**Assignment Descriptions:**

**CLAS 351: Community Engagement in the Classical World**

**Fall, 2019**

1. **Building Healthy Civic Discourse Through Respectful, Engaged, Community Conversation:**  engaging different perspectives in your UMW community by hosting and moderating a forum for UMW students on civic responsibility, respect and civility, inclusion, and/or civic engagement.

This class will organize and host a community forum on a topic related to civic responsibility, respect and civility, inclusion, and/or civic engagement. You will collaborate together to do the following:

* Define a topic that is relevant to civic engagement at UMW
* Present to your instructor a collaboratively produced “Action Plan” for the forum, which outlines how your group plans to go about and achieve all of the following.
* Identify, reach out to, develop relationships with, and partner with potential forum contributors within the community: student government leaders, leaders of community organizations, students working to forward UMW Votes campaign—it’s up to you!! Make connections and invite participants who will contribute to the forum.
  + Think about this as an opportunity to hear from and deeply listen to members of the community who may feel marginalized
  + How will you ensure a diverse range of voices from a diverse range of communities and perspectives?
* Figure out a workable structure for a good forum. Research best practices for hosting public forums and watch filmed public forums on YouTube (what worked? what didn’t?). Give thought to the multiple ways in which you *could* structure a forum. Achieve consensus on how *you* want to structure your forum.
* Advertise and Market your forum using social media, the Community Engagement Center, COAR, and any other out-reach strategies you can think of. How will you get optimal participation for your forum from the community?
* Identify a moderator (or moderators) either within this class our outside this class.
* Identify and communicate WELL IN ADVANCE other needs that your instructor will help you procure, such as A/V equipment, microphones, water for forum participants, space reservation, a camera to film the forum and make it digitally available to the campus community.
* *The Whole Class will Receive a Collective Grade for this Project on the Quality of the Preparations for and Execution of the Public Forum. It is in Your Best Interest to Work as a Team; to Build Team Strength; to Collaborate and Engage Radically; to Build Consensus; and to Support Each Other.*

2. **Individual Civic Engagement Project:**  participate directly in and reflect upon a community-oriented, civic engagement project through one of the following:

--volunteering for an organization that works to solve community problems or to provide benefits to community members

--membership and participation in a secular organization that works to solve community problems or to provide benefits to community members

--participating in and volunteering for the UMW Votes campaign

Here are just a few ways in which you can get involved:

* Help [refugees who have been resettled in the area develop resumes](https://academics.umw.edu/communityengagement/center-for-community-engagement/coar-2/weekly-programs/) so that they can find jobs
* Tutor refugee children (for those who have their own transportation; see me if you are interested)
* Work to help find solutions to the [housing shortage in the Fredericksburg Community](https://virginia-organizing.org/about-the-fredericksburg-chapter/)
* Volunteer for [UMW Votes campaign](https://umw.presence.io/event/celebrate-national-voter-registration-day) and get involved in helping others register to vote and become educated about candidates
* [Weed and Mulch at a Senior Citizen’s Center or participate in a Visiting Seniors Volunteer Program](http://www.ruwvolunteer.org/event/)
* Volunteer for a [local group that advocates and lobbies for sustainable climate and environmental issues](https://www.volunteermatch.org/search/opp2330888.jsp)
* Participate in organizations that address food justice, provide mentors for young kids, etc. [through COAR](https://academics.umw.edu/communityengagement/center-for-community-engagement/coar-2/weekly-programs/), which provides transportation for UMW students so that they can participate in community engagement in the larger Fredericksburg community
* Provide leadership for a student organization that addresses some set of challenges the UMW community faces

You will **turn in a proposal** for a community engagement plan so that you may receive the benefit of feedback from me before you undertake your plan.

The minimum expectation is to log in 8 hours of civic and/or community engagement. At the end of the semester, **you will turn in a log**, providing dates, times, events, civic/community engagement actions.

You will also **write a 2-5 page reflection** on what you learned during your community engagement project. Your reflection should address:

* What community problems or challenges your engagement project addressed and why they are important to you
* How your engagement project relates to participatory democracy as you conceive of it
* What you learned about yourself and your community

3. **Role-Playing (“React to the Past”) and “Flashpoint” Engagement Exercises**: participate in a “reacting to the past” intensive role-playing game set in classical Athens and/or ancient Rome, in addition to more focused “flashpoint” engagement exercises designed encourage speaking, writing, critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork as you confront difficult and complicated situations faced by citizens and politicians of the ancient world, many of which have correlations to our modern world. In this way, we will attempt to simulate and respond to the real-world forces—economic, social, cultural, international, political, intellectual, religious, etc.—that not only shaped ancient history, but serve as opportunities to reflect on our own challenges through the lens of the past.

Both the “Role-Playing” and “Flash-Point” Engagement Exercises are ***in-class* opportunities** to participate directly in learning about civic-engagement challenges and opportunities in both the ancient world and in our contemporary world. I may or may not give you advanced knowledge about the “flash-point” and “role-playing” exercises. To prepare for these, you will need to:

* Read very carefully all of the assigned readings
* Take excellent notes—both in-class and outside of class
* Conduct relevant independent research (I will provide guidance on what, exactly, you will research)
* Bring copies of assigned readings with you to class; if you are relying on the library’s copies of textbooks, photocopy or scan specific passages.
* Be ready to drop your inhibitions, collaborate radically, and get involved in historical re-enactment, scavenger hunts, and other non-traditional learning activities
* I may advise you to bring a computer and/or an electronic device to class. Or, I may advise you to leave it at home.

Both “flash-point” and “react to the past” role-playing exercises may involve research, writing, speaking, and collaboration.

For each “flash-point” and for the “reacting to the past” exercise, you will receive a participation grade:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0= Not Present, and/or Does Not Participate | 1= Present, but either Unprepared or Insufficient Participation | 2= Present, basic preparation; some participation; demonstrates general active learning | 3= Present, Well Prepared, Engaged, Demonstrates Heightened Active Learning | 4= Present, Highly Prepared, Deeply Engaged, Demonstrates Outstanding Active Learning and/or Leadership |

4. **Research and Writing:** you will be conducting a great deal of independent research in this class, which will support your roles and positions in both the “reacting to the past” role-playing games and the “flash-point” exercises. In addition, you will use the research you have conducted in this class to write a 1,000 word editorial using the lessons of the classical past to advocate a very specific course of action on a current issue. You will use this editorial as the basis for composing your *oratio*.

Since I discussed the “research and writing” for both the ‘flash-point’ and ‘reacting to the past’ exercises above, I will here address the 1,000 word editorial (about 4 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, normal margins). Your editorial should:

* Consist of about 1,000 words, give or take no more than 75 words. Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced, normal 1” margins
* Imagine you are writing a ‘letter to the editor’ or an editorial on a very specific issue pertaining to civic engagement in our contemporary world
* Demonstrate in your letter how some incident, writing, or challenge from the ancient world (that we have studied this semester) may provide some guidance in addressing this contemporary issue
* Your letter should demonstrate expertise and a high level of research. You may include endnotes and references if you so choose.
* Advocate in your editorial a specific course of action that may help to address the challenge you wish to address. The specific course of action you advocate should be informed by the lessons of the past.
* Your editorial may certainly engage in critique, but it should model civility, respect for alternative views, and, above all, it should address *theory, science, and/or policy,* and not engage in *ad hominem* attack or vituperation.

Your editorial will be evaluated on the quality of your analysis, on the relevance of your recommendations to classical antiquity, on the clarity, complexity, innovative nuance, and persuasiveness of your argument, on its adherence to basic mechanics of writing (good grammar, spelling, organization, etc.), and on its tone (civility and respectfulness). **You will NOT be evaluated** on whether or not I, personally, or anyone else in the class agrees with your position. Nor will you be evaluated on the degree to which you, personally, agree with what your editorial advocates.

Here are a few examples that may serve as helpful models (Please note: these are examples; I neither affirm nor disavow their conclusions):

1. <https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/what-thucydides-teaches-us-about-war-politics-and-the-human-condition/>

2. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/7/13512960/donald-trump-plato-democracy-tyranny-fascism-2016-elections>

3. <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2019/01/11/rome-america-edward-watts-mortal-republic>

5. **Oratio:** You will also produce and deliver as a speech (in the style of Greek and Roman oratory—IMAGINE YOU ARE DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH IN THE ATHENIAN EKKLESIA OR THE ROMAN SENATE) a *highly and professionally researched oratio* advocating some current and very specific policy course of action *based on* the lessons of ancient Athens and Rome.

Your oration may be greatly drawn from your editorial. However, keep in mind that *persuasion* is your goal, and persuasion in *writing* and in *speaking* are two different animals.

How will you keep your audience’s interest?

What rhetorical devices will you use to drum up emotion?

Consider using ancient models—like the speeches of Cicero, for example—which amply display such rhetorical devices.

What tone of voice will you take? How will you use gesturing? And, if you MUST use notes, how will you use them to best advantage?

This is an exercise in *oratory,* not just argumentation, and not just analysis. But, the elements of argumentation and analysis must be present in abundance to make a convincing oration.

4. **Attend and Participate in Community Lectures, Discussions, and/or Events** hosted by UMW organizations that relate to civic engagement, issues of significance to the community, sustainability, equality and inclusion, and/or and community well-being. **(Extra Credit)**

* Please consider announcing to the class relevant lectures, discussions, events
* I have posted some events on the syllabus and will keep adding them as they become available.