

SAN DIEGO MESA HONORS ADDENDUM FOR SPRING 2012

English 105 (CRN 86909): "Composition and Literature" Professor: Peter R Jacoby • Units: 3.0

TASKS: In addition to satisfying the requirements of the regular English 105 course (please see the attached English 105 syllabus and calendar), the Honors Contract candidate shall complete the following academically challenging tasks, which, enumerated here below, constitute the "Honors Addendum Syllabus."

1. Read the following additional text:

Banks, Russell. *Dreaming up America*. New York:Seven Stories P, 2008.

2. A culture is based on "narratives," the myths or facts (much more the first than the second) that we receive when we are young — and keep receiving through old age — that answer two profound and pressing questions: "Who am I?" and "What should I do?" Through close reading of his book, discover what Banks sees as the core American (meaning: United States) narratives and how he feels they came about and have guided this country since the early 17th century. This will require close and deliberative reading of his book.
3. Arrange to interview at least two historians — possibly including a Professor of History on the Mesa campus — to discuss the degree of factuality of the history of America as it is taught in America, not just in college, but also in K-12. In other words, analyze the current telling of the American narratives.
4. Write a thorough and thoughtful research paper of eight-to-ten pages (2000-2500 words) in which you use your own research to compellingly argue either for or against *Dreaming up America*, especially considering that this is the first work of nonfiction from a celebrated novelist. A key question to ask is this: should primarily fiction writers be accepted as writers of history? You must evaluate not only his ability to write, but also his ability to write factually. Researching key moments in the history of the "making" of America must be considered in your research. Accept Banks's challenge as he has you look at history through his lens. An important question for you will be something like, "Did we deliberately craft into being a nation grounded in a particular set of principles, or do we just 'dream up America'?" This paper will be due no later than April 30, 2012.
5. Give an oral report of approximately ten minutes to your English 105 class, summarizing your research and explaining your new understanding of the blending of fact and fiction (if any) in the writing of this book, and report to them whether *Dreaming up America* — while it is Literature from an American literary icon — is nonfiction, or fiction? In either case, why do you recommend your classmates should read this book, or why should they not bother? This presentation will be due no later than May 7, 2012
6. Meet with your instructor during his office hours (or other mutually agreed upon times and places on campus) at least six (6) times during the semester to discuss the direction and progress of your work on the Honors projects: research paper, oral report, and your understanding of developing expertise in the areas of your research.
7. Keep a journal of your Honors Contract work for review by your instructor at these meetings.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of the course the Honors Contract student, in accomplishing the above tasks, will:

1. demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the continual play between fiction and nonfiction Literature;
2. demonstrate knowledge of the historical development and structure the American culture;
3. demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills in the Honors candidate's written work as well as in oral presentations;
4. demonstrate the ability to originate, plan, and complete a sustained and multi-faceted and rigorous scholarly research project.

HONORS GRADING CRITERIA:

Journal: 3%

Analytical/critical Paper: 16%

Oral report: 3%

Interaction with instructor: 3%

and

Successful completion of CRN 86909 Syllabus: 75%

TOTAL: 100%