Final Report for FaCTS
Funded by the Mellon Foundation
AY 10-11

Brenda Edgerton-Webster, Ph.D.

Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals (1 paragraph)

A concentrated implementation of the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) within the required introductory course for the Department of Communications (MSCM 1100 – *Introduction to Mass Communication* – (XULA QEP-1.3)), the purpose of this proposed curriculum enhancement is to implement a drill course specifically designed to assess and improve the reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing skills of entering freshman and transfer students. This ancillary course will not only help students find success in their freshman year at Xavier University of Louisiana, but also will prepare them to productively matriculate through the rigor of the Communications curriculum. The proposed goals for this project are to: (1) increase student active learning via developmental and enrichment reading comprehension and critical thinking opportunities (Maaka and Ward, 1998 and Cunningham and Stanovich, 2003), (2) create a student-centered learning environment that heightens students' engagement in the "classroom, on campus, and within the community" of New Orleans (XULA QEP Presentation, August 2009), and 3) inculcate in students the importance of on-going professional development at the onset of their academic careers as a model for effectively carrying out their professional lives.

Future plans (1 brief paragraph)

University-student engagement with area secondary students, via the "College-to-High School News Exchange," helps high school students recognize the correlation of American History to modern current events and provides real-life exposure to topics in mass communication. It certainly creates a pool of rising high school juniors and seniors primed for recruitment to Xavier University of Louisiana in general and the Mass Communication Program in the Department of Communication in particular. The drill course will be offered again this Fall 2011 and data collected will provide ongoing updates to the study's results for future scholarship of teaching and learning, effective examples of active learning strategies, and a template of syllabus and lesson plan development for the improvement of the foundational course (*Introduction to the Mass Communication*) for most every Journalism or Mass Communication Department in the United States.

Dissemination of project

The "Current Events via the 'College-to-High School News Exchange' & Drill Session" has been selected as the **First Place winner** in the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Scholastic Journalism Division's 2011

Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism competition. I have been asked to discuss the winning program as part of the Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism Invited Panel at the AEJMC Convention in St. Louis. The Innovative Outreach session is Thursday, Aug. 11 from 3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

I am also working on a full journal article for submission to Journalism and Mass Communication Educator no later than August 2011.

Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**Goal 1: Increase media literacy via a standard method of media criticism.**

Learning Outcome 1: By the end of this course, students will be able to specifically describe their criticism of the media.

Learning Outcome 2: By the end of this course, students will be able to fully analyze the media's role within their specific criticism.

Learning Outcome 3: By the end of this course, students will be able to fully interpret the current scholarship in the area of their specific criticism.

Learning Outcome 4: By the end of this course, students will be able to fully evaluate media expert debate as it relates to research findings of their criticism.

Learning Outcome 5: By the end of this course, students will be able to fully engage in developing a solution to their specific media criticism.

Strategy: Class activities: write letters-to-the-editors of *Public Occurrences*, radio fireside chats, twitter, blog to Burns.

Assessment: Research presentations that employ all five steps of media criticism.

**Goal 2: Develop a discipline-centered vocabulary.**

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate their mastery a "disciplined-centered vocabulary derived from the text and readings of selected popular periodical and discipline-related journal articles.

Strategy: Students will attend a weekly drill session (taught by a senior-level student assistant) to reinforce readings, lecture/discussions, and vocabulary logs. Also, will use electronic flash cards.

Assessment: A weekly in-class vocabulary quiz on Thursday (sentences, lists stories).

**Goal 3: Become regular consumers of current event news and able to contextualize it with material learned in media history readings and lectures/discussions.**

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate their understanding of and a habitual practice of current event consumption.

Strategy: Reciprocal teaching and QAR in drills.

Assessment: A weekly in-class current event quiz on Tuesday containing questions that specifically target their ability to contextualize current news with material learned in readings and lectures/discussions.

**Goal 4:** Increase active learning via developmental and enrichment reading comprehension and critical thinking.

Learning Outcome 1: Students will help create a student-centered learning environment and heighten their engagement in the "classroom, on campus, and within the community" of New Orleans as critical thinkers and principled citizens.

Strategy: Throughout the semester, students will electronically submit at least two intellectually challenging questions for Tuesday's discussion of the week's readings. Using the theory of Bloom's Taxonomy as a rubric, the instructor will evaluate the rigor of each question and employ those with the highest level of critical thinking as the session discussion guide.

Assessment: Regardless of student ACT or incoming grade point average, all Freshmen and Transfer students will take a diagnostic exam in their drill class to assess their reading comprehension and writing skills as specifically needed for success in the discipline of communication studies. At the end of the semester, the students will take a post assessment exam that will determine their demonstrated ability to meet the aforementioned student goals and outcomes. Additionally, the instructor will retain all of the questions submitted and chart the progress of each student's ability to construct queries that demonstrate reading comprehension.

**Goal 5: Service learning**

Learning Outcome 1: Students will employ the strategies of reciprocal teaching and QAR to instruct secondary high school students on the synergy between U.S. History and contemporary news events.

Strategy: Students will use hardcopy and electronic newspapers and periodicals to read and lead discussions with groups of four to five-person 11th grade U.S. History students within the New Orleans Recovery School District With each monthly visit (Sept.-Nov.), Xavier students will "exchange the news" with secondary students and help them make connections to the learning and understanding of U.S. History.

Assessment: Xavier students also will continue these discussions with their student groups on Twitter or a Web log outside of the classroom and journal the experience.

Summary assessment

**Assessment of Project Goal (1):** *was to increase student active learning via developmental and enrichment grammar, reading comprehension, and critical thinking opportunities.* Regardless of student ACT or incoming grade point average, all freshmen and transfer students in class sections 01 and 02 (total of 23 university students) took a diagnostic exam in their drill class to assess their reading comprehension and writing skills as specifically needed for success in the discipline of communication studies. Students then received instruction that targeted either developmental or enrichment needs. One major strategy employed in the drill session required students to submit at least one intellectually challenging questions for discussion of the week's textbook and/or drill readings. Using Bloom's Taxonomy as a rubric, the instructor evaluated the rigor of each question and used those with the highest level of critical thinking to guide the session discussion.

T-test analysis conducted on the grammar, reading, and critical thinking diagnostic exam scores show students' mean average increased by as much as nine to 11% over the course of the semester. For example, average test scores for section 01, where N = 10, increased from 65% to 74.90% and for section 02, where N = 13, from 66.23% to 78.08%. While most students commented in end-of-semester evaluations that they initially thought the drill session was unnecessary, nearly all recanted their complaints and suggested that the department continue using it.

**Assessment of Project Goal (2):** *was to create a student-centered learning environment that heightens students' engagement in the "classroom, on campus, and within the community."* A strategy to facilitate this goal was the administration of Likert surveys to gather data on the satisfaction of the University's MSCM-1100-D (drill) students and Recovery School District faculty. Recovery School District students (13 high school students) were also surveyed, but their data results were discarded because the majority of the minor-aged students did not provide parental permission to publish

their responses; however, several Warren Easton students did say they hoped that the next year's entering freshmen at Xavier would make the same commitment to reach out to rising 11th-graders at their school. A few went as far as to tell future 11th-grade history students to take their teacher's first period class so not to miss out on the collaborative "news exchange" in the fall of 2011. The high school teacher, who scored each of the 26 elements of the survey with the most positive response of a "5" (Strongly Agree), said the service-learning project brought practical meaning to a segment of American history that students often do not correlate to popular events. "Students often do not understand that news of old crafts current history and current news constructs future history."[i]

**Assessment of Project Goal (3):** *was to develop a mastery of discipline-centered vocabulary.* Students attended the weekly drill session (taught by a senior-level student assistant) to reinforce readings, lecture/discussions, and vocabulary logs and used both electronic and hardcopy flash cards. Vocabulary quizzes asked students to use the words in the proper context to write a story, poem, fairy-tale, or other composed work. The goal was for students to learn the contextual meaning of each vocabulary word rather than just its simple definition. T-test analysis conducted on the vocabulary quiz scores show that in section 01, where N = 10, students averaged 7.58 out of a possible 10 points and in section 02, where N = 13, students averaged 8.30 out of a possible 10 points. Since this was the first year that vocabulary quizzes were used in this course, no previous statistics are available for comparison; however, as one might expect a bi-variant analyses of ACT scores for each section show a direct correlation between higher standardized test scores with higher vocabulary scores for this group of students.

**Assessment of Project Goal (4):** *was to become regular consumers of current event news and have the ability to contextualize it with material learned in media history readings and lectures/discussions* and **(5):** *help university students develop a "news exchange" with secondary students and connect current media events to the learning and understanding of U.S. History*. Ironically, one of the most challenging goals for any mass communication/journalism program is to get entering students to become regular consumers of current news events and understand its tangential application to their academic and public life. As recipients of best practices for reading instruction in the drill sessions, university students, in turn, employed reciprocal teaching and Question-

Answer-Relationship (QAR) techniques to teach secondary high school students the synergy between U.S. History and contemporary news events. To additionally help prepare for their interaction with the high school students, university students took weekly current event quizzes that required a demonstration of information knowledge, detail, and historical context. The only suggestion for improvement given by the high school history teacher was to make sure that students had better mastery of QAR techniques in relationship to U.S. History.

One of the most tangible artifacts of this experience was that student groups (comprised of both university and high school students) electronically continued their discussion outside of class and subsequently composed letters to the editor of the community paper (*The Trumpet*). In their joint letters to the editor (four submissions), the student groups spoke to the value of the magazine's special edition issue in addressing contemporary topics that touched their lives and had relevance to their academics.[ii] University students demonstrated a commitment to the University's mission through their active participation in community building with local youths and a metro media partner.

***PROJECT AWARD LETTER***

From: Julie Dodd
Sent: Thu 5/19/2011 12:02 PM
To: bedgerto@xula.edu
Cc: acrump@xula.edu
Subject: Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism - congratulations on being named first place

Brenda,
Congratulations!

"Current Events via the 'College-to-High School News Exchange' & Drill Session" has been selected as the First Place winner in the Scholastic Journalism Division's 2011 Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism competition.

You are asked to discuss your winning program as part of the Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism Invited Panel at the AEJMC Convention in St. Louis. At this session, you will receive your award plaque. I will send you information about the day and time of the session.

We are asking you to make a 20-minute presentation about your program. One of the goals of having you present at the convention is to provide you with national recognition for your important work. Another goal of the presentation is to help other college communications programs learn about your outreach effort and get ideas and strategies for developing their own outreach efforts.

Most of those who will attend the session will be involved in scholastic journalism efforts for their colleges or schools. Some who attend will be administrators, who may be looking for ideas for meeting accrediting standards and/or more effectively recruiting students. The panel will include a moderator and discussant who will provide a critique of the programs.

I will send the judges' comments in a separate email.

Would you please send me a mug shot that can be included in the article on the competition that will be published in Scholastic Source. I'd appreciate receiving the mug shot as soon as possible – no later than May 27. Please send the photo at 300 ppi, as the publication may be in print as well as digital format.

Again, congratulations.

Regards,
Julie Dodd

Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism chair

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Eugenia M. Valentine, Ph.D.

**Xavier University of Louisiana**
**Center for the Advancement of Teaching**
**Faculty Communities of Teaching Scholars (FaCTS)**

Principal Investigator/Fellow: Eugenia M. Valentine, Ph.D.

Department: Psychology

Title of Project: The Implementation of Discussion Groups Using a Non-pedagogical Book in a Psychology of Gender Class

Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals

This project proposed the inclusion of a non-pedagogical book into the Psychology of Gender class. The inclusion involved a change from a textbook of readings on gender to a more popular and topical book on gender. The class format was changed to include small group discussions of the book chapters, group leaders reporting on their small group discussions, and individual focus papers on the chapters. The inclusion of a non-pedagogical popular book was proposed to encourage advanced reading comprehension in upper-level students, leadership skills, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and expose students to the controversial issues of the construction of gender. The chosen book, As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl (by John Colapinto) provided a unique, interesting, and entertaining look at gender and how it functions in our society. Students became more aware of the myriad injustices of gender, which equips them to confront these issues in their future lives. The book reinforced reading skills that the students learned in lower division classes, while engaging them in reading. Class discussions served as a forum for students to bounce ideas and opinions off of each other, and discuss the topic at length. Students were able to take turns being small group leaders, and their focus papers on the readings provided a means of assessment of reading comprehension.

Future plans

The Psychology of Gender class is currently crosslisted as both a Psychology class and a Women's Studies class. It is offered every Fall semester at Xavier University of Louisiana. The student evaluations were so positive that I plan to continue to use the aforementioned book as my outside reading in the class. The general and popular nature of the book will help the class become even more attractive to all disciplines, including the Humanities. This is especially important since this class has been approved for addition to the Expansive Core Curriculum.

Dissemination of project

This project has been presented in a forum at the Southeastern Conference for the Teaching of Psychology, February 25, 2011. Citation as follows:

Yost-Hammer, E, & Valentine, E. M. (2011, February). Enhancing Strategic Reading Skills Via Psychology Courses: Assignments and Strategies. Presentation for the Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology.

Depending on remaining funding, this project may be presented at the National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology conference in January, 2012.

Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes

The specific goals and outcomes for this project were as follows:

I. Provide reading that is interesting and engaging to the students
II. Preserve the gender-related concepts of the class
III. Provide a means of assessment of reading comprehension via the focus papers
IV. Expose students to many injustices that gender creates (XULA Mission)
V. Allow students to take turns being the leaders of the small groups (QEP goal)
VI. Reinforce reading skills (QEP goal)
VII. Provide a forum for students to interact with each other about the readings (QEP goal)

The specific assignments for the book were focus papers that the students wrote for each section that the book was divided into. The focus papers already had a set assessment of a maximum of 5 points apiece. The students were instructed to read the section that was assigned for the day, summarize it, and comment on it. The papers were assigned to be approximately 1 ½ - 2 pages long, with at least 2-4 ideas, connections, experiences, criticisms, or concerns. Since other than final grades, these assignments were better reflections of the students' absorption of the book material, I planned to compare the students' grades on their focus papers from the first half of the class to the second half of the class. I expected to see an improvement in grades as the class progressed. I also proposed to compare the focus paper grades from the previous incarnation of the class in 2009, which used the book of collected readings, to the focus paper grades of this proposed class. I hypothesized that the focus paper grades on the non-pedagogical book would be better than the textbook of readings. It was also hypothesized that since the book was proposed to be more interesting to the students than the books on readings previously used, the mean class evaluations would improve over the mean class evaluations from the previous class with the textbook of readings.

Summary assessment

A significant difference in mean focus paper grades was found between the previous class and this class, but not in the expected direction. The 2009 class ($N = 29$, $M = 3.83$) had a higher average for their focus papers than the FaCTS class (2010, $N = 34$, $M = 3.61$). An independent t-test showed that this difference was statistically significant ($F = 5.05$, $p < .03$). This could be due to the fact that the 2009 class had one extra focus paper due, and therefore practice effects could have pulled the mean up.

I was also disappointed in my efforts to find a significant improvement in the focus paper grades from the beginning of the 2010 to the end. Since the FaCTS class had 7 focus papers due, the mean of the first three focus papers ($N = 34$, $M = 3.46$) was compared to the mean of the final three focus papers ($N = 34$, $M = 3.59$). Although there was an improvement overall, this difference was not strong enough to be significant in a dependent t-test ($t = 5.05$, $p = .58$). This could be due to Type II error, or could be attributed to the fact that our students tend to be consistent in their performance throughout the semester.

Once again, mean class evaluations did not exhibit expected trends between the 2009 class (overall $M = 4.71$) and the 2010 class (overall $M = 4.50$), on a Likert scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). On the bright side, the class seems to be enjoyable and informative for all students regardless of reading choice, as these evaluations reflect a very high degree of satisfaction across questions about class preparation, clarity of course objectives, and opportunities for learning. What follows are some selections of student comments from the 2010 class evaluations:

"The use of the book *As Nature Made Him* made the class more enjoyable and should become a part of the overall curriculum."

"Great examples, great explanation, great balance of work between takeovers, papers, tests, and book."

"Although recently converted to a QEP class, the overall objectives were met and the reading selections were appropriate and enjoyable."

"Very good statistics and interesting material learned."

Therefore, in spite of disappointing statistical outcomes, I am still grateful for the opportunity to have conducted this project, and am considering the entire experience a success.

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Katheryn Krotzer Laborde

Book Club 1020

**Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals (1 paragraph)**

*Book Club 1020* transforms English 1020 from a traditional freshman comp-and-lit class into something more in line with a book club. The purpose of this approach is to instill a relaxed atmosphere that will encourage an enjoyment of reading and a desire to discuss literature. As such, the 3-hour class takes place once a week in the English Department Lounge. Hot beverages and light breakfast fare (doughnuts and such) is provided in order to encourage an informal and pleasurable coffee house environment. The same requirements of the traditional 1020 class (essays, reflective writing, research paper) are maintained; a portable blackboard is used when traditional teaching methods are required.

**Future plans (1 brief paragraph)**

**What's the future of your course or project? Will you continue to offer it, etc.?**

Encouraged by the results, I plan on offering one to two sections of Book Club 1020 each spring. Without funding I will not be able to offer free food; however, students will be allowed to bring their own.

**Dissemination of project**

**Please list any presentations, publications, etc. that you have made or plan to make regarding this funded project. Please give a complete citation if you have already presented/published or had a proposal accepted.**

I presented *You Can Lead that Horse to Water, but…: When Freshmen Lit Meets Book Club* on April 22, 2011 at the National Popular/American Culture Associations Conference in San Antonio, Texas. It was part of a panel on Academics and Collegiate Culture.

**Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes**

**Here list any specific outcomes you developed for your course/project. These can come from your syllabi.**

The outcomes I listed on my syllabus more or less fell in line with outcomes I would generally list in a typical ENGL 1020 class (syllabus is attached).

However, the FaCTS-related outcomes I had in mind as I taught the class were the following:

* Students will develop their own reading schedules.

* Students will learn to enjoy the discussion of literature.

* Students will learn to enjoy reading (or at least come to enjoy it more).

**Summary assessment**

**Here provide any assessment you have for the specific outcomes you developed for your course/project, or for you project as a while. Basically you are answering the question, "how do you know your goals where met?" You are welcome (and encouraged) to attach samples of students' work, assignments, reading lists, etc.**

Before discussing how my outcomes were met, I think it is important to explain the this-and-that of the class. (I taught two sections of Book Club 1020; one on Tuesday morning and the other on Thursday morning. Since there was no difference in time, setting, or class size, I will discuss the two sections as one.)

**How did Book Club 1020 reading material differ from ENGL 1020?**

Every teacher is different, of course, but most of us tend to teach this course using a literature anthology. We generally cover nonfiction (essay), fiction, play, and poetry. To my mind, though. nothing would break the mood quicker than to have students trying to eat slices of king cake with heavy anthologies on their laps.

That said, I assigned four novels to be covered over the semester.

*Bright Lights, Big City* – Jay McIerney;
*Catcher in the Rye* – J. D. Salinger; and
*Madeleine is Sleeping* – Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum.
*Ballad of the Sad Café* – Carson McCullers.

To give the students time to get their books and get started, we started with two essays:

"Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night" – Nik Cohn (*New York Magazine*)
"Saturday Night Fever: The Life" – Charlie LeDuff (*New York Times*)

These, naturally, led to the showing of the film "Saturday Night Fever."

From there we started the novels.

*Leaving Saturn* by Major Jackson supplied the poetry we read and discussed. Rather than give them at-home reading assignments from this book, I would assign poems in class that we would read before splitting into groups to discuss. This in itself was a departure of how I generally teach the poetry section of the course. Instead of teaching poems from a variety of writers, I was able to focus on what makes poetry, poetry using the work of one.

## Who was in Book Club 1020?

Of the original 27 students, two dropped soon after the first novel was read. Judging by their grades on a written response to the novel, an exercise that gave a series of words that the students had to use to construct a summary of the book, one student had not read much of the book, and the other had not even cracked the spine.

That left 25 students. Of these,

* 14 were Science (Biology or Chemistry) majors, most pre-med;

* 4 were Business majors;

* 2 Psychology;

* 1 Mass Communications;

* 1 History;

* 3 were "deciding." At Xavier, where students declare majors long before they cross a classroom threshold, a "deciding" student is one who was unable to make passing grades in his Major courses (usually Biology or Chemistry).

Finally, 5 of the students were not second semester freshmen (but rather 4 sophomores and 1 junior).

## How had they done before?

It is important to note, as well, how they had done in English 1010 before coming to this non-traditional class.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 A's | 5 B's | 8 C's | 2 D's |

In addition, 3 students had taken ENGL 1000, an intensive alternative that includes mandatory weekly sessions in the Writing Center. These students had earned 2 C's and 1 B.

The A students, incidentally, had been eligible to take Honors English. Book Club 1020 does not give honors credit.

In considering class make up then, we see that we had a mix of good, average, and at-risk students. And, as is the norm at Xavier, there was a high percentage of science majors.

## Reading the books

As anyone who has ever participated in a book club can attest, it is simply no fun to sit around and listen to a discussion about a book one has not read. Being able to participate in the circle (particularly when the discussion could go well over an hour without interruption) is its own reward for having finished the book.

But it's easy for a slacker to hide in a circle. How to determine whether the books had been read, either partially or completely? For each book, a deadline was given for completion. The book was not discussed before its deadline. At the beginning of the deadline class, a quiz of sorts would be given. For the first book, students were asked to use a list of 20 words in writing a summary of the book. I used their grades to indicate progress.

**BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY**

| A/B | C | D/F | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 students<br>completed or nearly complete reading | 5 students<br>read most of the book | 9 students<br>had read perhaps the first chapter or nothing at all | 3 students<br>did not show up the day the book was to be discussed |

I assumed that giving them a list of words to include in the summary would encourage them to read more closely for the next time. In asking about *Catcher in the Rye*, I did not supply a list of words to include in the in-class summary quiz. I did, however, ask them to write in Holden Caulfield's "crumby" voice. (So much for Sparknotes!)

**CATCHER IN THE RYE**

| A/B | C | D/F | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16 students<br><br>a few of the students had read this in high school | 4 students<br><br>had not read the entire book | 3 students<br><br>had read perhaps the first chapter or two | 2 students<br><br>did not show up the day the book was to be discussed |

While *Bright Lights/Big City* had thrown the students for a bit of a loop because it is written in second person, at least the narrative was straightforward, as was the case with *Catcher*. This book, however, is based half in the real world (though a world tinted by magical realism) and half in a continuing dream. What is real? What is not? Who knows?

I chose to NOT ask them to write a summary, though I did not announce that until the start of class. With no grades to worry about, I asked them if they had finished the book.

## MADELEINE IS SLEEPING

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| Finished book | Did not finish | Did not come to class | Gave vague responses so unsure to whether he/she finished or not |

Not surprisingly, those who finished had come to 1020 with an A or a B in English (there was one C). Incidentally, at the end of the semester, this "confusing" (their word) book won hands down as the "least liked," chosen by those who read and those who didn't.

In discussing this book, we took yet another turn away from what we usually did. For the first hour of class, they broke into two mini groups and, as they often did with the poetry, discussed the book on their own. After the break, we formed our traditional group. We avoided the "and now the teacher will explain everything to us" scenario of a traditional lit class. After all, I knew just as much as they did. What is real? What is not? Who knows?

Soon we were back in the land of traditional narrative with a novella by Carson McCullers. (Interestingly, quite a few of the students had assumed that the female protagonist was African American because she was described as "dark." This lead to a discussion about considering historical context when reading older books.)

## BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFÉ

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A/B | C | D/F | 0 |
| 14 students | 2 students | 8 students | 1 student |

Of the A/B grades, many of the B's were thus graded because the student had not been able to answer the question *Who are the 12 mortal men?* This referred to a brief section at the end of the novella that seemingly has nothing to do with the story (but is most definitely part of the book).

Of the D/F grades, many of the students seemed to stop reading when the author momentarily dropped the action and waxed philosophical about love. These were, again, the weaker students. I had hoped to avoid end-of-semester lack of focus by choosing a short book, but this was not helpful to those who simply had run out of steam.

## CONCLUSIONS

When I first approached the department chair about setting up a course such as Book Club 1020, she assumed that I would want to designate it as an Honors course. And, it was a consideration since I knew I would be assigning novels and a book of poetry (by a single poet) rather than a variety of short pieces in an anthology. In the end, I reasoned that students who could earn an A in their first college English course likely already liked to read and had good habits in place. But since the objective of the course was to encourage an enjoyment of reading by seeing literature as a shared experience, an Honors class would not be getting to the students I wanted to reach.

**Book Club and the at-risk student: "S" and "B"**

In looking over the "quiz" grades, I found that the stronger students had made better grades, as a rule, with the striking exception of one particularly bright student (and a History major, at that) who said he had discovered that he needed more structure in an English class – that is, being responsible for having read bits by a series of deadlines, rather than taking it upon himself to assign himself his own deadlines.

This consideration of the quiz grades, though, seemed to support what we already know: better readers are better students. But better readers generally have better habits, so at the beginning and end of the semester I asked students to consider theirs. Do they read in bed? Do they read in the library? Is the TV on? Music? One student, "S," admitted that the

> first two and a half two chapters [of *Bright Lights, Big City*] took one hour because I was reading it during commercials of the show I was watching then I tried to go to Sparknotes because it was boring but college readings are not on Sparknotes and you have to buy the reviews for $29.45. So I spend Sunday night and Monday night reading and it got interesting so it really did not take that long.

S was only able to use 10 of the 20 words to write her summary.

Not surprisingly, her favorite text of the semester had been the movie.

Not surprisingly, her true favorite text of the semester seemed to be that which she produced herself. Up until the second to last class I was still finding myself stopping the class to ask her to stop texting as her peers carried the class conversation.

I was not surprised to learn that she had come to 1020 by way of 1000, and was on academic probation.

At the beginning of the semester, S described her reading habits as going to a quiet place with coffee because "I cannot be in a room full of people or in my room because I will fall asleep." (Obviously, she did not see the TV as a distraction.) But by the end of the semester, she commented that her reading habits had changed. How?

"Before I would read and just not understand," she wrote. By the end of the semester S was re-reading parts she did not comprehend. Her quiz grades confirm this change. She moved from an F to a C- to a B.

In deciding that this class would not be an Honors class , aiming instead for middle ground, I had also unwittingly determined that Book Club would not be the best class for the at risk student. This was not a class to improve one's reading. However, one's reading might well improve if one were willing to change. S, though unwilling to lose bad classroom habits when in a more intimate group setting, had changed her reading habits because she wanted to and could. Other students cannot. For example, "B" described having to work every other night at Wendy's, not getting home until 2:30 in the morning.

For this at-risk student (he came to this course with a D) to change his reading habits, he would have to change that habit of eating he had developed over the years: B HAD to work, and work often. The problem is that B thinks he is getting by in that he reads enough to "just get the gist," adding that if he got that gist and "the author's point" he could stop right there. B's quiz grade average was a D-.

**Making a change?**

When asked if their reading habits had changed, most of the students who had come to the class with A's and B's commented that there had been no change. Well, why change what is already working? And, perhaps this is to be expected as well: the students who came to this class with D's did not change their habits.

So, did anyone make changes to their reading habits? *Yes.* All of the ENGL 1000 students mentioned making improvements, as did half of the C students. In describing these changes, reading aloud or being read to was brought up by three people as a way to

help focus in the more difficult parts. (Another student related that he had been relying on audio books since high school since reading puts him to sleep.)

A few mentioned no longer reading with the television on (though one said she liked having it on but with the sound turned to mute). One who would always fall asleep while reading in her own room switched to reading in a friend's room or the library to avoid the relaxation factor.

One student spoke of now carrying a book everywhere so as to sneak in reading at free moments. Another had found that the opposite approach, trying to read "in one sitting" rather than spreading out the work, had improved her comprehension.

And, just like S, the students who made changes in their habits did start to see better quiz grades.

OUTCOMES

## * Students will develop their own reading schedules.

And so, they did. Having had explained to them that we would not discuss the novels in chunks, they were left on their own as to how they would read. I would occasionally ask them the week before how the reading was coming along, and there was always a variety of responses, from "I have finished" to "I have just started" to (in the case of *Catcher*) "I've read this already so I just have to review it," to "I have not started." And in the end, when I questioned about reading habits, the responses reigned from reading the day/night before class to taking several days to read.

They were on their own to plan their time. And the grades they received for each quiz reflected their efforts.

END OF SEMESTER QUIZ AVERAGES

| A/B | C | D |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | 10 | 3 |

***

## * Students will learn to enjoy the discussion of literature.

Was the Book Club scenario effective? Despite the one student who found it had had a negative effect because of the "lack of structure" others appreciated meeting only once a week because it allowed for a longer, more comprehensive session. "I felt I learned more in three hours than I [would have] in chunks," one wrote.

Several mentioned that they felt freer to contribute to the conversation in the relaxed (food, beverages, comfortable chairs) setting than in the traditional classroom setting. One mentioned that the circle encouraged "eye contact and starting a conversation." Another stated that the laid-back atmosphere encouraged him to do "a lot more reading than [I] would have done in a traditional English 1020 class."

One commented that she enjoyed the mix of "freedom and responsibility." And another summed the atmosphere as making class "simpler, calmer, homey."

Perhaps the best indicator I have of how the students enjoyed the discussion of literature comes in the fact that I NEVER had to wait for a response to a question about the text. That awkward moment that follows the asking of a question about the text, or the same two or three hands shooting up each time, was never experienced in this course.

The following comments come from students writing about the course at the end of the year:

"It would be boring if all we did was take notes."

"Seeing other people open up and talk made me want to open up and speak about the book."

"That the discussions are generally allowed to branch out into different topics and view points within the reading is helpful."

"The setting had an intimate feel."

And would these students consider joining a book club after college? Fifteen said they definitely would (the other responses ranged from maybe to no). Two admitted to having been in book clubs before.

***

## * Students will learn to enjoy reading (or at least come to enjoy it more).

At the beginning and end of the semester, students were asked, quite simply, if they like to read. The students came to the course either liking it or not, and stated that the course itself, with its book club setting, did not change those feelings.

*Do you like to read?*

| Loves | Likes | It depends | Not really | Hates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 0 |

Of these, the "lovers" were mostly students who came to the course with an A; "likers" came with a B.

At some point, I came to realize that I myself do not necessarily like to read. However, early on I developed emotional connections to books, and therefore like to read for that reason. Did my students have such connections themselves? Could that make a difference in how inspired they are to sit down with a text and lose themselves to other worlds?

At the end of the semester, days before the final classes, I found myself at a closing Borders book sale. "If I were really committed to wanting my students to connect to books and reading," I mused, "I would buy them books."

Then it hit me: Why not give them *my* books?

And so I went home and cleared my shelves of 25 books. I am usually terrible at letting go of books (that emotional connection!) but knowing they were going to particular students made the parting that much easier.

At the end of the final class, I told them they would find, on a table outside the door, the wrapped and individually labeled books. Inside each was a book mark that told of my relationship to that particular book. As you can see by what follows,

some books were loved, some were never read, but all had found their place on my shelf, some for years.

Also included was a self-addressed envelope so that the students could fulfill one last "assignment" – to, in time, tell me what had happened to the book. Had it been read? Kept? Passed on? Given to a book drive or used as a white elephant gift? They knew my story with the book: I wanted to know theirs.

In doing this, I hope to show that there are more to books than the words on the page. Whether we loved or hated the books, whether we read them or simply meant to, locked between the covers are our memories, and the ghosts of who we were then.

In making that announcement, I was prepared for polite acceptance. Both classes, though, were quite openly enthusiastic, and a few even declared that it was "like Christmas."

And so, they left the lounge where we had gathered as members of Book Club 1020. I went to my office and closed to door. It will be interesting to read their responses…and perhaps seeing these in my mailbox will be "like Christmas" for me.

*Pictured: A cell phone photo of LaTedra, Ana, Joi, and Aujenee with their books. Aujenee sent this picture to me the next day.*

# *BOOK MARKS*

## THE THORN BIRDS

I read this in high school (or was it college?) after my mom devoured it. My mom and I would talk about whom we would cast in a made-for-TV movie version (these were soooo popular at the time). We had it all figured out.

And then the movie came out, a week-long affair. We were so disappointed. Rachel Ward did not have wild red hair! Where was the wild red hair? We wanted wild red hair!

An epic, this book. Enjoy!

## RAGTIME

This book, which I had grabbed from my mom's bookshelf, is a virtual soap opera of real life events and real life people. Simply amazing.

By the time I finished it, I felt I had been transported in time. I longed for that New York City.

This is Evelyn Nesbit. In her day she could not go down the street without being recognized. Fame, like beauty, is fleeting.

## BELOVED

You know, I don't think I actually ever read this.

I bought it. I think I started to read it. Maybe I did? I don't know. If I did, I forgot it.

It's been on my shelf for years.

But what I do know is that YOU want to read it. And now, you can.

## COURTING PANDEMONIUM

This was written by my MFA thesis director, Rick Barton. He played basketball back in college….get the connection?

Rick is now the Director of the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans. See? There is life after basketball (and this is not the only book he's written).

## ORDINARY PEOPLE

When I saw this on my brother's bookshelf – obviously something he had read in school – I had to snatch it.

Why? Because of the film. That film, starring Mary Tyler Moore and directed by Robert Redford, was enormously popular at the time.

I hope the book is as good as the movie…I never got around to reading it.

## CATCH 22

The big story is that this book was rejected something like 27 times before it was accepted. Struggling authors always keep that in mind.

I read this very copy you hold in your hands in college. I didn't particularly like it, I fear – it was too much of a "guy" book for me. But after all these years, I remember taking the test on this. As the teacher handed out the sheets, she announced: "And I should warn you, if you only read the Cliff's Notes, the Cliff's Notes gets some things wrong!"

Busted.

## BITTERROOT LANDING

A haunting book I read years ago. This was one I couldn't put it down.

I remember reading it on a plane – don't remember where I was going but I do remember what part of the book I was reading.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I did all those years ago.

## CHRIST THE LORD

Anne Rice, author of books about vampires "got religion" and wrote this.

I bought it meaning to read it…but, truth be told, I could never get through any of the vampire novels so didn't ever crack the spine.

## THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Oh! I read this in high school and was amazed by it. I didn't start out liking it…but then I could not put it down.

And that ending!!!! Trust me when I say that the iconic film version doesn't touch this ending with the proverbial ten-foot pole….

You have here the copy I read in high school – this would have been about 1977 (freshman year). I love all the old ads for books in the back.

## LIFE OF PI

I picked this up years ago thinking I would read it and…well…never did.

But doesn't the cover look intriguing? And, hey! It was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection!

## 50 UNCOLLECTED STORIES BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Here's hoping you'll like Fitzgerald beyond Gatsby.

These look like fun. Who can resist a title like "The Pusher-in-the-Face"?

I never got around to reading these. I hope YOU do…

## THE MASTER AND THE MARGARITA

Ahhhhh…. This is an odd book, but I know you can wrap your mind around it.

A Russian woman I know gave it to me years ago. For a while I read a few pages every Friday night in the early days of divorcedom. I would go to a local restaurant where they all knew me and read this as I ate chicken fajitas. And then I graded papers. (Woo hoo!)

Many consider this to be one of the greatest novels of the 20th century.

## SIGHTS UNSEEN

I have no idea!

I picked this up in the book store one day and….well…never read it. But it has looked mighty fine on my shelf. And I do hope it looks good on yours….

## LIGHT IN AUGUST

This is a book I read in grad school that hit me as "un-Faulkner."

I wish I could tell you that what I remember most about this book is the character Joe Christmas, a man who can pass for white (his mother was white, I think) but, really, it is Lena. I was pregnant with my first child when I read this and Lena, also pregnant, was forever being described as "bovine." Moo.

## LAKE WOBEGONE DAYS

I find it so charming that your grandmother gave you the Shirley Temple collection. (Of all things, I saw the commercial for that collection this afternoon!)

Here is a book that will recall Shirley Temple's time, the day of radio dramas. This book may be a little corny in parts, but it definitely recalls a far different America than you or I will ever know.

## JITTERBUG PERFUME

I read this book when I was in a book club – my first! This was after college but before grad school.

I loved this book – frankly, I have not thought about perfume the same way since. When you're done, go to the perfume shop in the Quarter… that's what I did, so many years ago.

## THE BLIND ASSASSIN

I bought this, thinking I would read it….but never did.

But Margaret Atwood is a TERRIFIC author, so I have no doubt that this book is terrific.

If you don't like it, go get *The Hand Maiden's Tale*. Now, there's a book!

## THE GENERAL IN HIS LABYRINTH

I picked this up at a bookstore because I loved the author's *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Also good is *Love in the Time of Cholera*, which has a hopelessly romantic ending.

But I never read this book so I don't know what to say about it. Hmmmm….

Marquez is known for dabbling in Magical Realism. Beware!

## FRANNY AND ZOOEY

I read this book in grad school for a paper I was writing on the works of J. D. Salinger. (I was making an argument that the shorter works could be read as a composite novel.) I found it particularly compelling.

I did this paper in '91 or '92. I mention that because that is around about the time you were born, yes?

## SKINNY LEGS AND ALL

Who can resist Tom Robbins?

Smart, clever….his writing was introduced to me by a male member of a book group I was in when I was in my 20s. Hope you like it…

## INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

This was my mom's copy. She read it when it first came out, and then she handed it to me. Trading books with someone is a great habit to get into… I highly recommend it.

She loved the book. I did not and could not finish it. And the second time I tried to read it I could not finish it. But a lot of people who read it DID finish, and went on to read every other book Rice wrote about the Vampire Lestat.

Best of all – it is set in New Orleans.

## CAMILLE

I got this book from a friend who was clearing out his books to make room for more books. (That's what I am doing, too…)

Some 15 years later I finally got around to reading it.

The writing can get a little preachy in the beginning, but this is actually the least didactic of this author's works, which is likely why it has had such staying power.

And yes…the author had loved a woman very much like Camille. He wrote this after her death.

## LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE

I was not much older than you when I read this very copy for a class in college, a course in the post-modern novel.

The teacher would often use words we didn't know when he would asking a question. There weren't many of us in that class, maybe 12? We sat around a long table and stared at each other. What was he saying?

He also tended to speak of the post period, the post-post period, and then one day the post-post-post period. When he left, a guy named Mickey stood up and declared, "Post! Post! Telephone post!"

Some things stay with you.

## SUITE FRANCAISE

I picked up this book at the Xavier bookstore one day. I bought it because I was dating a Frenchman at the time.

(Ooh la la…not!)

I was reading other things when I dated him and so never got around to reading this.

And then we broke up and there was no way I was going to read this.

Looks good, though…n'est-ce pas?

# BOOK CLUB 1020

Spring 2011

**ENGL 1020-18**: Tuesday 9:25 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

**ENGL 1020-19**: Thursday 9:25 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

Administration Annex 301 (3rd floor lounge)

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Professor Katheryn Laborde
Office: Admin Annex, Room 301B (in the upstairs lounge)
Office Phone: 520-5151
E-Mail: klaborde@xula.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday: 12:30 – 2:30; Wednesday: 9:00 – 11:00; and by appointment

*

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

"Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night" – Nik Cohn (*New York Magazine*)
"Saturday Night Fever: The Life" – Charlie LeDuff (*New York Times*)

*Ballad of the Sad Café* – Carson McCullers, Hougton Mifflin, 5th edition
*Bright Lights, Big City* – Jay McIerney. Random House, 84th edition
*Catcher in the Rye* – J. D. Salinger, Back Bay Books, reissue edition
*Madeleine is Sleeping* – Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum, HBC Trade, 4th edition

*Leaving Saturn* – Major Jackson, University of Georgia, 2nd edition

*Bedford Handbook*—Diane Hacker (ed), Bedford/St. Martin's, 8th edition

In addition, we will be viewing *Saturday Night Fever* in class.

## What is English 1020?

*From the catalog*: **ENGL 1020:** English Composition and Literature. In this course students use different genres of writing to respond to fiction, poetry, and drama with emphasis on the longer paper. Prerequisite: ENGL 1000 or 1010. (3, FaSpSu)

## Soooo….what is Book Club 1020?

Many students feel that they *have* to read, but how many truly *enjoy* it? The purpose of the *Book Club 1020* is to transform a section or two of the traditional freshman comp-and-lit class into something more in line with a book club, the sort one finds any given night of the week in coffee houses and other comfortable gathering spots. That said, we will gather in the comfortable lounge on the third floor of the Admin Annex, eat doughnuts and king cake, and sip hot drinks. If what we provide is not to your liking, feel free to bring what you desire.

The book club setting goes beyond the notion of making reading more fun; as Margaret Atwood noted in 1995, "Book Groups are to late twentieth-century America what salons were to eighteenth-century Paris, and what Improvement Societies were to the Victorians." The book club approach encourages textual engagement and stirs intellectual curiosity.

We want you to turn 'class discussion' into a true discussion, the kind that encourages active reading and fosters a love for the written word.

In other words, we want to get you excited about reading.

## Learning Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

- discuss film as text;
- recognize recurring themes and images in a poet's body of work;
- determine successful reading strategies;
- demonstrate understanding of a novel through writing (both in class exercises and at-home essays) as well as meaningful conversation;
- 
- write a research paper adhering to MLA format.

## Course Policies

**If you don't turn in a research paper,** you fail the course automatically**.**

**If you don't turn in your outline on the assigned date,** your paper automatically drops one letter grade.

**If you plagiarize,** you fail. PERIOD. End of saga. See addendum.

Class will consist of lecture, discussion, and group work. Your contribution to class is important. Talking about your ideas will help you to write about them later. Asking questions will help your peers to understand.

You can't participate if you're not prepared for class. If a story is listed in the syllabus for the third week, that means read it *before* you come to class that week.

Avoid rude behavior. What's rude?

reading materials from another class
sleeping, placing your head on your desk
talking when I am talking
wearing earphones
wearing your backpack throughout class
leaving before class is dismissed
answering your cellphone
texting

**Unless you are awaiting an organ for a transplant,** turn off your phones before entering class. If they go off, I get to answer them.

**And this…** we dress to impress, yes, but not to distract. If you have a lot of flesh showing, I will ask you to please wear a shirt or jacket to class. And the caps, as you know by now, have to go.

**Attendance** is mandatory. University Policy states:

> In all 1000 level courses and all developmental courses, absence is considered excessive when a student misses twice the number of times the class meets per week. The total number of absences includes days missed because of late registration or late enrollment in the course.
>
> Xavier classes begin on the first day of the semester. If a student must change courses or sections of courses at the beginning of the semester, he/she: 1) is counted as absent until the professor is given documentation of completed registration and enrollment, and 2) is responsible for securing the syllabus and for becoming aware of the content covered in the missed classes. Absences experienced due to late registration into a course are included in determining the FE grade.

We meet once a week. You are allowed two absences in this course. Your third absence secures a grade of FE.

If you know you will miss your class time during a given week, you are allowed (upon letting me know first) to attend the other section THAT SAME WEEK. This is not a revolving door, however. You are expected to attend class on the day you are scheduled to do so.

**Bring your ID to class so you can swipe in.**

**Deadlines**: All assignments and drafts of all papers must be submitted (hard copy—NEVER email) on the date indicated.

If you are having a problem with a deadline, I will be far more understanding if you tell me ahead of time. And by that I do not mean minutes before class. Unless you've spoken to me about your circumstance, I will not accept late work. Especially the slipped-under-the-office-door variety.

**Format of work**: Any out of class work must conform to MLA guidelines. In addition:

The piece must conform to length requirements (too long is as bad as too short).
Please tell me how many words your piece is -- put this info on the first page.
I do NOT accept un-stapled work.
I do not accept "I didn't save a copy" as an excuse in any situation.
Don't do anything "cute" to make your work stand out, please.
Do not rely on spell cheek. (See why?)

## Grammar

I do not teach grammar. Serial language killers receive Ds on their papers before midterm, and Fs thereafter. There's no redoing the paper for a better grade. But there *is* going to the Writing Center. Get help before you turn in the next paper.

For the occasional offender, I recommend referring to your Bedford Handbook. I will be marking your paper in such a way that you will know just where to look...more on that later.

## Plagiarism

Ahem! When you use the citable work of someone else you must document your source.

If I suspect that you did not write your paper, I will give you the opportunity to prove me wrong. Please do. For that reason it is a VERY good idea to hold on to your drafts, notes, everything. Just in case. But if I have proof that you did not write your paper...then you have just failed the class.

## Grading

I will not look over your paper before you turn it in. Looking it over is what I do when I grade. However, if you are having problems with the content of the paper, I will be more than happy to discuss that with you.

I write all over your papers. Not just grammatical this and that (and for that I will be referring you back to your Bedford....more on that in class) but anything that comes to mind.

...And I do mean anything. There's a relationship between reader and writer, and I want you to keep this relationship in mind.

Midterm grades: I will average your essay grades (which will be two or three) together to derive this since writing is the most important thing. I do not average in anything else...and I tend to grade down.

NA's turn into D's if you do not turn in the new paper by the assigned deadline (usually a week).

There is no doing a paper over for a better grade. Just learn from your mistakes and do better next time. Before that next time comes we can have a one-on-one chat about your writing: make an appointment.

Blackboard: I will post assignments and helpful hints and important reminders and such on BlackBoard…but I do not post your grades there. Your grades will not be a mystery – you will have the grades in your hands.

## Assignments

**Cultural Events Portfolio 15% of your final grade**
4 events = A; 3 = B; 2 = C; 1 = D; 0 =F. Choose events from the menu.

**Essays 45%**
You will be responsible for turning in three essays as assigned. Proof them before handing them in. Any paper marked NA can be redone; please note that you have to get it back to me by the date assigned or that NA becomes a D.

**Research Paper 20%**
Use MLA-style documentation. The subject will be literature and we will talk about that in class. But please note that

**Poetic Response Paper 10%**
To be explained in class.

**In-class Written Responses 10%**

**At exam time** On the last day of class, the poetic response is due. Research papers earning a D or F must be revised (all others: optional) and turned in at exam time.

Poetry will be read in class so that out-of-class time will be spent reading the prose texts, writing papers, and conducting research.

# Class Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| jan 6 | introduction (both sections) |
| jan 11 / jan 13 | **discuss:** "The Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night" and "Saturday Night Fever: The Life" |
| jan 18/ jan 20 | **view:** *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) in library |
| | First essay due: Friday |
| jan 25 / jan 27 | **discuss**: *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) |
| feb 1 / feb 3 | research paper topics discussed |
| feb 8 / feb 10 | ……. |
| | Second essay due: Friday |
| feb 15 / feb 17 | **discuss**: *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) |
| feb 22 / feb 24 | research paper sources and outline due |
| mar 1 / mar 3 | **discuss:** *Madeleine is Sleeping* (2005) |
| mar 8 / mar 10 | *Mardi Gras* |
| mar 15 / mar 17 | ……. |
| mar 22 / mar 24 | …… |
| | Research paper due Friday |
| mar 29 / mar 31 | …….. |
| apr 5 / apr 7 | *Ballad of the Sad Cafe* (1951) |
| apr 12 / apr 14 | third paper due: Friday |
| apr 19 | last class: both sections |
| | poetic responses due in class. |

## Cultural Events Menu

*All events take place on campus*

*The Time Machine.* Movie. Thursday, Jan. 13. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

Poet Gina Ferrara. Reading. Thursday, Jan. 27, 7 p.m. UC

*Camille.* Movie. Thursday, Feb. 10. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

*Midsummer's Night Dream.* Play. Tuesday, March 15, 7 p.m. UC

*The Green Pastures.* Movie. March 17. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

Poet Julie Kane. Reading. Thursday, March 24. 7pm UC

*Devil in a Blue Dress.* Movie. Thursday, April 7. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

Writer David Madden. Reading. Friday, April 15. 7 pm. Admin Bldg Auditorium

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[i] Gorman, Leo. Warren Easton Charter High School, New Orleans, Louisiana, December 2010.

[ii] The student-composed letters to the editor are scheduled for publication in *The Trumpet Magazine* in the summer of 2011 and will provide important visual evidence to the presentation of this project.

NEWS

# Xavier (La.) and Oklahoma faculty members recognized for outreach work

Faculty members from Xavier University of Louisiana and the University of Oklahoma will be recognized for their support of high school journalism as the 2011 winners of the Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism. They will receive their awards at the AEJMC Conference in St. Louis on Thursday, Aug. 11.

The winners are:

- First Place: Brenda Edgerton-Webster; "Current Events via the 'College-to-High School News Exchange' & Drill Session," Xavier University of Louisiana.
- Second Place: Kathryn Jenson White, "Oklahoma Scholastic Journalism Initiative," University of Oklahoma.

The AEJMC Scholastic Journalism Division hosts the Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism competition to provide national awareness of top programs and to encourage other higher education media programs to support high school journalism. The program has been held since 2003.

"As a division, we're pleased to be able to showcase the efforts of faculty members to promote media education at the pre-college level," said Julie Dodd, chair of the Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism program. "Faculty members who receive this award have made a significant contribution of their time to service, and having that acknowledged is important for them."

The First Place winner is Brenda Edgerton-Webster, assistant professor of mass communication in the Department of Communications. Her program, "Current Events via the 'College-to-High School News Exchange' & Drill Session" is a service-learning project. Students in Introduction to Mass Communication made school visits to an 11th grade U.S. History class in Warren-Easton Charter High School, a school in the New Orleans Recovery School District.

The college students used a special edition of The Trumpet Magazine, the community newspaper, that featured stories on the large numbers of African Americans in the city's prison system to tie with the high school students' history readings on the beginning of the U.S. prison system after the Reconstruction Era.

Brenda Edgerton-Webster

Kathryn Jenson White

Working under the guidance of Edgerton-Webster and the U.S. History teacher, each of the Xavier students worked with four-to-five high school students to read and discuss the stories in the special edition of The Trumpet. Copies of the magazine were donated for the project.

Both the college and high school students became more engaged in reading the local news and seeing the power of the media to explain complex issues and call attention to social injustice. In addition, the high school students used the opportunity of having college students meeting with them to ask questions about college and becoming more interested in applying to college.

The Second Place winner is Kathryn Jenson White, associate professor in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma and executive director of Oklahoma Scholastic Media. Her program is Oklahoma Scholastic Journalism Initiative. The program began in 2008, as both OSM and the Ethics and Excellence in Journalisim Foundation, located in Oklahoma City, discussed the problem of loss of journalism programs in Oklahoma high schools.

Funded by a grant from the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, the program has trained 32 high school newspaper advisers. Eleven used the training to start newspapers in their schools, and the others used the program to improve the quality of exisiting papers, save those newspapers from being eliminated, or to either create or upgrade their journalism program.

The teachers attend an intensive five-day training workshop at the University of Oklahoma and then receive a grant to enable them to purchase equipment and software.

Schools selected for the program are also given membership in OSM as part of their grant award. Those who received grants the first three years of the project have remained members and have participated regularly in OSM's Media Mondays and monthly contests.

The award winners will be recognized at a special session during the AEJMC convention in St. Louis. The session will be Thursday, Aug. 11 from 3:15 – 4:45 p.m. The recipients will discuss their programs and will receive award plaques.

Final Report for Mellon Foundation's FaCTS, "Fostering Active Reading"

**Project: Reading Software for Remediating Introductory Programming Courses**

Andrea Edwards, 4/27/2011

## Summary of project purpose and statement of original goals

Programming begins with reading a problem statement and deciding on best approaches to solving the problem. Many students in Xavier University of Louisiana's introductory programming sequence (CPSC 1710, 1720, and 2730) have reading comprehension deficiencies that are affecting their understanding of ways to apply programming techniques. This project produced a programming remediation tool (PREP) designed for computing students to be active readers of programming problem statements. The strength of PREP is based on the integration of programming problems with solution hints, a set of similar problems for cognitive recognition, and simulations that encourage students to explore more complex problem sets. Students will access PREP via a web application, select a topic-based module, and then see a listing of problem statements particular to that module. The problem sets have solution hints (but few programming solutions.) The hints guide students to actively read the problem statement using the mindset of an experienced programmer. The project goals are: (1) to develop an innovative, engaging, and effective remediation tool; (2) to motivate students to actively read programming problem statements and discern the similarities and differences between problem statements; and (3) to enhance student learning (hence retention) especially for students in need of programming remediation.

## Future plans

This programming remediation tool can be found at http://webusers.xula.edu/aedwards/prep and will be available indefinitely. Future plans include *requiring* PREP use for students having difficulties with introductory programming concepts; adding more problem statements to available modules; and adding additional modules for remediating more advanced object-oriented programming topics like classes, inheritance, and polymorphism.

## Dissemination of project

This programming remediation tool is a web application that is available at the URL http://webusers.xula.edu/aedwards/prep .

A preliminary version of this project was presented at the CCSC-MS Conference. The paper is published in the conference proceedings.

Edwards, Andrea and Zhang, Kun. "A Programming Remediation Plan." JCSC 25(5). March 26, 2010. Searcy, AR. Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges: ACM, May 2010. Print.

Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes

1. Creation of an innovative web application that provides problem statements, useful solution hints, and advanced simulations.
2. Through active reading of programming problem statements, students will be able to identify key programming concepts.
3. Students will be able to extract meaning from programming problem statements and relate that meaning to similar problems.
4. Students will voluntarily write more programs and become better programmers by using active reading strategies to understand problem statements.

Summary assessment

*Creation of an innovative web application that provides problem statements, useful solution hints, and advanced simulations.*
PREP is available at http://webusers.xula.edu/aedwards/prep. It has five modules, each module has introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels, it has over 100 problem statements, and each problem statement has three hints.

*Through active reading of programming problem statements, students will be able to identify key programming concepts.*
PREP has modules for sequential, selection, repetition, arrays, and functions. These are the key programming concepts in introductory programming courses. Throughout the creation of PREP, students in the introductory programming courses were encouraged to evaluate PREP for ease of use, effectiveness, and to suggest improvements. Their suggestions were used to improve the web application, to inform on student-centered learning methods, and to involve undergraduate students in the pedagogy of teaching and learning. PREP is intended to be a remediation and review tool. Periodically it was used during in-class discussions when reviewing course material. During those discussions, many students recognized the key programming concepts. Students not able to recognize important concepts brought specific PREP problems to tutoring sessions —a useful indication that those students were able to pinpoint their areas of difficulty.

*Students will be able to extract meaning from programming problem statements and relate that meaning to similar problems.*
During instructor-student tutoring sessions, the instructor was able to gauge student learning and barriers to learning by discussing specific problems. The hints are especially useful for this. Students unable to explain the relationships between the hints and the problem statement were encouraged to review earlier modules — another way to guide student learning when remediation is needed.

*Students will voluntarily write more programs and become better programmers by using active reading strategies to understand problem statements.*
PREP is a remedial tool that students voluntarily choose to use. Nearly all these students are first or second year college students in their first programming course. Because PREP

is in only its first semester of use, all results for this project are preliminary. Anecdotally, students who earned a B or better in these introductory programming courses also used PREP more than three hours a week. Most students with difficulties completing homework voluntarily brought similar PREP problem statements to tutoring sessions appropriate to the particular homework. Students recognized that engaged reading of programming problem statements assisted their learning both for in-class discussions and for out-of-class assignments. They also understand that extracting meaning from problem statements is necessary for writing better programs.

Final Report for FaCTS
Funded by the Mellon Foundation
AY 10-11

**Project Title:** Cultivating A Sociological Imagination Using A Book Club Approach

**Submitted by:** Farrah D. Gafford, Sociology Department, 520-5423/ fgafford@xula.edu

## Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals (1 paragraph)

The use of non-traditional readings in sociology courses has been well documented as an effective way to promote student engagement and learning. Students enrolled in Sociology 2060 (Race and Ethnic Relations) participated in a classroom book club. Instead of relying solely on academic textbooks and scholarly journal articles, students also read and engaged a work of fiction that highlighted issues of race and racism in the United States. The reading for the book club experience was Richard Wright's *Native Son*. The book club strategy required students to be active and vocal contributors in the learning process. This approach was also designed to help students synthesize or weave themes from course (white privilege, stereotypes, intersectionality and discrimination) into the fictional reading. Students were given several writing and oral presentations assignments to demonstrate their ability to engage course readings, themes, theories and concepts.

## Future plans (1 brief paragraph)

It will be at least two semesters before I can offer the Race and Ethnic Relations course again. However, I am interested in using a book club approach in my other courses. I do not think I have to limit the book club experience to Race and Ethnic Relations (sociology 2060). There are various classes within the discipline where a book club strategy could also be implemented.

## Dissemination of project

In September 2010, I helped facilitate a panel discussion entitled *What are Students Really Reading?* The workshop was sponsored by Xavier University of Louisiana's Center for the Advancement of Teaching. I was asked to facilitate the panel because of my interest in students' reading habits and my use of the book club approach. I invited two students from my Sociology 2060 course to discuss their reading habits and general feelings about classroom reading assignments. My future goal is to organize a similar panel where students can share some of the perceived benefits/challenges of participating in a classroom book club. I intend on submitting an abstract for this panel discussion to the 2012 *Southern Sociological Society* meeting.

## Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes

The syllabus for Race and Ethnic Relations contained nine learning outcomes. Two of the learning outcomes were specifically related to the book club experience.
By the end of the semester, I wanted students to:

1) analyze and evaluate his or her growth as a reader

2) identify key course themes in reading passages from Native Son

Summary assessment

1). I wanted students to evaluate any changes or growth in their reading habits. In addition to creating reading logs, I asked students to write a brief reflection essay (and post it on the course discussion board) about their reading habits. I wanted students to reflect on how often they read, what they liked to read and some of the barriers they experienced while reading. Several students mentioned issues such as, "not having enough time to read", "not being able to concentrate" and "not having a true connection to the text". Students stated:

*I want to read more but time is a huge factor.*

*I am honest enough with myself to know that if the television is on, I'll watch it; if my phone is nearby, I know I'll get distracted.*

*When I read I do not absorb the material fully because I am not concentrating. My mind is somewhere else totally. I also tend to read when I am already sleepy which is horrible. My brain is already working part time then I am trying to cram more information into it.*

*The thing about reading that frustrates me the most is when I feel like I am reading just because. I hate going through pages of a book that don't really say anything. I don't like reading things that I have no interest in because it is very hard for me to follow.*

After the book club experience, I asked students to reflect once more on their habits and feelings. Several students noted that the book club experience encouraged them to read in a more "active" way. Students also commented on the interaction that took place during book club meetings.

*Because this class is smaller it kind of forces you to be prepared to have something to say. And the only way that could be done is if you read thoroughly. The book clubs make you more of an active reader because you have to be able to carry on a decent discussion for about an hour or so.*

*I think that overall I have become a more efficient and effective reader. I am more persistent in taking notes when I read for all my classes since it really helps for this class.*

*The book club was something that I found very interesting. At first I was not really enjoying myself, so I was not putting too much effort in it. This meant I was not reading the book. But as the second book club meeting came I started to enjoy it because I was getting the chance to interpret what I thought the book meant.*

*I feel like this helped my reading habits because it forced me to find examples of race within the text and connect it to what we learned in class.*

2)The second outcome that was related to the book club experience involved students being able to identify key themes (e.g. white privilege, discrimination, stereotypes, institutional racism) in selected passages of the text. I assigned a final reflection assignment where students had to choose a passage from *Native Son* that illustrated a particular theme that was connected to race. To assess this particular learning goal, I used a rubric (see attachment). The rubric contained a category that evaluated how well students were able to select passages from the book club

reading. The scores ranged from 1(poor) to 5 (excellent). Approximately 66% of the students who submitted the assignment received a score of 3 or higher.

## Additional Information

There were other positive outcomes from the book club experience. I encouraged Lauren Engram to submit her final reflection paper on *Native Son* to XULAneXUS, the university's undergraduate journal. Lauren's revised paper was accepted and appears in the latest issue of XULAneXUS. The complete paper is available at http://xulalnexus.xula.edu.
I also received positive feedback through my course evaluations. I received ratings of 4.63(with 5 being the highest possible score) or higher on all of the measures. Two of my highest scores on the evaluation were for "clarity of the course objectives" (4.75) and "opportunities for learning in the class" (4.88). While it is generally rewarding to receive high scores on course evaluations, I was even more delighted to see that the students were able to appreciate some of learning objectives of the class.

XULAneXUS
Xavier University of Louisiana's Undergraduate Research Journal

*Volume 8, Issue 2, April 2011. Scholarly Note. 12-20.*
*<http://xulanexus.xula.edu/textpattern/index.php?id=109>*

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# Exploring Racial Lines and Boundaries in the Twentieth Century: A Review of *Native Son* by Richard Wright

Lauren N. Engram, Psychology

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Farrah Gafford

**Abstract**
While slavery was eventually abolished, the oppression of Black Americans continued under the sharecropping system, Jim Crow, the constant threat of lynching, and other forms of brutality. This history of oppression in the southern region of the United States forced many African Americans to move northward to places like Chicago, New York and Detroit to have what they thought would be a new beginning. This was found not to be true. With a competitive labor force, institutionalized racism, and difficulty finding work, the black population experienced a surplus of poverty, and African American families were torn apart. This essay emerges from Sociology 2060: Race and Ethnic Relations, a course which used a book club approach to explore the novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright. Instead of relying solely on academic textbooks and scholarly journal articles, students read and engaged the *Native Son* text. Students used the text to analyze race related themes and concepts. In this essay, I use key excerpts from the *Native Son* text to discuss and explore two major race related themes: racial identity and white privilege. Specifically, I examine how racial identity and white privilege can be used to understand the racial environment of Chicago in the 1930s. I also show how the two concepts shaped the experiences of Bigger Thomas, the novel's protagonist.

**Key Terms:**
- The Great Migration
- Racial Identity
- *Native Son*
- White Privilege

## Introduction

During the early twentieth century, America witnessed a demographic shift where Blacks moved away from the rural south to urban spaces like Chicago, IL. Those who participated in this migration to the north relished the absence of Jim Crow laws and the oppressive nature of life in the south. However, the move to the north, or participating in the Great Migration, did not equate to the absence of racial discrimination and barriers. Often believed to be the "promise land," urban spaces like Chicago still presented challenges of equality and freedom for Blacks in the early twentieth century. Employment and housing continued to be limited by systematic racism. Racially restrictive covenants helped to create "Negro slum districts" that were characterized by low levels of education, concentrated poverty and high infant mortality rates (Jones-Correa, 2001). Even though Blacks moved to the north for better economic opportunities, their opportunities remained quite limited. Black women who moved to the north during the great migration were reduced to domestic service because they were often excluded from factory and clerical work. Moreover, employers would only hire black males when they thought work was unsuitable for whites (Franklin, 1997).

Described as one of the most influential American writers of the twentieth century, Richard Wright's work is known for tackling issues of race, racial identity and the outcomes of living in a racist society. His novel *Native Son* tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a young man dealing with the struggles of being poor and black on the south side of Chicago in the 1930s. Although *Native Son* is a work of fiction, the book provides insight into what life was like for Blacks in Chicago during the 1930s. The population in the north, especially in places like Chicago, changed drastically from 40,000 in 1910 to 278,000 in 1940 (Franklin, 1997). Just like most black people during that time, Bigger's opportunities were limited by the racial barriers and constraints of society. Because the novel takes place in Chicago during the twentieth century, we are able to see how racism impacted housing, employment and social opportunities of Blacks during this era (Franklin, 1997).

*Native Son* tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a 20-year-old African American male. Having grown up in an era of harsh racial prejudice, Bigger is burdened with the fact that he has no control over his life and that he has nothing to look forward to or aspire for. His mother harasses him to find a job and make something of himself, but instead Bigger constantly gets in trouble with his friends, hangs out at pool halls, and partakes in different robberies. Bigger and his friends have committed many petty robberies of black owned businesses, but have never found the courage to rob a white business.

Anxiety, frustration and rage define Bigger's daily existence. Left with no other options, Bigger takes a job as a chauffeur for the Daltons, a rich white family who coincidently own the apartment complex in which Bigger and his family live. Mary, Mr. Dalton's daughter, ignores the social limits and boundaries between white women and black men, which angers and worries Bigger. Mary insists that Bigger take a ride with her and her communist boyfriend, Jan. Persistent to prove their understanding of the black race, Mary and Jan force Bigger to take them to an all-black restaurant on Chicago's south side. Bigger feels very embarrassed and uncomfortable, but his fear for the white race will not let him object to their request. They order drinks, and the three of them end up drunk. Bigger takes Mary home to her room and kisses her on the lips. He is almost caught, and in a panic he tries to quiet Mary, accidently suffocating her to death. Bigger feels an overwhelming feeling of guilt at first, but then

starts to feel a sense of accomplishment. Mary's murder gives Bigger a foreign sense of power and identity.

The white authorities use Bigger's crime as an excuse to terrorize all other African Americans and the entire South Side of Chicago. Bigger is eventually caught and tried for murder. Max, Biggers public defender tries to save him from the death penalty by stating that even though Bigger is guilty, he is only a product of his environment. Max urges the court that there will be more young men like Bigger if America does not put an end to the vicious cycle of hatred and vengeance. Despite Max's plea, Bigger is sentenced to death.

The daily experience of the novel's protagonist provides an opportunity to explore themes such as white privilege, oppression, and stereotypes. In this essay, I will explore how Richard Wright's *Native Son* can be used to broaden our understanding of two key concepts connected to the enduring legacy of racial stratification in the United States. These two important themes are the idea of racial identity and white privilege. From the black perspective, racial identity is the struggle to come into, understand, and accept one's self in a society that is based off of white principles (Johnson, 2002). White privilege is a theory on racial inequalities that focuses on the advantages that white people accrue from society compared to the disadvantages that people of color experience (Randall, 2010).

## Racial Identity

Race is a very difficult concept to define. However, many sociologists see it as a social construction. "This means that race is created and sustained not by science but by historical, social and political processes" (Omni and Winant, 1986, p. 5). In the United States race is a matter of social definitions and traditions that we create through our social interactions. These may include interactions we have in social institutes such as schools, coffee shops, or convenience stores or more personal interactions such as the ones we have in our homes with our families. Although race is a social construction, it remains an important feature in our society. Along with gender, it is one of the first things that people are likely to notice about one another. Race is also one of the ways that people might identify themselves. Racial identity relates to the understanding people hold about "who they are and what is meaningful to them" (Giddens, Duneier and Appelbaum, 2007, p. 275). Racial identity is the way people decide to identify with which ever race they claim, whether that is negative or positive. When people decide how they racially identify, they then must decide what that means to themselves. For some African Americans or black Americans, that may mean adopting certain cultures, foods, music, religious practices, and dialect.

For centuries, African Americans have been taught to hate themselves as well as others of the same race so it has taken an extensive time to find something of which they were really proud. However, while this pride was formulating so was a never-ending cycle of doubt and confusion, and a sense of internal and external hate among the black race. When people are taught that their race is inferior and less than human, it tends to make them reject that particular race. Being black in many cases is not a choice and because of the oppression blacks have endured over time, many people are left with a low sense of racial identity.

The Black racial identity development theory by William Cross explains the processes by which "Black people develop a healthy sense of themselves as racial beings and of their Blackness in a toxic sociopolitical environment" (Tatum, 1992, p. 5). As Vandiver, et al. explain, "The Cross model, in toto or in part, has been the primary means of investigating racial identity in the counseling and psychotherapy process" (2002, p.71). The model includes five steps: pre-

encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization/commitment (Tatum, 1992). Pre-encounter is the feeling that "white is right," best exhibited when a person tries to live a life modeled after "white" ideals and customs. The encounter stage is when something takes place in a person's life that makes he/she question the initial "white is right" notion, most commonly a negative racial encounter with the opposite race. For example, a black man or woman may not be hired for a job that he or she is qualified for because of race. The immersion/emersion stage is when people wish to only surround themselves with individuals of their own race, avoiding any interaction with white people. When people get to the internalization stage, they are willing to interact with white people and possibly create relationships with them, but tend to remain conscious and acknowledge self-definition. Once the internalization/commitment stage is reached, individuals have accepted their place in society as black people, however still recognize the presence and power of their white counterparts. Sadly, there are many who never reach this stage and are trapped somewhere in the middle.

When people have low racial identity development, they have low confidence and self-worth which results in hatred for their own race as well as the white race. In most cases, people don't hate being black. They have pride in their culture; however, they hate and resent the burdens that come with the color of their skin. Johnson states that racial identity starts in one's childhood or early adulthood, with people like mothers, fathers, or pastors contributing to the structure of one's racial identity (Johnson, 2002). In many cases, people have parents who don't feel good about themselves or who are struggling with their own racial identity, so it is difficult to teach their children self-worth and how to find their place in society.

As the Cross Model suggests, your interactions, environment and experiences also contribute to your racial identity. People who grow up impoverished and those who are raised in well-off situations are going to have two different racial identities. When your reality is an all-black neighborhood with middle to upper class families, and you have very little to no interaction with white people, you do not resent being black because you view your race positively. People with this upbringing are usually placed in the immersion/emersion stage because they see life in an all-black world as fine the way it is, and don't harbor any negative feelings towards whites (Vandiver, et al., 2002). In contrast, when every black person you come in contact with is impoverished, while every white person you encounter appears to be well off, you will start to hate your circumstances and eventually your race. The way you racially identify can have an impact, whether positive or negative, on your mental health and quality of life (Johnson, 2002). These health behaviors can include stress, depression, and physical illness. It is difficult to reach the internalization/commitment stage of racial identity development when there are constant reminders that you are inferior, and when you feel that there is nothing good that can come from interacting with the opposite race.

In *Native Son*, we see that Bigger is struggling with his identity as a black man. Bigger struggles with his racial identity because he lives in a society where "white is right," and there isn't any place for diversity. He is very angry and continues to speak negatively about whites: "Them white boys sure can fly," Gus said. "Yeah," Bigger said, wistfully. "They get a chance to do everything" (Wright, 1940, p. 16). Bigger displays a sort of "white is right" attitude as he and his friend Gus "play white" one afternoon. Bigger and Gus pretend to be men in power, such as the President of the United States and Secretary of State, and imagine a conversation between the two of them (Wright, 1940, p.18). Bigger and Gus

know they would never hold positions like this because of the color of their skin, and even though they appear to have an outer hatred for white people, it is apparent they envy them and wonder what it would be like to be white. Any person who wonders what it is like to be a part of another race, is not fully connecting with their own race and may start to resent their position in society. This shows that Bigger is trapped somewhere in the immersion/emersion stage because he only wishes to stay in his own neighborhood and fantasize about how other people live instead of exploring it for himself.

It is clear that Bigger feels like the most important thing about himself above anything else is his race. He hasn't yet accepted the fact that he is a black male in the 1930s and exactly what that entails. He hates being black and hates white people for simply being white; feelings about race fuel all of his actions. Bigger cannot see past color long enough to have healthy relationships with family and friends or to help better his family's situation. The only thing he thinks about is how bad his life is because of his race: "He felt he had no physical existence at all right then; he was something he hated, the badge of shame which he knew was attached to a black skin" (Wright, 1940, p. 67). Bigger didn't see himself as a person. He didn't feel that he had his whole life ahead of him or that anything positive could come from his life because of his race.

Being black cripples Bigger before he even has the chance to live. In *Native Son* we can see how Bigger hates himself and every other black face he sees. Bigger says that he "hated this room and all the people in it, including himself" (Wright, 1940, p. 106). He then goes on to ask himself questions regarding his family's living conditions such as what they had ever done and why he and his folks have to live that way. He feels that black is wrong, but never understands why, and feels that the oppression of his race is a personal attack on him. Because of his fears and mixed emotions about being a black man working for an all-white family, Bigger commits a heinous murder, smothering, beheading and then burning his boss's young daughter. After meeting Max, his public defender, Bigger begins to transition through the stages of Cross's Black racial identity model. Max is the only person Bigger has ever confided in, which is surprising because he is white. Max shows Bigger that white people are people too, not gods or demons like he once thought. Even after meeting Max, Bigger feels that being black means you have no voice and no purpose in a white society. Max asks Bigger if he raped Mary, and Bigger says, "Naw. But everybody'll say I did. What's the use? I'm black. They say black men do that. So it don't matter if I did or if I didn't" (Wright, 1940, p. 349). Bigger feels defeated because of the pressures and stress that come along with being a young black male.

Bigger never gets a chance to live a life where he doesn't have to worry about his race. Just as Bigger is beginning to reach a place where he can positively identify with his race and accept his position in society, his life is snatched from him. Being found guilty of murder and receiving the death penalty is the worst yet best thing that could have happened to Bigger. It is only then that he sees beyond color and feels a sense of contentment with being a black male.

## White Privilege

White privilege is another theme that can be observed in *Native Son*. White privilege is defined as "a right, advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by white persons beyond the common advantage of all others; an exemption in many particular cases from certain burdens or liabilities" (Randall, 2010, p. 1). In other words, white privileges are certain advantages white Americans have over other races that are given to them based solely on the color of their skin. White privilege further reinforces racial inequalities by focusing on the many advantages that white

people have accumulated from society over time in contrast to the many disadvantages that people of color experience.

In Peggy McIntosh's article *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,* she defines white privilege as "an invisible package of unearned assets" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 1). She then talks about her perspective on racism, explaining that as a white woman she was taught to look at racism as a disadvantage for others but not as an advantage for herself. She compares the idea of white privilege to the privileges that males have over females. These are privileges that both males and white Americans would like to ignore, but sometimes don't even recognize. Elizabeth Minnich explains, "whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'" (1988, p.1).

McIntosh lists a series of privileges of which the white American or even the minority may be unaware. She lists an advantage in the housing market with the opportunity to live anywhere she wants without giving it a second thought and an advantage in the workplace knowing that when she goes to work or asks to speak the person in charge, she will be faced with someone of her own race. One more subtle privilege is that blemish cover ups and bandages are made in flesh tone colors to better match white skin (McIntosh, 1988). This is a prime example of something that people do not give much thought to, but gives the impression that "white is still right."

Tim Wise defines white privilege in *Between Barack and a Hard Place* as the "advantage the white Americans have not to confront just how real and how present day the idea of racism is" (Wise, 2008, p. 121). He focuses on the disadvantage that minorities experience by discussing President Barack Obama. According to Wise, Obama's election shows us not how far Americans have come, but how much we still need to grow. Wise views Obama's election as old fashioned racism, racism that is based solely on one's skin. Wise also argues that white Americans are responsible for changing the system they have inherited because white Americans "continue to benefit, consciously or not, from the entrenched privileges that are the legacy of that system" (Wise, 2008, p. 112). He states, "White Privilege is being able to go to a prestigious prep school, then to Yale and Harvard Business School and still be seen as an 'average guy,' while being black, going to a prestigious prep school, then Occidental College, then Columbia, and then Harvard Law, makes you 'uppity' and a snob who probably looks down on regular folks" (Wise, 2008, p. 112). This statement shows that blacks have to work twice as hard to be even put in the same category as whites, who are only doing what they have been told is normal everyday life for them. While McIntosh and Wise present the topic in two different ways, both agree that blacks and whites in America face two different realities, and both emphasize how easy it is for white people to ignore the role privilege plays in their lives.

Race and social policy are often intertwined. In the early twentieth century several policies helped to promote white privilege. For example, the intention of the Social Security Act of 1935 was to provide long-term economic stability and promote a sense of economic security for the aged, the unemployed, and the disabled. However, the Social Security Act did little to benefit African Americans (Davis, 2005). Instead it excluded them by putting restrictions on who could and could not qualify for Social Security. Most African American women, who worked in fields such as education, agriculture, and domestic services, did not qualify for benefits (Davis, 2005). Another social policy with racial implications was the Wagner Act of 1935. The policy was originally designed to protect African

Americans against discrimination in labor unions but was petitioned against and eventually dropped (Powell, 2003). The change in the policy allowed labor unions to dominate and monopolize the labor force and made discrimination against minorities legal. This gave the people in power, who were white, the authority to decide who they wanted working in the unions, making it impossible for African Americans to acquire union protection and benefits such as medical care, full employment, and job security (Powell, 2003).

Restrictive covenants were also put into place to keep African Americans out of certain neighborhoods. Racial restrictive covenants were legally binding covenants or contracts that restricted homeowners from selling, leasing or renting their homes to Asian Americans, Jews or Blacks (Franklin, 1997; Jones-Correa, 2001). If an owner violated this covenant they risked their property being foreclosed on or seized by the bank (Jones-Correa, 2001). Restrictive covenants prevented blacks from owning property and kept blacks in a small area of the cities that were in most cases the slum, giving them no opportunity to better themselves and their living situations. These two policies show that race was not only a social construct, but a political one as well that meant black Americans were dealing with oppression in both arenas.

The manifestations of such policies are indeed present in *Native Son*. The most obvious example of this white privilege is in the living arrangements of blacks and whites in Chicago. Even though whites and blacks in *Native Son* lived fairly close to each other, Wright shows the reader that there is an obvious color line that divides the two worlds. Mr. Dalton, for example, owns the South Side Real Estate Company that rents to Bigger and his family, but he has no interaction with them what so ever. When Bigger first comes to work for the Daltons, Mr. Dalton questions Bigger about his living situation. "You live at 3721 Indiana? Where do you pay rent? How much rent do you pay? For how many rooms" (Wright, 1940: p. 49)? One of the privileges of being white during that time was being able to choose if you wanted to have any interaction with blacks, and most whites chose not to. Mr. Dalton doesn't even know the details of his own property because as a white person he has the privilege of not having any contact with blacks or those who don't resemble him. Bigger, on the other hand, doesn't have a choice whether to interact with whites or not. If he wants a good job that will allow him to better himself, he not only has to interact with whites, but this interaction must be characterized with subservience.

We see this idea of white privilege again when the character of Jan, a young communist, is introduced to us. Jan and his girlfriend Mary ride around in a car with Bigger while he sits in between them, nervous and uneasy. Jan is completely oblivious to the fact that even though he is comfortable being around Bigger, Bigger isn't allowed to be relaxed or comfortable in the same situation. As a black man in the 1930s, Bigger must follow a certain social etiquette. This etiquette requires Bigger to only refer to Jan as "Mr." and "sir." When Jan shakes Bigger's hand and tells him not to call him "sir," Bigger is put in an awkward position because that's the way he has been socialized to interact with white people. Yet, Mary and Jan have the "privilege" of driving around a black neighborhood and not feeling scared or thinking they are going to be harassed. They don't think twice about going to an all-black diner in an all-black neighborhood. "Look, Bigger. We want one of those places where colored people eat, not one of those show places" (Wright, 1940, p. 69). Bigger and his friends never could have decided that they wanted to eat at an all-white restaurant. Knowing this, it never crosses Bigger's mind to go into the dinner and eat with them: "I – I.... I don't want to go in..." (Wright, 1940, p. 71). Bigger even feels uncomfortable eating with white folks in his own surroundings. Once inside, Mary and Jane eat and drink without interruption.

They don't have to deal with stares from Blacks. They don't have to enter through the back door or sit by the kitchen, and they are not mistreated. Social norms were different in the 1930s for black and whites and the characters Mary and Jan are able to take those differences for granted because of white privilege.

Richard Wright wrote *Native Son* in 1940. While the author's purpose was to take us through the life of Bigger Thomas and his struggle to find himself, we are still able to uncover other key concepts such as racial identity and white privilege in the text. Racism is a key concept that needs to be explored because it doesn't affect just one group of people, but society as a whole. "While the impact of racism on whites is clearly different from its impact on people of color, racism has a negative ramification for everyone" (Tatum, 1992, p. 3).

Comparing the definition of white privilege to the way it is displayed in *Native Son* shows a complete disregard and sometimes abuse for the things that white people can do that other races have to think twice about. Society has allowed it to be easier to be white opposed to any other race. We have been socialized to be content with white privilege, and with this socialization come a battle to accept any race that is not white, which makes it difficult for minorities to accept themselves. Moving up and down the racial identity development scale, Black Americans search for this acceptance and equality, but many never receive it.

In *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas doesn't reach the internalization/commitment stage until the very last lines of the book. Instead of having a negative encounter with the white race open his eyes, he finally has a positive one with his lawyer Max. Finally, Bigger is able to accept his place in society and be content with his role as a black male. He goes from the immersion/emersion stage, where he is very uncomfortable interacting with the white race and trying to avoid them at all costs, to only confiding in a white male. The time period in which Wright wrote this novel is different than the twenty-first century, however we still see similar problems today. Bigger represents many blacks not only in the 1930s, but in current times who struggle with racial identity.

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## Acknowledgments

First I would like to thank God because without him none of this would be possible. Then, I would like to thank my family. With their motivation, enlightenment, and support, I have been able to grow as a person and a writer. My mother, Alicia Harmon-Engram, and aunt, Angela Harmon, have made it possible for me to attend college and further my dream. Lastly, I would like to thank my faculty mentor Dr. Farrah Gafford for believing in me and my writing and encouraging me to publish. I feel that I am a better student and much better writer because of the work she has put into me. I appreciate her time and dedication.

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**Book Club Final Reflection Essay Assignment**

**Gafford-Race and Ethnic Relations**

| Category | 5-(excellent) | 3-(good) | 1-(poor) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clarity of Writing | The writing is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention | The writing is generally clear but unnecessary words are occasionally used. Meaning is sometimes hidden | It is difficult for the reader to understand what the writer is trying to express | |
| Passages Selected | Assignment features detailed, meaningful passages and quote selections that strongly reflect course themes | Assignment features less detailed passages and quote selections that somewhat reflect course themes | Assignment features quotes that are irrelevant to the course themes | |
| Summary of text | Coverage of the text is complete and thorough | Adequately addresses all parts of the reading assignment | Most commentary is vague, unsupported or a plot summary | |
| Spelling and Grammar | There are no mistakes in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation | A few mistakes in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation | Several mistakes in grammar and spelling | |
| | | | | |

Final Report for FaCTS Project

**Active Reading Skills in the Course MATH 2020: Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences**

**Dr. Vlajko L. Kocic**
**Mathematics Department**

Funded by the Mellon Foundation
AY 10-11

Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals (1 paragraph)

The main goal of the proposal "Active Reading Skills in the Course MATH 2020: Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences" is the development of very special reading skills that will enable Xavier students to understand the problems in natural world, translate them to the language of mathematics, to interpret the obtained mathematical results to real world situations and discuss their implications to world and society we live in. This goal will be accomplished through the building a vocabulary that includes both mathematical terms and terms from natural world used in the modeling process, development of students' skills to understand the connection between the problem in natural world and mathematical problem and its solution and to be able to discuss implications of the obtained solution to society and world. The proposed strategy includes the development of different types of instructional materials including handouts, worksheets, vocabulary exercises, projects, and tools to assess their effectiveness.

Future plans (1 brief paragraph)

The course MATH 2020 will be offered on regular basis during spring semester. It is already approve to be part of expansive core. Based on the success of this project and students' positive response to active learning component of the course, it will be fully integrated in the course structure in the future.

Dissemination of project

The following two invited talks were given at the Joint Mathematics Meeting (annual national meeting of all mathematical societies and associations)

1. *Attenuance and Resonance of Periodic Cycles in some Periodically Forced Population Models*, American Mathematical Society Special Session "Structured Models in Ecology, Evolution, and Epidemiology: Periodicity, Extinction, and Chaos", New Orleans, LA, 01/07/2011
2. *Global Behavior of Certain Nonautonomous Nonlinear Discrete Population Models Exhibiting Allee Effect*, American Mathematical Society Special Session "Difference Equations and Applications", New Orleans, LA, 01/08/2011

Some topics discussed in the class are related to both talks.

Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes

Goal: Development of mathematical and reading skills and knowledge that will enable students to understand and apply the process of mathematical modeling in life sciences.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. At the end of the course students will be able to possess a vocabulary involving terms used in the process of mathematical modeling in life sciences including mathematical terms, selected terms in natural world, and relationships between them.

2. At the end of the course students will be able to demonstrate the understanding the connections between the problem in natural world and the mathematical problem.

3. At the end of the course students will be able to interpret the mathematical solution of a problem, in terms of the original natural world problem and to be able to discuss implications of the obtained solution in light of current events in the society and the world.

Summary assessment

The assessment tools used in this project were:

1. Students' performance on the test

   The test contained three parts:

   (i) In the first part students answered several questions related to basic knowledge and vocabulary used mathematical modeling. Most questions required verbal answers. Overall students' performance was very good.
   (ii) The second part was focused on discrete mathematical models. It required from students to read information presented in graphical form about certain population model and interpret them to mathematical properties of the model and also to interpret them in terms of real life situation.
   (iii) In the third part students were required to read the article "The Mathematics of Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus" by Marjorie Wohnam, also to visit a web site devoted to West Nile modeling and write a one page summary of the article. In addition they needed to identify ten new words or concepts and to find their meaning in the context of the model. Prior to taking the test students were exposed to epidemic models. The dynamics of the classical SIR (Susceptible-Infected-Removed) epidemic model was studied in great details

in the class. So students had necessary background to do independent reading of new material. Overall, based on students works, this was success.

2. Anonymous survey conducted on the last day of classes. Since there were only six students in the class, the main purpose of the survey was to collect data about students' experience in the class, in particular related to the above specified learning outcomes.

   The first group of questions is related to the quality and usefulness of handouts prepared by instructor and distributed to students as well as the clarity of assignments. Results showed that100% of students had positive opinions. Students found questions that stimulation critical thinking to be challenging, but also assignments helped them to learn more about mathematical modeling. Also they suggested that handouts should be more comprehensive and to cover entire course and not just the beginning of the course.

   In general, 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the course helped them to expand mathematical knowledge, by learning new words or terms or new meaning of some known terms and mathematical concepts. Also 100% of students believed that the course helped them to learn ways of expressing mathematical concepts in plain English, to develop interest in mathematical modeling and to learn the ways to express mathematical findings in the context of real life situations. The course expand the knowledge of Mathematics for 83.3% of students, and the same number of students Regarding expansion of vocabulary and the impact of the course on improving students' reading skills 67.7% students expressed positive opinion.

   Next group of questions addressed the reading assignment the article "The Mathematics of Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus" by Marjorie Wohnam, 50% of students considered the article somewhat challenging. The main reasons were the lack of necessary mathematical skills, lack of understanding of basic concepts, lack of necessary vocabulary, and lack of time to focus more on the assignment. However, 83.3% of student enjoyed reading the article and 100% thought that the selection of this article was appropriate. Students' comments about the article included:

   - *It was a good assignment. It put everything we learned throughout the year together,*
   - *fun and interesting*
   - *I liked the assignment because it was very applicable to real world issues. It made my understanding worthwhile*
   - *Excellent example. Not just related to mathematical concept but also gain knowledge on the disease.*

   The last group of questions addressed the final project. All students (100%) thought that the project was appropriate, the information and guidance provided by instructor was helpful, and the project helped them to develop mathematical skills. On the other hand 83.3% enjoyed the project, and thought that the computer part of the project was

challenging, while 66.7% of students thought that the project was challenging. But not time consuming.

In general 100% of students enjoyed the course and made the following general comments about the course:

- *Keep this class around.*
- *I've learned a lot from the models we talked about in class but it would probably be better if we discussed a topic that interested students as well.*
- *Everything came together in final project which I liked. It was not very difficult and it helped me further understand and solidify concepts used in class.*
- *I liked the course.*
- *Do more modeling.*

3. Some components of the course portfolio are attached with this report.

**XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA**
**DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS**
**Spring 2011**
**MATH 2020: Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences**

**Syllabus**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Vlajko Kocic
**SECTION:** 01
**OFFICE:** Adm. 317 C

**e-mail :** vkocic@xula.edu
**MWF** 10:00 – 10:50 **ROOM:** 01-306
**PHONE**: 520 - 5309

**OFFICE HOURS:** MWF: 9:00 - 9:50 A.M., MW: 1:00 – 1:30 P.M. T: 12:00 - 12:50
Other times by appointment. **Office hours may change when committee assignments dictate.**

**TEXTBOOK:** L. Edelstein-Keshet, Mathematical Models in Biology, *SIAM Publishers,* 2005

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** E. S. Allman, J. A. Rhodes, Mathematical Models in Biology, an Introduction, *Cambridge University Press*

C. Diks, C. Hommes, V. Panchenko, R. vander Wielde, E&F Chaos: a user friendly software package for nonlinear dynamics, Computational Economics 32, 221 – 244.
C. Diks, C. Hommes, V. Panchenko, M. Tyszler, Manual E&F Chaos Program, http://www1.fee.uva.nl/cendef/makehp/page.asp?ID=19

**COURSE DESCRIPTION FROM XU CATALOGUE:**

**MATH 2020 Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences** - Introduction to mathematical models and techniques in life sciences including topics in population biology and epidemiology, cell division, bacterial growth in a chemostat, host-parasitoid systems, and predator-prey systems. The mathematical topics include linear and nonlinear difference equations, in particular the logistic equation, continuous processes described by ordinary differential equations, stability considerations including chaos (for both discrete and continuous models). Use of the technology is integrated in the course. Prerequisite: grade C or higher in MATH 1070/1070H Introductory Calculus/Honors. (3)

**PREREQUISITES:** grade "C" or higher in MATH 1070 or equivalent course.

**COURSE PHILOSOPHY:**

The purpose of this course is to introduce and provide a clear understanding of broad spectrum of mathematical models and techniques in life sciences, in particular Biology. We will emphasize:

- *depth of understanding* rather than breath of coverage;
- *development of mathematical thinking and application to problems in life sciences* - acquisition of a clear intuitive picture of central ideas, reason with the intuitive ideas, and explanation and applications of the reasoning clearly in plain English;
- *development of vocabulary and special reading skills* – acquisition of vocabulary and reading skills that will enable students to understand the problems in natural world, translate them to the language of mathematics, to interpret the obtained mathematical results to real world situations and discuss their implications to world and society we live in.
- *active learning* - through large group discussion sessions and small group working sessions and projects;
- *use of technology* - required.

**COURSE GOAL:**

Goal: Development of mathematical knowledge and reading skills that will enable students to understand and to apply the process of mathematical modeling to real world problems in life sciences.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. At the end of the course students will be able to possess a vocabulary involving terms used in the process of mathematical modeling in life sciences including mathematical terms, selected terms in natural world, and relationships between them.
2. At the end of the course students will be able to demonstrate the understanding the connections between a problem in natural world and the corresponding mathematical problem.
3. At the end of the course students will be able to interpret the mathematical solution of a problem, in terms of the original natural world problem and to be able to discuss implications of the obtained solution in light of current events in the society and the world.
4. At the end of the course students will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of various mathematical techniques and apply them to the analysis of discrete mathematical models in life sciences involving linear and nonlinear difference equations and systems.
5. At the end of the course students will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of various mathematical techniques and apply them to the analysis of continuous mathematical models in life sciences involving linear and nonlinear differential equations and systems.

**CLASS STRUCTURE:**

1. The class periods will be used to solve some of the homework problems, to introduce new concepts or techniques, and to work problems individually or in small groups. Students are encouraged to ask questions and to participate intelligently at all class meetings.
2. The class period starts precisely on time. Attendance will be taken and recorded. Quizzes, tests, or any other appropriate evaluation will be given during the class time according to the schedule below.
3. PROBLEMS MUST BE DONE REGULARLY, NEATLY, AND INTELLIGENTLY IN ORDER TO LEARN MATHEMATICS. Homework will be assigned daily and will be reviewed the next class meeting.

**COMPUTER LAB:**

Some classes or parts of classes will be devoted to explorations and solving problems using appropriate mathematical software.

**ATTENDANCE POLICIES:**

1. The student is cautioned that active participation in all class activities is necessary for success, especially in mathematics. Absences and tardiness MUST be avoided.
2. If an absence occurs, the student must make up the missed material on his or her own. <u>Make-up tests will not be given except in the most extreme circumstance.</u>

**EMERGENCY PLAN:**

In case of a class disruption the student is cautioned to take the textbook as part of the student's belongings. The course will be continued online via XU email and Blackboard.

**LEARNING AIDS**:

1. **TEXTBOOK.** The textbook has been carefully chosen to provide explanations for the student and contains all homework problems. The student is urged to READ THE ASSIGNED SECTIONS IN THE BOOK, working through the examples.
2. **HANDOUTS.** The faculty teaching the course has prepared the handouts and they contain various topics intended to enchase students' learning and understanding.
3. **BLACKBOARD.** Computer lab assignments, reviews for the test, homework problems, and syllabus, will be available on Blackboard. Instructor will post all lecture notes on Blackboard. Some quizzes, including vocabulary quizzes will be taken on Bolackboard. The use of Blackboard is integrated in the class structure and it is expected of the students to use it.
4. **TECHNOLOGY**. Software package E&F Chaos will be used for computer simulations. In addition students are encouraged to use graphing calculators.

**EVALUATION:**

1. The final grade in the course will be determined by the percentage of the total possible points earned by the student. Points can be earned as follows:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *TEST/PROJECT* | 1 | | = | 100 points |
| *QUIZZES* | 4 | | = | 100 points |
| *HOMEWORK/LABS* | 8 | (worth 25 points each) | = | 200 points |
| *FINAL EXAM/PROJECT* | | | = | 200 points |
| **TOTAL** | | | **=** | **600 points** |

2. The final letter grade will be determined by referring to the following rough scale:
   90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; below 60 = F

3. <u>ANY STUDENT FOUND CHEATING WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN AND WILL RECEIVE "F" IN THE COURSE.</u>

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

Module 1: Modeling in life sciences, discrete models; modeling population growth using linear difference equations (Chapter 1)
Introduction to E&F Chaos software

Module 2: Discrete models involving first order nonlinear difference equations (logistic model, Bevetron-Holt model, stability, chaos) (Chapter 2)
Discrete models involving two species interactions (host-parasitoid, plant-herbivore) (Chapter 3)

Test

Module 3: Introduction to continuous models (Chapter 4)
Qualitative methods in study continuous models (Chapter 5)

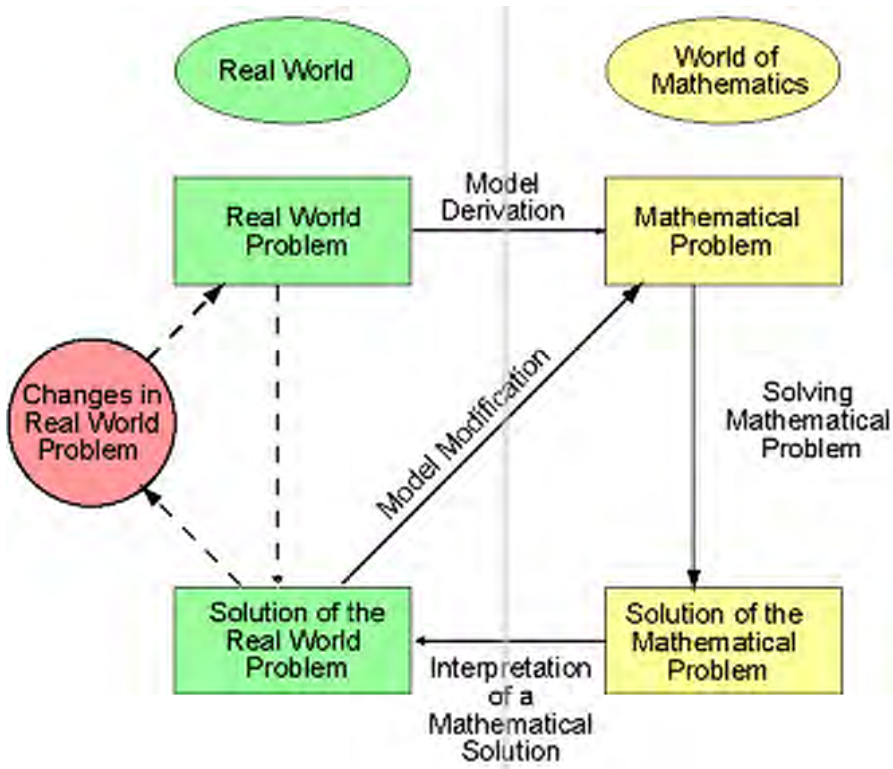
Module 4: Applications of continuous models: single species populations (Gomperz and logistic models, Allee effect, chemostat), two-species models (predator-prey), epidemic models (SIR model) (Chapter 6)

**FINAL EXAMINATION: Friday, April 29, 1:00, room 01-306.**

## Mathematical Model

A **mathematical model** is an idealization and an approximation of a real-world phenomenon. It is never a completely accurate representation of the real-world behavior. All mathematical models have limitations but they are valuable and helpful in efforts to understand and explain real-world situations.

**Modeling cycle** is a general framework used in the process of modeling.




**Real World Problem** - Real world situation that we are intend to understand and solve using mathematical techniques.

**Model Derivation** - We identify variables: independent, dependent (state) variables, parameters (coefficients). Relate variables using laws, assumptions, and hypotheses; establish basic relationship (such as "is directly proportional", "is inversely proportional", is increasing function of", "is decreasing function of"... ) between rates of change of some variables and other variables.

**Mathematical Problem** - Derived from the real world problem. Models could be either **discrete** or **continuous**. In continuous models independent variable *time* is continuous and all variables are also continuous functions of time or other variables. The main characteristic of **discrete models** is that the independent variable *time* is always discrete. Other variables could be discrete or continuous. Models also could be **deterministic** and **stochastic**. In deterministic models, if we know the state of the system at certain point of time we can determine the state of model in the future by solving it. In contrary **stochastic models** include uncertainty.

**Solution of a Mathematical Problem** - Use of different mathematical techniques and tools to obtain the solution of the problem. Depending of the problems we select appropriate techniques. For example, **difference equations** and discrete dynamical systems are appropriate for discrete models. **Ordinary differential equations** are suitable for continuous models with only one independent variable - time, while **partial differential equations** are suitable for models involving more than one independent variable (time and spatial variables). The theory of stochastic processes are utilized when investigating stochastic

models. In most cases we are not able to exactly solve the problem, so utilize approximation techniques such as numerical approximations, graphical approximation, approximations formula, or approximation of a problem. Qualitative methods include the description of the properties of solution without actually solving the equation.

**Interpretation of a Mathematical Solution** - We use the mathematical solution to answer the question and to use our solution to make predictions. We compare the results with data collected from real world, we test the solution using experiments, and use various statistical tools to test and evaluate our model.

**Modification** - In cases when there is a discrepancy between the real world data and model we need to modify our model and then we repeat the steps again until we reach satisfactory model.

**Changes in Real World Problem** - In some cases the result of our model could imply changes in original problem such as changes in some policies that have impact to originally formulated problem so we need to readdress this again by restarting the process from beginning.

# Population Dynamics

**Mathematical biology** is an interdisciplinary area with wide applications to biology, medicine, and biotechnology. The whole field is also referred as **biomathematics,** but also as **theoretical biology**. Mathematical biology includes mathematical representation, treatment, and modeling of biological processes and incorporates the use of variety of mathematical techniques and tools.

**Population dynamics** is traditionally a main and oldest branch of mathematical biology, and it that deals with a study of short and long term changes in size and age compositions of populations and underlying biological and environmental processes which affect and cause those changes.

In our context, a **population** represents a collection of inter-breeding organisms of a particular species. **Population size** represents a number of individual organisms of a particular population present in a specific geographic area or habitat. **Population density** is the population size per given unit of geographic area. Both population size and population density are functions of time. **Population model** is a mathematical model which describes the changes in population size or population density over time. If the population size (or population density) is continuous function of time, then we call such model **continuous population model**. However, population size could be measured in discrete time intervals, generally at equally spaced points of time, (such as every year, month, week, day, or hour) or measurements could be taken for each generation of a population. In such models time is discrete variable and we call such models **discrete population models**.

# Discrete Population Model

Changes in population size are directly affected by the following processes: birth, death, immigration, and emigration. Birth of individual organisms is measured with **birth rate** which represents the ratio of a number of newborns and present population size in one generation or unit of time. Similarly, the death within the population is measured with **death rate** which is the ratio of deceased individuals and present population size in one generation or unit of time. **Immigration** represents the arrival of new individuals into a population or habitat during one generation or time interval. Similarly **emigration** represents a departure of individuals from certain population or habitat during one generation or time interval.

So, in general, single species population models have the following form:

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c}\text{Next Generation}\\ \text{Population Size}\end{array}} = \boxed{\begin{array}{c}\text{Present}\\ \text{Population Size}\end{array}} + \boxed{\begin{array}{c}\text{Number of}\\ \text{Newborns}\end{array}} - \boxed{\begin{array}{c}\text{Number of}\\ \text{Deceased}\end{array}} + \boxed{\begin{array}{c}\text{Number of}\\ \text{Immigrants}\end{array}} - \boxed{\begin{array}{c}\text{Number of}\\ \text{Emigrants}\end{array}}$$

Next we introduce the following notation:

$p_n$ - population size in $n$-th generation (or $n$-th time interval); present population size. Remember population size is always nonnegative, that is $p_n \geq 0$.

$p_{n+1}$ - population size in $(n+1)$-th generation (or $(n+1)$-th time interval); population size in next generation.

$b_n$ - birth rate; the ratio of a number of newborns and present population size during one generation, that is from generation $n$ to generation $(n+1)$. In general birth rate can change from one generation to another.

$$b_n = \frac{\text{Number of newborns}}{\text{Present population size}}$$

or

$$\text{Number of newborns } = b_n p_n$$

$d_n$ - death rate; the ratio of a number of deceased and present population size during one generation, that is from generation $n$ to generation $(n+1)$. In general death rate can change from one generation to another.

$$d_n = \frac{\text{Number of deceased}}{\text{Present population size}}$$

or

$$\text{Number of deceased } = d_n p_n$$

$i_n$ - number of immigrants that entered the population (or habitat) during one generation, that is from generation $n$ to generation $(n+1)$. In general number of immigrants can change from one generation to another.

$e_n$ - number of emigrants that departed the population (or habitat) during one generation, that is from generation $n$ to generation $(n+1)$. In general number of emigrants can change from one generation to another.

So, now we can write the following equation that represent a general case of single species discrete population model

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} \text{Population size in} & & & \text{Birth} & & \text{Death} & & \text{Emigration} & & \\ \text{next generation} & & & \text{rate} & & \text{rate} & & & & \\ \downarrow & & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & & \downarrow & \\ p_{n+1} & = & p_n & + & b_n p_n & - & d_n p_n & + & i_n & - & e_n \\ & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ & & & & \text{Present population size} & & & & \text{Immigration} & & \end{array} \tag{1}$$

**Problem** *Develop a single species discrete population model assuming that there are no immigration and emigration and where the birth rate and the death rate are constant. Determine the long term behavior of such population.*

**Step 1 - Model Derivation** First we introduce the notation:

$p_n$ - population size in $n$-th generation or present population size.

$p_{n+1}$

- population size in $(n+1)$-th generation or population size in the next generation.

$b$ - constant birth rate; $b \geq 0$.

$d$ - constant death rate; $0 \leq d \leq 1$.

Since the birth and death rates are constant and there is no immigration and emigration we have

$$b_n = b, \quad d_n = d, \quad i_n = 0, \quad e_n = 0$$

so we obtain the following equation

$$\begin{aligned} p_{n+1} &= p_n + bp_n - dp_n \\ &= (1 + b - d)p_n. \end{aligned}$$

The constant

$$r = 1 + b - d$$

is called the **growth rate**. The constant $r$ satisfies

$$r \geq 0.$$

Finally we obtain the following population model

$$p_{n+1} = rp_n \tag{2}$$

where $r \geq 0$. The equation (2) is **difference equation.** Difference equations are equations where unknown is a **sequence**. In our case the unknown is the sequence of population size which is denoted by $\{p_n\}$. More details about sequences can be find in the section Mathematical Tools - Sequences. The equation involves one parameter $r$ which is nonnegative real number.

The **solution** of the difference equation is the sequence $\{p_n\}$ which satisfies the difference equation (2). To solve such equation we need to know the **initial population size,** that is the population size at generation 0 - $p_0$. In the theory of difference equation this is called the **initial condition**. For different initial conditions we obtain different solutions. Since there are infinitely many ways how the initial condition can be selected the difference equation has infinitely many solutions. The solution which includes all solutions is called a **general solution**.

In our case, the initial population size must be nonnegative number:

$$p_0 \geq 0.$$

So, at this point we obtained the following mathematical problem:

**Mathematical Problem** *Study the long term behavior of the sequence $\{p_n\}$, defined by*

$$p_{n+1} = rp_n, \quad n = 0, 1, ... \tag{3}$$

*with initial condition*

$$p_0 \geq 0$$

*and where*

$$r \geq 0.$$

**Step 2 - Solving Mathematical Problem** To solve the problem, we will start with equation (3) and use it to generate the terms of our sequence $\{p_n\}$ :

$$\begin{array}{llll}
n = 0: & p_1 = rp_0 & = p_0 r & \\
n = 1: & p_2 = rp_1 & = r(p_0 r) & = p_0 r^2 \\
n = 2: & p_3 = rp_2 & = r(p_0 r^2) & = p_0 r^3 \\
n = 3: & p_4 = rp_3 & = r(p_0 r^3) & = p_0 r^4 \\
n = 4: & p_5 = rp_4 & = r(p_0 r^4) & = p_0 r^5 \\
\vdots & & &
\end{array}$$

So, we can easily predict that the population size in $n$-th generation is given by

$$p_n = p_0 r^n, \quad n = 0, 1, .... \tag{4}$$

To show that the above formula is correct we will show that the sequence $\{p_n\}$ satisfies the initial condition and the equation (3). So for $n = 0$ the equation (4) becomes:

$$p_0 = p_0 r^0 = p_0,$$

so the initial condition is satisfied. From (4) we have

$$p_{n+1} = p_0 r^{n+1}$$

after substituting it and (4) into (3) we obtain

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
p_0 r^{n+1} & & p_0 r^n \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
p_{n+1} & = & rp_n \\
p_0 r^{n+1} & = & r(p_0 r^n)
\end{array}$$

which is correct.

Next we will examine the long term behavior of the population size $\{p_n\}$ in terms of the parameter $r$ and the initial population size $p_0$. There are several cases:

**Case 1:** $r = 0$. In this case we have

$$p_n = \begin{cases} p_0, & \text{if} \quad n = 0 \\ 0 & \text{if} \quad n = 1, 2, ... \end{cases}.$$

Therefore,

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = 0.$$

**Case 2:** $p_0 = 0$. Then, the population size $p_n$ is always 0. So our difference equation has a **constant solution**

$$p_n = 0, \qquad \text{for all } n = 0, 1, 2, ....$$

which is called an **equilibrium** of the equation.

**Case 3:** $0 < r < 1$ **and** $p_0 > 0$. Recall that the exponential function $f(x) = r^x$, for $0 < r < 1$ is decreasing and has limit 0, when $x$ approaches $\infty$,

$$\lim_{x\to\infty} r^x = 0,$$

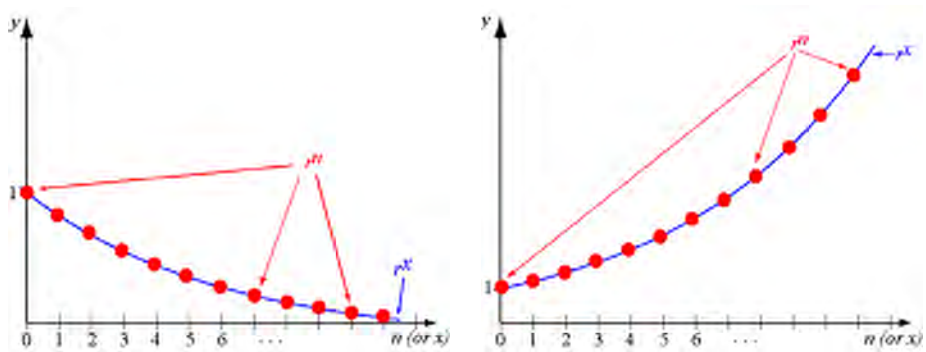
so the sequence $\{r^n\}$ is also decreasing and converges to 0

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} r^n = 0.$$

Clearly, in this case

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = \lim_{n\to\infty} p_0 r^n = 0.$$

Then, the population size decreases to 0. In this case we say that the **equilibrium** 0 **is asymptotically stable**. Also, we say that 0 is an **attractor**.




Case $0 < r < 1$ Case $r > 1$

Graphs of the exponential function $r^x$ and the sequence $\{r^n\}$

**Case 4:** $r > 1$ **and** $p_0 > 0$. Again, recall that the exponential function $f(x) = r^x$, for $r > 1$ is increasing and has limit $\infty$, when $x$ approaches $\infty$,

$$\lim_{x\to\infty} r^x = \infty,$$

so the sequence $\{r^n\}$ is also increasing and diverges to $\infty$

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} r^n = \infty.$$

Now, we have

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = \lim_{n\to\infty} p_0 r^n = \infty.$$

Then, the population size also diverges to $\infty$. In this case we say that the **equilibrium** 0 **is unstable** and that 0 is a **repellor**.

**Case 5:** $r = 1$ **and** $p_0 > 0$. In this case

$$r^n = 1^n = 1, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, ...$$

so

$$p_n = p_0, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, ...$$

so every solution of the difference equation is a constant solution or equilibrium. So in this case all solutions are equilibria. The value $r = 1$ is called a **bifurcation point**. At that value of $r$ the long term behavior of the population size $\{p_n\}$ changes.

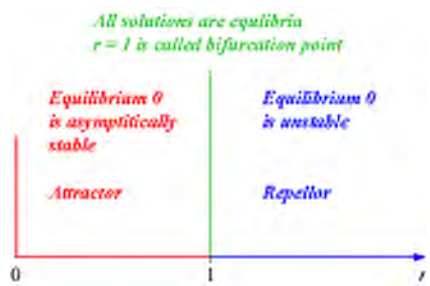
So we can summarize our findings and formulate the solution.

**Solution of the Mathematical Problem** *We summarize the previous findings as:*
*The difference equation (3) has the following solution*

$$p_n = p_0 r^n, \quad n = 0, 1, ...$$

*which has the following properties:*

1. *If* $r = 0$, *then* $p_n = 0$, *for all integers* $n \geq 1$.
2. *If* $p_0 = 0$, *then* $p_n = 0$, *for all integer* $n \geq 0$, *and* $0$ *is the equilibrium (constant solution) of the equation.*
3. *If* $0 < r < 1$, *then* $\{p_n\}$ *decreases and* $\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = 0$.
4. *If* $r > 1$, *then* $\{p_n\}$ *increases and* $\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = \infty$.
5. *If* $r = 1$, *then* $\{p_n\}$ *is constant, that is* $p_n = p_0$, *for all integers* $n \geq 0$.




Now we proceed to out nest step in modeling cycle:

**Step 3 - Interpretation of the Mathematical Solution** From the solution of the mathematical problem we can draw the following conclusions:

1. If $r = 0$, then $p_n = 0$ for all $n \geq 1$. It means that the population size, in all generations, except initial populations, will be 0. On the other hand, $r = 0$ implies

$$r = 1 + b - d = 0$$

and since $b \geq 0$ and $0 \leq d \leq 1$, it must be

$$b = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad d = 1$$

so there are no newborns in any generation and all individuals currently present will die. So the population size in generation 1 will be 0 and it will remain 0 thereafter, which is consistent with our solution.

2. If $p_0 = 0$, then $p_n = 0$ for all $n \geq 0$ and there will be no individuals present. Again, this is consistent with common sense that if there are no individuals initially present in some are, and there is no immigration or emigration, no newborns, so no deaths too, the population size will not change and it will remain 0.
3. If $0 < r < 1$, then $\{p_n\}$ decreases and $\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = 0$ which leads to the **extinction** of the population. On the other hand, $0 < r < 1$ implies

$$r = 1 + b - d < 1$$

and

$$b < d.$$

So the birth rate is less than the death rate so, within one generation, the number of newborns is less than the number of deceased. Therefore, population size will decrease and that will eventually lead to extinction.

4. If $r > 1$, then $\{p_n\}$ increases and $\lim_{n\to\infty} p_n = \infty$ which implies that the population size will not approach 0 and that means the **survival** of the population. Indeed, $r > 1$ implies

$$r = 1 + b - d > 1$$

and

$$b > d.$$

So the birth rate is greater than the death rate so, within one generation, the number of newborns is greater than the number of deceased. Therefore, population will survive.

5. If $r = 1$, then $\{p_n\}$ is constant, that is $p_n = p_0$, for all $n \geq 0$ which means that the population size, in any generation, will be the same as initial population size. In this case Indeed, $r = 1$ implies

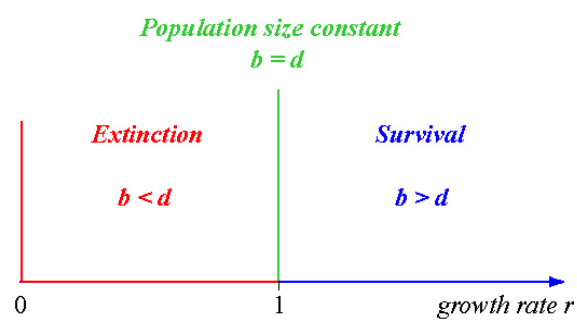
$$r = 1 + b - d = 1$$

and

$$b = d.$$

So the birth rate and the death rate are equal, so the number of newborns is the same as number of deceased. Therefore, population will survive and remain unchanged.

**Solution of the Real World Problem** *We summarize the previous findings as:*




In the case $r > 1$, our model predicts that the population size $p_n$ increases to $\infty$. It is realistic to expect, in any biological system, that the population size may increase to $\infty$. In such cases we may pose certain restrictions to use of our model, for example that it can be use as predictor of the population size, only for a limited number of generations. Also, it means that we need to introduce some modifications in our model.

## Linear homogenous first-order difference equation with constant coefficients

Now, we will consider the behavior of solutions of **linear homogenous first-order difference equation with constant coefficients**

$$x_{n+1} = rx_n, \quad n = 0, 1, ... \tag{1}$$

where $r$ is any real number and the initial condition

$$x_0 = C$$

where $C$ is a real number. Earlier, we examine the same equation with unknown population size $\{p_n\}$ assuming that the parameter $r$ and the initial condition are nonnegative numbers.

## Solution

Following the previous consideration we can predict that the equation (1) has the solution given by

$$x_n = Cr^n, \quad n = 0, 1, .... \tag{2}$$

To show that the above formula is correct we will show that the sequence $\{x_n\}$ satisfies the initial condition and the equation (1). So for $n = 0$ the equation (2) becomes:

$$x_0 = Cr^0 = C,$$

so the initial condition is satisfied. From (2) we have

$$p_{n+1} = Cr^{n+1}$$

after substituting it and (2) into (1) we obtain

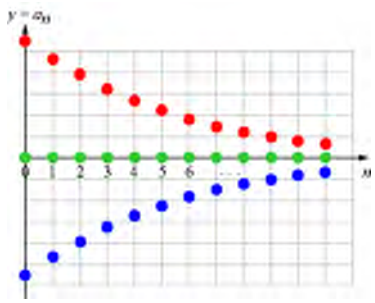
$$\begin{array}{ccc} Cr^{n+1} & & Cr^n \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ x_{n+1} & = & rx_n \\ Cr^{n+1} & = & r(Cr^n) \end{array}$$

and that is correct. So the solution of the equation (1) is given by (2). For any real number $C$ the sequence $\{x_n\}$ defined by (2) satisfies the equation (1). We call such solution a **general solution** and it includes one arbitrary constant $C$.

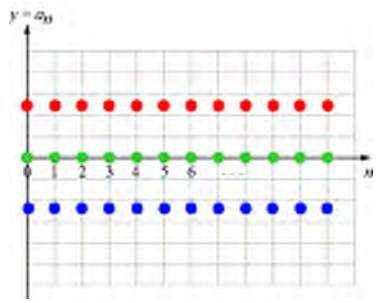
## Graphical Representation

We already examined the cases when $r = 0$, $0 < r < 1$, $r = 1$ and $r > 1$. Since we assume that $r$ can be any real number there are few more cases to consider. For the completeness we will include all cases that lead to different behavior of solutions. Any solution of the difference equation (1) can be obtained from the general solution by specifying the value of the constant $C$.

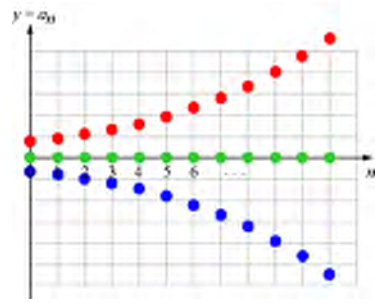
The following graphs represent the solutions of the equation (1) for different values of the parameter $r$.



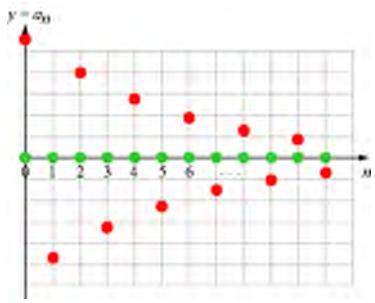
Case: $0 < r < 1$

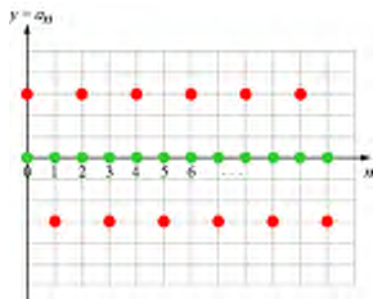


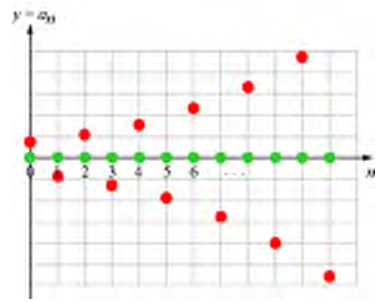
Case: $r = 1$

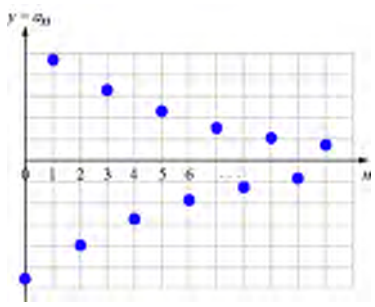


Case: $r > 1$

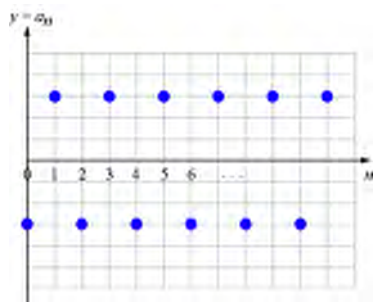




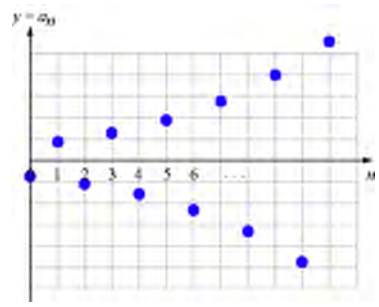




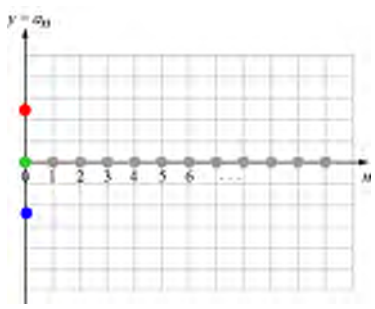
Case: $-1 < r < 0$

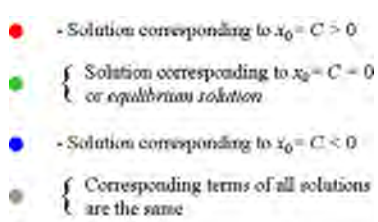


Case: $r = -1$



Case: $r < -1$






Case: $r = 0$

## Attractivity

The following summarizes the behavior of solutions of the given equation:

- For any real number $r$, the equation (1) has a zero as an equilibrium, that is, the sequence $\{\bar{x}_n\}$ defined by

$$\bar{x}_n = 0, \quad n = 0, 1, ...$$

  In further cases we will exclude the equilibrium solution.

- When $|r| < 1$, or $-1 < r < 1$, the zero equilibrium is attractor of all solutions, that is

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} x_n = \lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n| = 0$$

for any real number $C$. More precisely, we have the following:

- Let $0 < r < 1$. If $C > 0$, then the solution $\{x_n\}$ is positive and decreases to 0 while in the case $C < 0$, the solution is negative and increases to 0.
- Let $r = 0$. All terms of the solution $\{x_n\}$ are 0, except perhaps $x_0$. So

$$x_n = 0, \quad \text{for } n = 1, 2, ... \quad \text{and } x_0 = C.$$

- Let $-1 < r < 0$. The solution **oscillates,** that is changes its sign infinitely many times. If $C > 0$, then all even numbered terms, $x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ...$are positive, while all odd numbered terms $x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ...$ are negative. Similarly, in the case $C < 0$, all even numbered terms, $x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ...$are negative, while all odd numbered terms $x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ...$ are positive:

$$\begin{array}{llll} \text{if } C > 0 & \text{then } x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ... > 0 & \text{and} & x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ... < 0; \\ \text{if } C < 0 & \text{then } x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ... < 0 & \text{and} & x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ... > 0. \end{array}$$

- When $r = 1$, then all solutions of the equation are equilibria:

$$x_n = C, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, ....$$

In this case 0 equilibrium is not an attractor.

- When $r = -1$, then all solutions oscillate. In this case 0 equilibrium is also not asymptotically stable. More precisely, all even numbered terms $x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ...$take the same value $C$, while all odd numbered terms $x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ...$ take the value $-C$. Such solution starts with $x_0 = C$, then next term is $x_1 = -C$, and then again $x_2 = C$, and so on. Such solution is called **periodic with period 2**. In general, any sequence $\{x_n\}$ which satisfies

$$x_{n+2} = x_n, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, 2, ...$$

is called periodic with period 2. Periodic sequences could have other periods, and we say the the sequence $\{x_n\}$ is periodic with period $k$ (where $k$ is fixed positive integer), if

$$x_{n+k} = x_n, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, 2, ....$$

- When $|r| > 1$, the zero equilibrium is repellor. Any solution satisfies

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n| = \infty$$

The following cases are possible:

- Let $r > 1$. If $C > 0$, then the solution $\{x_n\}$ is positive and increases to $\infty$, while in the case $C < 0$, the solution is negative and decreases to $-\infty$.
- Let $r < -1$, then the solution $\{x_n\}$ in unbounded, oscillates, and diverges.

# Nonlinear Difference Equations

First order nonlinear difference equations have a form

$$x_{n+1} = f(x_n), \qquad n = 0, 1, ... \tag{1}$$

where $f$ is given function. Also we will assume that $f$ is continuous that the initial condition $x_0$ is given. In the case when $f$ is linear function

$$f(x) = rx$$

we obtain a linear first order equation

$$x_{n+1} = rx_n. \tag{2}$$

Even in some simple cases when $f$ is not a linear function, like for example,

$$f(x) = \frac{2x}{1+x} \quad \text{or} \quad f(x) = 2xe^{-x} \quad \text{or} \quad f(x) = 2x(1-x)$$

it is practically impossible to find general solutions of corresponding difference equations

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{2x_n}{1+x_n} \quad \text{or} \quad x_{n+1} = 2x_n e^{-x_n} \quad \text{or} \quad x_{n+1} = 2x_n(1-x_n).$$

So in such cases we should use different approach.

Let's recall that the linear difference equation (2) has equilibrium or constant solution 0. Indeed, by putting

$$x_n = x_{n+1} = 0$$

into the equation (2) we obtain an identity

$$0 = r \cdot 0.$$

We can expand this concept to general case. We say that $\bar{x}$ is an **equilibrium** of the equation (1) if

$$\bar{x} = f(\bar{x}).$$

The corresponding solution $\{\bar{x}_n\}$ such that

$$\bar{x}_n = \bar{x}$$

is called also **constant solution** or **steady-state solution**. Also, in such cases we say that $\bar{x}$ is a **fixed point** of the function $f$.

# Stability

**Definition 1** *(i) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1) is called* ***(locally) stable*** *if for every $\epsilon > 0$ there exists $\delta > 0$ such that*

$$|x_0 - \bar{x}| < \delta \quad \textit{implies} \quad |x_n - \bar{x}| < \epsilon \quad \textit{for} \quad n \geq 0.$$

*Otherwise, the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ is called* ***unstable.***
*(ii) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1) is called* ***(locally) asymptotically stable*** *if it is stable and there exists $\gamma$ such that*

$$|x_0 - \bar{x}| < \gamma \quad \textit{implies} \quad \lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n - \bar{x}| = 0.$$

*(iii) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1) is called* ***globally asymptotically stable*** *if for every $x_0$*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n - \bar{x}| = 0.$$

*(iv) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1) is called* ***globally asymptotically stable relative to a set*** *$S \subset \mathbb{R}$ if it is asymptotically stable, and if for every $x_0 \in S$,*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n - \bar{x}| = 0.$$

*(v) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1) is said to be an* ***attractor with the basin of attraction*** *$S \subset \mathbb{R}$ if*

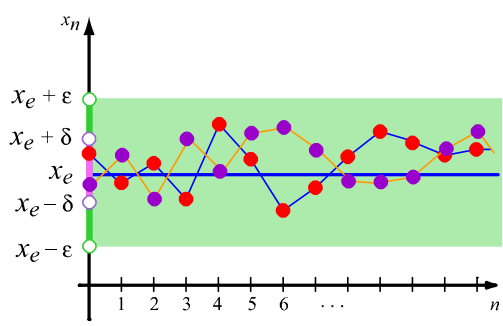
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} x_n = \bar{x}$$

*for every solution with $x_0 \in S$.*
*(vi) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1) is said to be a* ***repeller*** *if there exists $\eta > 0$, such that for all $x_0$ with $0 < |x_0 - \bar{x}| < \eta$, there exists an integer $N \geq 1$ such that*

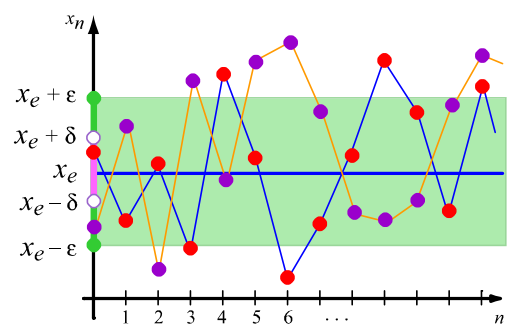
$$|x_n - \bar{x}| \geq \eta$$

*for $n \geq N$.*

Informally, the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ is stable if all terms of any solution, whose initial conditions are sufficiently close to $\bar{x}$, are arbitrarily close to $\bar{x}$. So for every horizontal strip with width $2\varepsilon$ centered around $\bar{x}$, we can choose an interval $(\bar{x}-\delta, \bar{x}+\delta)$ so all solutions with initial conditions within the interval $(\bar{x}-\delta, \bar{x}+\delta)$ will remain entirely inside the horizontal strip. On the other hand, in the case of unstable equilibrium $\bar{x}$, there is a horizontal strip of the width $2\varepsilon$ centered around $\bar{x}$, such that in any interval $(\bar{x}-\delta, \bar{x}+\delta)$ there are initial conditions, such that the corresponding solutions will not remain entirely inside the horizontal strip.




Stable equlibrium $x_e$




Unstable equilibrium $x_e$

Next we will examine the behavior of solutions of a nonlinear difference equations that are close to equilibrium. Let $\{x_n\}$ be a solution of the nonlinear equation (1) such that, for some integer $n$, $x_n$ is "close" to $\bar{x}$. We introduce the new sequence $\{y_n\}$ such that

$$x_n = \bar{x} + y_n, \quad n = 0, 1, ...$$

The sequence $\{y_n\}$ is also called a **perturbation** of a steady state $\bar{x}$, and represents a "small" change in a steady state solution.

Assume that the function $f$ is differentiable for $x$ close to $\bar{x}$. Recall the well-known linear approximation formula

$$f(x) \approx f(a) + f'(a)(x-a)$$

where $x$ is "close" to $a$ and $f$ is differentiable function. Then, putting $x = \bar{x} + y_n$ and $a = \bar{x}$, we obtain

$$f(\bar{x} + y_n) \approx f(\bar{x}) + f'(\bar{x})(\bar{x} + y_n - \bar{x}) = f(\bar{x}) + f'(\bar{x})y_n.$$

Since

$$y_{n+1} = x_{n+1} - \bar{x} = f(x_n) - \bar{x} = f(\bar{x} + y_n) - \bar{x}$$

and

$$f(\bar{x}) = \bar{x}$$

we obtain

$$y_{n+1} = f(\bar{x} + y_n) - \bar{x} \approx f(\bar{x}) + f'(\bar{x})y_n - \bar{x} = f'(\bar{x})y_n.$$

and this can be written as

$$y_{n+1} \approx r y_n$$

where $r$ is a constant given by

$$r = f'(\bar{x}).$$

We already know the character of solution of linear equation

$$y_{n+1} = ry_n \tag{3}$$

so may may intuitively predict that the behavior of the perturbation $\{y_n\}$ will be close to the behavior of the solutions of linear difference equation (3). We know that the 0 equilibrium of the linear equation (3) is asymptotically stable, that is $y_n$ approaches 0, when $|r| < 1$, so when

$$|r| = |f'(\bar{x})| < 1$$

the corresponding solution $\{x_n\}$ will approach the equilibrium $\bar{x}$. That will be true for all initial conditions that are sufficiently close to $\bar{x}$.

So we say that the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ of the nonlinear difference equation (1) is **locally asymptotically stable** if

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} x_n = \bar{x}$$

for all solutions $\{x_n\}$ of the same equations with initial conditions sufficiently close to $\bar{x}$. The word "local" is very important because it emphasizes that such behavior exists only when we are close to the equilibrium

Similarly, when

$$|r| = |f'(\bar{x})| > 1$$

the 0 equilibrium of the linear equation (3) is unstable. That means the perturbation $\{y_n\}$ will move away from 0, regardless how close is initial condition to 0. In the same way the solutions of nonlinear equation will move away from the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ regardless how close is the initial condition to the equilibrium $\bar{x}$. In this case the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ is **unstable**.

We have the following result:

**Theorem 2** *Let $\bar{x}$ be an equilibrium of the difference equation (1) where $f$ is a continuously differentiable function at $\bar{x}$.*
*(i) If*

$$|f'(\bar{x})| < 1$$

*then the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ is **locally asymptotically stable**.*
*(ii) If*

$$|f'(\bar{x})| > 1$$

*then the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ is **unstable** and also a **reppeler.***

In the case when $|f'(\bar{x})| \neq 1$, the equilibrium $\bar{x}$ is called a **hyperbolic equilibrium**. Otherwise, that is if $|f'(\bar{x})| = 1$, it is called a a **nonhyperbolic equilibrium**.

# Mathematical Tools - Linear First Order Difference Equation

## Linear First Order Difference Equation

Now, we will consider the behavior of solutions of **linear homogenous first-order difference equation with constant coefficients**

$$x_{n+1} = rx_n, \quad n = 0, 1, ... \tag{1}$$

where $r$ is any real number and the initial condition

$$x_0 = C$$

where $C$ is a real number. Earlier, we examine the same equation with unknown population size $\{p_n\}$ assuming that the parameter $r$ and the initial condition are nonnegative numbers.

## Solution

Following the previous consideration we can predict that the equation (1) has the solution given by

$$x_n = Cr^n, \quad n = 0, 1, .... \tag{2}$$

To show that the above formula is correct we will show that the sequence $\{x_n\}$ satisfies the initial condition and the equation (1). So for $n = 0$ the equation (2) becomes:

$$x_0 = Cr^0 = C,$$

so the initial condition is satisfied. From (2) we have

$$p_{n+1} = Cr^{n+1}$$

after substituting it and (2) into (1) we obtain

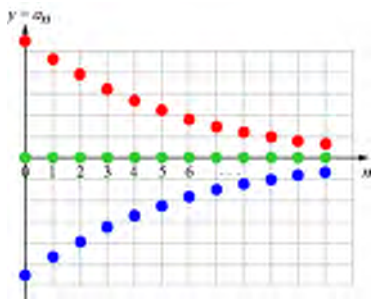
$$\begin{array}{ccc} Cr^{n+1} & & Cr^n \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ x_{n+1} & = & rx_n \\ Cr^{n+1} & = & r(Cr^n) \end{array}$$

and that is correct. So the solution of the equation (1) is given by (2). For any real number $C$ the sequence $\{x_n\}$ defined by (2) satisfies the equation (1). We call such solution a **general solution** and it includes one arbitrary constant $C$.

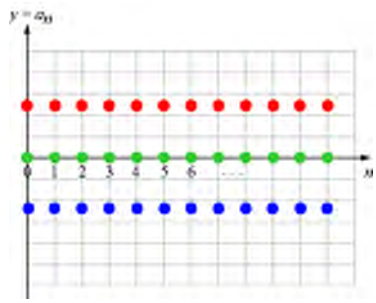
## Graphical Representation

We already examined the cases when $r = 0$, $0 < r < 1$, $r = 1$ and $r > 1$. Since we assume that $r$ can be any real number there are few more cases to consider. For the completeness we will include all cases that lead to different behavior of solutions. Any solution of the difference equation (1) can be obtained from the general solution by specifying the value of the constant $C$.

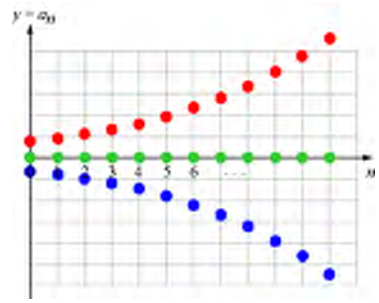
The following graphs represent the solutions of the equation (1) for different values of the parameter $r$.



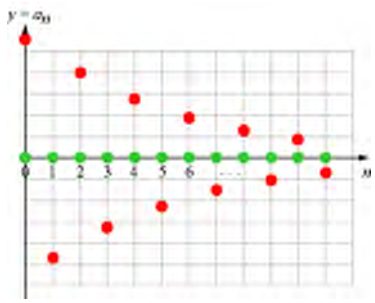
Case: $0 < r < 1$

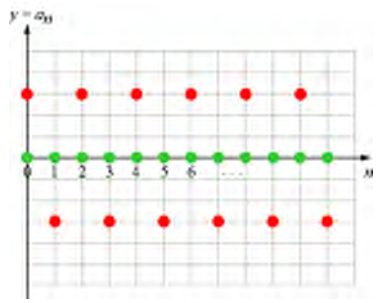


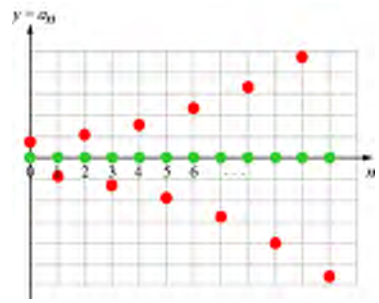
Case: $r = 1$

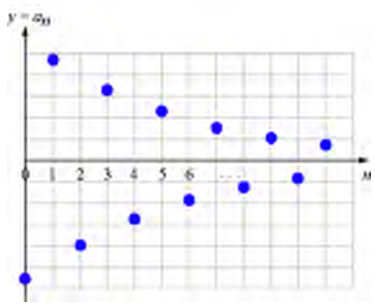


Case: $r > 1$

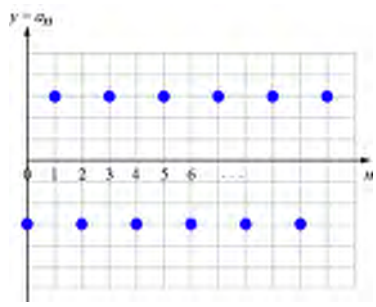




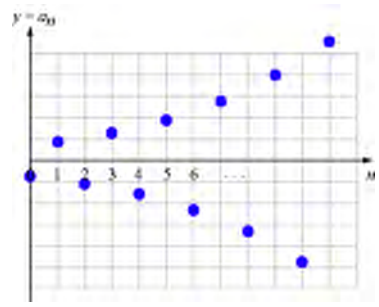




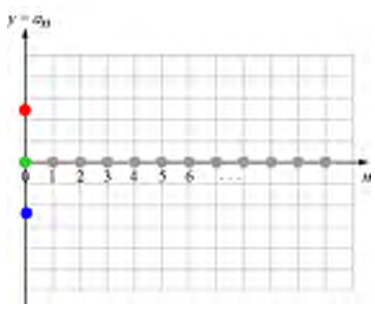
Case: $-1 < r < 0$

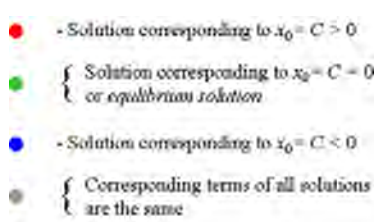


Case: $r = -1$



Case: $r < -1$






Case: $r = 0$

## Attractivity

The following summarizes the behavior of solutions of the given equation:

- For any real number $r$, the equation (1) has a zero as an equilibrium, that is, the sequence $\{\bar{x}_n\}$ defined by

$$\bar{x}_n = 0, \quad n = 0, 1, ...$$

  In further cases we will exclude the equilibrium solution.

- When $|r| < 1$, or $-1 < r < 1$, the zero equilibrium is attractor of all solutions, that is

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} x_n = \lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n| = 0$$

for any real number $C$. More precisely, we have the following:

- Let $0 < r < 1$. If $C > 0$, then the solution $\{x_n\}$ is positive and decreases to 0 while in the case $C < 0$, the solution is negative and increases to 0.
- Let $r = 0$. All terms of the solution $\{x_n\}$ are 0, except perhaps $x_0$. So

$$x_n = 0, \quad \text{for } n = 1, 2, ... \quad \text{and } x_0 = C.$$

- Let $-1 < r < 0$. The solution **oscillates,** that is changes its sign infinitely many times. If $C > 0$, then all even numbered terms, $x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ...$are positive, while all odd numbered terms $x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ...$ are negative. Similarly, in the case $C < 0$, all even numbered terms, $x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ...$are negative, while all odd numbered terms $x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ...$ are positive:

$$\begin{array}{llll} \text{if } C > 0 & \text{then } x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ... > 0 & \text{and} & x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ... < 0; \\ \text{if } C < 0 & \text{then } x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ... < 0 & \text{and} & x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ... > 0. \end{array}$$

- When $r = 1$, then all solutions of the equation are equilibria:

$$x_n = C, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, ....$$

In this case 0 equilibrium is not an attractor.

- When $r = -1$, then all solutions oscillate. In this case 0 equilibrium is also not asymptotically stable. More precisely, all even numbered terms $x_0, x_2, x_4, x_6, ...$take the same value $C$, while all odd numbered terms $x_1, x_3, x_5, x_7, ...$ take the value $-C$. Such solution starts with $x_0 = C$, then next term is $x_1 = -C$, and then again $x_2 = C$, and so on. Such solution is called **periodic with period 2**. In general, any sequence $\{x_n\}$ which satisfies

$$x_{n+2} = x_n, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, 2, ...$$

is called periodic with period 2. Periodic sequences could have other periods, and we say the the sequence $\{x_n\}$ is periodic with period $k$ (where $k$ is fixed positive integer), if

$$x_{n+k} = x_n, \quad \text{for } n = 0, 1, 2, ....$$

- When $|r| > 1$, the zero equilibrium is repellor. Any solution satisfies

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} |x_n| = \infty$$

The following cases are possible:

- Let $r > 1$. If $C > 0$, then the solution $\{x_n\}$ is positive and increases to $\infty$, while in the case $C < 0$, the solution is negative and decreases to $-\infty$.
- Let $r < -1$, then the solution $\{x_n\}$ in unbounded, oscillates, and diverges.

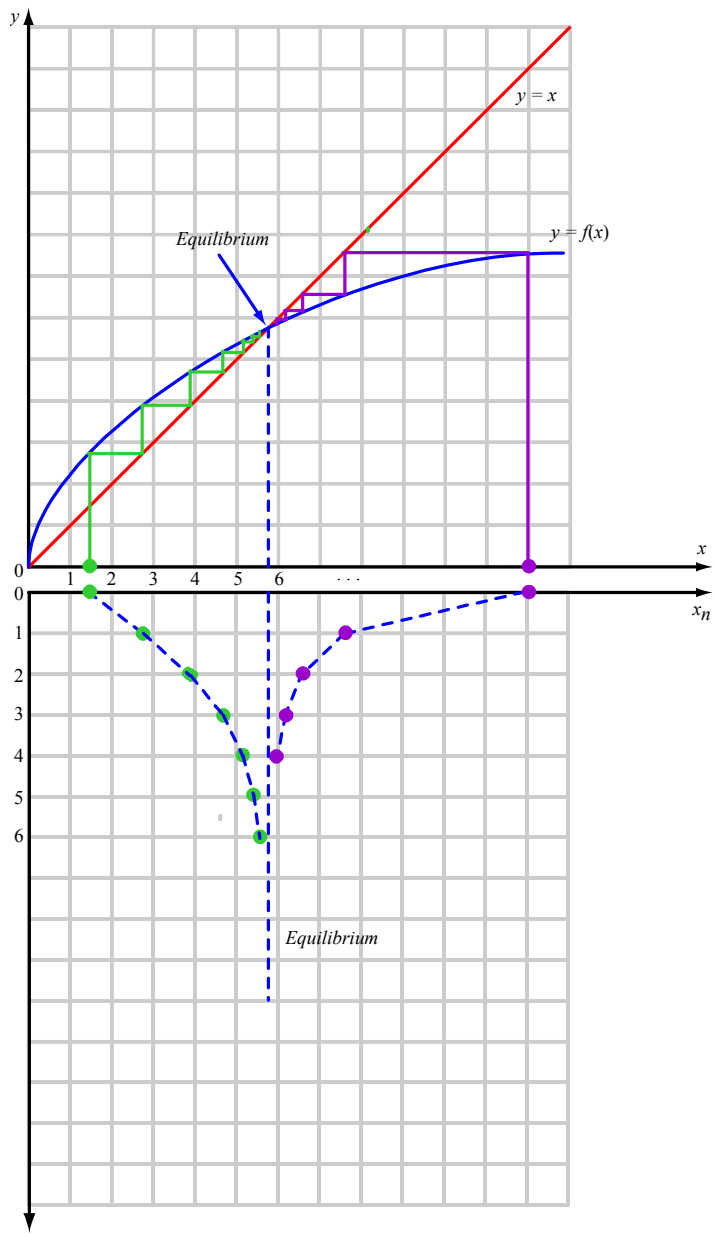
# Nonlinear Difference Equations - Graphical Representation

Cobweb diagram or staircase diagram is useful graphical tool in exploring behavior of solutions of nonlinear difference equations of the form

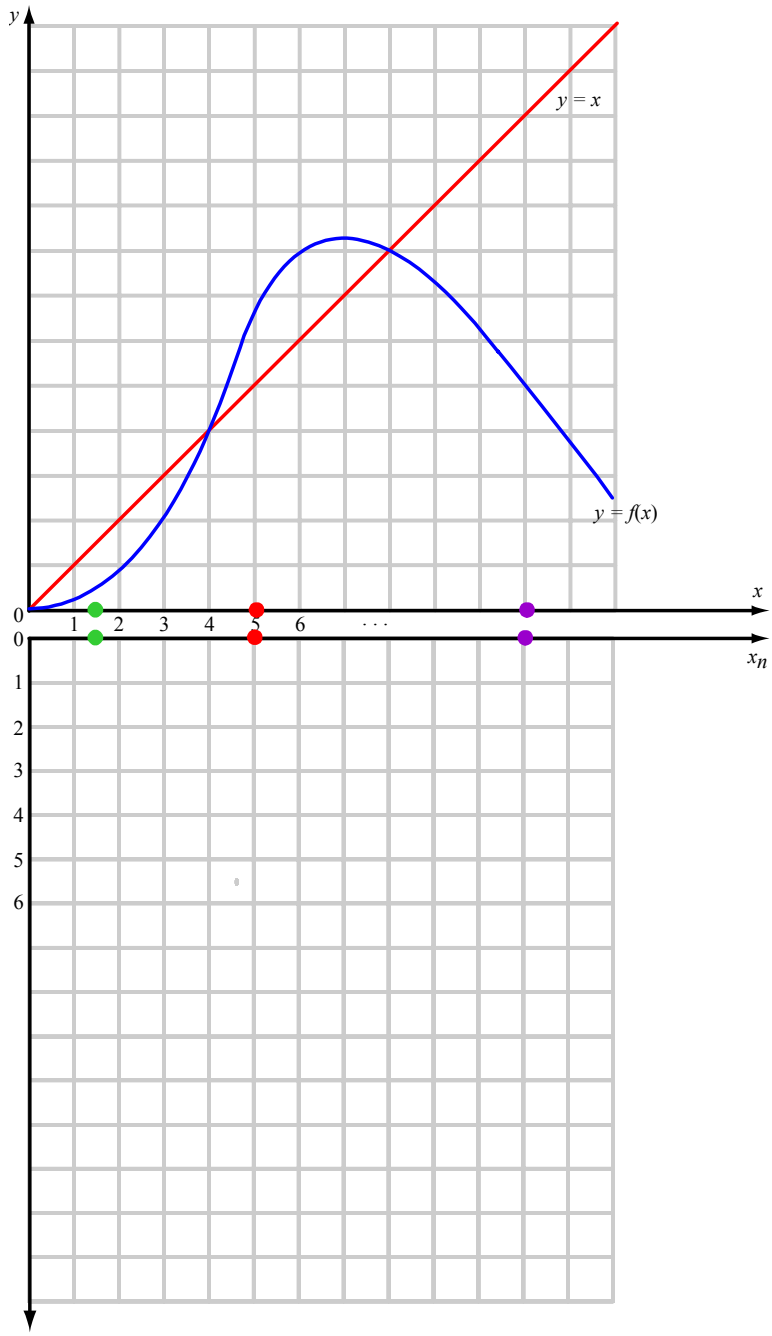
$$x_{n+1} = f(x_n), \qquad n = 0, 1, ... \tag{1}$$

Procedure for constructing cobweb diagrams

1. Sketch the graph of the ffunction $f$ and the line $y = x$.
2. On $x-$axis locate the given initial condition $x_0$. Draw verical line and find intersection with the graph of the function $f$. Draw horizontal line toward the graph of the line $y = x$ and locate the intersection. Move vertically toward the graph of function $f$ and licate the intersection. Repeat the procedure several times.
3. You may use cobweb diagram to generate time series as illustrated on the graph below.



Construct the Cobweb diagram



Mathematical Tools - Sequences

# Sequences

**Sequence** is a special type of real function whose domain is the set of integers. In most cases the domain is the set of positive integers or natural numbers $\mathbb{N} = \{1, 2, ...\}$ or set of nonnegative integers $\mathbb{N}_0 = \{0, 1, 2, ...\}$. In the context of our course we will assume that the domain is the set of nonnegative integers. For example the function defined by

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & ... & n & ... \\ \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow \\ a_0 & a_1 & a_2 & a_3 & ... & a_n & ... \end{array}$$

assigns real number $a_0$ to 0, $a_1$ to 2, and so on. The real numbers $a_0$, $a_1, a_2, ...a_n, ...$ are called the **terms** of the sequence. The real number $a_n$ is called **$n$-th term of the sequence** and the entire sequence is denoted by $\{a_n\}$.

Limit of the sequence is defined similarly as the limit at infinity of a real function:

Let $L$ be a real number. The **limit of the sequence** $\{a_n\}$ is $L$ if the terms of the sequence $a_n$ become arbitrarily close to $L$ for all sufficiently large integers $n$. In that case we write

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = L$$

and we read it as "the limit of the sequence $\{a_n\}$, when $n$ approaches infinity, is equal $L$". In the case when the sequence $\{a_n\}$ has the limit (finite), it said to be **convergent** or to **converge to a limit** $L$. If the sequence does not converge it **diverges**.

There are many ways how a sequence diverges. For example if the terms of the sequence $\{a_n\}$ increase without bounds, we write

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = \infty$$

and we say that the sequence $\{a_n\}$ **diverges to** $\infty$. Similarly if the terms decrease without bounds the sequence **diverges to** $-\infty$ and we write

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = -\infty.$$

The following result summarizes some properties of limits:

**Theorem 1** *Let* $\lim\limits_{n\to\infty} a_n = L$ *and* $\lim\limits_{n\to\infty} b_n = K$. *Then the following is true:*
*(i)* $\lim\limits_{n\to\infty} (a_n \pm b_n) = L \pm K$
*(ii)* $\lim\limits_{n\to\infty} (a_n b_n) = LK$
*(iii)* $\lim\limits_{n\to\infty} (ca_n) = cL$, *where* $c$ *is any real number.*
*(iv)* $\lim\limits_{n\to\infty} \left(\dfrac{a_n}{b_n}\right) = \dfrac{L}{K}$, *provided* $b_n \neq 0$ *and* $K \neq 0$.

A sequence $\{a_n\}$ is said to be **increasing** if its terms satisfy

$$a_0 < a_1 < a_2 < \cdots < a_n < \cdots .$$

Similarly we say that the sequence $\{a_n\}$ is **decreasing** if

$$a_0 > a_1 > a_2 > \cdots > a_n > \cdots .$$

If the above inequalities are not strict, that is when

$$a_0 \leq a_1 \leq a_2 \leq \cdots \leq a_n \leq \cdots$$

or

$$a_0 \geq a_1 \geq a_2 \geq \cdots \geq a_n \geq \cdots$$

the sequence $\{a_n\}$ is said to be **nondecreasing** or **nonincreasing**, respectively. A sequence is said to be **monotonic** if it is either increasing, decreasing, nondecreasing or nonincreasing.

A sequence $\{a_n\}$ is said to be **bounded from above** if there exists a real number $M$ such that

$$a_n \leq M, \quad \text{for all } n = 0, 1, ....$$

The number $M$ is called an **upper bound** of $\{a_n\}$. Similarly a sequence $\{a_n\}$ is said to be **bounded from below** if there exists a real number $m$ such that

$$a_n \geq m, \quad \text{for all } n = 0, 1, ....$$

The number $m$ is a lower bound of the sequence $\{a_n\}$. The sequence is **bounded** if it is bounded from above and bounded from below.

The following two theorems are very practical and useful in study of the convergence of sequences. The sequence that are not bounded are called **unbounded**.

**Theorem 2** ***(Squeeze Theorem)*** *Let*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = \lim_{n\to\infty} b_n = L$$

*and there exists an integer $N$ such that*

$$a_n \leq c_n \leq b_n \quad \textit{for all } n > N.$$

*Then*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} c_n = L.$$

**Theorem 3** ***(Monotonic and Bounded Sequence)*** *(i) If a sequence $\{a_n\}$ is monotonic and bounded then it converges.*
*(ii) If a sequence $\{a_n\}$ is either increasing or nondecreasing and unbounded, then it diverges to $\infty$.*
*(iii) If a sequence $\{a_n\}$ is either decreasing or nonincreasing and unbounded, then it diverges to $-\infty$.*

The following results provide useful tools to study the properties of sequences using the well-known properties of real functions developed in Calculus course. namely the following results is correct.

**Theorem 4** *Let $f$ be a real function defined on $[0, \infty)$. Consider the sequence $\{a_n\}$ defined by*

$$a_n = f(n), \quad \textit{for } n = 0, 1, ....$$

*Then the following statements are true:*
*(i) If*

$$\lim_{x\to\infty} f(x) = L$$

*then*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = L,$$

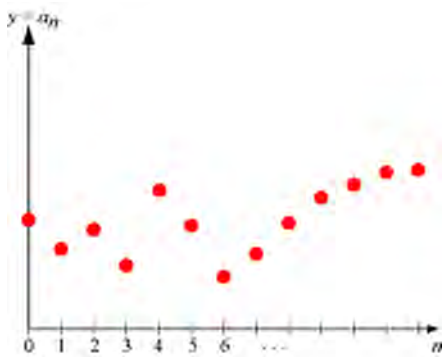
*where $L$ is a real number, $\infty$, or $-\infty$.*
*(ii) If the function $f$ is increasing, decreasing, nondecreasing, or nonincreasing on $[0, \infty)$, then the sequence $\{a_n\}$ is also increasing, decreasing, nondecreasing, or nonincreasing, respectively.*
*(iii) If the function $f$ is bounded from above, bounded from below, or bounded on $[0, \infty)$, then the sequence $\{a_n\}$ is also bounded from above, bounded from below, or bounded, respectively.*

The above theorem provides the necessary background for the application of well-developed tools from Introductory Calculus in the study of properties of sequences. In many cases, the limits of sequences could be evaluated by applying known techniques about the limits of functions including L'Hospital rule. The sign of derivatives of functions determine the monotonic character of functions and could be also used to study monotonic character of sequences.

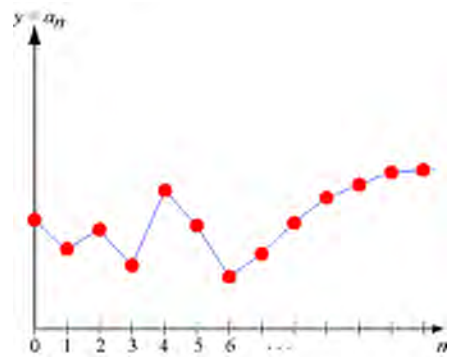
It is useful to graphically represent sequences. For that purpose we use the rectangular coordinate system with integer $n$ on horizontal axis and the vertical axis is reserved for corresponding values of terms $a_n$ of the

sequence. The graph of the sequence is represented with isolated points. In some cases it is useful to connect isolated points with line segment, that are definitely not part of the graph of sequence.

In the study of population dynamics graphs of sequences representing population size as a function of generation (or time) are called **time series**.




Time series with isolated points




Time series with connected points

# Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences - Survey
## Spring 2011

**The purpose of this survey is to collect information about the students' experiences with the new course Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences. The information collected will be used ONLY for future improvements. PLEASE DO NOT SIGN THE SURVEY.**

1. In general, the handouts helped me to better master the required skills in this course.

   a) strongly agree 83.3% (5) b) agree 16.7% (1) c) disagree d) strongly disagree e) no opinion

2. In general, the handouts helped me to better understand the key concepts in this course.

   a) strongly agree 83.3% (5) b) agree 16.7% (1) c) disagree d) strongly disagree e) no opinion

3. The hanouts helped me to easily complete assignments.

   a) strongly agree 16.7% (1) b) agree 83.3% (5) c) disagree d) strongly disagree e) no opinion

4. Assignments were clearly written.

   a) strongly agree 83.3% (5) b) agree 16.7% (1) c) disagree d) strongly disagree e) no opinion

5. Instructions for completion of assignments were complete.

   a) strongly agree 33.3% (2) b) agree 66.7% (4) c) disagree d) strongly disagree e) no opinion

6. The level of my preparation and mathematical skills was appropriate to successfully complete most of the assignments.

   a) YES 100% (6) b) NO

   If the answer is NO please complete the following: (*Check all that apply*)

(a) Most assignments that I had difficulties with, emphasized:

**_(1)__** Excessive computations.
___ Computations involving expressions with one of more parameters.
___ Excessive use of algebra.
___ Excessive use of computer software.
___ Excessive use of concepts from previous mathematics classes.
___ Learning of new concepts through exploration.

(b) My major difficulty in successfully completing assignments was the deficiencies in:

___ Algebraic skills.
**_(1)__** E&F Chaos skills.
___ Mathematics skills from previous mathematics classes.
___ Understanding of appropriate concepts from the course.

7. In assignments, questions strongly correlated to the appropriate topic were

| a) very challenging | b) challenging | c) appropriate | d) easy | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 66.7% (4) | 33.3 % (2) | | |

8. In assignments, questions that stimulated critical thinking were

| a) very challenging | b) challenging | c) appropriate | d) easy | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 66.7% (4) | 33.3 % (2) | | |

9. In general, the assignments were

| a) very challenging | b) challenging | c) appropriate | d) easy | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 66.7% (4) | 33.3 % (2) | | |

10. In general, the assignments were

| a) very interesting | b) somewhat interesting | c) not interesting | d) boring | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 100% (6) | | | |

11. In general, the assignments helped me learn more about the mathematical modeling.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 50% (3) | | | |

12. List three things that you find most useful in handouts.

(a) The proofs,

(b) The examples
(c) Directed to real life
(d) Key concepts
(e) sample problems
(f) Easy to organized than notes
(g) Clear definitions and explanations
(h) Examples of models
(i) Equations given
(j) variable information
(k) expialn in great details
(l) definitions
(m) theorems
(n) examples
(o) detail of the material
(p) step by step explanation
(q) definitions

13. List three things in handouts that need improvements.

(a) Variable identification
(b) Mathematical steps
(c) Less word
(d) no opinion
(e) the equations - some of them need further definition and classification of variables & terms
(f) consistency
(g) explanations of equations
(h) more examples
(i) handouts for every model would be better instead of just the ones we did in the beginning of the class

14. General comments.

- Create problems/questions in everyday class that relates to real-life problems. **Do more modeling.**
- Handouts were very helpful for reinforcement and graphing concepts
- The class was fun & interesting

15. In general, in this course I learned a number of new words and learned new meaning of some words and terms.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 50% (3) | | | |

16. In general, in this course I learned new meanings of some known mathematical concepts.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33.3% (2) | 66.7% (4) | | | |

17. The course helped me to expand my knowledge in Mathematics.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 33.3% (2) | 16.7% (1) | | |

18. The course helped me to expand my vocabulary.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 16.7% (1) | 33.3% (2) | | |

19. The course helped me to improve my reading skills related to reading mathematical texts.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 16.7% (1) | 33.3 (2) | | |

20. The course helped me to learn ways of expressing mathematical concepts in plain English.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 50% (3) | | | |

21. The course helped me to develop interests in mathematical modeling.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33.3% (2) | 66.7% (4) | | | |

22. The course helped me to better understand relationships between mathematics and real world.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66.7% (3) | 16.7% (1) | 16.7% (1) | | |

23. The course helped me to develop appreciation for applied mathematics.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 16.7% (1) | 16.7% (1) | | 16.7% (1) |

24. In this course I learned to interpret real-life situations in the language of mathematics.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33.3% (2) | 33.3% (2) | 16.7% (1) | | 16.7% (1) |

25. In this course I learned to express mathematical findings in the context of real-life situations.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 83.3% (5) | 16.7% (1) | | | |

26. Reading assignment about the article "The Mathematics of Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus" by Marjorie Wohnam. was somewhat challenging

| a) YES | b) NO |
|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 50% (3) |

If the answer is YES please complete the following: (*Check all that apply*)

(a) The reasons I had difficulties is due to:

**_(2)__** Lack of appropriate mathematical skills.
**_(2)__** Lack of understanding of basic concepts.
**_(2)__** Lack of necessary vocabulary.
**_(1)__** Text was unreadable.
**_(1)__** Excessive use of concepts from previous mathematics classes.
**_(2)__** Lack of time to focus more on the assignment..

27. I enjoyed reading the article "The Mathematics of Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus" by Marjorie Wohnam.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16.7% (1) | 66.7% (4) | | 16.7% (1) | |

28. The selection of the article was appropriate.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66.7% (4) | 33.3% (2) | | | |

29. List three most important things you learned from West Nile assignment.

(a) How math models are developed
(b) all the necessary aspects that are considered when creating a model
(c) SIR
(d) direct application to the real world
(e) rich (inlegible)
(f) the different types of models that them we ab le to use
(g) how difficult is to try to control the virus
(h) vector and host
(i) how disease spread
(j) modeling behind disease
(k) I learned abouth this disease that I never knew before

30. General comments abut the West Nile assignments

- It was a good assignment. It put everything we learned throughout the year together.
- fun and interesting
- I liked the assignment because it was very applicable to real world issues. It made my understanding worthwhile
- Excellent example. Not just related to mathematical concept but also gain knowledge on the disease.

31. The final project was appropriate.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66.7% (4) | 33.3% (2) | | | |

32. I enjoyed working on the project.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 33.3% (2) | | | 16.7% (1) |

33. The project was challenging.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16.7% (1) | 50% (3) | 33.3% (2) | | |

34. The project was time consuming.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16.7% (1) | 16.7% (1) | 66.7% (4) | | |

35. Information and guidance provided .by instructor were helpful.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 83.3% (5) | 16.7% (1) | | | |

36. Computer part of the project was challenging.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33.3% (2) | | 50% (3) | 16.7% (1) | |

37. The project helped me to develop mathematical skills.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33.3% (2) | 66.7% (40 | | | |

38. The project helped me to better understand the relationships between math and real world..

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | | | 16.7% (1) | 33.3% (2) |

39. I enjoyed being in this course.

| a) strongly agree | b) agree | c) disagree | d) strongly disagree | e) no opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% (3) | 50% (3) | | | |

40. General comments.

- N/A
- keep this class around
- I've learned a lot from the models we talked about in class but it would probably be better if we discussed a topic that interested students as well
- Everything came together in final project which I liked. It was not very difficult and it helped me further understand and solidify concepts used in class.
- I liked the course.
- **Do more modeling**.

# Mathematical Modeling in Life Sciences

Test - Vocabulary and Reading Skills

Follow the instructions. For True/False problems, if the answer is "False" you must correct the statement in order to get credits.

1. **Mathematical Model**

   (a) Define Mathematical model -

   (b) (Fill the blanks) Mathematical model is _____ representation of a real-world behavior.

   (c) Explain the difference between discrete and continuous mathematical models.

   (d) Explain the difference between deterministic and stochastic mathematical models.

   (e) (T/F) _____ Mathematical model is complete and accurate representation of real a world situation.

   (f) (T/F) _____ Differential equations are used to describe discrete mathematical models.

   (g) (T/F) _____ Difference equations are used to describe discrete mathematical models.

   (h) Fill the blanks to complete "Modeling Cycle"

   (i) Describe at least one situation where the results of the modeling process can impact the real-life situation it models.

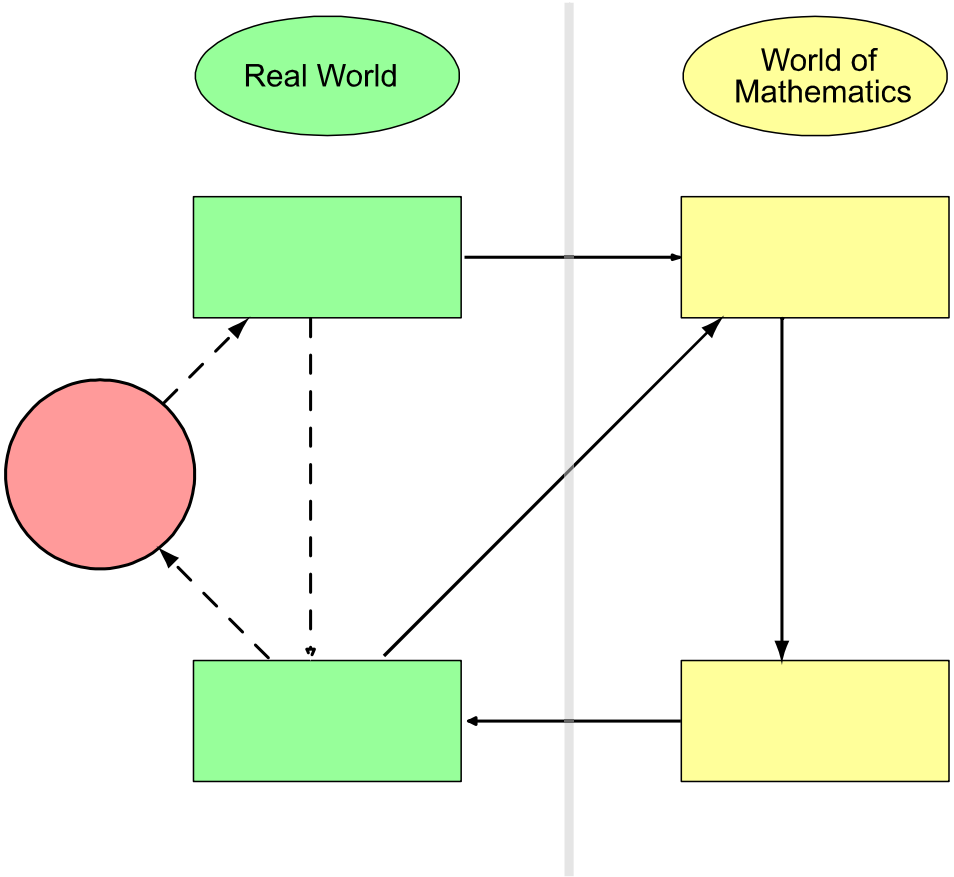
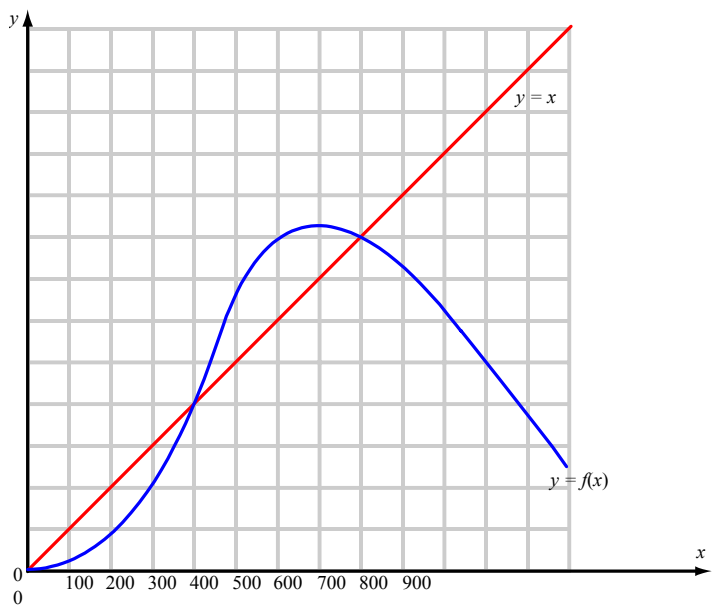



Figure 1:

2. **Discrete Population Models**
Use the information provided for the following group of questions:
The following equation represents a single species discrete population model:

$$p_{n+1} = f(p_n), n = 0, 1, ...,$$

where $p_n$ denotes population size in generation $n$, initial condition $p_0 \geq 0$, and function $f$ is represented on the picture below:




(a) Define the meaning of the term "Equilibrium" -

(b) Define the meaning of the term "Attractor"

(c) Define the meaning of the term "Repeller"

(d) If the population size remains arbitrarily close to the equilibrium, for all initial conditions sufficiently close to the equilibrium, then the equilibrium is:

i. Unstable
ii. Locally asymptotically stable
iii. Stable
iv. Attractor
v. Repeller

(e) The equilibrium is locally asymptotically stable if it is _____ .

(f) The equilibrium is unstable if it is _____ .

(g) The equilibrium is an attractor if _____ .

(h) (circle all that are correct) If $p$ is an equilibrium of the given population model than

i. $p$ is a steady-state solution of the difference equation
ii. $p$ is a constant solution of the difference equation
iii. $p$ is an attractor
iv. $p$ is locally asymptotically stable
v. $p$ is a fixed point of the function $f$

For the given population model, express in terms of population size the meaning of the following terms:

(i) Extinction -

(j) Survival -

(k) Equilibrium -

For the following questions use the picture provided:

(l) Find all equilibria and mark them on the picture _____ .

(m) If the initial population size is 300 what will happen to the population in the long run?

(n) If the initial population size is 400 what will happen to the population in the long run?

(o) If the initial population size is 500 what will happen to the population in the long run?

(p) If the initial population size is 900 what will happen to the population in the long run?

(q) Identify stable equilibria.

3. **West-Nile Model**

(a) Read the article "The Mathematics of Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus" by Marjorie Wohnam.

(b) Visit the web site devoted to the modeling of West Nile disease "Welcome to West Nile Virus: Mathematical Modeling to Understand and Control a Disease ". Active link will be sent to all students in separate e-mail.

(c) Write one-page summary (typed, 12pts, single spaced, equations extra) based on the article and the web site about the process of modeling the spread of disease and the way to control it.

(d) Identify at least 10 words or terms that you learn and provide the explanation.

Final Report for FaCTS
Funded by the Mellon Foundation
AY 10-11

Katheryn Krotzer Laborde

Book Club 1020

**Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals (1 paragraph)**

*Book Club 1020* transforms English 1020 from a traditional freshman comp-and-lit class into something more in line with a book club. The purpose of this approach is to instill a relaxed atmosphere that will encourage an enjoyment of reading and a desire to discuss literature. As such, the 3-hour class takes place once a week in the English Department Lounge. Hot beverages and light breakfast fare (doughnuts and such) is provided in order to encourage an informal and pleasurable coffee house environment. The same requirements of the traditional 1020 class (essays, reflective writing, research paper) are maintained; a portable blackboard is used when traditional teaching methods are required.

**Future plans (1 brief paragraph)**

**What's the future of your course or project? Will you continue to offer it, etc.?**

Encouraged by the results, I plan on offering one to two sections of Book Club 1020 each spring. Without funding I will not be able to offer free food; however, students will be allowed to bring their own.

**Dissemination of project**

**Please list any presentations, publications, etc. that you have made or plan to make regarding this funded project. Please give a complete citation if you have already presented/published or had a proposal accepted.**

I presented *You Can Lead that Horse to Water, but…: When Freshmen Lit Meets Book Club* on April 22, 2011 at the National Popular/American Culture Associations Conference in San Antonio, Texas. It was part of a panel on Academics and Collegiate Culture.

**Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes**

**Here list any specific outcomes you developed for your course/project. These can come from your syllabi.**

The outcomes I listed on my syllabus more or less fell in line with outcomes I would generally list in a typical ENGL 1020 class (syllabus is attached).

However, the FaCTS-related outcomes I had in mind as I taught the class were the following:

* Students will develop their own reading schedules.

* Students will learn to enjoy the discussion of literature.

* Students will learn to enjoy reading (or at least come to enjoy it more).

**Summary assessment**

**Here provide any assessment you have for the specific outcomes you developed for your course/project, or for you project as a while. Basically you are answering the question, "how do you know your goals where met?" You are welcome (and encouraged) to attach samples of students' work, assignments, reading lists, etc.**

Before discussing how my outcomes were met, I think it is important to explain the this-and-that of the class. (I taught two sections of Book Club 1020; one on Tuesday morning and the other on Thursday morning. Since there was no difference in time, setting, or class size, I will discuss the two sections as one.)

**How did Book Club 1020 reading material differ from ENGL 1020?**

Every teacher is different, of course, but most of us tend to teach this course using a literature anthology. We generally cover nonfiction (essay), fiction, play, and poetry. To my mind, though. nothing would break the mood quicker than to have students trying to eat slices of king cake with heavy anthologies on their laps.

That said, I assigned four novels to be covered over the semester.

*Bright Lights, Big City* – Jay McIerney;
*Catcher in the Rye* – J. D. Salinger; and
*Madeleine is Sleeping* – Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum.
*Ballad of the Sad Café* – Carson McCullers.

To give the students time to get their books and get started, we started with two essays:

"Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night" – Nik Cohn (*New York Magazine*)
"Saturday Night Fever: The Life" – Charlie LeDuff (*New York Times*)

These, naturally, led to the showing of the film "Saturday Night Fever."

From there we started the novels.

*Leaving Saturn* by Major Jackson supplied the poetry we read and discussed. Rather than give them at-home reading assignments from this book, I would assign poems in class that we would read before splitting into groups to discuss. This in itself was a departure of how I generally teach the poetry section of the course. Instead of teaching poems from a variety of writers, I was able to focus on what makes poetry, poetry using the work of one.

## Who was in Book Club 1020?

Of the original 27 students, two dropped soon after the first novel was read. Judging by their grades on a written response to the novel, an exercise that gave a series of words that the students had to use to construct a summary of the book, one student had not read much of the book, and the other had not even cracked the spine.

That left 25 students. Of these,

* 14 were Science (Biology or Chemistry) majors, most pre-med;

* 4 were Business majors;

* 2 Psychology;

* 1 Mass Communications;

* 1 History;

* 3 were "deciding." At Xavier, where students declare majors long before they cross a classroom threshold, a "deciding" student is one who was unable to make passing grades in his Major courses (usually Biology or Chemistry).

Finally, 5 of the students were not second semester freshmen (but rather 4 sophomores and 1 junior).

## How had they done before?

It is important to note, as well, how they had done in English 1010 before coming to this non-traditional class.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 A's | 5 B's | 8 C's | 2 D's |

In addition, 3 students had taken ENGL 1000, an intensive alternative that includes mandatory weekly sessions in the Writing Center. These students had earned 2 C's and 1 B.

The A students, incidentally, had been eligible to take Honors English. Book Club 1020 does not give honors credit.

In considering class make up then, we see that we had a mix of good, average, and at-risk students. And, as is the norm at Xavier, there was a high percentage of science majors.

## Reading the books

As anyone who has ever participated in a book club can attest, it is simply no fun to sit around and listen to a discussion about a book one has not read. Being able to participate in the circle (particularly when the discussion could go well over an hour without interruption) is its own reward for having finished the book.

But it's easy for a slacker to hide in a circle. How to determine whether the books had been read, either partially or completely? For each book, a deadline was given for completion. The book was not discussed before its deadline. At the beginning of the deadline class, a quiz of sorts would be given. For the first book, students were asked to use a list of 20 words in writing a summary of the book. I used their grades to indicate progress.

**BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY**

| A/B | C | D/F | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 students<br>completed or nearly complete reading | 5 students<br>read most of the book | 9 students<br>had read perhaps the first chapter or nothing at all | 3 students<br>did not show up the day the book was to be discussed |

I assumed that giving them a list of words to include in the summary would encourage them to read more closely for the next time. In asking about *Catcher in the Rye*, I did not supply a list of words to include in the in-class summary quiz. I did, however, ask them to write in Holden Caulfield's "crumby" voice. (So much for Sparknotes!)

**CATCHER IN THE RYE**

| A/B | C | D/F | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16 students<br><br>a few of the students had read this in high school | 4 students<br><br>had not read the entire book | 3 students<br><br>had read perhaps the first chapter or two | 2 students<br><br>did not show up the day the book was to be discussed |

While *Bright Lights/Big City* had thrown the students for a bit of a loop because it is written in second person, at least the narrative was straightforward, as was the case with *Catcher*. This book, however, is based half in the real world (though a world tinted by magical realism) and half in a continuing dream. What is real? What is not? Who knows?

I chose to NOT ask them to write a summary, though I did not announce that until the start of class. With no grades to worry about, I asked them if they had finished the book.

**MADELEINE IS SLEEPING**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| Finished book | Did not finish | Did not come to class | Gave vague responses so unsure to whether he/she finished or not |

Not surprisingly, those who finished had come to 1020 with an A or a B in English (there was one C). Incidentally, at the end of the semester, this "confusing" (their word) book won hands down as the "least liked," chosen by those who read and those who didn't.

In discussing this book, we took yet another turn away from what we usually did. For the first hour of class, they broke into two mini groups and, as they often did with the poetry, discussed the book on their own. After the break, we formed our traditional group. We avoided the "and now the teacher will explain everything to us" scenario of a traditional lit class. After all, I knew just as much as they did. What is real? What is not? Who knows?

Soon we were back in the land of traditional narrative with a novella by Carson McCullers. (Interestingly, quite a few of the students had assumed that the female protagonist was African American because she was described as "dark." This lead to a discussion about considering historical context when reading older books.)

**BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFÉ**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A/B | C | D/F | 0 |
| 14 students | 2 students | 8 students | 1 student |

Of the A/B grades, many of the B's were thus graded because the student had not been able to answer the question *Who are the 12 mortal men?* This referred to a brief section at the end of the novella that seemingly has nothing to do with the story (but is most definitely part of the book).

Of the D/F grades, many of the students seemed to stop reading when the author momentarily dropped the action and waxed philosophical about love. These were, again, the weaker students. I had hoped to avoid end-of-semester lack of focus by choosing a short book, but this was not helpful to those who simply had run out of steam.

## CONCLUSIONS

When I first approached the department chair about setting up a course such as Book Club 1020, she assumed that I would want to designate it as an Honors course. And, it was a consideration since I knew I would be assigning novels and a book of poetry (by a single poet) rather than a variety of short pieces in an anthology. In the end, I reasoned that students who could earn an A in their first college English course likely already liked to read and had good habits in place. But since the objective of the course was to encourage an enjoyment of reading by seeing literature as a shared experience, an Honors class would not be getting to the students I wanted to reach.

**Book Club and the at-risk student: "S" and "B"**

In looking over the "quiz" grades, I found that the stronger students had made better grades, as a rule, with the striking exception of one particularly bright student (and a History major, at that) who said he had discovered that he needed more structure in an English class – that is, being responsible for having read bits by a series of deadlines, rather than taking it upon himself to assign himself his own deadlines.

This consideration of the quiz grades, though, seemed to support what we already know: better readers are better students. But better readers generally have better habits, so at the beginning and end of the semester I asked students to consider theirs. Do they read in bed? Do they read in the library? Is the TV on? Music? One student, "S," admitted that the

> first two and a half two chapters [of *Bright Lights, Big City*] took one hour because I was reading it during commercials of the show I was watching then I tried to go to Sparknotes because it was boring but college readings are not on Sparknotes and you have to buy the reviews for $29.45. So I spend Sunday night and Monday night reading and it got interesting so it really did not take that long.

S was only able to use 10 of the 20 words to write her summary.

Not surprisingly, her favorite text of the semester had been the movie.

Not surprisingly, her true favorite text of the semester seemed to be that which she produced herself. Up until the second to last class I was still finding myself stopping the class to ask her to stop texting as her peers carried the class conversation.

I was not surprised to learn that she had come to 1020 by way of 1000, and was on academic probation.

At the beginning of the semester, S described her reading habits as going to a quiet place with coffee because "I cannot be in a room full of people or in my room because I will fall asleep." (Obviously, she did not see the TV as a distraction.) But by the end of the semester, she commented that her reading habits had changed. How?

"Before I would read and just not understand," she wrote. By the end of the semester S was re-reading parts she did not comprehend. Her quiz grades confirm this change. She moved from an F to a C- to a B.

In deciding that this class would not be an Honors class , aiming instead for middle ground, I had also unwittingly determined that Book Club would not be the best class for the at risk student. This was not a class to improve one's reading. However, one's reading might well improve if one were willing to change. S, though unwilling to lose bad classroom habits when in a more intimate group setting, had changed her reading habits because she wanted to and could. Other students cannot. For example, "B" described having to work every other night at Wendy's, not getting home until 2:30 in the morning.

For this at-risk student (he came to this course with a D) to change his reading habits, he would have to change that habit of eating he had developed over the years: B HAD to work, and work often. The problem is that B thinks he is getting by in that he reads enough to "just get the gist," adding that if he got that gist and "the author's point" he could stop right there. B's quiz grade average was a D-.

**Making a change?**

When asked if their reading habits had changed, most of the students who had come to the class with A's and B's commented that there had been no change. Well, why change what is already working? And, perhaps this is to be expected as well: the students who came to this class with D's did not change their habits.

So, did anyone make changes to their reading habits? *Yes.* All of the ENGL 1000 students mentioned making improvements, as did half of the C students. In describing these changes, reading aloud or being read to was brought up by three people as a way to

help focus in the more difficult parts. (Another student related that he had been relying on audio books since high school since reading puts him to sleep.)

A few mentioned no longer reading with the television on (though one said she liked having it on but with the sound turned to mute). One who would always fall asleep while reading in her own room switched to reading in a friend's room or the library to avoid the relaxation factor.

One student spoke of now carrying a book everywhere so as to sneak in reading at free moments. Another had found that the opposite approach, trying to read "in one sitting" rather than spreading out the work, had improved her comprehension.

And, just like S, the students who made changes in their habits did start to see better quiz grades.

OUTCOMES

## * Students will develop their own reading schedules.

And so, they did. Having had explained to them that we would not discuss the novels in chunks, they were left on their own as to how they would read. I would occasionally ask them the week before how the reading was coming along, and there was always a variety of responses, from "I have finished" to "I have just started" to (in the case of *Catcher*) "I've read this already so I just have to review it," to "I have not started." And in the end, when I questioned about reading habits, the responses reigned from reading the day/night before class to taking several days to read.

They were on their own to plan their time. And the grades they received for each quiz reflected their efforts.

END OF SEMESTER QUIZ AVERAGES

| A/B | C | D |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | 10 | 3 |

***

## * Students will learn to enjoy the discussion of literature.

Was the Book Club scenario effective? Despite the one student who found it had had a negative effect because of the "lack of structure" others appreciated meeting only once a week because it allowed for a longer, more comprehensive session. "I felt I learned more in three hours than I [would have] in chunks," one wrote.

Several mentioned that they felt freer to contribute to the conversation in the relaxed (food, beverages, comfortable chairs) setting than in the traditional classroom setting. One mentioned that the circle encouraged "eye contact and starting a conversation." Another stated that the laid-back atmosphere encouraged him to do "a lot more reading than [I] would have done in a traditional English 1020 class."

One commented that she enjoyed the mix of "freedom and responsibility." And another summed the atmosphere as making class "simpler, calmer, homey."

Perhaps the best indicator I have of how the students enjoyed the discussion of literature comes in the fact that I NEVER had to wait for a response to a question about the text. That awkward moment that follows the asking of a question about the text, or the same two or three hands shooting up each time, was never experienced in this course.

The following comments come from students writing about the course at the end of the year:

"It would be boring if all we did was take notes."

"Seeing other people open up and talk made me want to open up and speak about the book."

"That the discussions are generally allowed to branch out into different topics and view points within the reading is helpful."

"The setting had an intimate feel."

And would these students consider joining a book club after college? Fifteen said they definitely would (the other responses ranged from maybe to no). Two admitted to having been in book clubs before.

***

## * Students will learn to enjoy reading (or at least come to enjoy it more).

At the beginning and end of the semester, students were asked, quite simply, if they like to read. The students came to the course either liking it or not, and stated that the course itself, with its book club setting, did not change those feelings.

*Do you like to read?*

| Loves | Likes | It depends | Not really | Hates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 0 |

Of these, the "lovers" were mostly students who came to the course with an A; "likers" came with a B.

At some point, I came to realize that I myself do not necessarily like to read. However, early on I developed emotional connections to books, and therefore like to read for that reason. Did my students have such connections themselves? Could that make a difference in how inspired they are to sit down with a text and lose themselves to other worlds?

At the end of the semester, days before the final classes, I found myself at a closing Borders book sale. "If I were really committed to wanting my students to connect to books and reading," I mused, "I would buy them books."

Then it hit me: Why not give them *my* books?

And so I went home and cleared my shelves of 25 books. I am usually terrible at letting go of books (that emotional connection!) but knowing they were going to particular students made the parting that much easier.

At the end of the final class, I told them they would find, on a table outside the door, the wrapped and individually labeled books. Inside each was a book mark that told of my relationship to that particular book. As you can see by what follows,

some books were loved, some were never read, but all had found their place on my shelf, some for years.

Also included was a self-addressed envelope so that the students could fulfill one last "assignment" – to, in time, tell me what had happened to the book. Had it been read? Kept? Passed on? Given to a book drive or used as a white elephant gift? They knew my story with the book: I wanted to know theirs.

In doing this, I hope to show that there are more to books than the words on the page. Whether we loved or hated the books, whether we read them or simply meant to, locked between the covers are our memories, and the ghosts of who we were then.

In making that announcement, I was prepared for polite acceptance. Both classes, though, were quite openly enthusiastic, and a few even declared that it was "like Christmas."

And so, they left the lounge where we had gathered as members of Book Club 1020. I went to my office and closed to door. It will be interesting to read their responses…and perhaps seeing these in my mailbox will be "like Christmas" for me.

*Pictured: A cell phone photo of LaTedra, Ana, Joi, and Aujenee with their books. Aujenee sent this picture to me the next day.*

# *BOOK MARKS*

## THE THORN BIRDS

I read this in high school (or was it college?) after my mom devoured it. My mom and I would talk about whom we would cast in a made-for-TV movie version (these were soooo popular at the time). We had it all figured out.

And then the movie came out, a week-long affair. We were so disappointed. Rachel Ward did not have wild red hair! Where was the wild red hair? We wanted wild red hair!

An epic, this book. Enjoy!

## RAGTIME

This book, which I had grabbed from my mom's bookshelf, is a virtual soap opera of real life events and real life people. Simply amazing.

By the time I finished it, I felt I had been transported in time. I longed for that New York City.

This is Evelyn Nesbit. In her day she could not go down the street without being recognized. Fame, like beauty, is fleeting.

## BELOVED

You know, I don't think I actually ever read this.

I bought it. I think I started to read it. Maybe I did? I don't know. If I did, I forgot it.

It's been on my shelf for years.

But what I do know is that YOU want to read it. And now, you can.

## COURTING PANDEMONIUM

This was written by my MFA thesis director, Rick Barton. He played basketball back in college….get the connection?

Rick is now the Director of the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans. See? There is life after basketball (and this is not the only book he's written).

## ORDINARY PEOPLE

When I saw this on my brother's bookshelf – obviously something he had read in school – I had to snatch it.

Why? Because of the film. That film, starring Mary Tyler Moore and directed by Robert Redford, was enormously popular at the time.

I hope the book is as good as the movie…I never got around to reading it.

## CATCH 22

The big story is that this book was rejected something like 27 times before it was accepted. Struggling authors always keep that in mind.

I read this very copy you hold in your hands in college. I didn't particularly like it, I fear – it was too much of a "guy" book for me. But after all these years, I remember taking the test on this. As the teacher handed out the sheets, she announced: "And I should warn you, if you only read the Cliff's Notes, the Cliff's Notes gets some things wrong!"

Busted.

## BITTERROOT LANDING

A haunting book I read years ago. This was one I couldn't put it down.

I remember reading it on a plane – don't remember where I was going but I do remember what part of the book I was reading.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I did all those years ago.

## CHRIST THE LORD

Anne Rice, author of books about vampires "got religion" and wrote this.

I bought it meaning to read it…but, truth be told, I could never get through any of the vampire novels so didn't ever crack the spine.

## THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Oh! I read this in high school and was amazed by it. I didn't start out liking it…but then I could not put it down.

And that ending!!!! Trust me when I say that the iconic film version doesn't touch this ending with the proverbial ten-foot pole….

You have here the copy I read in high school – this would have been about 1977 (freshman year). I love all the old ads for books in the back.

## LIFE OF PI

I picked this up years ago thinking I would read it and…well…never did.

But doesn't the cover look intriguing? And, hey! It was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection!

## 50 UNCOLLECTED STORIES BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Here's hoping you'll like Fitzgerald beyond Gatsby.

These look like fun. Who can resist a title like "The Pusher-in-the-Face"?

I never got around to reading these. I hope YOU do…

## THE MASTER AND THE MARGARITA

Ahhhhh…. This is an odd book, but I know you can wrap your mind around it.

A Russian woman I know gave it to me years ago. For a while I read a few pages every Friday night in the early days of divorcedom. I would go to a local restaurant where they all knew me and read this as I ate chicken fajitas. And then I graded papers. (Woo hoo!)

Many consider this to be one of the greatest novels of the 20th century.

## SIGHTS UNSEEN

I have no idea!

I picked this up in the book store one day and….well…never read it. But it has looked mighty fine on my shelf. And I do hope it looks good on yours….

## LIGHT IN AUGUST

This is a book I read in grad school that hit me as "un-Faulkner."

I wish I could tell you that what I remember most about this book is the character Joe Christmas, a man who can pass for white (his mother was white, I think) but, really, it is Lena. I was pregnant with my first child when I read this and Lena, also pregnant, was forever being described as "bovine." Moo.

## LAKE WOBEGONE DAYS

I find it so charming that your grandmother gave you the Shirley Temple collection. (Of all things, I saw the commercial for that collection this afternoon!)

Here is a book that will recall Shirley Temple's time, the day of radio dramas. This book may be a little corny in parts, but it definitely recalls a far different America than you or I will ever know.

## JITTERBUG PERFUME

I read this book when I was in a book club – my first! This was after college but before grad school.

I loved this book – frankly, I have not thought about perfume the same way since. When you're done, go to the perfume shop in the Quarter… that's what I did, so many years ago.

## THE BLIND ASSASSIN

I bought this, thinking I would read it….but never did.

But Margaret Atwood is a TERRIFIC author, so I have no doubt that this book is terrific.

If you don't like it, go get *The Hand Maiden's Tale*. Now, there's a book!

## THE GENERAL IN HIS LABYRINTH

I picked this up at a bookstore because I loved the author's *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Also good is *Love in the Time of Cholera*, which has a hopelessly romantic ending.

But I never read this book so I don't know what to say about it. Hmmmm….

Marquez is known for dabbling in Magical Realism. Beware!

## FRANNY AND ZOOEY

I read this book in grad school for a paper I was writing on the works of J. D. Salinger. (I was making an argument that the shorter works could be read as a composite novel.) I found it particularly compelling.

I did this paper in '91 or '92. I mention that because that is around about the time you were born, yes?

## SKINNY LEGS AND ALL

Who can resist Tom Robbins?

Smart, clever….his writing was introduced to me by a male member of a book group I was in when I was in my 20s. Hope you like it…

## INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

This was my mom's copy. She read it when it first came out, and then she handed it to me. Trading books with someone is a great habit to get into… I highly recommend it.

She loved the book. I did not and could not finish it. And the second time I tried to read it I could not finish it. But a lot of people who read it DID finish, and went on to read every other book Rice wrote about the Vampire Lestat.

Best of all – it is set in New Orleans.

## CAMILLE

I got this book from a friend who was clearing out his books to make room for more books. (That's what I am doing, too…)

Some 15 years later I finally got around to reading it.

The writing can get a little preachy in the beginning, but this is actually the least didactic of this author's works, which is likely why it has had such staying power.

And yes…the author had loved a woman very much like Camille. He wrote this after her death.

## LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE

I was not much older than you when I read this very copy for a class in college, a course in the post-modern novel.

The teacher would often use words we didn't know when he would asking a question. There weren't many of us in that class, maybe 12? We sat around a long table and stared at each other. What was he saying?

He also tended to speak of the post period, the post-post period, and then one day the post-post-post period. When he left, a guy named Mickey stood up and declared, "Post! Post! Telephone post!"

Some things stay with you.

## SUITE FRANCAISE

I picked up this book at the Xavier bookstore one day. I bought it because I was dating a Frenchman at the time.

(Ooh la la…not!)

I was reading other things when I dated him and so never got around to reading this.

And then we broke up and there was no way I was going to read this.

Looks good, though…n'est-ce pas?

# BOOK CLUB 1020

Spring 2011

**ENGL 1020-18**: Tuesday 9:25 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

**ENGL 1020-19**: Thursday 9:25 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

Administration Annex 301 (3rd floor lounge)

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Professor Katheryn Laborde
Office: Admin Annex, Room 301B (in the upstairs lounge)
Office Phone: 520-5151
E-Mail: klaborde@xula.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday: 12:30 – 2:30; Wednesday: 9:00 – 11:00; and by appointment

*

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

"Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night" – Nik Cohn (*New York Magazine*)
"Saturday Night Fever: The Life" – Charlie LeDuff (*New York Times*)

*Ballad of the Sad Café* – Carson McCullers, Hougton Mifflin, 5th edition
*Bright Lights, Big City* – Jay McIerney. Random House, 84th edition
*Catcher in the Rye* – J. D. Salinger, Back Bay Books, reissue edition
*Madeleine is Sleeping* – Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum, HBC Trade, 4th edition

*Leaving Saturn* – Major Jackson, University of Georgia, 2nd edition

*Bedford Handbook*—Diane Hacker (ed), Bedford/St. Martin's, 8th edition

In addition, we will be viewing *Saturday Night Fever* in class.

## What is English 1020?

*From the catalog*: **ENGL 1020:** English Composition and Literature. In this course students use different genres of writing to respond to fiction, poetry, and drama with emphasis on the longer paper. Prerequisite: ENGL 1000 or 1010. (3, FaSpSu)

## Soooo….what is Book Club 1020?

Many students feel that they *have* to read, but how many truly *enjoy* it? The purpose of the *Book Club 1020* is to transform a section or two of the traditional freshman comp-and-lit class into something more in line with a book club, the sort one finds any given night of the week in coffee houses and other comfortable gathering spots. That said, we will gather in the comfortable lounge on the third floor of the Admin Annex, eat doughnuts and king cake, and sip hot drinks. If what we provide is not to your liking, feel free to bring what you desire.

The book club setting goes beyond the notion of making reading more fun; as Margaret Atwood noted in 1995, "Book Groups are to late twentieth-century America what salons were to eighteenth-century Paris, and what Improvement Societies were to the Victorians." The book club approach encourages textual engagement and stirs intellectual curiosity.

We want you to turn 'class discussion' into a true discussion, the kind that encourages active reading and fosters a love for the written word.

In other words, we want to get you excited about reading.

## Learning Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

- discuss film as text;
- recognize recurring themes and images in a poet's body of work;
- determine successful reading strategies;
- demonstrate understanding of a novel through writing (both in class exercises and at-home essays) as well as meaningful conversation;
- 
- write a research paper adhering to MLA format.

## Course Policies

**If you don't turn in a research paper,** you fail the course automatically**.**

**If you don't turn in your outline on the assigned date,** your paper automatically drops one letter grade.

**If you plagiarize,** you fail. PERIOD. End of saga. See addendum.

Class will consist of lecture, discussion, and group work. Your contribution to class is important. Talking about your ideas will help you to write about them later. Asking questions will help your peers to understand.

You can't participate if you're not prepared for class. If a story is listed in the syllabus for the third week, that means read it *before* you come to class that week.

Avoid rude behavior. What's rude?

reading materials from another class
sleeping, placing your head on your desk
talking when I am talking
wearing earphones
wearing your backpack throughout class
leaving before class is dismissed
answering your cellphone
texting

**Unless you are awaiting an organ for a transplant,** turn off your phones before entering class. If they go off, I get to answer them.

**And this…** we dress to impress, yes, but not to distract. If you have a lot of flesh showing, I will ask you to please wear a shirt or jacket to class. And the caps, as you know by now, have to go.

**Attendance** is mandatory. University Policy states:

> In all 1000 level courses and all developmental courses, absence is considered excessive when a student misses twice the number of times the class meets per week. The total number of absences includes days missed because of late registration or late enrollment in the course.
>
> Xavier classes begin on the first day of the semester. If a student must change courses or sections of courses at the beginning of the semester, he/she: 1) is counted as absent until the professor is given documentation of completed registration and enrollment, and 2) is responsible for securing the syllabus and for becoming aware of the content covered in the missed classes. Absences experienced due to late registration into a course are included in determining the FE grade.

We meet once a week. You are allowed two absences in this course. Your third absence secures a grade of FE.

If you know you will miss your class time during a given week, you are allowed (upon letting me know first) to attend the other section THAT SAME WEEK. This is not a revolving door, however. You are expected to attend class on the day you are scheduled to do so.

**Bring your ID to class so you can swipe in.**

**Deadlines**: All assignments and drafts of all papers must be submitted (hard copy—NEVER email) on the date indicated.

If you are having a problem with a deadline, I will be far more understanding if you tell me ahead of time. And by that I do not mean minutes before class. Unless you've spoken to me about your circumstance, I will not accept late work. Especially the slipped-under-the-office-door variety.

**Format of work**: Any out of class work must conform to MLA guidelines. In addition:

The piece must conform to length requirements (too long is as bad as too short).
Please tell me how many words your piece is -- put this info on the first page.
I do NOT accept un-stapled work.
I do not accept "I didn't save a copy" as an excuse in any situation.
Don't do anything "cute" to make your work stand out, please.
Do not rely on spell cheek. (See why?)

**Grammar**

I do not teach grammar. Serial language killers receive Ds on their papers before midterm, and Fs thereafter. There's no redoing the paper for a better grade. But there *is* going to the Writing Center. Get help before you turn in the next paper.

For the occasional offender, I recommend referring to your Bedford Handbook. I will be marking your paper in such a way that you will know just where to look...more on that later.

**Plagiarism**

Ahem! When you use the citable work of someone else you must document your source.

If I suspect that you did not write your paper, I will give you the opportunity to prove me wrong. Please do. For that reason it is a VERY good idea to hold on to your drafts, notes, everything. Just in case. But if I have proof that you did not write your paper...then you have just failed the class.

**Grading**

I will not look over your paper before you turn it in. Looking it over is what I do when I grade. However, if you are having problems with the content of the paper, I will be more than happy to discuss that with you.

I write all over your papers. Not just grammatical this and that (and for that I will be referring you back to your Bedford....more on that in class) but anything that comes to mind.

...And I do mean anything. There's a relationship between reader and writer, and I want you to keep this relationship in mind.

Midterm grades: I will average your essay grades (which will be two or three) together to derive this since writing is the most important thing. I do not average in anything else...and I tend to grade down.

NA's turn into D's if you do not turn in the new paper by the assigned deadline (usually a week).

There is no doing a paper over for a better grade. Just learn from your mistakes and do better next time. Before that next time comes we can have a one-on-one chat about your writing: make an appointment.

Blackboard: I will post assignments and helpful hints and important reminders and such on BlackBoard…but I do not post your grades there. Your grades will not be a mystery – you will have the grades in your hands.

## Assignments

**Cultural Events Portfolio 15% of your final grade**
4 events = A; 3 = B; 2 = C; 1 = D; 0 =F. Choose events from the menu.

**Essays 45%**
You will be responsible for turning in three essays as assigned. Proof them before handing them in. Any paper marked NA can be redone; please note that you have to get it back to me by the date assigned or that NA becomes a D.

**Research Paper 20%**
Use MLA-style documentation. The subject will be literature and we will talk about that in class. But please note that

**Poetic Response Paper 10%**
To be explained in class.

**In-class Written Responses 10%**

**At exam time** On the last day of class, the poetic response is due. Research papers earning a D or F must be revised (all others: optional) and turned in at exam time.

Poetry will be read in class so that out-of-class time will be spent reading the prose texts, writing papers, and conducting research.

# Class Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| jan 6 | introduction (both sections) |
| jan 11 / jan 13 | **discuss:** "The Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night" and "Saturday Night Fever: The Life" |
| jan 18/ jan 20 | **view:** *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) in library |
| | First essay due: Friday |
| jan 25 / jan 27 | **discuss**: *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) |
| feb 1 / feb 3 | research paper topics discussed |
| feb 8 / feb 10 | ……. |
| | Second essay due: Friday |
| feb 15 / feb 17 | **discuss**: *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) |
| feb 22 / feb 24 | research paper sources and outline due |
| mar 1 / mar 3 | **discuss:** *Madeleine is Sleeping* (2005) |
| mar 8 / mar 10 | *Mardi Gras* |
| mar 15 / mar 17 | ……. |
| mar 22 / mar 24 | …… |
| | Research paper due Friday |
| mar 29 / mar 31 | …….. |
| apr 5 / apr 7 | *Ballad of the Sad Cafe* (1951) |
| apr 12 / apr 14 | third paper due: Friday |
| apr 19 | last class: both sections |
| | poetic responses due in class. |

## Cultural Events Menu

*All events take place on campus*

*The Time Machine.* Movie. Thursday, Jan. 13. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

Poet Gina Ferrara. Reading. Thursday, Jan. 27, 7 p.m. UC

*Camille.* Movie. Thursday, Feb. 10. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

*Midsummer's Night Dream.* Play. Tuesday, March 15, 7 p.m. UC

*The Green Pastures.* Movie. March 17. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

Poet Julie Kane. Reading. Thursday, March 24. 7pm UC

*Devil in a Blue Dress.* Movie. Thursday, April 7. 6 pm UC Student Lounge

Writer David Madden. Reading. Friday, April 15. 7 pm. Admin Bldg Auditorium

Elizabeth Manley
Assistant Professor
Department of History
emanley1@gmail.com

FaCTS Initiative: 2010 – 2011 Project Final Report

**Project Title:** *Historians as Engaged Readers: Understanding Human Rights in a Global Past*

This project sought to take a newly created but not yet implemented course and develop it as a reading intensive seminar designed to fit within both the FaCTS theme – *Fostering Active Reading* – and the goals of Xavier University's Quality Enhancement Plan. The course, Human Rights in Global History (HIST1810), fulfills the core requirement for history and targets first and second year students. The plan for course development included creating activities that engage students in the topic of global human rights, but that also enable them to fully dissect and interpret written historical materials covering a wide range of time periods and cultural backgrounds. Students will participate in individual and group activities that demand careful attention to primary source documents, journal articles, and human rights databases.

The goals of the proposed project were two-fold. First, through the scholarship of teaching, I sought to expand upon existing practices and develop new exercises in critical reading. Ultimately, these best-practices were then molded into a syllabus that set a course for a seminar on global human rights that both engaged students thematically and focused on developing their critical reading skills. Second, I planned to implement this syllabus in a course to be offered in the fall of 2010 for first and second-year students. I have found that even with existing practices many students still struggle with the first stages of reading primary source documents. It is the goal for this course to get all students past the first stage – restatement – and onto the subsequent stages – understanding goals, perspectives, techniques, and audience – of historical documents.

Although I planned to continue to offer this course in the future, the positive feedback I received from students solidified my plan to teach this class either once a year or once every two years in the future. Moreover, I have taken activities and approaches developed in this course and applied them to my teaching more broadly. I would like to present the findings of my classroom techniques and activities at a teaching-oriented conference, and plan to seek out the ideal venue for such a presentation for the fall 2011.

My reading-focused objectives for the course were two-fold. First, I sought to convey to students how to explain the difference between primary and secondary documents (the building blocks of historical analysis). Second, I believed that through practice and certain activities, student would learn to summarize and critique both primary and secondary sources of historical documentation. As the following assessment demonstrates, I believe I had some success with both objectives.

Using the assessment tool created for the FaCTS course, HIST1810 – Human Rights and World History, I sought to ascertain my students' skill level in reading primary documents and summarizing texts at the beginning of the course. The following data represent the answers gathered from the students on the first day of class.

| Age | Grade | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Fresh | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | Yes/S | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.7 |
| 20 | Junior | 9 | 8 | 10 | 7 | 7 | Yes/N | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | 0.9 |
| 18 | Fresh | 6 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 7 | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.7 |
| 17 | Fresh | 5 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | No | No | No | No | No | 0.6 |
| 18 | Fresh | 10 | 5 | 10 | 1 | 10 | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | 0.7 |
| 18 | Fresh | 5 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 4 | YES/Y | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.7 |
| 18 | Fresh | 5 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 3 | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.7 |
| 19 | Soph | 8 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 10 | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.9 |
| 17 | Fresh | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 5 | Yes/N | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.8 |
| 19 | Soph | 8 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 8 | No | No | No | No | No | 0.7 |
| 21 | Senior | 10 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 10 | Yes/Y | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 0.8 |
| 18 | Fresh | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | No | No | No | No | Yes | 0.7 |
| 18 | Fresh | 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 10 | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | 0.8 |
| 18 | Fresh | 3 | 10 | 10 | 1 | 2 | No | No | No | No | No | 0.8 |
| 18 | Fresh | 10 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 5 | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | 0.7 |
| 19 | Soph | 9 | 5 | 10 | 7 | 9 | Yes/S | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.6 |
| 21 | Junior | 8 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 8 | Yes/N | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 0.5 |
| 22 | Senior | 6 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 7 | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | 0.5 |
| 27 | Soph | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8 | Yes/NI | No | Yes | No | No | 0.6 |
| 17 | Fresh | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.7 |
| 19 | Junior | 6 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 7 | No | No | No | No | No | 0.5 |
| 19 | Soph | 5 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 5 | No | No | Yes | No | No | 0.5 |
| 18 | Fresh | 6 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 7 | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | 0.6 |
| 19 | Fresh | 8 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 6 | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | 0.8 |
| 19 | Soph | 8 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 10 | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | 0.7 |
| 21 | Senior | 8 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 9 | Yes/S | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 0.8 |
| 19 | Soph | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | Yes/S | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | 0.6 |
| 24 | Junior | 7 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 7 | Yes/Y | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 0.8 |

Assessing Question #8 about primary documents, it seemed most of the students knew what they were and could identify one. However, in looking at Question #9 about secondary documents, it became very clear that they could not differentiate between the two. So my first task was to help them understand the two types of historical record. I began with weekly primary source document exercises. These were short assignments conducted every week to help students break down the basic components of a primary document and familiarize them with the variety of such documents. Using a flow chart structure that I had developed for a previous class, the exercises required short answers on author, time, place, intent / perspective, main points and techniques. I also added a summary section and unknown words. Within the syllabus I clearly identified which readings were "primary" and which were "secondary." The objective of the exercise was to help them see how primary documents are produced by an actor or actors within a particular historic moment. Moreover, I wanted them to see how they were different

from a secondary source – such as a textbook, article, or manuscript – that is, a compilation of primary sources and interpretations.

When assessing their ability to summarize a passage, I graded their responses using a scale resembling a traditional grading rubric (.5 = F; .6 = D; .7 = C; .8 = B; .9 = A). The average for the class was .693, indicating that their abilities in this area were just below average. In order to improve this skill, I assigned weekly blog summaries of both the secondary and primary sources, requiring them to work to synthesize the meanings of all the readings for a given week.

Overall, I believe I had mixed success with both exercises. For one group of students, both tasks worked well to improve their reading and writing skills. In several cases, I noticed marked improvement in students' ability to decode primary sources, summarize secondary sources, and understand concepts in reading collectively through writing and discussion. For another group, I noted improvements in these skills, while still seeing some obstacles in their ability to summarize complex articles and / or fully see the perspective of a primary document. For a smaller group, their reading and writing skill set coming into the class posed a significant challenge, and they struggled to complete the tasks successfully on a weekly basis. Nonetheless, I feel that the improvements that I did witness were enough to continue applying and improving upon the exercises constructed for this class.

# HIST1810: HUMAN RIGHTS IN GLOBAL HISTORY

**HIST – 1810-01 / Fall 2010 / TR 1:15 – 2:30**
**Credit Hours: 3.0 / Administration Building 220**

**Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Manley**
**Office: Administration Building, Suite 212, #12 Office Hours: T 10 – 1 W 10 – 1**
**Email: emanley1@xula.edu Office Phone: 520-7409**

**Course Description**

Human rights, an idea that has come to mean a set of core practices and values that society believes are inherent to each and every individual, was not a construct that sprang from a vacuum. In this course we will address the development of the term human rights, from ancient times through to the present day. As a class, we will focus on the religious, moral, and social implications of believing in such inalienable rights, the development of the concept of individual rights and responsibilities, the conflicts and complications that made contemporary human rights what they, and the 20th and 21st century struggles that have pushed human rights near to a breaking point. In particular, the class will look at the definition of human rights, ancient societies' ideas about social rights, the expanding construction of who deserved such rights, the development of a universalist ideology of human rights in the post-World War II age, civil war and genocide across the globe in the twentieth century, culture and the problems with universal applications of rights, and modern conceptions and defenses of human rights. We will also look at how organizations like the United Nations seek to police a western-centric concept of human rights.

As a history course covering a single topic on a global scale, this course will entail a significant amount of reading, and will focus on the tools and practices necessary for successful comprehension of historical materials, both in the primary and secondary form. Xavier University's initiative, "Read Today, Lead Tomorrow," (http://read.xula.edu/) will be a central theme of this course. Through this class, students will learn to differentiate between primary and secondary historical sources, successfully deconstruct both sets of materials, and understand how to summarize and integrate individual sources with the larger historical narrative of human rights.

**Course Objectives**

*By the end of the course, students will be able to:*

- Narrate the development of human rights as a basic concept and construct a personal understanding of human rights.
- Construct a narrative not only of human rights, but those events and ideas that have contradicted and conflicted with such protections of individual freedom, liberty, and justice across societies and cultures.
- Critically assess the effectiveness of multiple social institutions that have been constructed that encourage greater respect for human life, including the United Nations, and develop ideas for continued methods of enforcement.
- Possess a greater understanding of social institutions and practices across the globe through the perspective of human rights.

- Explain the difference between primary and secondary documents (the building blocks of historical analysis)
- Summarize and critique both primary and secondary sources of historical documentation

***Course Requirements***

| | |
|---|---|
| Regular Class Attendance and Participation | 20% |
| Reading Blog Posts | 20% |
| Primary Reading Exercises | 15% |
| Human Rights Project | 25% |
| Mid-term Examination | 10% |
| Final Examination | 10% |

***Required Texts***

- Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights, A History* (New York, Norton, 2007).
- Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, Greg Grandin, Lynn Hunt, and Marilyn B. Young, *Human Rights and Revolutions,* 2nd Edition (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).
- Alice Walker, *Overcoming Speechlessness* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2010).
- On-line course materials available at http://humanrightsandworldhistory.wordpress.com/readings/. In addition, students must become a member of wordpress and participate in the blog exercises as explained below.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** Active participation in discussions and class activities (held on ***Thursday*** unless otherwise noted) constitutes a significant portion of your grade. You will be expected to come to class ready to discuss the materials covered in both the reading for that week and the previous lectures. Also, please review the question posed for each week's reading. Your participation in the reading blog (see below) should also help guide you toward questions and comments that you can make during class discussions and activities. As all the readings will be due on Thursdays, it is highly advisable that you begin your work for the week ahead of time. In regards to grading for attendance and participation, your efforts will be evaluated on a point system. During lecture and final project classes (14), you can receive up to two points per class (totally 28 potential points). Your physical presence will grant you a single point; demonstrating that you are awake, alert, and processing information will grant you a second point. During discussion classes, a total of six points can be awarded. Again, physical presence will account for only a minimal amount of points; the remainder will be awarded on the basis of the following attributes: level of attentiveness and alertness (i.e. paying attention, taking notes, and not being distracted by your cell phone); contribution to class topic; engagement with fellow students; respect for fellow students; completion of reading workshop activity. A total of 72 points may be attained for these classes. **Final Note: Each week you will be responsible for completing either two or three elements for Thursday's class.** 1) Complete the reading. 2) Fill out the primary source exercise and bring to class. It will be used to develop class discussion and activities, along with your weekly reading blogs. 3) **IF IT IS YOUR WEEK,** completion of the blog activity.

**Reading Blog:** Students will be divided into two groups (A and B) and will be responsible for the upkeep of a weekly blog. If the week is designated as an *A* week, students in group A will be

expected to (individually) post summaries and critiques on the blog for ALL of that week's readings. Students in group B are expected to read these posts and be prepared to talk about them in class. In weeks designated B, the opposite will be true. Please follow these guidelines when posting, and make clear note of your group. *Summaries and critiques:* These should be posted by 9pm on Wednesday of the week due. The summary section should be no more than 300 words, no less than 150. The critique section should respond to the question posed for that week, should encourage debate among your classmates (i.e. take a stand), and should be no more than 100 words, no less than 75. **For all posts:** All posts should be composed in a word processing program before being added to the blog. They should be checked for spelling and grammar, as well as for word count. Finally, they should demonstrate that you have read ALL of the week's readings and have thought about them as a comprehensive whole. Each student will have six opportunities to post, and will be graded on the best five of these. Up to twenty points can be earned for each post. You must sign up on wordpress in order to contribute!

**Primary Reading Activity:** The reading workshop should be completed every week (except the first week) on the PRIMARY source reading (indicated below in the syllabus each week with a P). The reading and the activity should be brought to class and used to facilitate discussion. There will be twelve opportunities to complete this exercise. You must complete at least ten, and each will be worth up to 10 points.

**Human Rights Project:** Students will complete a final project for the class that will be presented in the final week of the semester. Students will chose an issue relative to human rights violations in our contemporary world. They will then conduct research on the topic and construct a five minute audio / visual presentation. Topics will be approved by the instructor and research should gathered from reputable academic sources. More information on the project will be presented in class.

**Midterm Examination:** The midterm examination will be administered on October 14th during the class period, and will cover **all** materials from readings, lectures and discussions up to that point.

**Final Examination:** The final examination will be administered during the scheduled exam time for the course. It will be a two-hour essay examination. Students going into the final with an A in the class will have the option of not taking the final exam.

***Policies***

**Attendance:** Class attendance is **mandatory**. In addition to the points system indicated above, Xavier University policy dictates that absences in excess of twice the number of weekly meetings (in this case, five) will result in a grade of FE (Failure due to excessive absences). If you are not present for the roll at the beginning of class, you **must** inform me of your presence **after** class. It is your responsibility to keep track of your attendance and all concerns about absences must be addressed before submission of final grades at the end of the semester. Attendance includes both your physical and mental presence.

**Lateness**: Do not arrive late to class. It is disrespectful not only to me, but to your fellow students who are attempting to concentrate on the material. Arriving more than ten minutes late will result in an absence for that day's class. Consistent tardiness will also affect your participation grade.

**In-class comportment**: I expect you to arrive to class on time and be ready to listen, discuss and take notes when class begins. **All cell phones** should be put away. If you choose to utilize your cell phone during class – either in the form of a conversation or a text message – you will be asked to leave the classroom, as such behavior indicates that your conversation is more important than the class. In addition, I expect that you will take care of all issues before coming to class, allowing you to sit attentively for the entirety of the class.

**Late assignments / makeups**: Extensions for class assignments, blogs, and projects **will be granted only with valid justification and prior discussion with the instructor**. Please contact me *before* the assignment is due if you feel you cannot complete the work. Feel free to contact me with any questions regarding assignments, exams and/or grading for this class.

**Grading**: I place significant emphasis on improvement over the course of the class, meaning your efforts to improve your performance will benefit your overall grade. If your grades consistently improve over the course of the semester and if your class presence is consistent and attentive, I will consider shifting our final grade up to the next level. For example, if your final grade in the course worked out to a 78, but your grades had consistently improved during the semester and were an active class participant, I would consider shifting your grade to a B.

**Availability**: In addition to my office hours, I am available for appointments with students. If you are experiencing problems or feel it would be helpful to speak to me, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone and I would be happy to set up an appointment with you at our mutual convenience.

**Honor code and plagiarism**: Academic honesty is expected of all students at Xavier. Your responsibilities as a Xavier student include being familiar with the honor system and the plagiarism policy of the University. The Honor Code of Xavier University states that "**students are personally responsible for their work, their actions, and their word**." This policy incorporates all forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a particularly egregious offense in a history course. It is defined as "unacknowledged or falsely acknowledged presentation of another person's ideas, expressions, or original research as one's own work. Such an act often gives the reader the impression that the student has written or thought something that he or she has in fact borrowed from another. Any paraphrasing or quotation must be appropriately acknowledged." Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences according to the procedures established in the Academic Integrity Policy (found at: http://www.xula.edu/cas/index.php) and may result in a failing grade, academic probation and/or sanction, or expulsion.

**Students with disabilities:** Xavier University seeks to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. Students should contact the Office of Disability Services (Building 15, 520 –

7315), for assistance and the appropriate paper work should be then filed with the Dean and forwarded to the appropriate professors.

**Hurricane Preparedness Policy:** As we live in the Gulf Coast in the wake of Katrina, it is important to have a hurricane emergency policy. Students should be familiar with Xavier University's Hurricane Emergency Plan. Continuation of this course in the event of such an emergency will follow the dictates of university administrators and students should maintain contact via both email and blackboard.

***Class Schedule***

**Part I: Introduction to Human Rights**

**Week One: What are Human Rights?**

Tuesday August 24: Introduction to the Course / Pre-Test (L)
Thursday August 26: Defining Human Rights / Primary Sources (D)
Primary Reading: U.N. Declaration of Human Rights
Secondary Reading: "What are Human Rights,"
Question: What does the term *human rights* mean to you?

**Week Two (A): How are Human Rights a Part of History?**

Tuesday August 31: Background on Human Rights and Reading History (L)
Thursday September 2: Critiques, Summaries, Webblogs (D)
Primary Reading: Code of Hammurabi
Secondary Reading: Burns H. Weston, "Human Rights," pp. 257 – 267 (B); Hunt Chapter Introduction and Chapter 1.
Question: Why would a society propose a set of standards by which all should behave? What would be the purpose? What does it mean to be a moral being?

**Part II: Developing a Concept of Individual Rights**

**Week Three (B): "Rights" and Ancient Societies**

Tuesday September 7: Ancient Societies and Rights and Responsibilities (L)
Thursday September 9: Religion and Human Rights (D)
Primary Reading: Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics
Secondary Reading: Desmond Tutu, "Religious Human Rights and the Bible"; Berdal Aral, "The Idea of Human Rights as Perceived in the Ottoman Empire"
Question: How do religious ideals relate to a common concept of human rights? Is there an overarching idea of how people *should* act based on a Judeo-Christian god? Others?

**Week Four (A): The Enlightenment and a New Concept of Rights**

Tuesday September 14: Challenging Absolute Rights (L)
Thursday September 16: Writing Exercise (RAFT) – Citizenship (D)
Primary Reading: The Magna Carta (B); Excerpt from John Stuart Mill

Secondary Reading: Jerome J. Shestack, "The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights," pp. 201 – 227; Hunt, Chapter 2; Hunt, "The Paradoxical Origins of Human Rights," pp. 3 – 20, in Wasserstrom and Grandin.

Question: How does the connection between corporal punishment and individual rights change during this period. How does the idea of nobility connect to rights? What does citizenship mean now? In the past? Why do you think it was so limited initially?

**Week Five (B): Revolution – England, France, Haiti, and the United States**

Tuesday September 21: Egalité for All (Film)

Thursday September 23: Haiti vs. the U.S. and Europe – Debate (D)

Primary Reading: Hunt, Appendix, pp. 215 – 229.

Secondary Reading: Hunt, Chapters 3 & 4; Zaret, "Tradition, Human Rights, and the English Revolution," pp. 47 – 63 in Wasserstrom and Grandin.

Question: How do we reconcile what European and U.S. thinkers proclaimed vs. what Haitians claimed in regards to rights and citizenship? How does race play into the discussion about rights?

**Week Six (A): The Industrial Age – Who has rights? Who needs to be protected?**

Tuesday September 28: The Dawning of Industrialism, Capitalism & Nationalism (L)

Thursday September 30: Workers and Rights (D)

Primary Reading: Women Miners in the English Coal Pits (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1842womenminers.html) and Life of the Industrial Worker (http://www.victorianweb.org/history/workers2.html)

Secondary Reading: Hunt, Chapter 5, pp 176 – 200

Question: How do we explain selective inclusion in terms of rights and citizenship? Why does nationalism / capitalism demand the subjugation of laborers?

**Week Seven (B): The Holocaust and the (Slow) Development of Modern Human Rights**

Tuesday October 5: The Horrors of the Holocaust (L)

Thursday October 7: Global Dominance and Human Rights (D)

Primary Reading: Selected Writings from Hitler (http://h-net.org/~german/gtext/kaiserreich/hitler2.html) the Nazi Party (http://frank.mtsu.edu/~baustin/nurmlaw1.html) and a Nazi Massacre (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1942graebe.html)

Secondary Reading: Hunt, Chapter 5, pp. 200 – 214

Question: Where does justification for global dominance (like that of the Nazi Party) come from? At what point is there a global responsibility for such actions? Why do you think countries were reluctant to fight and willing to ignore?

**Week Eight: Midterm Examination**

Tuesday October 12: No Class

Thursday October 14: Midterm Examination

Reading: None; study for exam

**Week Nine (A): The Creation of the United Nations**

Tuesday October 19: The (Re)Construction of an International Police Force (L)

Thursday October 21: The Viability of Culpability and International Codes (D)
Primary Reading: United Nations Charter; Nuremberg Code (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/nurecode.asp)
Secondary Reading: "The Boundaries of Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum" **by** Edward T. Linenthal

Question: How do you deal with atrocities after the fact? What changed in the post-war era? What does it mean to give consent? How is this connected to ideas of citizenship?

**Part III: Modern Forms of Terror and Human Rights**

**Week Ten (B): Are Human Rights Universal or Relativist?**

Tuesday October 26: The Universalist Tendency in Human Rights (L)
Thursday October 28: The Limits of Human Rights Doctrine - FGM (D)
Primary Reading: U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/%28symbol%29/a.res.48.104.en) and Guardian story about FGC (http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/jul/25/female-circumcision-children-british-law)
Secondary Reading: Jerome Shestack, "The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights" pp. 228 – 234; Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "The Chinese Revolution and Contemporary Paradoxes," pp. 21 – 44, in Wasserstrom and Grandin.

Question: Can you imagine a situation in which something you perceived as rights-denial might be cultural practice? What do we do then?

**Week Eleven (A): Israel and Palestine**

Tuesday November 2: The Creation of Israel and the Modern Middle East (L)
Thursday November 4: Religion and Rights in the Modern World (D)
Primary Reading: UN General Assembly Resolution 181
Secondary Reading: "Human Rights in Israel/Palestine: The History and Politics of a Movement" by Lisa Hajjar, Waserstrom and Grandin, Chapter 11(169 – 190)

Question: How is the Palestine-Israel conflict discussed in the news? What difference does it make to know more about the history of the region in your assessment of the situation? Do you think there is a "solution" to the problems in the region?

**Week Twelve (B): Africa and Military Regimes of Genocide**

Tuesday November 9: Dictatorships, Civil War, and Violence (L)
Thursday November 11: The Benefits of Bearing Witness (D)
Primary Reading: See below
Secondary Reading: Alice Walker, *Overcoming Speechlessness,* Wasterstrom and Grandin, Chapter 8 (121 – 138)

Question: Is the international community responsible for taking action at the very first indication of dictatorship and potential human rights violations? When is a "good time" to step in? What good, if any, is the UN police force?

**Week Thirteen (A): The Death Penalty in the United States**

Tuesday November 16: Origins and Development of the Death Penalty (L)
Thursday November 18: Guest Speaker

Primary Reading: Cesare Beccaria "Essay on Crimes and Punishments" 1819
**(http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/18beccaria.html)**
Secondary Reading: "'A Work in Progress?': United States' Report to UN Human Rights Committee" by Upendra Baxi**; "**Amnesty and Human Rights in the US" by A. G. Noorani

Question: Do you think the death penalty is a human rights violation? Why or why not?

**Week Fourteen (B): Where to Now?**

Tuesday November 23: NGOs, Pluralism & the Future (L/D)
Thursday November 25: No Class

Primary Reading: None
Secondary Reading: "An Appraisal of Amnesty International's Work at the United Nations: Established Areas of Activities and Shifting Priorities since the 1990s" by Kerstin Martens; Wasterstrom and Grandin, Chapter 12 (191 – 212)

Question: How have NGOs aided the overall work of human rights advocacy? Have they harmed the process in any way? Is there another model?

**Week Fifteen: Presentations**

Tuesday November 30: Presentations – Group A
Thursday December 2: Presentations – Group B

Final Examination: Thursday, December 9th, 8:00 AM

(L) = Lecture; (D) = Discussion;

# "Bringing Great Books to Life"
# FaCTS Project Final Report
**Paul M. Schafer**

## Project Summary

The purpose of the project "Bringing Great Books to Life" was to restructure an existing introductory level philosophy course (PHIL 1030: "Great Books in Philosophy") in order to promote the active reading of classic philosophical works. The restructuring of the course aimed to promote active reading in two ways. First, to provide students with a set of concrete reading skills designed to improve reading efficiency (i.e., speed, comprehension, and recall). Second, to utilize teaching and learning practices that would provide students with multiple opportunities to transport the intellectual content of the course from the classroom to their own individual worldviews, and then to the world that we share together.

## Future Plans

This project has a bright future. I will continue to regularly teach this course, and it is the QEP designated reading-enhanced lower level course in the Philosophy Department; others in my department will teach it as well, and should benefit from my FaCTS-related work. Moreover, I intend to continue working on reading enhancements for this course, and perhaps to use the results of my work as the basis for a scholarly project.

## Dissemination of the Project

I think that I have the kernel of a scholarly project in my FaCTS work, and I intend to explore it further over the summer months. I need to look at my data in more detail, review relevant scholarly literature, and then see what I have.

## Summary of Specific FaCTS-related Outcomes

I developed the following list of course outcomes and practices for the course; these will appear on future syllabi for the course.

Outcomes:

1. Students will learn and utilize general strategies for active reading.
2. Students will learn and utilize strategies for reading philosophical texts.
3. Students will improve their ability to accurately comprehend philosophical texts.
4. Students will improve their reading vocabulary.
5. Students will improve their ability to make connections between the words and ideas of the text and the world of everyday personal and social reality.

Practices:

1. Active Reading Mini-Workshops.

2. Reading Quizzes (take-home and in-class).
3. Development of Class Vocabulary List.
4. Reading Portfolio.
5. Reading Comprehension Exam Questions.

**Summary Assessment**

To assess the specific outcomes for the course I have relied primarily on a survey completed by students after they turned in their final exam for the course. According to the survey results, I have reason to believe that the course was successful with respect to the learning outcomes, more successful in some areas than others. I am especially pleased that students strongly agreed that the class helped improve their reading skills, and that this class will help them to read successfully in other classes. I am also pleased that every single surveyed student intends to keep at least one of the books from the class! "These are real books!" as one of the students wrote in the comment section. For details, please see the attached "End of Semester Survey Results" and photocopies of all of the written comments from the survey.

I should add that I believe the FaCTS process surrounding this course has led me to discover an effective means of diagnosing the analytical reading skills of my students, which will allow me to do more effective assessment in the future. I am referring to the "take-home" reading quiz, which I believe provides an accurate picture of a student's true reading skills, and should be a more effective instrument of assessment than the self-reported data from the survey.

# PHIL 1030: Great Books in Philosophy
## Spring 2011

**Section 01: MWF 9:00-9:50; Administration Building 312**
**Section 02: MWF 10:00-10:50; Administration Building 312**

| | |
|---|---|
| Instructor: Dr. Paul Schafer<br>Office: Library, Room 529<br>Phone: 520-5406<br>E-Mail: pschafer@xula.edu | Course website: http://blackboard.xula.edu<br>Office Hours: MWF: 11:00-1:00; TR: 12:30-2:30.<br>Other times by appointment |

## Overview

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:
PHIL 1030 introduces the student to philosophy using the original writings of several philosophers from the classical to the contemporary periods. The goals of this course include developing the student's capacity for critical reading, writing, and thinking, with a general consideration of the nature, methods, and cultural impact of philosophy. *Prerequisite: Completion of required non-degree credit Reading course.*

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:
At the completion of this course, the student should be able to (1) understand, (2) analyze, and (3) think critically about the main arguments presented in the books selected for study.

| QEP Reading Enhancements | |
|---|---|
| Reading Oriented Course Objectives: | Reading Oriented Course Practices: |
| 1. Students will learn and utilize general strategies for active reading.<br>2. Students will learn and utilize strategies for reading philosophical texts.<br>3. Students will improve their ability to accurately comprehend philosophical texts.<br>4. Students will improve their reading vocabulary.<br>5. Students will improve their ability to make connections between the words and ideas of the text and the world of everyday personal and social reality. | 1. Active Reading Mini-Workshops.<br>2. Reading Quizzes (take-home and in-class).<br>3. Development of Class Vocabulary List.<br>4. Reading Portfolio.<br>5. Reading Comprehension Exam Questions. |

## COURSE TEXTS:

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, Hackett Press, 2nd edition, 2002.
2. Martin Luther King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, handout.
3. Epictetus, *The Handbook*, Hackett Press, 1983.
4. Descartes, *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy*, Hackett Press, 1999.
5. Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, Hackett Press, 1983.
6. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Norton, 1969.

## COURSE FORMAT:

PHIL 1030 is designed as a mixed-format course. There will be some lecture, some discussion, and some classroom activities. During the semester you'll complete the following assignments:

- Critical Essay: You will write a 4-6 page "critical essay" in which you will identify, analyze, and evaluate central ideas from course readings. No outside research is required. Details will be provided later in the course.

- Exams: You will take three exams, two "in-semester" exams and a comprehensive final. Exams will cover assigned readings and topics taken up in class (including lectures and discussions). The exam format will include both essay and non-essay (T/F, multiple choice, etc.) questions.

- Quizzes: You will take regular "reading quizzes" on assigned readings. There will be about a quiz each week; at the end of the semester, your two lowest quizzes will be dropped. Quizzes may include essay and/or non-essay questions. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class, late students will not be allowed to take the quiz, and there will be no make-up quizzes for any reason.

- Discussion Board: You will write at least TWO posts per week on our class discussion board on Blackboard. To receive credit for the week, you must write a post that is at least four sentences long and related (directly or indirectly) to our class. I encourage you to write more than two posts a week and to view the discussion board as an opportunity to seek clarification from other students, to help provide clarification for other students, to further explore issues raised in class or the readings, or to just say anything on your mind related to philosophy. For the purposes of this assignment, weeks begin at 12:00am Monday and end at 11:59pm the following Sunday.

## COURSE GRADING:

The final grade will be determined by the following distribution: quizzes (20%), exams (15% each = 45% total), discussion board postings (10%), and critical essay (25%). The midterm grade will be calculated from your first exam (50%) and your midterm quiz average (50%). **No extra credit work will be given.**

*Grading scale and explanation*: A=100-90; B=89-80; C=79-70; D=69-60; F=59 and lower.

A: Excellent. Work that far exceeds the basic requirements for the course or assignment.

B: Above average. Work that exceeds the basic requirements for the course or assignment.

C: Average. Work that meets the basic requirements for the course or assignment.

D: Below average. Work that meets some, but not all, of the basic requirements for the course or assignment.

F: Failing. Work that does not meet the basic requirements for the course or assignment.

## COURSE POLICIES:

*Attendance:* You are expected to attend all class meetings, to participate in class discussions, and to prepare for each class by reading the daily assignments. Attendance will be taken promptly at the beginning of class. If you arrive more than ten minutes late you will be counted absent for the day. It is your responsibility to find out about any assignments if you miss class.

*Technology:* Blackboard will be used to post announcements and materials related to the course. Email should be used to communicate with me outside of regular office hours. Microsoft Word should be used for all formal writing assignments.

*Late and Makeup Policy:* Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Papers that are delivered later on the assigned due date will be penalized 7 points. Late papers that are delivered after the assigned due date will be penalized 15 points. No assignment will be accepted more than one week after the assigned due date. Make-up exams will be given only if a test is missed for a legitimate reason (documentation is required), and if you notify me within 24 hours of the test. Make-up exams may consist solely of essay questions and may be more difficult than the original. Missed quizzes may not be made up.

*Hurricane Evacuations [Fall Semester]:* In the event that Xavier University evacuates during a tropical storm or hurricane, please refer to the University's emergency website for information about resuming classes and returning to campus (http://www.xulaemergency.com/). Students should also check the course blackboard website for information about class assignments, due dates, and revised schedules. Students will be expected to continue with course readings and other assignments during an evacuation.

*Classroom Civility:* A successful class requires a professional and respectful intellectual atmosphere. With this in mind, please be attentive to the following rules:

- Cell phones & Ipods: Turn them **off**. Any texting (reading or writing) in class will result in your being asked to leave class, earning you an absence for that day. Please remove your headphones when you enter the class.
- Etiquette: No food or beverage may be brought into the classroom. Do not leave the room after class has started. Be attentive to whoever has the floor during class, whether it is the instructor, a classmate, or a guest speaker. It is disruptive and unprofessional when students whisper or talk among themselves during class.

- Respect: Academic conversation encourages critical thinking, which often results in disagreements. As a young intellectual, you are expected to express your views in ways that do not offend your audience; correspondingly, you must learn to respect the views of others, even when you do not agree with them.

*Academic Honesty:* In accordance with Xavier's academic integrity policy (http://www.xula.edu/cas/documents/cas_academicIntegrity.pdf), any instance of cheating will result in a grade of "F" for the course and will be reported to the student's dean. This includes plagiarism, which is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is the act of using another's ideas or words as one's own. Avoid plagiarism by properly quoting or citing all outside sources.

*Students with disabilities:* If you have a disability that may affect your work in this course and for which you may need special accommodation, contact a representative in the Office of Disability Services at 520-7315. After you receive documentation of your disability and the specific arrangements that you need, please meet with me during office hours to discuss the Accommodation Agreement form. It is imperative that you do this by the end of the second week of the semester.

## Semester Calendar

- Readings must be completed BEFORE coming to class on the assigned date.
- Calendar is subject to change; changes will be announced in class.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **January** | 7: | Introduction to Philosophy | *First Class!* |
| | 10: | Plato's *Apology* | |
| | 12: | Plato's *Apology* | |
| | 14: | Plato's *Apology* | |
| | 17: | **MLK Day Holiday** | |
| | 19: | Plato's *Apology* | |
| | 21: | MLK's *Letter from Birmingham Jail* | |
| | 24: | MLK's *Letter from Birmingham Jail* | |
| | 26: | MLK's *Letter from Birmingham Jail* | |
| | 28: | Plato, *Euthyphro* | |
| | 31: | Plato, *Euthyphro* | |
| **February** | 2: | Plato, *Euthyphro* | |
| | 4: | Open | |
| | 7: | **Test One** | |
| | 9: | Epictetus, *The Handbook* | |
| | 11: | Epictetus, *The Handbook* | |
| | 14: | Epictetus, *The Handbook* | |
| | 16: | Epictetus, *The Handbook* | |
| | 18: | Epictetus, *The Handbook* | |
| | 21: | Open | |
| | 23: | Descartes, *Meditations* | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 25: | Descartes, *Meditations* | |
| | 28: | Descartes, *Meditations* | |
| **March** | 2: | Descartes, *Meditations* | *Mid-term Grades Turned In* |
| | 4: | Descartes, *Meditations* | |
| | 7-11: | **Mardi Gras/Spring Break Holiday** | |
| | 14: | Descartes, *Meditations* | |
| | 16: | Descartes, *Meditations* | |
| | 18: | Open | *Last Day to Drop Classes* |
| | 21: | **Test Two** | |
| | 23: | Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* | |
| | 25: | Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* | |
| | 28: | Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* | |
| | 30: | Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* | |
| **April** | 1: | Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* | |
| | 4: | Open | |
| | 6: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | |
| | 8: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | |
| | 11: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | |
| | 13: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | **Critical Essay Due** |
| | 15: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | |
| | 18: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | |
| | 20: | Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* | |
| | 21-22: | **Easter Holiday** | |
| | 20: | *Last Day of Classes/**Senior Finals*** | |

# Great Books in Philosophy
## Spring 2011 End of Semester Survey Results

**Note:** In Section 01 22 students took the survey; however, 3 students did not complete the reverse side of the survey. In Section 02 18 students took the survey.

*I. Readings. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being low, 5 being high) rate the course readings.*

| | Sec. 01 Avg. | Sec. 02 Avg. | Overall Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A. Plato's *Apology* and *Euthyphro*.** | | | |
| 1. Level of difficulty. | 3.04 | 2.89 | 2.97 |
| 2. Level of enjoyment. | 4.14 | 4.06 | 4.10 |
| 3. Value to my education. | 4.50 | 4.22 | 4.37 |
| **B. King's *Letter from Birmingham Jail*** | | | |
| 1. Level of difficulty. | 2.36 | 2.33 | 2.35 |
| 2. Level of enjoyment. | 3.86 | 4.55 | 4.17 |
| 3. Value to my education. | 4.36 | 4.72 | 4.52 |
| **C. Epictetus' *The Handbook*.** | | | |
| 1. Level of difficulty. | 3.04 | 3.00 | 3.02 |
| 2. Level of enjoyment. | 3.73 | 3.78 | 3.75 |
| 3. Value to my education. | 3.95 | 4.11 | 4.02 |
| **D. Descartes' *Meditations*** | | | |
| 1. Level of difficulty. | 4.18 | 3.72 | 3.97 |
| 2. Level of enjoyment. | 2.86 | 3.33 | 3.07 |
| 3. Value to my education. | 3.68 | 4.06 | 3.85 |
| **E. Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*** | | | |
| 1. Level of difficulty. | 3.86 | 4.22 | 4.02 |
| 2. Level of enjoyment. | 3.32 | 2.83 | 3.10 |
| 3. Value to my education. | 4.14 | 3.61 | 3.90 |
| **F. Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*** | | | |
| 1. Level of difficulty. | 3.45 | 3.78 | 3.60 |
| 2. Level of enjoyment. | 3.77 | 3.66 | 3.72 |
| 3. Value to my education. | 4.27 | 4.33 | 4.30 |

G. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being almost none, 5 being almost everything), how much of the reading for this class did you actually do?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.23 | 4.06 | 4.15 |

H. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being very weak, 5 being exceptionally good), how would you rate your skill level as a reader?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3.59 | 3.66 | 3.62 |

I. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being almost none, 5 being a great deal), how much do you think taking this class helped you improve your reading skills?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.45 | 4.17 | 4.32 |

*II. Reading-related Class Activities and Assignments. For each of the following, please indicate the degree to which the activity/assignment positively affected your reading skills. (1=very little positive affect, 5=great positive affect).*

| | Sec. 01 Avg. | Sec. 02 Avg. | Overall Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Vocabulary Work/Class Vocabulary List. | 4.10 | 4.11 | 4.12 |
| B. Take-Home Reading Quizzes. | 4.10 | 4.33 | 4.21 |
| C. In-Class Group Reading Quizzes. | 3.73 | 4.33 | 4.03 |
| D. "Regular" Reading Quizzes. | 3.73 | 3.61 | 3.67 |
| E. Reading Strategy Instruction (Pre-Reading Skills, Structure Skills, Book Marking Strategies, etc.) | 4.26 | 4.05 | 4.16 |
| F. Reading Portfolio Reflections | 4.05 | 3.28 | 3.68 |

*III. General Questions.*

1. Do you plan on keeping any of the books from this course? Yes/NO.
   If "Yes," write down the books you plan to keep:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "Yes" | 19 | 18 | 37 |
| "No" | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Plato votes: | 9 | 10 | 19 |
| Epictetus votes: | 10 | 12 | 22 |
| Descartes votes: | 7 | 8 | 15 |
| Locke votes: | 8 | 7 | 15 |
| Freud votes: | 14 | 12 | 26 |

2. On a scale of 1-5 (1=very little, 5=a great deal), how much do you think having taken this class will help you read successfully in other classes?

   4.31 4.17 4.24

3. On a scale of 1-5 (1=very little, 5=a great deal), how important do you think being a good reader is for your overall education?

   4.79 4.83 4.81

4. On a scale of 1-5 (1=very little, 5=a great deal), how much did you enjoy taking this class?

   4.31 4.11 4.22

Final Report for FaCTS
Funded by the Mellon Foundation
AY 10-11

**Xavier University of Louisiana**
**Center for the Advancement of Teaching**
**Faculty Communities of Teaching Scholars (FaCTS)**

Principal Investigator/Fellow: Eugenia M. Valentine, Ph.D.

Department: Psychology

Title of Project: The Implementation of Discussion Groups Using a Non-pedagogical Book in a Psychology of Gender Class

Summary of project purpose, and statement of original goals

This project proposed the inclusion of a non-pedagogical book into the Psychology of Gender class. The inclusion involved a change from a textbook of readings on gender to a more popular and topical book on gender. The class format was changed to include small group discussions of the book chapters, group leaders reporting on their small group discussions, and individual focus papers on the chapters. The inclusion of a non-pedagogical popular book was proposed to encourage advanced reading comprehension in upper-level students, leadership skills, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and expose students to the controversial issues of the construction of gender. The chosen book, As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl (by John Colapinto) provided a unique, interesting, and entertaining look at gender and how it functions in our society. Students became more aware of the myriad injustices of gender, which equips them to confront these issues in their future lives. The book reinforced reading skills that the students learned in lower division classes, while engaging them in reading. Class discussions served as a forum for students to bounce ideas and opinions off of each other, and discuss the topic at length. Students were able to take turns being small group leaders, and their focus papers on the readings provided a means of assessment of reading comprehension.

Future plans

The Psychology of Gender class is currently crosslisted as both a Psychology class and a Women's Studies class. It is offered every Fall semester at Xavier University of Louisiana. The student evaluations were so positive that I plan to continue to use the aforementioned book as my outside reading in the class. The general and popular nature of the book will help the class become even more attractive to all disciplines, including the Humanities. This is especially important since this class has been approved for addition to the Expansive Core Curriculum.

Dissemination of project

This project has been presented in a forum at the Southeastern Conference for the Teaching of Psychology, February 25, 2011. Citation as follows:

Yost-Hammer, E, & Valentine, E. M. (2011, February). Enhancing Strategic Reading Skills Via Psychology Courses: Assignments and Strategies. Presentation for the Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology.

Depending on remaining funding, this project may be presented at the National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology conference in January, 2012.

Summary of specific FaCTS-related outcomes

The specific goals and outcomes for this project were as follows:

I. Provide reading that is interesting and engaging to the students
II. Preserve the gender-related concepts of the class
III. Provide a means of assessment of reading comprehension via the focus papers
IV. Expose students to many injustices that gender creates (XULA Mission)
V. Allow students to take turns being the leaders of the small groups (QEP goal)
VI. Reinforce reading skills (QEP goal)
VII. Provide a forum for students to interact with each other about the readings (QEP goal)

The specific assignments for the book were focus papers that the students wrote for each section that the book was divided into. The focus papers already had a set assessment of a maximum of 5 points apiece. The students were instructed to read the section that was assigned for the day, summarize it, and comment on it. The papers were assigned to be approximately 1 ½ - 2 pages long, with at least 2-4 ideas, connections, experiences, criticisms, or concerns. Since other than final grades, these assignments were better reflections of the students' absorption of the book material, I planned to compare the students' grades on their focus papers from the first half of the class to the second half of the class. I expected to see an improvement in grades as the class progressed. I also proposed to compare the focus paper grades from the previous incarnation of the class in 2009, which used the book of collected readings, to the focus paper grades of this proposed class. I hypothesized that the focus paper grades on the non-pedagogical book would be better than the textbook of readings. It was also hypothesized that since the book was proposed to be more interesting to the students than the books on readings previously used, the mean class evaluations would improve over the mean class evaluations from the previous class with the textbook of readings.

Summary assessment

A significant difference in mean focus paper grades was found between the previous class and this class, but not in the expected direction. The 2009 class ($N = 29$, $M = 3.83$) had a higher average for their focus papers than the FaCTS class (2010, $N = 34$, $M = 3.61$). An independent t-test showed that this difference was statistically significant ($F = 5.05$, $p < .03$). This could be due to the fact that the 2009 class had one extra focus paper due, and therefore practice effects could have pulled the mean up.

I was also disappointed in my efforts to find a significant improvement in the focus paper grades from the beginning of the 2010 to the end. Since the FaCTS class had 7 focus papers due, the mean of the first three focus papers ($N = 34$, $M = 3.46$) was compared to the mean of the final three focus papers ($N = 34$, $M = 3.59$). Although there was an improvement overall, this difference was not strong enough to be significant in a dependent t-test ($t = 5.05$, $p = .58$). This could be due to Type II error, or could be attributed to the fact that our students tend to be consistent in their performance throughout the semester.

Once again, mean class evaluations did not exhibit expected trends between the 2009 class (overall $M = 4.71$) and the 2010 class (overall $M = 4.50$), on a Likert scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). On the bright side, the class seems to be enjoyable and informative for all students regardless of reading choice, as these evaluations reflect a very high degree of satisfaction across questions about class preparation, clarity of course objectives, and opportunities for learning. What follows are some selections of student comments from the 2010 class evaluations:

"The use of the book *As Nature Made Him* made the class more enjoyable and should become a part of the overall curriculum."

"Great examples, great explanation, great balance of work between takeovers, papers, tests, and book."

"Although recently converted to a QEP class, the overall objectives were met and the reading selections were appropriate and enjoyable."

"Very good statistics and interesting material learned."

Therefore, in spite of disappointing statistical outcomes, I am still grateful for the opportunity to have conducted this project, and am considering the entire experience a success.