Attendance and Participation

In order for students to make meaningful contributions to class discussion, it is expected that all assigned readings will be completed in advance of the class in which they will be addressed. The professor reserves the right to use a variety of methods to evaluate student participation and preparation for class. Such methods include – but are not limited to – unannounced quizzes, in-class exercises, short take-home assignments and/or having a randomly chosen student answer a particular question in class or even lead class discussion; some of these methods may be graded by the professor or fellow students, while others are not formally graded at all. There is no strictly applied mathematical formula that corresponds to student success in such events, but repeated failures clearly demonstrate a lack of meaningful engagement with course material that will be reflected in a student’s participation grade.

Of course, students cannot participate in class in any way if they are not present. Therefore, students will be monitored in regard to their regular and prompt attendance in both colloquium and common sessions. Because late arrival is so disruptive to a class, any student arriving more than five minutes late will be marked late, which will effectively count as half of an absence. Occasionally, a student may find that some compelling need arises that causes them to miss class completely; such matters are at the discretion of the student and the professor requires no explanation. However, missing more than three classes will result in a five-point deduction in the student’s final attendance and participation grade, with every additional absence thereafter resulting in an additional one-point deduction.

If the student has a serious illness or other crisis that will cause the student to miss class, it is important to promptly notify the professor and be prepared to provide written documentation upon the student’s return. If the professor feels that the absences were unavoidable, any missed classes will be considered as excused when they are figured into the attendance portion of the final grade.

Ultimately, however, it is the student’s responsibility to stay current with the course and students are responsible for all the material presented and discussed in both colloquia and common sessions. Therefore, if you are absent – even if you absence is “excused” – you should first contact other students for notes and then reread the relevant text in conjunction with those notes. If any of the missed material still remains unclear to you, contact the professor, who will then be pleased to answer any lingering questions.

Missed Exams

Make-up exams are given only at the professor’s discretion. In addition to timely notification, the professor may also require written documentation. If the student has a valid, documented excuse that causes them to miss a substantial portion of the course, such as an extended hospital stay, the professor may then decide to remove an exam or paper from the evaluation method of the course, effectively increasing the percentage value of the other course requirements. Incompletes are very rarely allowed.
Grading
All work is evaluated on the grading scale outlined in the Rhodes College Catalogue: A, excellent; B, good; C, satisfactory; D, passing; and F, failure (with pluses and minuses where appropriate). The American Heritage Dictionary definition of “excellent” highlights its rarefied state, defining it as something “of the highest or finest quality; exceptionally good of its kind.” Thus, only a student whose work demonstrates a real command of the subject, integrating and even extrapolating from course materials to craft creative and compelling arguments that are clearly articulated, well supported, completed in a timely manner, follow the principles of correct composition AND meet all stated requirements will earn an A; while excellent students typically dedicate significant time and effort to their coursework, only the results of that time and effort are evaluated.

Academic Honesty
All work in this course – even attendance sheets – must be completed in accordance with the Honor System at Rhodes College. In keeping with this policy, students are required to sign the Honor Pledge on every exam and paper submitted for this course. Remember that taking any information or idea from a source without proper citation is plagiarism, even if one completely changes the grammar, language, sentence structure and/or organization of the original source. For more information, consult the Requirements for the Writing Portfolio handout, the Honor System Website under “Plagiarism” at www.rhodes.edu/Honor/students/violations.cfm and/or speak to the professor.

Special Needs
If a student has a documented disability and which to receive academic accommodations, the student should first contact the Office of Student Disability Services (x3994) and then provide the professor with an accommodation form as soon as possible.

Tips for Success in this Course
College courses assume that students are self-regulating adults. You will not be repeatedly reminded about your absences, pending deadlines, overdue work, etc., but you will be expected to accept the consequences of your own choices/actions… so make them good ones! Attend class regularly, having already read and taken notes on the assigned material for each day’s class (and bring the relevant text and notes with you to class). This is not only important because attendance and participation represent a significant evaluation method for the course, but this routine will also help you to stay current with the material – which can otherwise easily build-up and overwhelm students – and allows you to have enough time to complete papers (consult the Requirements for the Writing Portfolio handout for more tips on papers) and prepare for exams. In class, stay alert and practice good note-taking skills. With regard to the latter, you should not be trying to record every word, but rather evaluating the material in order to make short notations that will remind you of important points made; of course, lack of familiarity with the material makes note-taking unnecessarily challenging. You should also plan on reviewing your reading and class notes in conjunction with the text after each class; then, do larger, more comprehensive reviews after each text and/or culture. Spreading out your study time this way is actually easier, allowing you to build real knowledge you can recall, rather than trying to skim and/or cram the material into your short-term memory all at once. Finally, do not forget that the professor is available for clarification and consultation at every stage of the learning process!