**The Humanities and Social Change (IDH3931) – 2 Credits**

**Wednesdays, Periods 7-8 (1:55-3:50pm), Little Hall 117**

**Spring 2017**

Instructors:

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**The Humanities and Social Change**

In a 2015 Presidential debate, Florida Senator Marco Rubio boldly declared that "we need more welders, less philosophers." Politics aside, Rubio's statement raises an interesting question: what exactly *do* philosophers contribute to society? The purpose of this course is to explore the social contributions of the humanities and their practitioners such as philosophers, historians, classicists, literary scholars, and anthropologists, among others. In the first part of the course, we will debate definitions and justifications for the humanities, excavate their history, understand their basic research methods, and explore why some say there is a “crisis” in the humanities today; we will also examine what is involved in creating real social change by examining methods of intervention available to the humanities. The latter part of the course will investigate the humanities “in-action.” By highlighting a particular theme of pressing importance in our time, sustainability, we will take a deep dive into how people and institutions use the work of the humanities in their daily lives to guide their behavior and study how these humanistic interventions provide depth and context for vital contemporary problems as well as actively contribute to positive social change.

Students who successfully complete the course will fulfill 2,000 words toward their writing requirement. Assignments include two response papers that ask students to focus on history and context and a final paper that combines historical, philosophical, and sociological content to answer a question: how do practitioners of the humanities contribute to social change? Students will also be required to give a short presentation in class on a recommended reading.

**This course is a humanities (H) subject area course in UF’s General Education Program.**

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

The emphasis of this two credit course will be on using the critical thinking skills of the humanities, particularly close readings of texts, argumentative reasoning, and writing, to examine *how* practitioners of the humanities do their work and their effects in the world. Put simply, it will be a *humanistic inquiry into the humanities themselves* as a body of knowledge at work in our world.

The course will provide the intellectual tools and empirical evidence to answer a fundamental question: how do the humanities contribute to social change? Our approach will be to examine how different philosophies of the humanities and their institutional and methodological histories have shaped beliefs about their social value and to investigate the practical, action oriented contributions of the humanities to the issue of sustainability. Therefore, a key outcome of this course will be to connect daily life and its social entanglements directly to the work of the humanities.

At the end of this course, you will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes, as defined by UF’s General Education Student Learning Outcomes:

***Content.*** *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the subject area*. You will acquire knowledge about divergent philosophies of the humanities, their intellectual and institutional history, and their contribution to significant contemporary problems under the umbrella of sustainability. Through lecture and class discussion, you will become familiar with contemporary debates about the humanities and their value, how to place these debates into historical context, and reflect on the social value of work in the humanities. Your competence in these areas will be assessed by two written response papers, a recommended reading presentation, and a final paper.

***Critical thinking.*** *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the subject area*. The humanities are a complex web of disciplines, vocabularies, methods, and value judgements. Our discussions will draw on individual humanities disciplines to contribute to a larger picture of the humanities as a whole. Although emphasizing the philosophical and historical, this course will incorporate sociology, religion, anthropology, classics, literature, urban planning, and even the physical sciences. You will learn how to distinguish between different humanistic disciplines but also what unites them and binds them to the social and physical sciences. You will also have the opportunity to develop and articulate your own theory of social change, which will demand critical reflection on the relationship between theory and practice.

***Communication.*** *Students clearly and effectively communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning in written or oral forms appropriate to the subject area.* This is a reading-and-discussion intensive course. The purpose of lecture and class discussion is provide you the opportunity to reflect and refine your own thoughts on the content, but also to engage in civil intellectual discussion with your peers. The response papers will assess your ability to place complex trends into appropriate historical context and the recommended reading presentation will develop your individual ability to analyze and assess a single piece of text and your ability to communicate that assessment to the class. The final paper will develop your ability to analyze, synthesize, and articulate your answer to the key question of the course: how do practitioners of the humanities contribute to social change?

Required Texts

There is no textbook for this course. All course readings, including recommended readings, will be provided to students in PDF format unless otherwise noted or provided.

*Note: The instructors reserve the right the change this syllabus during course of the semester as long as advance notice is provided.*

Course Schedule

Jan. 4 Introduction: Welders vs. Philosophers

* Emily Richmond, “The Reality Behind the Philosophers vs. Welders Debate,” *The Atlantic* (November 2015), <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/11/philospher-vs-welders/415890/>
* In-class Discussion: Social “Roles” and the Legacy of Plato’s *Republic*

Jan. 11 Through “Thick” and “Thin”: Definitions and Justifications of the Humanities

* Stanley Fish, “Do Your Job” in *Save the World on Your Own Time* (2008)and “Will the Humanities Save Us?”, *The New York Times* (January 2008), <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/06/will-the-humanities-save-us/?_r=0>
* Martha Nussbaum, “Education for Profit, Education for Democracy” and “Cultivating Imagination: Literature and the Arts” in *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010)
* In-class Discussion: “Think” and “Thin” Philosophies of Humanistic Value

Jan. 18 What’s the Use?

* Helen Small, “Use and Uselessness” in *The Value of the Humanities* (2013)
* In-class Discussion: Social Utility and False Dilemmas
* Recommended Reading: Wilfred M. McClay, “The Burden and Beauty of the Humanities” in *American Educator* (Winter 2008-9).

Jan. 25 A Short History of the Humanities

* Rens Bod, “Was There Progress in the Early Modern Humanities?” and “Insights from the Humanities that Changed the World” from *A New History of the Humanities* (2013)
* In-class Discussion: How are the Humanities and the Sciences Different?
* Recommended Reading: Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
* First Response Paper DUE

Feb. 1 Are the Humanities in Crisis?

* Geoffrey Galt Harpham, “Beyond the Crisis in the Humanities” in *New Literary History* (2005)
* In-class Discussion: A Real or Imagined Crisis?
* Recommended Reading: David A. Bell, “Reimagining the Humanities: Proposals for a New Century” in *Dissent* (2010)

Feb. 8 Reconsidering the “Social” Role of the Humanities

* Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern” in *Critical Inquiry* (2004)
* In-class Discussion: The Humanities and Mechanisms of Change
* Recommended Reading: Kathleen Woodward, “The Future of the Humanities in the Present and in Public” in *Daedalus* (Winter 2009).

Feb. 15 Recap and Intro. to Sustainability

* Leslie Paul Thiele, “The Challenge of Co-Evolution: Interdependence and Sustainable Development” in *Environmentalism for a New Millennium* (1999)
* In-class Discussion: Sustainability and Environmental Ethics
* Recommended Reading: Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” in *Science* (1967).

Feb. 22 Imagining Alternative Futures

* Guest Lecture: Terry Harpold (Department of English)
* Jeff VanderMeer, excerpt from *Annihilation: A Novel*
* In-class Discussion: Literature and Possible Worlds
* Recommended Reading: Jeff Goodell, “Goodbye Miami,” *Rolling Stone* (June 2013) <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/why-the-city-of-miami-is-doomed-to-drown-20130620>.
* Second Response Paper DUE

Mar. 1 Imagining Alternative Futures: Intentional Communities

* Guest Lecture: Whitney Sanford (Department of Religion)
* Film: “Captain Fantastic”
* In-class Discussion: Translating Values into Practice
* Recommended Reading: Whitney Sanford, excerpt from *Living Sustainably* (forthcoming)

**Spring Break**

Mar. 15 Confronting the Water Crisis: Florida Water Stories

* Class at Matheson Museum in Downtown Gainesville to see exhibit on the St. Johns River.
* Guest Lecture: Steve Noll (Department of History)
* Gary Mormino, “The Beach” in *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (2005)
* In-class Discussion: Water and a Social History of “Progress”
* Recommended Reading: Leslie Poole, “The Three Marjories, Rachel, and the Rise of Ecology” in *Saving Florida: Women’s Fight for the Environment in the 20th Century*

Mar. 22 Confronting the Water Crisis: The “Hydroilllogical” Cycle and Human Action

* Cynthia Barnett, “Australia: Dry Down Under” in *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America’s Water Crisis* (2011)
* In-class Discussion: Building a Water Ethic
* Recommended Reading: Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic” in *A Sand County Almanac*.

Mar. 29 Challenging Environmental Racism

* Carl Zimring, “Waste and Space Reordered” in *Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism* (2015)
* In-class Discussion: Race and Space
* Recommended Reading: Zora Neale Hurston, excerpt from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Apr. 5 Challenging Environmental Racism: Green Spaces and Urban Planning

* Guest Lecture: Jonathan Strout (Department of Sociology, Criminology and Law)
* Michel Gelobter, “The Meaning of Urban Environmental Justice” in *Fordham Urban Law Journal* (1993).
* In-class Discussion: Redesigning Space to Confront Racism
* Recommended Reading: Amy Hays, “Religious Community Activism in the Love Canal Chemical Disaster” in *Environmental History* (2009)

Apr. 12 Recap and Conclusion: Both/And – Revisiting the Philosophers vs. Welders Debate

* Final Paper DUE

Assignments and Evaluation

***First Response Paper: Intellectual History of the Humanities*** *(DUE by Midnight on Jan. 25). Based on class readings and class discussion, provide a historical explanation for the idea of “social” roles and their connection to the concept of “utility.”*

***Second Response Paper: Institutional History of the Humanities*** *(DUE by Midnight on Feb. 22). When and why did the humanities become distinct from the sciences? Identify and evaluate some of the social and institutional consequences of this separation.*

***Final Paper: Theories of Change in the Humanities*** *(DUE by Midnight on Apr. 12).* *In your final paper, each student must respond to the following prompt: How do practitioners of the humanities contribute to social change? Utilizing your own interpretations of course readings, class discussions, and additional readings done outside of class, students must make a debatable claim about how the humanities bring about social change and support their claim with evidence and argument. To assist in building a case, students should examine how the humanities have contributed to social change in the past, what values they bring to the table (and when and where), and who produces and uses the humanities in specific contexts. This paper should propose a discrete theory of change that identifies a mechanism for action related to the humanities.*
***Recommended Reading Presentation:*** *Each student is required to read, in addition to the course readings, one recommended reading which they will summarize, analyze, and present to the class in a brief 8-10 minute presentation. The purpose of this assignment is two-fold: to introduce and synthesize more information for the whole class and develop analytical and communication skills. Each week (excluding the first and second) has a unique recommended reading; students will sign-up for a recommended reading by the second week of class.*

**Note: No late assignments will be accepted and all assignments must be double-spaced in 12 point font.**

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| Assignments | Points (out of 1000) | Percentage of Grade |
| Response Paper 1 (500 words) | 100 | 10% |
| Response Paper 2 (500 words) | 150 | 15% |
| Recommended Reading Presentation | 100 | 10% |
| Final Paper (1000 words) | 250 | 25% |
| Participation | 400 | 40% |

Grading Policy

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Score  | Percent  | Grade  | Grade Points  |
| 934-1000  | 93.4-100  | A  | 4.00  |
| 900-933 | 90.0-93.3 | A- | 3.67 |
| 867-899  | 86.7-89.9  | B+  | 3.33  |
| 834-866  | 83.4-86.6  | B  | 3.00  |
| 800-833  | 80.0-83.3  | B-  | 2.67  |
| 767-799  | 76.7-79.9  | C+  | 2.33  |
| 734-766  | 73.4-76.6  | C  | 2.00  |
| 700-733  | 70.0-73.3  | C-  | 1.67  |
| 667-699  | 66.7-69.9  | D+  | 1.33  |
| 634-666  | 63.4-66.6  | D  | 1.00  |
| 600-633  | 60.0-63.3  | D-  | 0.67  |
| 0-599  | 0-599  | E  | 0.00   |

More information on grades and grading policies is here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Grading Rubric for Writing and Presentations

| **Recommended Reading Presentation** |
| --- |
| **Criteria** | **Ratings** | **Pts** |
| Thesis: Has the presenter explained clearly the author's main claim (thesis statement)? |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Outstanding20.0 pts | Satisfactory15.0 pts | Unsatisfactory10.0 pts | No Marks0.0 pts |

 | 20.0 pts |
| Argument: Has the presenter explained clearly the method and arguments which the author uses to prove his/her main claim (methodology)? |

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| Outstanding20.0 pts | Satisfactory15.0 pts | Unsatisfactory10.0 pts | No Marks0.0 pts |

 | 20.0 pts |
| Evidence: Has the presenter explained clearly the author's use of evidence in support of the argument? |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Outstanding20.0 pts | Satisfactory15.0 pts | Unsatisfactory10.0 pts | No Marks0.0 pts |

 | 20.0 pts |
| Significance: Has the presenter explained clearly the importance of the author's article? |

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| Outstanding20.0 pts | Satisfactory15.0 pts | Unsatisfactory10.0 pts | No Marks0.0 pts |

 | 20.0 pts |
| Organization: Has the student presented the article in a cohesive and coherent fashion? | Outstanding20.0 pts | Satisfactory15.0 pts | Unsatisfactory10.0 pts | No Marks0.0 pts | 20.0 pts |
| Total Points: 100 |

**Writing Requirement**

This course confers 2000 words towards the Writing Requirement (WR), which ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on students’ written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. After receiving feedback, students may re-write their short essays up to one time per essay for an updated grade consideration.

Course grades have two components. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

To further develop our craft as writers, we will draw on the following two writer’s handbooks:

Joseph M. Williams. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace.* University of Chicago Press.

*Writer’s Help*. Macmillian Learning.

**Essay Rubric**

Writing Assessment Rubric (**Note: This is the rubric for fulfilling the Gordon requirement. The grading rubric is below. All written work should follow the standards of the** [**Chicago Manual of Style**](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) **(16th edition).**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | SATISFACTORY (Y)  | UNSATISFACTORY (N) |
| CONTENT | Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources. | Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources. |
| ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE | Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences. | Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader. |
| ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT | Documents use persuasive presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments. | Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to connect observations to argument through analysis. |
| STYLE | Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure. | Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly. |
| MECHANICS | Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper’s argument or points. | Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader’s understanding or severely undermine the writer’s credibility. |

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|  | THESIS | EVIDENCE | ORGANIZATION  | MECHANICS (written work only) |
| “A” range | * Clearly stated in introduction and conclusion
* Accurate
* Arguable
* Significant: makes insightful connections to course questions and themes
 | * Specific
* Relevant to thesis
* Explained clearly, using digestive sentences
 | * Clear intro, body, conclusion
* Develops argument persuasively, using effective transitional sentences
* Shows connections between evidence and thesis
 | * Citation is thorough and consistent with MLA Style
* Few, if any errors in spelling and grammar
* Meets length requirements (within a half-page over or under)
 |
| “B” range | * Stated in introduction and conclusion
* Makes solid connections course questions and themes
 | * Solid, relevant evidence, but occasionally under developed
 | * Clear intro, body, conclusion
* Develops argument clearly, often using transitional sentences
* Usually shows connections between evidence and thesis
 | * Some citations are missing or inconsistent with MLA sty
* Some errors in spelling and grammar
* Meets length requirements (within a half-page over or under
 |
| “C” range | * Not explicit in introduction and/or conclusion, but evident in the argument
* Refers to topic but does not show its connections to course themes
 | * Evidence is provided, but its connection to the thesis is weak or unclear (i.e. quotes are used, but left dangling without digestive sentence)
 | * Intro, body, conclusion
* Argument is sometimes lost in the writing
* Weak connections between evidence and thesis
 | * Citations are missing or inconsistent more often than not
* Errors in spelling and grammar are frequent enough to be distracting
* Does not meet length requirements
 |
| “D” range | * Thesis is hidden or inconsistent
* No clear connections to course themes
 | * Evidence does not support thesis
 | * Organization makes it difficult to follow the argument
 | * Citation is infrequent
* Errors in spelling and grammar are distracting
* Does not meet length requirements
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| “F” range | * No thesis
 | * No evidence
 | * No organization evident
 | * No citation
* Errors in spelling and grammar make the paper difficult to understand
* Does not meet length requirements
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**Attendance**

This is a discussion-based course, so attendance is crucial. If you miss more than three class meetings, you will fail the course. Exceptions to this policy, if discussed with the instructors in advance, include university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, documented illness, and religious holidays. For each unexcused absence after the first, 50 points will be deducted from the final grade. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all missed material. Two instances of unexcused lateness count as one absence.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**Participation Rubric**

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|  | FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION | QUALITY OF COMMENTS | RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE SKILLS  |
| “A” range | Student initiates contributions more than once in each class meeting. | Comments always insightful and constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between generalimpressions, opinions and specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions derived from class readings. | Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others’ remarks, i.e., student hears what others say and contributes to the dialogue. Student responds respectfully to different values and beliefs, demonstrating empathy. |
| “B” range | Student initiates contribution once in each class meeting. | Comments mostly insightful and constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology and are linked to the readings. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion. | Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect and build on others’ remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from T.A of focus of comment. Student responds respectfully to different values and beliefs, and corrects behavior otherwise if corrected by instructor. |
| “C” range | Student initiates contribution at least in half of the class meetings. | Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology and seldom refers to the readings; comments not always relevant to the discussion. | Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking. Student does not always respond respectfully to different values/beliefs despite correction from instructor. |
| Unacceptable  | Student does not initiate contribution and needs instructor to solicit input. | Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion and personal taste, e.g., “I love it”, “I hate it”, “It’s bad” etc. | Does not listen to others; regularly talks or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc. Disrespectful to other points of view despite correction. |

Extra Credit

UF is a busy and exciting place. During the semester, events may be held on campus that are relevant to course material. If approved by the instructors, a one-page write up about the event can be submitted for extra credit for up to 50 points of the final course grade.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

We appreciate your student feedback on the quality of instruction in this course through the online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/.

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

Materials and Supplies Fees

There are no additional fees for this course.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct- honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructors in this class.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

1. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

*Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.*

b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007 <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the Writing Studio online at http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/ or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.