

# 2020-2021 Humanities 12 Course Syllabus

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**Digital Portfolio:**

[ashleyhumanities12.weebly.com](http://ashleyhumanities12.weebly.com)

**Office Hours:** By appointment. If you need extra help, please make an appointment with me by talking to me in class during work time or emailing me.

## Required Class Materials

1. Laptop
2. Folder to hold class handouts (*a 3-ring binder is **NOT** required. Feel free to get one for ALL classes, but there is no need to have a 3-ring binder for each of your classes at Animas*)
3. Composition notebook for starters, creative-writing prompts, occasional journaling and note-taking.
4. Pencils or pens
5. USB device
6. Highlighter or colored pens for marking texts
7. Daily Planner
8. Sunglasses, a hat, a camp chair or foam pad, and warm layers to be outside comfortably during the various seasons
9. An open mind, willingness to grow, and a commitment to deep engagement with course content and classmates



## Humanities 12 Mission Statement

*“This I submit is the real freedom of education, of learning to be well-adjusted. You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn’t. That is real freedom. That is being educated and understanding how to think. The alternative is unconsciousness, the default setting, the rat face.”* - [David Foster Wallace, “This is Water” Commencement Address](#)

**The mission of this course is to provide students with the....**

1. Freedom to choose how to think
2. Ability to critically examine their own and others’ thinking
3. Agency to feel an authentic sense of purpose in how they contribute to the world beyond these four walls.

## Course Overview

*“Through the humanities we reflect on the fundamental question: What does it mean to be human? The humanities offer clues but never a complete answer. They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual, and intellectual sense of a world in which irrationality, despair, loneliness, and death are as conspicuous as birth, friendship, hope, and reason.”* - From: *The Humanities in American Life*, a 1980 report from the United States Rockefeller Commission on the Humanities



Over the course of the year, students grow into critical thinkers who can examine their own views, the views of others, and the way those views impact themselves and our society. While this initially seems simple, changing your own opinion based on evidence is one of the most difficult tasks students may encounter.



### First Semester

In the first semester, students will study a diverse array of philosophies of justice and apply those philosophies to various case studies pertaining to Environmental and Racial Injustices. They will work to develop their own authentic and well-reasoned philosophy of justice as it relates to an issue about which they are passionate.

### Second Semester

In the second semester, students will use the Senior Project to put their critical thinking skills to work on a burning question they have. In the process, not only will they develop the research and writing skills necessary for success in college-level coursework, but they will also have a better sense of who they are as learners and agents of change in a diverse and complex world.

### First Semester Projects at a Glance

Course Theme	Description
 <p><b>Justice Project</b></p>	<p>20<sup>th</sup> century moral and political philosopher, John Rawls, said, “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions”. However, justice is hard to define. Through this project, we will deconstruct what justice means according to moral and political philosophers as we explore the essential question, what is justice? We will begin by studying several philosophies that have most influenced the US legal and political systems (Utilitarianism, Libertarianism, Deontology and John Rawls’ Justice as Fairness). We will then branch out to critically examine those philosophies by exploring the difference between individualism and collectivism, the Dalai Llama’s philosophy of “compassion as justice”, various perspectives on environmental justice, including both an ecocentric view and indigenous perspectives on the interrelatedness of humans and non-human life. We’ll contemplate just how far our obligation to justice extends: To our families? Local communities? Nations? Other countries? Other lifeforms? Etc..</p> <p>We’ll do all of this through various case studies examining the intersection of Environmental, Economic and Racial Justice.</p> <p>Together, we’ll come up with an idea for a final project that enables students to cultivate their own philosophy of justice and apply it to an issue about which they are passionate.</p>
 <p><b>Senior Project Exploration</b></p>	<p>Additionally, this semester, we will spend time exploring your passions and curiosities in order to help you choose an inspiring research question and action project that addresses a real-world need or problem. You will have the opportunity to hear from various professionals and academics in order to understand just what those needs, problems and questions are in various fields of study, as well as more specifically in the field of study or line of work you’re interested in exploring for your senior project. The work we do with the justice project, leadership development and self-awareness will all come into play here.</p>

### Second Semester: Senior Project

This is the big one! For the entire second semester, you will be exploring a topic of your choosing, both through academic research and writing, and through a self designed project. Your senior project will have three main parts:

1. **Senior Thesis:** The writing part.
2. **Senior Project:** The action part: \*Action projects must **have impact**, **fill a need** or **solve a problem** in an **innovative way**.
3. **TED Talk:** The speaking part.

## Responsibilities for Teaching & Learning

At this point in your high school career, education is a shared responsibility. Your success in this course, as it is in life, is directly related to your active involvement in the learning process. I have several expectations that deserve special mention up front:

1. That you come to class prepared and on-time with the understanding that education is an *active* rather than passive process. This includes completing the assigned reading for that day.
2. That engagement in discussion and class participation are required and expected of all
3. That you uphold the norms and expectations for respectful behavior necessary to foster a safe and inclusive classroom environment
4. That you seek to grow and strive for excellence

My responsibilities as an educator is to empower you to take control of your own learning, and to challenge, support and inspire you by providing a variety of learning opportunities and experiences related to the course objectives described above as well as to share my passion for the Humanities. Part of my job is to help you grow and stretch as a learner by providing timely, specific feedback on your work both in-class and out of class. Some of this feedback will involve grades.

## Semester 1 Grading Policy

I will be implementing a three-tiered system of grading and work with students to develop more of the criteria and expectations for this system over the first several weeks of the semester. If you would like more information on this process, my philosophy and the nitty gritty details, check out [this linked document](#). Here is a brief snapshot of the three-tiered system:

***There will be 3 categories in the gradebook for the first semester:***

1. **50% of your overall Humanities Grade = Apply yo' knowledge:** For the category of "A, Apply your knowledge", you will see specific assignments entered in the gradebook throughout the semester that reflect your ability to apply content knowledge to the task. These would include the college essay, final writing assignments, justice monologues, and seminars.
2. **30% = A's and C's of Humanities Growth and Reflection:** 30% of your Humanities grade will be based on your ability to demonstrate and reflect upon your growth in the As and C's of Humanities. You will receive a grade (out of 20 points) each time you conference with that includes three things. We will conference 1-2 times a month. These conferences will be graded on:
  - a. The extent to which you are prepared for and authentically engaged in the conference
  - b. The extent to you demonstrate growth and sincere reflection in the As and C's
3. **20%= Are you doing the work?** This is simply whether or not you're turning in completion assignments throughout the semester. You'll receive a completion grade for each assignment in this category. Things like reading notes, seminar prep, discussion questions, etc... will go in this category.

## Semester 2 Assessment Policy

In the second semester, we will move towards an assessment system that looks very similar to Humanities-based college classes. In the second semester, the assessment will break down as follows:

1. **50% Senior Thesis Final Draft.** That's right, this paper is worth 50% of your grade. So make it a good one! Don't panic yet, you will have lots of support in getting there.
2. **30% Senior Thesis Defense/TED Talk.** This is a talk where you will present and defend the conclusions of your research before a panel of teachers, peers, and outside observers.

3. **20% Interim Deadlines and Assignments.** This category includes daily assignments and deadlines on the way to your Senior Thesis, including Senior Project Advisor Meetings, Deep Reading, Annotated Bibliography, and deadlines for your outline and rough draft.

## Late Work Policy

If you are absent from school, it is your responsibility as a student to contact me for missed assignments. For excused absences, you will be given the same amount of time to complete the assignment as the rest of the class had. When possible, plan ahead when you know you are going to be absent. If you are really ill, please let me know and I will work with you to develop an appropriate plan to get you caught up on the essentials.

Assignments are due as noted in Google Classroom. Anything submitted later than that will be docked an immediate 20%. After 5 school days have passed, I will no longer accept the work, and your grade in Infinite Campus will become a 0%.

COMMUNICATE WITH ME AHEAD OF TIME IF YOU NEED HELP OR MORE TIME TO GET ASSIGNMENTS OR PROJECTS DONE. I can be flexible with responsible, communicative students. Coming to me the day that the assignment is due (or after) with excuses will do no good. I will grant extensions in cases where I deem them necessary and appropriate.

In order to receive an extension on a deadline you must write me an email no later than 10 pm the evening before the assignment is due (preferably sooner!). This email must be professionally written, and must include the following information:

1. The reason for your request (why you need an extension)
2. The date by which you think it's appropriate to submit the assignment.
3. Any additional help or support you need in completing the assignment.

Please note that extensions will never be granted for Exhibition products, which must be completed by Exhibition.

## Parent Communication Policy

To encourage you to take ownership of your own grades and better prepare you for life beyond the "nest", I ask that you please contact me directly with any questions about your assignments and grades. Please do not have your parents contact me regarding your grades until you have asked the questions first, via email, speech, or writing. If you or your parents still have questions after you have talked to me, I would be happy to address your/their concerns at that point!

## Email Etiquette: *How to effectively communicate with teachers*

Subject: E-mail Format

Dear Students,

E-mail is a useful mode of communication, particularly during the school day when teachers tend to be busy and might forget information transmitted orally during the course of the day. You should use email to communicate any of the following types of information: future excused absences, late work excuses, requests for extensions on projects, to schedule a meeting with a teacher, to ask questions you might have that have not been addressed during class, etc... Email should always include a clearly stated purpose, necessary background information, a **recommendation or action plan** and clear and concise writing.

Please keep in mind that you are communicating with a *teacher* in writing about your work. That means you should read over what you wrote before you send it out and correct any typos or errors. Do not use text message abbreviations or emoticons. I “m not ur bff,” so do not send me emails that read like text messages you would send to a friend. ALWAYS begin your email with a respectful greeting (Dear Ashley, Good morning Ashley, Hello Ashley, etc...) and conclude your email with an appropriate closing such as Sincerely/Respectfully/Best Regards, Your Name). Following these guidelines will help you make good impressions not only on your beloved Animas teachers, but also with prospective employers and college professors.

Sincerely,  
Ashley Carruth

## Norms and Expectations

**We will read and write every day.** *Seriously. Every day.*

### What are the minimum standards for written work?

o Practice like you’re going to play! In other words, your written work should be high quality and professional. In our fast-paced digital world, it is all-too easy to shoot off a professional email to a teacher, boss, or admissions officer, riddled with errors. However, that reflects poorly on you and may lead to a missed opportunity.

o **Paper Formatting/Printing:** Only 2-sided printing will be accepted and unless otherwise indicated, papers and assignments should be typed in 12 point font, using one inch margins.

o I invite you to hand in a draft of any assigned formal written work in advance of the due date for preliminary feedback.

o **Important note about grammar:** If there are more than **five** significant errors in spelling/grammar on typed writing assignments, I will stop reading your paper at that point, automatically deduct 10%, and hand it back to you for a re-write, which you will be expected to turn in the following class. The take home point here is if you are challenged by grammar, then I urge you to use your classmates, family members, or teachers as proofreaders.

### We will use technology respectfully and responsibly.

This means that you are not distracting yourself, classmates, or me with your phones, laptops, or music during class. Cell phones should always remain turned off and in your backpacks, out of sight.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What do I do if I am late to class?

Come in quietly. Do not disturb others or try to make some flashy, fashionably-late entrance. Check the DP and read the daily blog. If you require further clarification, ask a neighbor. You should come see me *only* after doing all of the above.

### What do I do if I am sick or miss school?

It is your responsibility to read my DP and google classroom, stay abreast of our course material, and contact me to let me know why you are absent and inquire as to what you need to make up. *Yes, You do need to make-up missed starters.*

### Can I get extra credit?

No. But if you have turned in sub-par work, please talk to me about the potential to further demonstrate your learning.

### How do I get into Honors Humanities 12?

Express interest and then submit a writing sample from Humanities 11 to demonstrate your preparation for 12th grade Honors Humanities.

### When are assignments due?

*“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” —*

#### **Benjamin Franklin**

Assignments are due in the first five minutes of class unless otherwise noted. Anything turned in later than five minutes after class has begun will be docked an immediate 20%. You have up to one week from the deadline to turn it in for up to 80% credit. After that, you will receive a zero for the assignment. Make sure all printing is done before the deadline.



**We will be kind to each other.**

Mean, intolerant, or profanity-ridden speech will absolutely not be tolerated. We will be discussing many controversial topics and I expect all students to do so with compassion and an open-mind.

**Tardiness**

I check attendance during the first 10 minutes of class every day. If you're consistently late, I will ask you to make up that time with me in a way that supports a productive learning environment.

**Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism):** Any assignments that have been plagiarized will result in an automatic ZERO and will be reported to Sean and Libby. I'll also have a serious conversation with you as we'll seek ways for you to restore trust. Please don't test this one. We're studying JUSTICE, afterall.

**Lost or Damaged Book Policy**

By signing this syllabus, you agree to take good care of all class texts and to return books that have been checked out to you in a similar condition as you received them. If you do not, you will be expected to pay for the cost of the book. Also, you may receive an incomplete in the class until the text is replaced or the cost of the text has been covered.

**Can I refine my work after the deadline?**

Yes! I want to see growth! You're always welcome to seek my feedback and refine your work. However, do not take advantage of this by turning in a purposefully weak first draft. I want to give you feedback that will be meaningfully and can only do that on work you've put solid effort towards. However, there will be a time limit and refinements won't be endless, as I'll subjectively determine if needed.

**Can I get an extension?**

Please review the late work policy above.

**Can I eat in class?**

Unfortunately, because of Covid, this year eating is not allowed, as you can't chew through a mask. Sorry!

**Can I listen to music during work time?**

Look y'all. We only have TWO days together in person right now. Let's make the most of it by being present and connected. Thus, to avoid students isolating themselves, and to encourage collaboration and productive discussion, we will be listening to music as a class this year during independent work time. We will mostly stick to non-lyrical music, as that's proven to aid focus the most. I am open to suggestions to add to our playlist!

## Humanities 12 Syllabus Signature and Parent Information



Dear Parents/Guardians,

9/3/2020

The education of your child is a task shared by parents, teachers, peer groups, and other community members. Please assist me in serving your child by reading my syllabus linked on my digital portfolio at <http://ashleyhumanities12.weebly.com/syllabus.html> and talking about it with your student. Then sign and date this form for your student for them to return by **Thursday, September 10th**. Additionally, I recommend saving my contact info and bookmarking my digital portfolio: [www.ashleyhumanities12.weebly.com](http://www.ashleyhumanities12.weebly.com).

In their senior year, I am expecting students to have increased levels of individual responsibility, and to engage in their education with less support from teachers and parents (remember, we're trying to get them ready for life beyond the Osprey nest! Eek!). Practically, this means that I may engage in less parental communication than you may have experienced in previous years. That said, if at any point you have questions or concerns, please email me at [ashley.carruth@animashighschool.com](mailto:ashley.carruth@animashighschool.com).

Additionally, it will be important for you to play an active role in supporting your child with their senior project. Rather than asking your child how they are doing in school and what grades they are earning, I'd recommend weekly conversations to help them think more deeply about their own passions and interests so they can ultimately choose a senior project topic that is both authentic to who they are and is inspiring to them. Some questions to guide your conversations include:

- What are you curious about?
- What excites you intellectually and professionally?
- What questions do you have about the world?
- What keeps you awake at night?
- What has been the most interesting topic you've explored in school?
- What don't you like?
- What are you good at? What are you excited to improve in?
- What do you want to learn about?
- What people or topics make you leap for joy?

Thank you,  
Ashley Carruth \* 12th Grade Humanities \* Animas High School

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*If there is anything you'd like me to know about your child to help me in my role as educator, mentor and academic coach, please take a moment to fill out the space on the backside of this document. →*

