

Learning and Knowledge Creation

FSSO 103 (CRN 15797): SAGES Social World First Seminar

Fall Semester 2005

Instructors

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M 12:30-1:45 in **Peter B. Lewis 120** & TR 8:30 – 9:45 in **Peter B. Lewis 121**

The focus of this course is on the process of learning and knowledge creation. We will examine this process from two perspectives—from your perspective as a learner entering Case to choose and develop a career path and from the perspective of Case as an academic community characterized by a rich diversity of academic disciplines with different approaches to learning and knowledge creation. We will begin by exploring the learning process and your unique approach to learning with its strengths and challenges, and how it influences your academic interests and desired career path. We will continue our intellectual journey of discovery and inquiry through the exploration of the rich learning environments of Case and University Circle Institutions. Using philosophical analysis of the different forms of knowledge creation and criteria for truth, social analysis of the culture of academic fields and individual study of professors and scholars in different fields, we will examine the skills and values required for successful learning and knowledge creation in these fields. In particular we will compare and contrast ways of learning and knowledge creation in science and the arts studying Case and the Cleveland Institute of Art.

The course provides an introduction to various dimensions of academic life. It will be characterized by intense yet open-ended intellectual inquiry, guided by reading from primary as well as secondary sources, and will include practice in written and oral communication in small groups. The goals are to enhance basic intellectual skills of academic inquiry, such as critical reading, thoughtful analysis, and written and oral communication; to introduce basic information literacy skills; to provide a foundation for ethical decision-making; to encourage a global and multidisciplinary perspective on the learning process; to facilitate faculty-student interactions; and to provide a supportive common intellectual experience for first-year students at Case.

READINGS

Texts:

Gould, S. J. (2003). *The hedgehog, the fox, and the magister's pox: Mending the gap between science and the humanities*. New York: Harmony Books.

Light, R. J. (2001). *Making most of college: Students speak their minds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Andrea Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*, 2nd ed. (Boston: St. Martin's, 2001).

Handouts:

Carlsson, B., Keane, P., & Martin, J. B. (1976). R & D organizations as learning systems. *Sloan Management Review*, 17, 1-15.

Deslauriers, D. (1992). "Dimensions of Knowing: Narrative, Paradigm, and Ritual," *ReVision*, 14(4), 1992, pp. 187-193.

Kahn, M. *The Seminar*. Unpublished paper 1974

Kolb, A. Y. & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. 4(2): 193-212.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall, Chapter 2 "The process of experiential learning" & Chapter 5 "The structure of knowledge".

Kolb, D. A. (1981). Learning styles and disciplinary differences: Diverse pathways for growth. In A. Chickering (Ed.), *The modern American college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kolb, D., Kolb, A., Kayes, D. C., Kayes, A. (2004). *The Kolb Team Learning Experience*. Hay Resources Direct.

Turkle, S. and Papert, S. (1992) Epistemological pluralism and the revaluation of the concrete. *Journal of mathematical behavior*. 11(1): 3-33.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: The University as a Learning Community.

This part of the course will be devoted to the understanding of what it means to be a member of the Case learning community. Based on assigned course books, class discussions, and your personal experience as the new member of the University we will explore various aspects of the academic life you are about to begin. What happens at a university? What can I do to get most of my college experience? What are the skills I need to succeed in my college life? These are the questions we will explore together to make your college life enjoyable, intellectually stimulating, and to help you become productive members of the Case learning community.

Tue 8/30 Introduction to the course and experiential learning.

Thur 9/1 Creating our Teaching and Learning Contract
Read: Michael Kahn, “The Seminar”

Tue 9/6 Diagnostic writing exercise.
Read and discuss Richard Light, *Making most of college: Students speak their minds*.

Thur 9/8 Seminar discussion about—Richard Light, *Making most of college: Students speak their minds*.

Tue 9/13 Writing instruction—Peer Review.
First writing assignment due: *Getting the Most from My Case College Experience*.

Thur 9/15 Writing instruction.

Mon 9/19 **SAGES Plenary session.** Academic advising and Major exploration in the first year.

Part II: My Learning Style and Learning Skills

This part of the course will focus on understanding our learning process as individuals and as a group. Each one of us has a unique “life of the mind,” and therefore, we develop learning preferences very different from one another. Understanding our learning process gives us important tools to become effective learners throughout our lives. How can I apply my learning style information to maximize my learning? Will learning style information help me develop a better relationship with my teachers and peers? What are specific learning skills I need to develop to succeed in various courses? How can we learn from other’s differences and work effectively as a group? These are the questions we will explore through readings, discussions, and structured experiential exercises.

Tue 9/20 Understanding individual learning styles. Take the Kolb Learning Style Inventory on-line, print out your scores and interpretative material and bring them to class.

Readings: Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall, Chapter 2 “The process of experiential learning”

Kolb, A. Y. & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. 4(2): 193-212.

Kolb, D. A. (1981). Learning styles and disciplinary differences: Diverse pathways for growth. In A. Chickering (Ed.), *The modern American College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Thur 9/22 Assessing your learning skills. Take the Learning Skills Profile on-line, print out your scores and interpretative material and bring them to class.

First writing assignment due: Final revision.

Mon 9/26 The Learning skill demands of my prospective academic major and my skill development goals.

Tue 9/27 Writing instruction: Learning style and learning skills research paper/interviews.

Thur 9/29 Learning in conversation: Creating knowledge together.

Mon 10/3 & Wed 10/4 **Sages Plenary Session.** Major/minor Overviews. (Repeated 10/10 & 10/12)

Tue 10/4 Forming Learning Teams. Coffee Beanery Exercise.

Thur 10/6 Team Purpose & Membership.

Mon 10/10 **Second writing assignment due: *Learning Style and Learning Skills Research paper.***

Tue 10/11 Writing instruction: Peer review

Thur 10/13 Oral communication practice in teams.

Tue 10/18 Oral communication practice in teams.

Thur 10/20 Oral communication practice in teams.

Second writing assignment due: Final revision.

Part III: My Desired Major and Academic Demands

This part of the course centers on exploration of your future majors and careers and academic requirements of different fields offered at Case. In considering your future major and career, it is important to acknowledge the diverse developmental pathways that exist within disciplines and professions. Disciplines show variations not only in the knowledge structure, research method, criteria for academic excellence and productivity, but also in differences in student and faculty demographics, personality and aptitudes, as well as differences in values and cultural norms. For you as a student, education in an academic field is a continuing process of socialization and selection into the pivotal norms of governing criteria for learning and knowledge creation and how it is to be achieved, used, and communicated. How do academic fields differ and what are the overall requirements of the field I am about to enter? Will my disciplinary interest change in the future? Building on what we have learned in Part I and Part II, these are the question we will explore through readings, discussions, and group activities.

Mon 10/24 No class

Tue 10/25 No class

Thur 10/27 Session on Library Research Resources.

Mon 10/31 Seminar Discussion

Read: Gould, S. J. (2003). *The hedgehog, the fox, and the magister's pox: Mending the gap between science and the humanities.* New York: Harmony Books.

Tue 11/1 Seminar Discussion

Read: Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall, Chapter 5 “The structure of knowledge”.

Deslauriers, D. (1992). “Dimensions of Knowing: Narrative, Paradigm, and Ritual,” *ReVision*, 14(4), 1992, pp. 187-193.

Turkle, S. and Papert, S. (1992) Epistemological pluralism and the revaluation of the concrete. *Journal of mathematical behavior*. 11(1): 3-33

Thur 11/3 Seminar Discussion

Fri 11/4 **Sages Choices Fair**—Investigation of disciplinary knowledge creation processes

Mon 11/7 Visit to Cleveland Institute of Art

Tue 11/8 Individual writing conferences.

Thur 11/10 Team project work.

Third writing assignment due: *Learning and Knowledge Creation in My Prospective Academic Major and the Skills it Will Require*

Part IV: Knowledge Creation and Learning in Different Fields

The last part of the course will focus on the importance of people working together to create new knowledge. Working in groups of four students each, you will explore the “life of the mind” of university faculty members in four different fields—an arts discipline, a science discipline, a service profession and a science based profession. The first goal of this project is to learn how individual research projects are parts of a larger scholarly “conversations” spanning both time and space. A second goal is to gain greater understanding of the diverse and exciting range of research that takes place in this university. A third goal is to provide opportunity to learn and practice relevant skills to work effectively as a team. You will work as a team to contact the faculty members, conduct interviews, carefully study and analyze their areas of inquiry, and integrate the findings with previous readings and classroom discussions. The project will culminate in a team oral presentation on the interviewees’ research work and professional experience and learning and knowledge creation in his or her field. An individual paper that focuses on an in-depth analysis of a topic of your choice related to the course theme of learning and knowledge creation will be the final writing assignment of the semester.

Tue 11/15 Team debate: Hedgehog vs. Fox: Which path to truth?

Thur 11/17 Team project work.

Final paper topic choice

Mon 11/21 Team project work

Tue 11/22 Science Discipline: Team presentation

Thur 11/24 Thanksgiving

Tue 11/29 Arts Discipline: Team presentation

Thur 12/01 Science Based Profession: Team presentation

Mon 12/5 Human Science Based Profession: Team presentation

Tue 12/6 Team Learning Process Analysis

Read: Carlsson, B., Keane, P., & Martin, J. B. (1976). R & D organizations as learning systems. *Sloan Management Review*, 17, 1-15.

Thur 12/8 Summary. **Fourth writing assignment due: Individual paper.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Weighting of grades. Final course grades will be weighted as follows:

- Class Participation 20%
- Writing Assignments 40% (10% per paper)
- Oral Presentations 20% (10% per presentation)
- Writing Folder 20%

2. Class participation (20%). Attendance and active participation in regular class sessions and fourth-hour events is essential, and is required. Your attendance should be 100%. (Each unexcused absence will result in a grade penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade off the class participation grade, and three late arrivals equal one unexcused absence.) The instructors will **start classes on time**, and finish on time. Students should be just as courteous in arriving on time to classes. Positive contributions to class discussions will also be a factor in the determination of this grade element.

3. Writing assignments (40% in all, 10% per paper). A major goal of the seminar is to help you improve your writing skills. In addition to your three seminar instructors, you can also get assistance from the Writing Resource Center and the SAGES Peer Writing Crew at <http://studentaffairs.case.edu/education/services/writing/>

There will be four writing assignments each four to six pages long. Detailed assignment sheets will be given out for each writing assignment:

Assignment #1. *Getting the Most from My Case College Experience.*

Assignment #2. *Learning Style and Learning Skills Research paper.*

Assignment #3. *Learning and Knowledge Creation in My Prospective Academic Major and the Skills it Will Require*

Assignment #4. *Individual paper.*

The first two papers will be graded in successive drafts in order to allow you the opportunity to experience supervised revision and improve your paper. The grade for each paper depends on the quality of *each* draft. That is, the better the first draft, the better the ultimate grade on the paper; also, the better the final draft and the more improvement shown, the better the ultimate paper grade.

Students must retain both printed copies *and* computer documents for all four papers, including each draft of those submitted in multiple drafts. Final versions of these papers will be part of the student's permanent Writing Portfolio, which s/he will maintain throughout the SAGES program. (Writing instruction is part of all four SAGES seminars. Although not part of the student's grade for this course, the Writing Portfolio will be evaluated at the end of the student's second year, to determine that the student has demonstrated writing competency.)

Papers are due in hard copy (word processed, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins all around, double-spaced throughout) at the **beginning** of class on the due date. Late papers will be penalized with a reduction of one-third letter grade per day. Instructors reserve the right to grant extensions in truly extraordinary circumstances; these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. In addition to hard copy, electronic files of all papers must be retained and backed up. At the last meeting of the course, all files will be submitted in the PDF format generated by Adobe Distiller. Finally, for their own records, each student should burn a CD-ROM (write once, read many times technology) of all of the files submitted.

3. Group interview project. During the last part of the course, students will explore the “life of the mind” of faculty members in four different university departments. Working in your teams, you will share what you learn through in-class team presentations. A list of available faculty subjects will be provided by instructors. Carefully prepared interviews will be conducted by the groups, in order to provide material for analysis, and the faculty member will suggest one or two short, accessible readings for incorporation into the project. Areas of inquiry will include the researcher’s area of expertise; the background and potential significance of the work; the researcher’s career path leading to this expertise; the particular approaches or methodologies s/he uses; and ethical issues involved in the research. It will also be important to take account of the *collaborative* character of the research process and its context within the larger community. One of the goals of this assignment is to learn how individual research projects are actually parts of larger scholarly “conversations,” within different discipline knowledge structures. A second goal is to gain a greater understanding of the diverse and exciting range of research that takes place in this university; a third is to provide further exercise in written and oral communication. The project will culminate in an oral presentation on the faculty members and their department, as well as a written paper that focuses on *one particular aspect or theme* with which the project was concerned. The oral presentation will be conducted by the entire group that collaborated in the project, but the papers will be individual. The oral presentation grade will constitute 10% of the student’s course grade. The individual written paper will count as the last of the four writing assignments described above.

4. Oral presentations (20% in all, 10% per presentation). Each student will present two oral presentations, each comprising 10% of the course grade. One of these will be an **individual oral presentation**, assigned in connection with the first writing assignment. The other will be the **group oral presentation** connected with the group interview project described above, which will take place near the end of the semester. These presentations must be analytical and interpretive, not just descriptive narrative.

5. Writing folder (20%). In lieu of a final exam, each student will build a Writing Folder comprised of revised versions of her/his three best papers and a four-page self-assessment of her/his development as a writer through the course of the semester. (Do not confuse this final First Seminar course requirement with the SAGES Writing Portfolio.) Working with the course instructors, students will make final revisions that use the skills that have been acquired during the semester. These folders will be submitted in digital as well as paper formats, so that they may be digitally archived. This is a very important part of the course; the development of this folder has the essential function of a final examination, and the student should dedicate the time to this task that would be similar to the effort that would be taken in studying for a final.