

First Year Seminar – HUM DEV 198
More than ABC's and 123's: What we can learn from Sesame Street
Tuesday/Thursday: 12:30pm – 1:50pm
Section 003; Class Number 11871
Fall 2010 – MAC 223

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Office hours: Tuesdays: 11am-12pm; Wednesdays: 9:30-10:30am & 12pm-3:30pm; and by appointment

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Peer Mentor: Meghan Gehrke @ gehrml26@uwgb.edu

Required Text: Fisch, S. M., & Truglio, R. T. (2000). *"G" is for Growing*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Common Read: Loeb, P. (2010). *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in Challenging Times*. St. Martin's Press

Overview of the Course

Course description: This course will introduce students to the impact television has on the developing child. A large part of the course will be devoted to discussion of *Sesame Street*, with the goal of answering questions such as: (1) How is research on educational content integrated into the production of the show?, (2) How has this show been integrated into other cultures?, (3) What are methodological issues in conducting media-based research with young children?, and (4) What is the longitudinal impact of children viewing educational versus non-educational television? As each topic is introduced through the use of the text *"G" is for Growing*, additional readings and viewings of past and current television shows will be required to extend the discussion beyond *Sesame Street*. In general, students will be introduced to the world of research through a topic of study – children's television – with which students have likely had much experience.

First Year Seminar course: This course is part of the First Year Seminar (FYE) program at UW-Green Bay. This means it is one of 14 different sections of classes teaching general education materials to first-semester freshman in a small class-size seminar environment. As you can see in the syllabus, not only will you be learning about issues related to children's television in this course, but you will also be participating in a variety of activities to help you gain the most possible out of your time here at UW-Green Bay

This course meets all First Year Seminar Learning Outcomes:

- 1. Interdisciplinarity** - Consistent with UW-Green Bay's mission and philosophy, students should have an understanding of the importance of tackling problems from multiple perspectives.
- 2. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving** - Students need to address problems from multiple perspectives and have the ability to analyze data/information from a critical perspective.
- 3. Communication Skills** - This course emphasizes effective communication including writing, speaking, and the ability to work in a small group environment.
- 4. Creativity/Innovation** - Students are expected to develop, explore and present new ideas and beliefs.
- 5. Information Literacy** - The seminars introduce the idea of information literacy in the context of writing and speaking assignments so that students have a better understanding of how information is collected, how to assess the quality of the information and its sources, and how to use information effectively
- 6. Engagement** - Students have the opportunity to connect with other students, to connect campus resources, to connect their learning with other courses, and to connect with the community.

This course meets the following General Education Outcomes:

1. For Social Science 2 (SS2): Have a fundamental understanding of the Social Sciences, including the impact that social institutions and values have on individuals and groups in a culture

2. As a lower-level writing emphasis course: The course work in this class is intended to help you improve the quality of your writing. In all formal written work that you complete in this class (e.g. papers, journals), you will be graded upon both the quality as well as the content of your writing. Please make sure that your work is well-written, contains no spelling and grammatical errors, and includes logical, well-constructed points and a clear thesis/objective/topic. I encourage you to come see me during my office hours to work on drafts of your written assignments. I can help you with both the content of your assignment and the quality of your writing. For assistance in editing your written work, you can also set up a meeting with one of the UWGB Writing Center assistants (Writing Center 465-2338, CL 109). I strongly encourage you to seek out the assistance of the Writing Center if you would like to improve the style and clarity (e.g. grammar, flow, organization) of your writing. If you choose to do so, make sure to set up an appointment ahead of time, and bring a copy of your assignment along with a draft of your work (the draft does not have to be complete to be reviewed).

This course meets the following Human Development Learning Outcomes:

1. Basic Skills – Consistent with UWGB’s General Education Learning Objectives, students will demonstrate skills in listening, speaking, writing, and use of computers, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving.

2. Research Skills – Students will possess an understanding of the scientific methods involved in research on human development.

- Have the ability to critically assess the merits of basic and applied research
- Have the ability to accurately interpret and use such research
- Understand the ethical issues involved in research

2. Diverse Context – Students will recognize the role of context (i.e., ecological systems) in the processes of human development.

Course website: Course announcements, grades, the syllabus, homework assignments, readings, and other information relevant to the course will be posted on D2L: <https://uwgb.courses.wisconsin.edu>
Please look at the site regularly as ALL dates are tentative and are subject to change.

Course Requirements

Readings: Please complete the assigned readings prior to class. Keeping up with the reading will help you both get more out of class discussions and aid in your retention of the material. In general, the first class meeting on a topic will begin with an assigned reading from the required text and the second class meeting will focus on book chapters and/or journal articles related to the topics introduced on the first day. The two together, then, will form a cohesive literature on the topic.

Attendance and Participation: You are expected to attend every class, to come prepared to discuss the materials you have read and to participate fully in all class activities and discussions. In short, during our class meetings, you will be encouraged to ask questions, address shortcomings of empirical studies, suggest directions for future research, and generally share your perspectives on the issues we discuss. Student participation in class is essential in order for us to fulfill the objectives of the course, and, as such, I ask that each student participate in our class discussions at least once each class.

Library Session: In an effort to improve your information literacy skills, you will be required to attend a session at the library where you will become familiar with identifying and selecting appropriate information sources and critically evaluating the information retrieved. You will need to sign up at your earliest convenience at the following website: http://www.uwgb.edu/library/guides/literacy_sessions.asp The sessions are held at various times on September 29, October 5, 6, 7, and 11.

Critical Questions: Your active participation is crucial to the success of this course. Please come to class having read and thought about all the assigned readings and prepare to discuss them. In addition, I would strongly suggest you bring your textbook and additional readings to class every day, as we will be using them regularly in our class discussions.

In order to better facilitate our discussions, students are required to write 2 discussion-generating questions for the assigned readings for at least *one class period each topic*. This will involve engaging in especially careful and thoughtful analysis about the readings for a particular class. These questions might concern alternative explanations for reported findings, strengths and weaknesses of study design, relationships to other findings or literatures, clarifications of terms or concepts, directions for future research, etc. These questions should be deposited in the appropriate D2L dropbox no later than 8am the day of class. I will examine your questions, synthesize the issues, and use your questions and comments to facilitate the discussion in class.

Group Presentations: In lieu of formal tests on the material presented in class and in the readings, students will engage in collaborative learning by presenting Power Point presentations to the class. Groups of two-three students will be formed in the first two weeks of the semester. Each group will receive an assigned topic in which they will be responsible for presenting to the class a presentation related to the information covered in the reading for that topic. Students will be instructed in class on how to prepare for the presentations, as well as on ways to engage fellow students in the presentation itself.

Papers: More details on each of these assignments will be given in class, but the topics of the three papers are as follows:

Paper 1: This assignment will require you to reflect on your own television viewing as a child. You will choose two characters from television shows that you watched as a child and discuss the following questions: (1) What do you remember about this character/these characters?, (2) What did you learn from these characters when you were younger?, and (3) What do the characters you chose have in common? I ask you write the best 500 word essay on this topic as possible. You will then meet with me during my office hours to edit this essay. You will hand in a second draft that will be graded. The first draft is due Thursday, September 9th. The final copy is due Thursday, September 23rd.

Paper 2: This assignment will require you to prepare a research proposal on a topic of your choice. The goal will be for you to think of the educational issues raised throughout the course, to choose one to focus on, and then to design a way to test whether the information was retained by the children who were exposed to the material. (3-5 pages)

Paper 3 –This assignment will allow you to reflect on television as it was, as it is today, and where it might go in the future. (3-5 pages)

Final Project: Midway through the semester students will create five groups of five students, with each group having the task of designing an episode of Sesame Street that will educate children on a topic of the group's choice. Students will be required to submit a script and also perform a portion of their script for the class (either via video or live). Additional details on this project will be given in class.

First Year Journal: Six times over the course of the semester I would like you to spend 5-10 minutes writing about some aspect of your experiences in your first semester of college in an electronic journal. The objective of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your experiences during this first semester of college. In these entries you can talk about what you are doing in your classes or about how you feel about your school work, discuss experiences you are having at UWGB (e.g. with friends, joining organizations, dorm life, attending programs or activities on or around campus), discuss a good book you have just read or something you have seen (e.g. T.V, movies, internet) or read somewhere that relates to what you have been talking about in a class, reflect on your relationships with parents or friends back home and how college is impacting these relationships, reflect on content in one of your classes that is making you think – really any aspect of your life this first semester of college is fair game. No confidential information should be included within the journal. You will submit your journal entries into the appropriate D2L dropbox.

First Year Seminar Interdisciplinary Exercise: In order to increase students' understanding of interdisciplinary and their experience working from an interdisciplinary perspective, all students completing a Seminar class will be required to: (1) participate in a multi-class Interdisciplinary Exercise (as listed on the course calendar) and complete an associated worksheet, (2) attend the Paul Loeb program that is the fall keynote for the 2010-11 UWGB Common Theme (*The Leadership Question*), and (3) complete the following paper assignment due at the end of the semester:

The first sentence of Paul Loeb’s book, *Soul of a Citizen*, is a quote from Rabbi Hillel:

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I?”

Reflecting on the activities of this semester and keeping with our university mission, what does this quote mean to you? (approx. 2 pages in length)

Further instructions on these assignments will be provided as necessary during the semester.

First Year Seminar Co-Curricular Activities: Over the course of the semester, the university puts on a variety of student life activities involving topics on health, leadership, and diversity, as well as a variety of other programs for members of the UWGB and larger Green Bay community. Since one of the objectives of the freshman seminar is to introduce you to such opportunities on campus, you will be required to attend, and complete a written response to, three of these activities (from three different topic areas; the mandatory Loeb presentation does not “count” as a co-curricular) over the course of the semester. I will provide you with more information about these opportunities, as well as the written assignment, during the first week of class.

In addition to the three required activities, you can attend up to two additional activities over the course of the semester, and complete brief written worksheets, for three extra credit points each.

Grading

	Points	Approx. Percentage of Grade
Attendance/Participation	24	10%
22 *’d days @ 1 point each		
Loeb & Library sessions @ 1 point each		
Critical Questions	20	9%
10 @ 2 points each		
Group Presentation @ 25 points	25	11%
Papers	40	18%
Paper 1 @ 10 points		
Paper 2 @ 10 points		
Paper 3 @ 20 points		
Final Project	40	18%
Script @ 25 points		
Performance @ 15 points		
First Year Journal	18	8%
6 @ 3 points each		
Interdisciplinary Exercise Work:	30	13%
Interdisciplinary Exercise Worksheet @ 15 points		
Paper Assignment @ 15 points		
Co-Curricular Activities	30	13%
3 @ 10 points each		
Extra Credit		
Up to 2 additional co-curricular activities – 3 points per activity		
Total	227	100%

Grades will be assigned in the following manner:

A	93-100%	B	83-87%	C	73-77%	D	60-67%
A/B	88-92%	B/C	78-82%	C/D	68-72%	F	<60%

Course Schedule

Day	Date	Topic	Reading Due	Notes
R	9/2	Welcome & Course Introduction		
T	9/7*	TOPIC 1A The Beginnings of <i>Sesame Street</i> Research	Text Chapter 1	
R	9/9*	TOPIC 1B What Exactly is this Video Doing to my Baby's Brain?	Guernsey (2007) Chapter 1	Paper 1 *DRAFT* Due (in class) 1st Journal Due by 11:59pm (dropbox)
T	9/14*	Preparation for IE: Student Group Presentations	Assigned Chapter in Loeb Book	Before next class, review: http://www.bayareacommunitycouncil.org/
R	9/16	Interdisciplinary Exercise		Meet in Union for class – Phoenix BC
T	9/21*	TOPIC 2A Creation and Evolution of the <i>Sesame Street</i> Curriculum	Text Chapter 2	
R	9/23*	TOPIC 2B Information Processing; What is Educational About “Educational” TV	Van Evra (2009) Chapter 3 & Guernsey (2007) Chapter 6	Paper 1 Due (in class)
T	9/28*	TOPIC 3 Formative Research Revealed; Research Methodologies	Text Chapter 3 & Van Evra (2009) Chapter 2	2nd Journal Due by 11:59pm (dropbox)
R	9/30	Interdisciplinary Exercise <i>7p.m. Paul Loeb Program in Phoenix Rooms</i>		Meet in Union for class – Phoenix BC IE Worksheet Due (dropbox)
T	10/5*	TOPIC 4A The Varied Role of Formative Research: Case Studies from 30 Years	Text Chapter 4	
R	10/7*	TOPIC 4B Language, Reading, and Academic Achievement; Teach To Speak/Be Bilingual?	Van Evra (2009) Chapter 4 & Guernsey (2007) Chapter 7	
T	10/12*	TOPIC 5A A Review of the Research on the Educational and Social Impact of <i>Sesame Street</i> ; Social/Emotional Issues	Text Chapter 5 & Van Evra (2009) Chapter 10	
R	10/14*	TOPIC 5B Television & Violence: The bobo doll study & beyond	Bandura, Ross, & Ross (1963); Heath, et al. (1986)	3rd Journal Due by 11:59pm (dropbox)
T	10/19*	TOPIC 6A The Early Window Project: <i>Sesame Street</i> Prepares Children for School	Text Chapter 6	
R	10/21*	TOPIC 6B Television and Learning	Lemish (2007) Chapter 5	

T	10/26*	TOPIC 6C Does <i>Sesame Street</i> Enhance School Readiness?: Evidence From a National Survey of Children	Text Chapter 7	
R	10/28*	TOPIC 7A The World of <i>Sesame Street</i> Research	Text Chapter 9	
T	11/2*	TOPIC 7B Cultural Diversity; How Do Real Families Make Smart Media Choices?	Van Evra (2009) Chapter 6 & Guernsey (2007) Chapter 12	4th Journal Due by 11:59pm (dropbox)
R	11/4*	TOPIC 7C Health-Related Issues; Will Screen Time Make My Children Fat?	Van Evra (2009) Chapter 9 & Guernsey (2007) Chapter 11	
T	11/9*	TOPIC 8A The Role of <i>Sesame Street</i> -Based Materials in Child Care Settings	Text Chapter 10	Paper 2 Due
R	11/11*	TOPIC 8B Television and the Family; Can This Program Teach My Child to Be a Good Person?	Van Evra (2009) Chapter 8 & Guernsey (2007) Chapter 9	
T	11/16*	TOPIC 9A Interactive Technologies Research at Children's Television Workshop	Text Chapter 12	
R	11/18*	TOPIC 9B Is Interactive Media Worthwhile – or at Least Better Than TV?	Guernsey (2007) Chapter 10	5th Journal Due by 11:59pm (dropbox)
T	11/23	Final Project Work Day		
R	11/25	Happy Thanksgiving		
T	11/30*	TOPIC 10 Carrying <i>Sesame Street</i> Into Print	Text Chapter 11	
R	12/2*	Why Children Learn from <i>Sesame Street</i> ; Summary, Conclusions, & Future Directions	Text Chapter 13 & Van Evra (2009) Chapter 15	6th Journal Due by 11:59pm (dropbox)
T	12/7	Final Project Presentations		
R	12/9	Final Project Presentations		IE Paper Assignment Due Paper 3 Due

I reserve the right to modify the course requirements and/or schedule as deemed appropriate and with reasonable notice of such revisions.

From the University: As required by federal law and UW-Green Bay policy for Individuals with Disabilities, students with a documented disability who need accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at 465-2841. Reasonable accommodations can be made unless they alter the essential components of the class. Contact should be made with the Disability Services Office and the instructor during the first week of class.