we need this time and it will be worth your while. You know what kind of educational experience you wanted when you enrolled at Grinnell, and starting at 8 a.m. is part of how we are going to make that happen.

We will need both hours each day, running from 8 to 10 a.m., to cover the material for discussion, to talk about other important issues, or to work on writing. There are three full weeks that will be devoted to in-class writing exercises. During these weeks, you will meet in groups of three, with each group meeting for one hour. Individually, you will spend just one hour in class on those weeks. The in-class writing exercises will involve peer editing focused on the style and structure of your papers. It is always a great benefit to have a fresh pair of eyes providing feedback on your drafts. This course will put a heavy emphasis on drafting, feedback, and revising to produce the best possible writing. That is how professionals work, and you really should use this method for all your writing at Grinnell.

## *Expectations*

My expectations of you are very high. I don't want you to be lazy and miss the opportunity to go the places we can go together. This course is a perfect chance for us to summon our collective intellectual passion and to see where it takes us. The format is loose and free of busywork and exams. Remember the three pillars: reading, discussion, and writing. They are beckoning to you, inviting your devotion.

Because of the nature of this course, arriving to class on time is incredibly important. We are in this together, and the presence of each one of us is essential to the class. I can't emphasize this enough. Showing up late is just disrespectful, and everyone will be waiting for you. In fact, let us agree right now that class will never start until everyone is here. If you are not here at 8 a.m., one of us will call you. We may even dispatch a posse to your room to drag you out of bed. Whatever it takes.

If you need to miss class for family or medical reasons, please be sure to notify me in advance. Otherwise you are expected to be at every class meeting.

## *Grading*

Tutorial is not like any other class. In keeping with this, I will grade in a way that is unique to tutorial. First, let me say that in my perfect world, I would not be grading you at all. But since I will be assigning grades, I will set out to do it right. Keep in mind the following: Tutorial is not the place to obsess about getting an “A.” A “B” is a very good tutorial grade at Grinnell. Also, let’s agree to be honest with each other. I am not here to give you a falsely complimentary appraisal of your writing. You would see through that. And, a grade is not something to take personally. It does not reflect on your worth as a human being. But it does try to reflect where you are as a college-level writer. It doesn’t say where you have been, or where you may go in the future.

With those comments made, I’d like to describe the significance of the grades I will assign. The same philosophy will apply to the written work and to the course overall. I’d like the grades to be a proper signal to you and to faculty that will be teaching you in future courses. Your overall grade will depend mostly on your writing, but I will also be keenly aware of your participation in class as evidence of your effort in preparation.

## *Grading scale*

- A thoroughly impressive, impeccable work
- A - something very interesting going on
- B+ something interesting going on
- B you are right where you should be; great work
- B- some weaknesses, but strong work overall
- C+ satisfactory, but weaker areas will require significant extra work
- C you passed
- D there are grave doubts about whether your effort was genuine
- F one or more assignments not completed

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**Syllabus**

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Sun., Aug. 24	First Meeting – Discussion about the course Registration planning, set individual meeting times
Thurs., Aug. 28	Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u> , pp. 7–19, 82–95 (1 <sup>st</sup> paper due)
Tues., Sept. 2	Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u> , pp. 27–44, 65–81
Thurs., Sept. 4	Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u> , pp. 111–125, 139–148, 203–221
Tues., Sept. 9	in class writing exercise (2 draft due)
Thurs., Sept. 11	in class writing exercise (2 draft due)
Mon., Sept. 15	(2 <sup>nd</sup> paper due)
Tues., Sept. 16	Malthus, <u>Essay on Population</u> , pp. 15–44, 60–95
Thurs., Sept. 18	Malthus, <u>Essay on Population</u> , pp. 116–139
Tues., Sept. 23	in class writing exercise (3 draft due)
Thurs., Sept. 25	in class writing exercise (3 draft due)
Mon., Sept. 29	(3 <sup>rd</sup> paper due)
Tues., Sept. 30	Darwin, <u>Origin of Species</u> , pp. 95–124, 135–140, 144–147, 157–174
Thurs., Oct. 2	Darwin, <u>Descent of Man</u> , pp. 175–180, 197–222, 230–254

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Tues., Oct. 7 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp. 1-3, *part one* nos. 6, 9, 13, 14, 23. *part two* nos. 24, 26, 27, 29-31, 33, 36, 40, 41, 43, 44. *part three* nos. 45-47, 49-62

Thurs., Oct. 9 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, *part five* nos. 186, 188, 194, 198, 199, 201-203. *part six* nos. 211-213. *part seven* nos. 229,230. *part eight* nos. 242, 253. *part nine* nos. 257-263, 284, 287, 291, 294

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Tues., Oct. 14 in class writing exercise (4 draft due)

Thurs., Oct. 16 in class writing exercise (4 draft due)  
Fri., Oct. 17 (4<sup>th</sup> paper due)

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Sat., Oct. 18 –  
Sun., Oct. 26

**FALL BREAK**

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Tues., Oct. 28 Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, pp. 1-187

Thurs., Oct. 30 Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, pp. 189-316

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Tues., Nov. 4 Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, pp. 316-415  
Library visit (Library research exercise)

Thurs., Nov. 6 Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, pp. 417-536  
Writing lab visit (Library research exercise)

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Mon., Nov. 10 (Response paper due)\*

Tues., Nov. 11 Bellah *et al*, Habits of the Heart, pp. 3-35, 50-51, 55-84

Thurs., Nov. 13 Bellah *et al*, Habits of the Heart, pp. 113-163

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Mon., Nov. 17 (Response paper due)\*  
Tues., Nov. 18 Bellah *et al*, Habits of the Heart, pp. 167 –199, 250–296

Thurs., Nov. 20 Lewis *et al*, A General Theory of Love, pp. 3–99

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Tues., Nov. 25 Lewis *et al*, A General Theory of Love, pp. 100–230

Thurs., Nov. 27 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

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Tues., Dec. 2 King, The Long Walk, pp. 1–252

Thurs., Dec. 4 King, The Long Walk, pp. 253–370

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Tues., Dec. 9 Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, pp. 1–40

Thurs., Dec. 11 Essay by Marilynne Robinson (Handout)  
(5<sup>th</sup> paper due)

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\*Write one response paper, 2 pages maximum, on either Dostoyevsky or Bellah *et al*.

## Course Abstract

It has been said that we live in a dog-eat-dog world. Some have likened human life to a continual struggle for the survival of the fittest individuals, mirroring certain evolutionary processes observed in non-human life. Still others cherish a view in which we are all brothers or sisters in one human family, a view that urges awareness of how human relationships bring inspiration and meaning to our lives. This tutorial will examine the ways in which we are isolated from each other and in which we are connected to each other as human beings. We will allow a variety of sources to shed light on our conversation, including plays, short stories, and philosophical writings as well as research in biology, economics, and psychology. Our readings and discussions may be informed by a variety of perspectives, encouraging dialog among religious or spiritual and secular humanist points of view. Ultimately, we will seek a deeper appreciation for the various roles of individuality and relatedness in human life.