

**SCLA 102**

**Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking and Communication II: Modern World**

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CRN: 22148  
Classroom: BRNG B238  
Time: Tu & Th: 7:30-8:45am

**Course Description**

SCLA 102 (3 credit hours) is based on the fundamental premise that great texts—whether famous speeches, essays, or poetry as well as film and digital media—inform and inspire students, encouraging their creative and imaginative capacities, helping students see the world from different perspectives and broadening their worldview. In this class, we will examine a series of texts and media (including novels, essays, speeches, live performance, film, and music); seeking to understand the contexts in which these texts were produced as well as what these texts mean to us today.

SCLA 102 is part of Level I of the Cornerstone certificate program. It fulfills the Oral Communication requirement in the University Core Curriculum. It is dedicated to developing and enhancing the ability of students to convey information through oral presentations, advancing their understanding of the importance of rhetorical situations and choices; analyzing and constructing presentations for different audiences; gathering and evaluating sources for presentations and using visual aids effectively.

The theme for this course will be the zeitgeist of the 1920s. Translated from German, zeitgeist means “spirit of the time,” or more loosely “the spirit of an age.” Certain times seem to have governing spirits, periods when the politics, economics, and culture appear to be in tune. Historians and other scholars and non-scholars talk about the 1930s or the 1960s, as if those decades had a spirit of their own. Or they speak of generations—the Boomer Generation or Generation X, Y, or Z. Are they different? Do they have their own unique zeitgeist? In many ways the 1920s was the first decade that historians viewed as a set piece. Was this accurate? And if so, why? In this course, we will examine the zeitgeist of the 1920s through its history, novels, poetry, music, films, and other documents. We will also attempt to define the zeitgeist of your generation in the same fashion.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Demonstrate effective, professional delivery, designing and adapting appropriate verbal appeals through vocal intonation and non-verbal cues.
2. Distinguish and apply appropriate informative, persuasive, explanatory, interrogatory and argumentative strategies and techniques in the discussions and in formal presentations.
3. Organize presentations with effective supporting materials.
4. Locate and evaluate effective sources of information.
5. Engage critically with transformative texts, drawing on multiple perspectives, including the individual, the historical, and the contemporary.

**Required Texts**

The following texts are required for this course. Try to get the specified editions.

- Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, (Ballantine Books, 1982)

- Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* The Hemingway Library Edition (Scribner's, 2014)
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* Edited by James I. W. West III (Scribner's, 2018)

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard for download.

### Assignments & Grades

- **Attendance & Discussion:** This course is a seminar. As such, it requires your thoughtful participation in classroom discussion and activities. This includes active notetaking in order to record the main ideas that surface during class discussions as well as thoughtful and civil engagement with course colleagues regarding the course material. In order to do this, however, it is imperative that you carefully read the assigned texts before class, taking note of the main ideas and arguments in the reading as well as points you did not understand and would like to discuss in class.
- **Weekly Prompts:** During a given class periods, you will be asked to answer a straightforward question regarding the course material. The prompt will be delivered at the beginning of class and you will have a few minutes to provide a thoughtful one or two paragraph response. No course material may be used to complete these assignments. These prompts will ensure that you are carefully completing the assigned course readings and provide you with practice in thoughtfully engaging with course material.
- **Two Brief Oral Presentations:** At two points in the course you will be tasked with making a short presentation introducing the text assigned for that day. One presentation will be made in class and one will be made at the [Purdue Presentation Center](#). Both presentations should be similar in format and design, however, your presentation at the PPC will be recorded and you will be required to review it with a staff member at the Center. (This may be a good opportunity to practice presenting before your presentation in class.) A successful presentation should be approximately 5 minutes in length and serve as an opening for a larger class discussion. Be sure to introduce the main ideas from the text, the major contours of the argument or story being told, the relevant characters, and your thoughts on how the text fits in to what we have been discussing thus far. More information on successful presentations will be forthcoming in class, however, it is also advisable to review resources at the Purdue Presentation Center, rubrics and materials posted to our Blackboard site.
- **Final Paper:** You will be asked to compose a well-written and thoughtful essay which makes an argument using at least two texts that there is a zeitgeist of the present age—that is, your age. We will discuss this more in class.. Essays should be approximately 5 to 6 pages in length and engage with the texts in some depth, including judicious use of passages from the texts in question.
- **Oral Presentation:** Having written your final paper, you will then be asked to make a brief (approximately 8-10 minute) presentation to the class, clearly presenting your paper topic, thesis, argument, and evidence.

The respective weights of the above assignments are shown below:

Attendance & Participation:	10%
Weekly Writing Prompts:	20%
Oral Presentation 1:	10%
Oral Presentation 2:	10%
Final Paper:	20%
<u>Final Oral Presentation:</u>	<u>30%</u>

TOTAL: 100%

The grading scale for this class is as follows:

A+	100-98	B+	89-88	C+	79-78	D+	69-68	F	59-0
A	97-93	B	87-83	C	77-73	D	67-63		
A-	92-90	B-	82-80	C-	72-70	D-	63-60		

### Course Policies:

**Attendance:** The success of this course depends on you! Your presence, reading, and comments will all be required if *we* are to make this course a success. Because your presence is vital to the success of our joint endeavors in this class, it is necessary that you show up. Thus, attendance is mandatory. Things happen, so I'll allow two unexcused absences. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a deduction of 2% from your total grade. Tardiness will likewise not be tolerated. In addition to merely being present, it is vital that you show up to class ready to engage with the text and each other. Your participation grade will be determined based upon your preparedness for and engagement during class meetings. To this end, be sure to bring the text we are reading to class. Absences due to illness, religious observance, or a proper emergency will, of course, be excused. Should you be forced to miss class due to one of these reasons please inform me of your situation as soon as possible (and before you miss class) so that I can ensure your absence is excused.

**Technology:** No technology is allowed in class (unless otherwise noted). The only items you ought to be using during class are the texts, paper for note-taking, and a writing instrument.

**Communication: Email, Phone, & Blackboard:** During this course, we will be in contact with each other via your Purdue email address and our common course Blackboard site. Please be sure to check both of these regularly to be apprised of course information and/or changes to our course. If you have questions, concerns, or would simply like to discuss course material or a topic related to university life, please don't hesitate to be in touch, either via email or during office hours. I will do my best to respond promptly within normal business hours.

**Disabilities:** Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247. See also <http://www.purdue.edu/drc>.

**Academic Misconduct:** Of course, plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and, should it occur, will be dealt with pursuant to Purdue policy.

**University Non-Discrimination Statement:** Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy can be found at [http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.html](http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html).

**Major Campus Emergency:** In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading are subject to change that may be necessitated by a revised calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted on Blackboard and I will send an email.

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### Course Schedule

#### **Introduction:**

##### Jan. 14:

Welcome to the course!

Syllabus and Expectations

Introduction to the topic: What is a zeitgeist?

Introduce someone.

##### Jan. 16:

Introduce someone.

World War I and Erich Maria Remarque—Come to class with something to say about the event and the man.

##### Jan. 21:

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, chapters 1-4

Who are the good guys? Who are the bad ones?

##### Jan. 23:

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, chapters 5-6

The experience of war? How does it change a man?

##### Jan. 28:

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, chapters 7-9

##### Jan. 30:

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, chapters 10-12

What are Remarque's final impressions of war? What impact might the novel have on readers and politicians? How might it influence foreign policy and society in general?

##### Feb. 4:

The poetry of the war and the 1920s. From course package.

How did the war impact poetry and contribute to the zeitgeist of the 1920s?

Feb. 6:

**No Class**

Feb. 11:

Music of World War I

How did the music of the war have—and still have—a lasting impression? How does music play into pro-war and anti-war propaganda?

Feb, 13:

**The Sun Also Rises**, chapters 1-7

Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the major characters?

Feb, 18:

**The Sun Also Rises**, chapters 8-11

How has the war influenced the major characters?

Feb. 20:

**The Sun Also Rises**, chapters 12-16

Feb. 25:

**The Sun Also Rises**, chapters 17—18

Feb, 27:

*The Sun Also Rises*, chapter 19, Introduction, Appendix 1

What does it all mean for the themes of the course?

Mar. 3:

*The Great Gatsby*, Chapters 1-4 and Introduction

Who was F. Scott Fitzgerald? What was his life like?

Mar, 5: *The Great Gatsby*, chapters 5-6

Are the rich different? What governs their lives?

Mar. 10:

*The Great Gatsby*, chapters 7-9

Mar. 12:

Is there a 1920s zeitgeist? Is there another 1920s? How does the spirit of the 1920s compare to today?

Mar.17:

**Spring Break**

Mar. 19:

**Spring Break**

Mar. 24: Final Presentations in class

Mar. 26: Final Presentations in class

Mar. 31: Final Presentations in class

Apr. 2: Final Presentations in class

Apr. 7: Final Presentations in class

Apr. 9: Final Presentation in class (if necessary)

Apr. 14: Final Presentation in class (if necessary)

Apr. 16: Writing Seminar

Apr. 21: Tips from a Lifetime of writing

Apr 23: Individual Writing Instruction

Apr 28: Individual Writing Instruction

Apr. 30: Evaluation

**TBA: Papers due the day of the scheduled exam.**