

UNIV 112 – Focused Inquiry II TR11: Spring 2011 Syllabus

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Office Hours:

Noon – 2:00PM

or by appointment

Course Goals

As the second part of a two-semester course sequence, UNIV 112--Focused Inquiry II, will help you to improve your writing skills while continuing work on your critical thinking, ethical reasoning, collaboration, oral communication, and information fluency skills. UNIV 112 is designed to provide you with practice in writing literary analysis, experiential and expository essays, and argument. This practice will prepare you for the types of writing you will encounter and be expected to produce throughout your university career (and likely beyond). Building on UNIV 111, UNIV 112 applies the notion of the "spiral curriculum" in that you improve your skills by repeating key concepts and adding to the complexity of those concepts with each subsequent unit.

The UNIV 112 curriculum will prepare you to:

- identify different genres of writing for purpose and audience,
- generate relevant questions and conclusions,
- apply critical thinking strategies to analyzing and creating arguments,
- support conclusions with appropriate evidence,
- generate both informal and formal written products for assessment,
- analyze and evaluate your own writing process(es),
- practice appropriate information retrieval and source evaluation,
- provide peer response and participate in group feedback,
- effectively collaborate on activities and projects
- present your ideas orally, in formal and informal contexts,
- recognize and assess the moral implications of issues, draw inferences from moral judgments to address an issue, and articulate moral viewpoints, and
- evaluate quantitative information used as evidence.

UNIV 112 will continue to build on your ability to interpret, analyze, evaluate, and infer based on appropriate evidence, it will emphasize writing, revising, and proofreading. By the end of the course, you will be equipped to produce writing in a variety of genres that reflects your ability to appropriately frame writing according to both purpose and audience. More specifically, you will be equipped to connect your own ideas to academically relevant ideas, narrow your topics to an academic focus, determine the appropriateness of evidence for a given audience, analyze single texts, analyze and synthesize multiple texts, construct an argument based on scholarly evidence, organize your writing for an academic audience, and correct mechanical problems in your writing.

UNIV 112 is divided up into three theoretically and thematically connected units. These units are:

- Unit I: Experience/Culture/Text (*Memory → Collective Memories*)
- Unit II: Text/Context (*History → Histories*)
- Unit III: Context/Argument (*Possibility/Probability*)

Required Course Materials - you must have all these materials to be successful in the class:

- Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*, Sixth Edition with 2009 MLA Update
- McGraw-Hill Custom Reader: *History, Memory and Possibility: Focused Inquiry*, VCU 2010-2011 Edition (came packaged with Sherman Alexie's *Flight*)
- *Flight* by Sherman Alexie
- VCU email and Blackboard accounts *and reliable DAILY access to them.*
- A tape-bound composition notebook (your Journal)

Coursework

Here's a basic outline of what students are expected to do in this class:

- Complete reading assignments to help them develop ideas and skills and understand course assignments;
- Write an experiential essay concerning an incident of social injustice they have witnessed;
- Students will take one timed essay exam based on the Holiday Reading and write a reflection about their performance on that exam;
- Students will produce a researched, argumentative essay demonstrating ethical reasoning (5-7 pages or 1250-1750 words);
- Students will prepare for and participate in peer editing workshops;
- Students will prepare for and produce a group oral presentation;
- Students will prepare for and produce an individual oral presentation;
- Students will compile a portfolio of course work that will be revised over the course of the semester;
- Students will fulfill 15 hours of community service, 10 of which will be working with a particular community partner;
- Students will also be responsible for homework assignments, in-class assignments and discussions, collaborative exercises, reading responses, and additional informal writing.

Course Grading:

Unit Essays and Timed Essay Exam:	
Unit I Experiential Essay:	100 points
Unit II Timed Essay Exam:	100 points
Unit III Proposal Letter and Annotated Bibliography:	100 points
Unit IV Researched Argumentative Essay:	200 points
Group Presentation:	50 points
Individual Oral Presentation:	50 points
Journals:	100 points
Discussion Boards:	100 points
Community Service Blogs:	100 points
Class Attendance, Participation, Portfolio*, and Other Assignments:	<u>100 points</u>
Total:	1000 points

***You cannot exit UNIV 112 without successful completion of your portfolio. Failure to turn in a portfolio by the deadline will result in an Incomplete. Failure to submit the portfolio to remove the incomplete will result in a grade of F. You must earn a C or better in UNIV 112 to pass.**

Benefits of taking a Service-Learning course:

- A Service-Learning designation on your transcript (the course is designated "S-L"), indicating that you have been willing to participate in service to your community.
- A line item for your resume. Future employers want to see that students have engaged in a variety of worthwhile activities during their academic careers. While good grades are of primary importance on a transcript, service learning can be that extra something that makes you stand out to a future employer.
- Contacts gained through your service relationship with community partners are likely to yield recommendation letters acknowledging your contribution to that organization. Here again, such a letter is excellent supplementary documentation in your resume files.
- Moving outside of VCU's boundaries, meeting new people and gaining knowledge about the community in which you live and study, becoming a participating member of the community.
- Making a difference!

Service-Learning at Virginia Commonwealth University is a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which you participate in an organized service activity that meets community-identified needs. You will at intervals *reflect* on the service activity to increase understanding and application of course content and to enhance a sense of civic responsibility. A distinctive characteristic of service-learning is that it engages you in such reflection to enable you to synthesize your service experiences by connecting hands-on learning taking place in the community to academic concepts. Reflection encourages you to develop self-assessment skills as life-long learners, to appreciate diversity of life situations, and to explore and clarify values that can foster civic responsibility (Hatcher, Julie, and Robert Bringle. "Reflections: Bridging the Gap between Service and Learning." *Journal of College Teaching* 45 (1997): 153-58.

What are the requirements for the Service-Learning component of this course? The service-learning component of this course complements Focused Inquiry. Service-learning is a system of learning that asks for you to think critically by becoming active *with* the community. Because this course is designated as a Service-Learning course, you are required to participate in Service-Learning activities and to meet all requirements associated with the Service-Learning work that you do – you'll be able to choose your community partner from the list we generate from our list of fall partners.

- You will commit fifteen hours of service work during the spring semester (beyond that already performed in the fall term) with our community partners, chosen by our class from our list of fall partners. Depending on your service activity, this may be a once-a-week meeting every week over the course of the semester, or it may be covered in two or three days of work, requiring something approaching a day-long stretch of service.
- You'll make an agreement for service with one of our chosen community partners.
- You'll keep a service log with your hours, to be signed by your community service contact.
- Throughout the semester, you'll post reflective blogs about your project. Students who participated in the same organization will make a group presentation about their experiences. We would love to see slides/photographs of your work, if applicable, so keep this in mind as you do your service-learning work.
- You'll keep in touch with your group members concerning your service experience via your particular group site on Blackboard and in class via group meetings.
- Your final research paper will touch on some aspect of your service learning experience, suggesting policy initiatives that might enhance future prospects for the community served by your organization.

COURSE POLICIES

Cell Phone Policy: Cell phone use can create significant distractions in an active-learning class such as ours. Turn off and put away your cell phones before entering the classroom. (I understand there may be occasions when special circumstances require that a student be reached by cell phone during class-- for instance, if you have a job that requires you to be on-call or you are a parent with a sick child. If this is the case, please notify me as you enter the room at the start of class.)

Required format for written assignments (including homework):

Written assignments should conform to the following specifications. *You may need to adjust their software settings to adhere to these requirements:*

- Times New Roman, 12 point
- Margins: 1 inch, left and right, top and bottom
- Justification: left margin only
- Line spacing: double-spaced.
- Graphics: in an appendix only
- Documentation: MLA style

See pages 74-76 in Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* for a model.

Each unit writing assignment will also involve a writer's reflection about the assignment experience. These are designed to help you get the most learning out of your work and should also help move you toward a completed Portfolio.

Blackboard

Course documents, schedules, assignments, discussion forums, communication, and secure file storage in the Content System are available through the Blackboard learning management system at <http://blackboard.vcu.edu> or through your VCU portal. You are required to check Blackboard on a regular basis and are completely responsible for the consequences of not reading announcements, assignments, or other posts in a timely fashion. The library has computers with Internet connections available for student use. If you have technical difficulties with Blackboard, VCU email, or your computer, it is your responsibility to resolve those difficulties through the appropriate channels in a timely way. The technology help desk can be reached at 828-2227 or <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/helpdesk.html> - if you have technical difficulties with your personal computer, I recommend you take it to see them in the basement of Cabell Library.

Focused Inquiry Program Attendance Policy:

UNIV 111 requires prepared, active participation during class sessions.

- Students who miss more than three (3) classes cannot expect to receive an "A" in the course.
- The instructor has the right to lower a student's final course grade as the sole result of his or her repeated absences and tardiness.
- Attendance is mandatory but not sufficient for top performance in this course.
- Being absent from class does not relieve students of responsibility for completing all course work by the scheduled due dates – please check Blackboard Assignments and Notes first and check in with fellow students before contacting me for missed material.
- Students who miss more than 25% of the classes will automatically fail. **In a TTH class, this is 8 or more absences.**
- There are no "excused" or "unexcused" absences. If you are absent due to university business, please provide documentation about what particular dates you'll be absent on VCU letterhead from the appropriate authority.

I keep and report daily attendance. You will receive an automated email from your advisor each time you are absent. If you receive an email in error, please let me know immediately.

University Policies

Email Policy: Electronic mail or "email" is considered an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost effective, and environmentally aware manner. This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the University as needed. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of University-related actions, including disciplinary action. Please read the policy in its entirety: <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/policies/webemail.html>

VCU Honor System - Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: The VCU honor system policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty, and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. According to his policy, "members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity." In addition, "All members of the VCU community are presumed to have an understanding of the VCU Honor System and are required to:

- Agree to be bound by the Honor System policy and its procedures;
- Report suspicion or knowledge of possible violations of the Honor System;
- Support an environment that reflects a commitment to academic integrity;
- Answer truthfully when called upon to do so regarding Honor System cases, and,
- Maintain confidentiality regarding specific information in Honor System cases."

Most importantly, "All VCU students are presumed upon enrollment to have acquainted themselves with and have an understanding of the Honor System." (The VCU INSIDER, VCU Honor System 131-132).

The Honor System in its entirety can be reviewed on the Web at http://www.provost.vcu.edu/pdfs/Honor_system_policy.pdf or it can be found in the 2010-11 VCU Insider at http://www.students.vcu.edu/docs/Insider_10-11_book_final.pdf

In this class, because coursework will be at times collaborative, particular issues of integrity arise. You should not copy or print another student's work without permission. Any material (this includes **language or ideas**) from another source must be credited, whether that material is quoted directly, summarized, or paraphrased. In other words, you should respect the work of others and in no way present it as your own.

Student Conduct in the Classroom: According to the *VCU Resource Guide*, "The instructional program at VCU is based upon the premise that students enrolled in a class are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other students. Accordingly, in classrooms, laboratories, studies, and other learning areas, students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner so that faculty members can proceed with their customary instruction. Faculty members (including graduate teaching assistants) may set reasonable standards for classroom behavior in order to serve these objectives. If a student believes that the behavior of another student is disruptive, the instructor should be informed." Among other things,

cell phones and beepers should be turned off while in the classroom. Also, the University Rules and Procedures prohibit anyone from having "...in his possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive, regardless of whether a license to possess the same has been issued, without the written authorization of the President of the university..." See the *VCU Resource Guide* for more information: http://www.students.vcu.edu/docs/Insider_10-11_book_final.pdf

Certainly the expectation in this course is that students will attend class with punctuality, proper decorum, required course material, and studious involvement. The *VCU Resource Guide* contains additional important information about a number of other policies with which students should be familiar, including Guidelines on Prohibition of Sexual Harassment, Grade Review Procedure, and Ethics Policy on Computing. It also contains maps, phone numbers, and information about resources available to VCU students. The *VCU Resource Guide* is available online or through the Division of Student Affairs.

Students with Disabilities

SECTION 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require that VCU provide an "academic adjustment" and/or a "reasonable accommodation" to any individual who advises us of a physical and/or mental disability. To receive accommodations, students must disclose their need for disability-related accommodations with the Disability Support Services Office (DSS). The DSS office is located in the Student Commons, Room 102. The office phone number is 828-2253. The coordinator is Joyce Knight. More information is available at the Disability Support Services webpage: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/dss/>

If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or accommodation, arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience. Additionally, if your coursework requires you to work in a lab environment, you should advise me or a department chairperson of any concerns you may have regarding safety issues related to your limitation(s). This statement applies not only to this course but also to every other course in this University.

Statement on Military Short-Term Training or Deployment

Military students may receive orders for short-term training or deployment. These students are asked to inform and present their orders to their professor(s). For further information on policies and procedures contact Military Services at 828-5993 or access the corresponding policies at <http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/about/?Default.aspx?uid=10096&iid=30704> and <http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/BULLETINS/undergraduate/?uid=10096&iid=30773>.

Campus Emergency information

What to Know and Do To Be Prepared for Emergencies at VCU:

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>). Keep your information up-to-date. Within the classroom, the professor will keep her phone on to receive any emergency transmissions.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities. Within the

classroom, follow your professor's instructions.

4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

Make a Commitment to Community Learning

Your learning here at VCU is not limited to what goes on in your classrooms; in fact, part of a full and rich college experience is tapping into as many different kinds of learning as possible. Learning happens as a result of being exposed to different ideas and different experiences, both in the classroom and beyond, in the larger University community. It often takes other peoples' perspectives and opinions to spark in us new and deeper ways of seeing something. Think, for example, when you listen to other people in class or in general conversation, how many times you have said to yourself, "Gee. I never thought of it that way before." Thus, we learn and think through social exchange. Be a social learner while you are here. There are a number of social learning communities that should be of particular interest to you as a first-year student.

<p>Campus Learning Center</p> <p>Hibbs Hall, 1st Floor</p> <p>www.vcu.edu/uc/clc/ 827-8108</p>	<p>The University College Campus Learning Center offers a variety of community learning opportunities to support your work in most 100 and 200 level courses. You can receive one-on-one or group based learning support <i>at no charge</i>. Study skills assistance is also available. Check out the CLC website for complete information.</p>
<p>VCU Libraries</p> <p>www.library.vcu.edu/</p> <p>Cabell Library Research & Instructional Services</p> <p>"Ask Us" Research Assistance Desk 828-1101</p>	<p>Reference librarians are available for research assistance at the "Ask Us" desk on Cabell Library's first floor or via email at library@vcu.edu. Individual consultations with a librarian are also available. VCU Libraries is one of the largest research libraries in Virginia – with nearly two million volumes; almost 24,000 journal and other serial titles; more than 3.18 million microforms; film, video, sound, comic, manuscript and book art collections; and the largest health sciences library in Virginia. James Branch Cabell Library is the university's center for study and research in the arts, humanities, social sciences and physical sciences.</p>
<p>Academic Advising</p> <p>Hibbs Hall, 1st Floor</p> <p>827-8648 (UNIV)</p> <p>www.vcu.edu/uc/firstyearadvising/</p>	<p>The University College provides academic advising for all first-year students and for those who are not yet admitted into a professional school or academic program. Your advisor can help you find your way around the university, especially in helping you understand academic requirements and policies, choosing an appropriate program of study, and identifying educational and career goals.</p>
<p>The Language Resource Center</p> <p>Harris Hall, room 5149</p> <p>www.vcu.edu/uc/fi/FocusedInquiryLanguageResourceCenter.htm</p>	<p>The University College Language Resource Center (LRC) provides specialized support to English language learners (ELLs) in the Focused Inquiry program. The LRC encourages success by helping students develop their vocabulary and reading comprehension, fluency in composition, oral communication, and understanding of American academic rhetorical expectations.</p>

<p>The Writing Center</p> <p>Hibbs Hall, 1st Floor 827-8108</p> <p>www.vcu.edu/uc/writingcenter/</p>	<p>The University College Writing Center offers support for the entire VCU community. Services for students include one-on-one consultations and workshops on a wide variety of topics associated with academic writing, reading, and critical thinking. As you work on your writing assignments, you will benefit the most if you plan multiple visits to the Writing Center – for brainstorming and planning, for developing and organizing, and then for revising, editing and proofreading.</p>
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Unit One (1-18-2/10): Experience/Culture/Text

(Memory → Collective Memories)

In addition to reading, discussing, and analyzing Sherman Alexie's *Flight*, you will examine a number of sample essays (both from the McGraw-Hill reader and from electronic sources) to explore the themes of Memory and Collective Memory. You will critically examine your own assumptions about public issues/ideas. You will model and then practice workshop/feedback strategies. In this Unit, you will also continue to practice generating writing and ideas for larger writing projects and will practice "writing to figure things out" (i.e. "daily writing practice"). You will practice revision (rethinking and rewriting). You will reflect on your writing processes through written and oral responses.

Inquiry Questions: *How do we approach a text in assessing not only its meaning, but also its methods? What kinds of support do writers need to offer for the assertions they make in personal, reflective, or creative writing? What can one learn from a text about writerly choices and the craft of writing? How does the writing/thinking situation change when one is writing "under pressure," as in a timed writing?*

Major Assignments

- **Unit Writing Assignment** - Experiential Essay about an Incident of Social Injustice
- **Oral Presentation** • Fishbowl

Mon Jan 24: Last Day to Drop/Add

Fri Jan 28: Deadline for Written Advance Notice to Observe Religious Holidays

Unit Two (2/15 – 3/10): Text/Context

(History → Histories)

You will examine an issue, concept, or event within a cultural, political, or historical context. You will attend an intensive library instruction session to further learn about academic research in the VCU library system. You will conduct research to determine this cultural/political/historical context and as a means to begin thinking critically about how perspectives on your issue, concept, or event has changed over time. You will continue to practice workshop/feedback strategies. You will also continue to practice generating writing and ideas for larger writing projects and will practice "writing to figure things out" (i.e. "daily writing practice"). You will practice revision (rethinking and rewriting) and you will reflect on your writing processes through written and oral responses.

Inquiry Questions: *How does considering the “larger” (i.e. social, political, historical, etc.) contexts of a topic lead to greater critical understanding? How can exploring “expert” sources help one understand these larger contexts? How are the larger questions that characterize the human experience changing over time or from culture to culture? How does organizing a topic for an academic audience lead to more substantive analysis?*

Major Assignments

- **Unit Writing Assignment** • Timed Essay Exam
- **Collaborative Group Presentation**

Mon Feb 28: Deadline to submit completed work to remove fall term grade of Incomplete
Mon Mar 14 –Fri Mar 18: Spring Break – NO CLASSES

Unit Three (3/22 – 5/3): Context/Argument

(Possibility/Probability)

In this section, you will utilize the research and writing you did in Unit II to produce questions that will lead to additional research and writing. The end result will be an academic argumentative essay. You will continue to practice your oral presentation skills by preparing for and doing an individual oral presentation at the end of the term. You will continue to practice workshop/feedback strategies. You will also continue to practice generating writing and ideas for larger writing projects and will practice “writing to figure things out” (i.e. “daily writing practice”). You will practice revision (rethinking and rewriting) and will produce a portfolio of representative work by the end of the term. You will reflect on your writing processes through written and oral responses.

Inquiry Questions: *How does one navigate thinking and research through writing for an academic audience? How does starting the research process with a question change the process itself? What kinds of questions lend themselves to academic research? How can different answers, and even different kinds of answers, to research questions, help form more complete claims? How can one maintain one’s “voice” within a more formal piece of writing?*

Major Assignments

Unit Writing Assignments

- Annotated Bibliography
- Argumentative Essay with Research (5-7 pages or 1250-1750 words)
- Portfolio: 3 representative pieces of writing from the spring term to add to your selections from the fall term, and a revision of your fall reflective cover essay that references your selections and reflects on your learning over the course of the year. Portfolios will be electronic, submitted through Blackboard, and shared with the course instructor.

Individual Presentation - Source Analysis and Response

Fri Mar 25 - Last Day to Withdraw with Grade of W (upon consultation with advisor)
Wed May 4 – FI EXPO
Exam Period – Tue May 10, 8:00-10:50AM