

FREX 134: Exploring the Arts and Sciences

Fall 2026

Section 13: TR 10:30-11:45, Library B17



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Favorite cat: Dudley
Favorite color: Orange
Professor school: Washington
University in St. Louis
Catchphrase: "To what extent"
Values: integrity, justice,
perseverance, compassion,
and calling



Peer Mentor Andie Lozano-Lomeli
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Favorite cat: Ollie
Favorite color: Yellow
Majors: Communication studies and
political science
Catchphrase: "First of all, wow"
Values: kindness, discernment,
empathy, education, and fun

Student Office Hours: Tuesdays 8:15-9:15 and 1:15-2:15, Thursdays 1:15-2:15
Syllabus Updated: August 28, 2026

Course Description: Welcome to TLU! TLU's mission statement tells us that we are a "community of faith and learning," which, at its core, means that we all study and practice the liberal arts. FREX is designed to introduce you to the core components of those liberal arts --- critical thinking, reading, and writing. That is the learning part. The community of faith part comes from this course section's focus on vocational discernment and engaged citizenship. We are all called to serve, and to serve we need to be engaged on and off campus and in the lives of others. The liberal arts are the skills and approaches we use to liberate, forming the basis for a lifetime of service. With this basis you can successfully work in any field and, importantly, discern your vocation --- what you are uniquely called to do.

Prerequisites: None.

Text: None to purchase. All available on Brightspace.

Catalog Description: This course brings TLU first-year students into a multi-generational community of learning. By engaging texts written out of diverse disciplines and participating in curricular and co-curricular activities, this course introduces students to the multiple facets of TLU's educational mission. Special attention is focused on developing critically reflective reading skills at a university level.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Engage in critically reflective reading at the university level.
2. Apply strategies for successfully transitioning into and engaging with university life.
3. Apply academic and life skills for university success.
4. Describe and apply concepts of vocational discernment, values development, and calling to your life and to your career at TLU.
5. Understand the core principles of a liberal arts education.

Course Philosophy:

This section of FREX is open to all and is oriented toward those interested in studying the humanities or social sciences (in alphabetical order): communication studies, English studies, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, Spanish, and theology. As such, we will be reading selections from each of these disciplines alongside *The TLU Reader*, a text designed to present arguments that we will read and analyze. Our focus will be on engaged citizenship, translating what we learn into how we can get involved on and off campus to make positive change, and vocational discernment, understanding how we uniquely contribute to the world.

FREX is a common course, meaning that all your fellow first-time first year students are completing FREX. There are common elements to FREX like the units, the *Reader*, the Krost assignment, and the focus on and assessment of critical reading. At the same time, each FREX section is different and has different assignments and expectations based on its overall theme and the students in the course. We are exploring the humanities and social sciences because, well, you are interested in them. We are doing this through engaged citizenship because connecting to TLU is what helps you find a home here and supports you throughout your time here.

FREX is fundamentally a discussion course. As such, we will engage in group activities, writing, discussions, and lessons from your peer mentor --- a fellow student whose job is to help you adjust to life at TLU. You may not have taken a course like this before --- that is totally okay. We will work to build up your skills throughout the semester. These skills include critical reading and writing, both of which may be challenging, but both of which we will work on together. You must come to class having completed the reading and the relevant assignment for the day. Your participation is critical to the success of the course. As with any college course, you should expect to spend on average 2-3 hours outside of class on assignments for every class session.

I expect that we will all work to maintain a positive classroom environment. While we often use data and models to provide evidence, students of humanities and social science do not have definitive answers to any question. Thus, we will work to understand others' perspectives in a constructive and respectful manner. Your consistent effort is the key to success in this course. The content may be challenging, but everyone who puts in consistent effort will succeed. During the course, we will be discussing topics that may be sensitive in nature for some students. Treat these topics with care and ground your comments in theories and methods from the course.

Assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Majors Assignment	November 5	80
Office Hours Assignment	October 22	80
Class Engagement		89
Krost Assignment	October 6	83
Social Annotations	See specific dates	156 (13 each)
Activities	See specific dates	208 (16 each)
Midterm Reflection	October 13	80
Final Reflection	December 8	80
Final Common Exam	December 15 at 8:30	144

Letter Grade Distribution:

A \geq 895; B 795 – 894; C 695 – 794; D 600 – 694; F \leq 599; Satisfactory \geq 695

Note: This grade distribution and points system is a 1000 point scaled version of the FREX common 600 points scale for your ease of calculation. Your midterm exam includes the midterm reflection and activities to the midterm point. Your final exam includes the final common exam, final reflection, and the activities after the midterm.

Topics and Readings: Below is the schedule of reading and assignments due on the date indicated. I may change the course outline, but I will give you plenty of prior notice.¹

Unit 1: Welcome to TLU!

August 23: FREX first meeting as part of Bulldog Orientation at the time listed on your orientation schedule.

August 24 at 7PM in Langner 120: Optional pre-semester dessert with humanities and social science faculty and students including Dr. O'Brochta and Andie.

August 25 at 8:30AM in the atrium of Hein: Optional pre-opening convocation group breakfast with Dr. O'Brochta and Andie.

August 25 at 9:30AM: Opening convocation with Andie. Andie and Dr. O'Brochta will go to our classroom immediately following the convocation, and you are welcome to join us early.

August 25: All are Welcome

- Note: Opening convocation from 9:30-10:30. Class runs 10:45-11:45.

¹ I have made a conscious effort to represent gender and ethnic/regional diversity of scholarship in these readings.

August 27: Learn Boldly

- Reading Due (annotations due):
 - Tucker, Drew. 2022. *4D Formation: Exploring Vocation in Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. pp. 3-11.
 - Hughes, Carl S. 2015. "The Dangers of 'Vocation' for Students Thinking about Career." *Intersections: Faith, Learning, and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education*. 41: 23-24.
- Activity: Beginning of semester survey. You should complete the survey before you can access the reading. Remember that activities are graded as complete or incomplete. Complete this activity by finishing and submitting the beginning of semester survey.
- E-mail me before our class August 27 with a picture of your favorite cute animal for extra credit!

September 1: What is This? Why are we Here?

- Reading Due (annotations due):
 - Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities. 2018. *Rooted and Open*.
 - Bohmann, Emma and Monica Sitachitta. 2026. "Fragmented in Faith: The Concerns and Hopes Found in Student Spirituality and Civic Engagement." *Intersections: Faith, Learning, and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education* 61: 25-27.

September 3: Vocation for Life

- Reading Due (annotations due): A reading from theology.
 - Kleinhans, Kathryn. 2018. "Good Government and the Vocation of Citizenship: A Lutheran Perspective." *Dialog* 57: 120-125.

Unit 2: Vocation and Service

September 8: Who are We?

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity (remember, due by class time): Vocation interview. Interview a fellow first year student --- someone who is not your roommate, teammate, or in this FREX section --- for at least 15 minutes. Talk about vocation. Do they know what vocation is? How do they define vocation? How do you define vocation? Why is vocation important? Write a 250-word summary of your conversation with at least three key takeaways.

September 10: Called and Empowered

- Meet in front of the ASC at class time. Wear clothes to work outside.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Poems from English studies.
 - Gorman, Amanda. 2020. *The Hill We Climb*.
 - Harper Nichols, Morgan. 2020. *All Along You Were Blooming*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

September 15: Service

- Meet in front of the ASC at class time. Wear clothes to work outside.
- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Service reflection. Complete this activity by writing a minimum 350 word reflection on your experience with the service we completed with the 9/11 flag display. Mention specific events and thoughts you had related to this service opportunity. Why did you do this service? What did you learn about yourself by doing it? Be as specific as possible and provide examples.

September 15 at 7PM in Jackson: Brown Cultural Event

September 17: Values

- Reading Due (annotations due): A psychology study.
 - Wong, Y. Joel, Hsiu-Lan Cheng, Ryon C. McDermott, Kuo Deng, and Keiko M. McCullough. 2019. "I Believe in You! Measuring the Experience of Encouragement Using the Academic Encouragement Scale." *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 14(6): 820-828.
- Activity: Values activity. Access the "Clarifying Your Values" handout on Brightspace. Complete the handout, taking care to answer all the questions fully and to provide thoughtful responses. Upload your completed handout to Brightspace.

September 22: Commitments for What Matters

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Commitment plan. Complete this activity by taking the values you identified in the values activity as a starting point. Select 5 of these values to work with. For each value, describe how you intend to live out the value in the next week, in the next semester, during college, and during the rest of your life. Your answers must differ for each of the four stages of life listed above. Write at least a paragraph for each value with these details. Then, write a few paragraphs about how some resources at TLU (clubs, organizations, activities, courses, et. cetera) can help you better live into these values.

Unit 3: Adjusting to College

September 24: Why Engage on Campus?

- Reading Due (annotations due): A project with historical context.
 - Stephens, Izzie, Allegra Negrete, Moo Holstein, et al. 2025. *A Student-Centered Vision: Committing to Student Engagement*.

September 29: Complaints and Student Government

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: College Life. How are you doing? Write a 500-word reflection describing how your adjustment to college life has gone. What are things you learned? What has gone well? What are you trying to improve? What things match or are different from your expectations? How well have you adhered to your commitment plan that you wrote for class previously?

September 29 at 7PM in Dunne: SGA Meeting

September 30 at 7PM in Jackson: MANDATORY Krost Symposium Presentation

October 1: Reflection on SGA Meeting and Krost Presentation

- Reading Due (annotations due): Krost reading.

October 6: Clubs and Organizations

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Research clubs and organizations. Complete this activity by identifying at least three clubs and organizations you might be interested in joining at TLU. You can use Connect (<https://texaslutheran.campuslabs.com/engage/>) to look for organizations. Once you find your organizations, research them looking for their social media accounts, contact information for officers, and when meetings are held. Write down this information. Then describe why you are interested in joining each of these organizations, providing specific details about your interests and what the organizations do. This assignment should total 350+ words.
- Assignments Due: Krost Assignment.

October 8: Why Engage off Campus?

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Find local organizations. Complete this activity by choosing three local non-profit organizations listed in the 2026 Non-Profit Organization Guidebook (<https://seguintoday.com/2026/04/07/seguin-today-april-2026/>) starting on page 17. For each organization: describe why you chose that organization (be specific and relate to your commitment plan above) and describe specific ways you (not just a random person, but you) might want to interact with that organization (specific volunteer opportunities, internships, open houses, et. cetera). This assignment should be a minimum of 500 words.

October 13: Intentional Practices and Healthy Relationships

- Reading Due: None.
- Activities:
 - On campus event 1. Complete this activity by attending any on campus event. Upload a selfie of you at the event and write 250+ words stating what the event was and specific takeaways you had from the event.
 - Cultural Event. Complete this activity by attending a cultural event at TLU --- either a Brown Cultural Enrichment presentation (on September 15 at 7PM in Jackson) or another event listed as part of Communities and Cultures (<https://www.tlu.edu/ccc>). Upload a document with a selfie and a list of five specific things you learned during the presentation with a few sentences about each thing. Put your selfie in the .doc, .docx, or .pdf file.
- Assignments Due: Midterm Assignment. Optional mid semester survey.

October 15-16: Optional fall semester retreat.

Unit 4: Applying the Liberal Arts

October 20: Sensitive Conversations and Boundary Setting

- Reading Due (annotations due): Advice from communication studies.
 - Stone, Douglas, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. 2023. "Sort out the Three Conversations." *Difficult Conversations*. New York: Penguin. Chapter 1.

October 22: Going *There*

- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Office Hours Assignment.

October 27: Voice

- Reading Due (annotations due): An article from Spanish studies.
 - Barrera, James. 2008. "The 1968 San Antonio School Walkouts: The Beginning of the Chicano Student Movement in South Texas." *Journal of South Texas* 21(1): 39-61.

Unit 5: Expression

October 29: Media Literacy

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Media Literacy. Use your social media to find a news article you are interested in (look at a news website if you do not have social media). Read the article and answer these questions in a narrative format: when was the article posted? Who wrote the article? What expertise do they have? What is the headline? What emotions does the headline evoke? What factual information is contained in the article? What opinion information is contained in the article? How do you know? Find two additional articles closely related to the first one. For each additional article, what information is reported in the same way as the original article? Finally, describe the news sources where you found all three articles? Are these sources trustworthy? Generally why or why not?

November 3: The Election

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Election research. Complete this activity by researching what is on your ballot for the November 3 election. To do this, you will need to find a sample ballot on your county elections website (for Guadalupe County: <https://www.guadalupetx.gov/page/elections.home>). View your sample ballot. Write out a list of the different elected offices. Select three offices to research. List the candidates for each race and look at the following sources of information (if available): their website, their social media, and news articles about them. Write down what you learned and provide your sources of information. Then, describe what the major differences between the candidates for each elected office are and how one would make an informed decision about who to vote for based on this information (I am not asking you how you would vote. I am asking you what the differences are and how a person would decide.)

If you are not registered to vote, any time is a good time to register

(<https://www.votetexas.gov>).

November 5: Advising Preparation

- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Majors Assignment.

November 10: Deliberative Dialogue

- Reading Due: None.
- Activity: Deliberative dialogue. Review the deliberative dialogue document provided on Brightspace from Project Pericles and identify two deliberative dialogue topics you would be interested in discussing during class. For each topic, review the supplemental resources. Then, take each issue stance and spend a few sentences discussing why a TLU student might hold this issue stance. Be specific to our local context, the context of a student, and the context of TLU. Repeat for each issue stance in the second deliberative dialogue topic. Be ready to discuss both of the topics and all of the issue stances in class.

Unit 6: Critical Reading

November 12: A Critical Reading Process

- Reading Due (annotations due): Vrooman, Steve. 2016. "Reading Argument." In: Vrooman, Steve, and Beth Barry (eds.). *The TLU Reader*. Seguin: Texas Lutheran University. pp. 1-21.

November 17: Journey into Darkness

- Reading Due (annotations due): Palmer, Parker. 2000. "Now I Become Myself." In: *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 9-36.

November 19: Potentials and Limits

- Reading Due (annotations due): Palmer, Parker. 2000. "When Way Closes." In: *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 37-55.

November 24: Perspective Taking

- Reading Due (annotations due): An essay from sociology.
 - Goffman, Erving. 1956. "Performances." In: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh. Chapter 1.

December 1: Study Abroad and Study Away

- Reading Due (annotations due):
 - Bloodgood, Nichole. 2026. "Where She's Been & Where She's Going: Margie Coyle on her Adventures Abroad." *TLU Student Media*. <https://tlustudentmedia.com/2026/04/24/where-shes-been-where-shes-going-margie-coyle-on-her-adventures-abroad/>
 - Bloodgood, Nichole. 2026. "Ashley in Athens: Reflections on a Fall Spent Abroad." *TLU Student Media*. <https://tlustudentmedia.com/2026/03/20/ashley-in-athens-reflections-on-a-fall-spent-abroad/>
 - Albert, Lexi. 2025. "From Skipping Class to a Front-Row Seat to Politics: A Semester in D.C." *TLU Student Media*

<https://tlustudentmedia.com/2025/03/26/from-skipping-class-to-a-front-row-seat-to-politics-a-semester-in-d-c/>

- These are all wonderful people! Please let me know if you want to connect with any of them about studying abroad or away!
- Activity: Study abroad. Start completing this activity by visiting <https://www.tlu.edu/academics/study-abroad/why-study-abroad/affiliated-programs> and select two countries: one you might be interested in studying abroad in and one country you have never heard of (or have heard little about) before. Research both countries and the associated study abroad programs that TLU is affiliated with and write down what you learned. Then, construct a pro and con list related to the possibility of studying abroad. Your list should contain a total of at least six items, and you should describe in detail why you might be interested in studying abroad and what reservations you have about doing so.

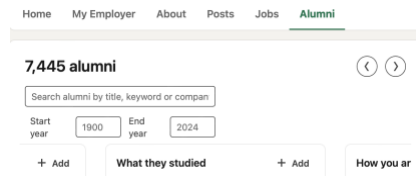
December 3: Grounding: A Meditation to the Earth

- Reading Due (annotations due): Berry, Wendell. 1989. "A Walk Down Camp Branch." In *Travelling at Home*. San Francisco: North Point Press. pp. 11-22.

December 8: Intersections

- Reading Due: None.
- Activities:
 - Volunteering (worth the equivalent of three activities). Attend HOT Dogs Day this semester and upload a selfie. Or complete another volunteer project totaling at least three hours at some point during the semester. You can reach out to the Center for Servant Leadership or to me for a list of opportunities.
 - SGA meeting. Complete this activity by attending an SGA meeting at any point during the semester (7PM on Tuesdays in Tschoepe's Dunne Conference room). Upload a selfie of you at the meeting and write 250+ words stating what you learned from the meeting and ways that you could be more involved in SGA if you chose. If you attend the meeting with me, no assignment submission is required.
 - On campus event 2. Complete this activity by attending any on campus event. Upload a selfie of you at the event and write 250+ words stating what the event was and specific takeaways you had from the event.
 - On campus event 3. Complete this activity by attending any on campus event. Upload a selfie of you at the event and write 250+ words stating what the event was and specific takeaways you had from the event.
 - Community event. Complete this activity by attending any event in the Seguin or Guadalupe County community. Upload a selfie of you at the event and write 250+ words stating what the event was and specific takeaways you had from the event.
 - Major exemplars. With your current major or another TLU major of your choice, research people who have graduated from TLU with this major. Who are these people? Why did they choose this major? What have they done? Are they doing things you are interested in doing? You can answer these questions very specifically if you want by using the search tool if you have a LinkedIn account <https://www.linkedin.com/school/texas-lutheran-university/people/>. If using this

tool, click the right arrow until you get to “what they studied” and select your major. Then research specific people.



The closer you can get to describing the path of TLU graduates in these majors, the better. Your write-up should be at least 500 words.

- Note: We will complete the end-of-semester survey in class.

Tuesday, December 15 8:30-11:30:

- Assignments Due: Final Reflection (submit to Brightspace by end of final exam period).
- Final Common Exam (complete during the final exam period in class).

Description of Assignments:

Majors Assignment (80 points)

Do the following:

1. Imagine you are writing a personal statement describing your choice of your current major (or intended major) and how it fits into the vision you see for yourself and your life. Write that personal statement in about 350 words. Personal statements should be personal and include specific examples and experiences, not vague generalities.
2. Complete the exercise in (1) again, but write the statement after selecting a different major available at TLU.
3. For the major selected in (1), find your degree plan at <https://my.tlu.edu/ICS/Public/Registrar.jnz>. Download it and fill in the courses you are currently completing. Review the degree plan carefully. The course list for next semester may or may not be available when you complete this assignment: <https://www.tlu.edu/academics/registrar>. If it is, select the courses you would like to take, checking for pre-requisites in the course catalog found at the same link and making sure the course times do not conflict. If it is not, select the courses you would like to take *if they happen to be offered next semester* using an old course listing and checking for pre-requisites in the course catalog. For each course, provide a brief description of why you would like to take it and why you think it is important to take it next semester.

Evaluation: Submit these items to Brightspace. The assignment will be graded on the below rubric.

Majors Assignment Rubric

80 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Personal statement describes a vision for yourself in your current major.	15 12	8 6	4 0
Personal statement includes specific examples from your life.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Second personal statement describes a vision for yourself in another major.	15 12	8 6	4 0
Second personal statement includes specific examples from your life.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Degree plan is provided and completed with courses you are in currently	5		0
Potential courses for next semester are listed (for 12-18 hours)	5		0
Descriptions for why courses are chosen are meaningful.	20 16	12 8	4 0

Office Hours Assignment (80 points)

Visit office hours for one of the following people:

1. Me.
2. A professor whose course you are currently enrolled in.
3. Your advisor. Find their office hours either from a course of theirs you are taking, their office door, by asking me, or by e-mailing them.

Visit this person during their scheduled office hours or make an appointment with them if you are unable to attend their scheduled office hours. Write down the name of the professor you are visiting, why you chose to visit with them, and when your visit occurred.

You must prepare for your office hours visit in advance. To do so, create a list of questions you would like to ask the professor during office hours. These questions will differ depending on why you are talking to this professor. You could be getting to know them or asking about an upcoming assignment or asking about the major, et. cetera. These questions should be sufficient such that your office hours visit lasts at least 10 minutes.

In addition to your list of questions, you should learn something about this professor before visiting them. Research them and write down some facts about their professional life that are relevant to you (e.g., where they went to school, what they research, et. cetera). Finally, write down what your expectations and feelings are before visiting office hours. Are you nervous? Excited? Why?

After your visit, record the answers to the questions you asked. Revisit your expectations from before the visit and reflect on how the visit went? Did it confirm your expectations? Why or why not?

Evaluation: Submit a document with the answers to all the above questions and that has a minimum length of 500 words. Then include a brief self-assessment of your performance on this assignment in the same document assigning yourself a letter grade from A to F on this assignment and describing how you fulfilled the expectations for the assignment.

Class Engagement (89 points)

I hope that class time will be a productive space to discuss readings, work in groups to complete activities, teach your peers, and relate the course to your life experiences. Class engagement goes beyond simply showing up for class, though being in class is definitely an important component. If you miss a substantial amount of class, you can expect to earn a 0 on class engagement and/or to DF the course (see attendance policy below).

I will evaluate class engagement based on the following criteria: Listen respectfully, ask respectful questions, and actively participate. You play a critical part in maintaining an inclusive classroom climate. You must participate both during class and during the work we do outside of class (annotations, projects, et. cetera); if you feel uncomfortable participating, please reach out to me so we can figure out a way for you to be engaged.

Evaluation: The final class engagement grade will be assigned at my discretion based on a holistic evaluation of your performance. If you have concerns about your engagement, please discuss them with me during the semester. We can work together to help you do well in this component of the course.

Krost Assignment (83 points)

Do the following:

1. Attend the Krost Symposium Lecture. This is a mandatory assignment for all FREX sections. There are no alternate or make up assignments available unless you have a university excused absence. If this applies to you, you must contact me as soon as possible and before the Krost Symposium Lecture. The required lecture is September 30 at 7PM in Jackson. Take a selfie at the lecture.
2. Attend at least one other Krost related event. You are responsible for finding at least one other event to attend, confirming the location, and organizing your schedule to attend the event. Take a selfie at each event you attend.
 - Wednesday, September 30 from 10AM to 10:20AM: Chapel talk
 - Thursday, October 1 from 9:30AM to 10:15AM: Panel discussion
 - Thursday, October 1 from 11:45AM to 1PM: Lunch and learn
 - Thursday, October 1 at 7PM: Film viewing
3. Submit a file with: your selfies, a 250-word reflection describing specific topics and concepts discussed during the main Krost lecture (September 30 at 7PM), and a list of three key reflections you made from the other event you attended.

Evaluation: This assignment is graded as complete or incomplete.

- Complete (83 points): Attended both events. Submit a file with a selfie of you at each event, a 250-word reflection describing specific topics and concepts discussed during the main Krost lecture, and a list of three key reflections from the other event you attended.
- Incomplete (0 points): No submission or incomplete submission.

Social Annotation (156 points; 13 points each)

Completing and engaging with course material and other students is essential to your success in this course. We will be using Perusall (linked on Brightspace) for social annotation. The idea behind social annotation is that you can engage with students in the course while reading. This will help you to read in a more active and engaged way, to come to class more prepared for our discussions, and to generate ideas that you would like to raise in class. My motivation in asking you to do social annotations is to help you read efficiently. This is a skill that you *can* develop.

For each assigned reading where annotations are due, complete the following:

- Go to Brightspace and click on the link for an assigned reading. You must access Perusall through Brightspace for your annotations to be saved.
- Read the text. I recommend skimming through the entire text once, marking any points of confusion, and asking clarification or definition questions. These are not substantive annotations that count toward your grade, but they will help you read more effectively.
- Return to the text later and read it again. While doing so, **make at least five substantive annotations**. Examples of substantive and not substantive annotations follow.
- Reading and completing the annotations for a particular class period should take you no less than 1 hour and no more than 2 hours. If you find yourself spending more time on an assignment, refer back to the Hoover Green piece on reading effectively. Feel free to come talk to me if you are having any difficulty.

How to write a substantive annotation:

1. Find a part of the reading that is interesting, surprising, or about which you would like to make an annotation.
2. Highlight the relevant text and leave an annotation or, if someone else has already highlighted the text, leave a comment responding to their annotation.
3. In your annotation, go beyond agreeing with or re-stating what the reading is saying. Discuss how you have thought about and processed the information you read. Make connections to concepts from your notes or that you learned in class. Discuss how the reading relates to you personally or to current events. Provide depth by writing at least three sentences per annotation.
4. Complete at least five substantive annotations, spread throughout the reading.

Non-exhaustive examples of substantive and not substantive annotations:

Notice that the substantive comments go far beyond a single sentence and focus on explaining and making connections.

	Not substantive	Substantive
Definition	This term means [description of term].	This term means [description of term]. By introducing this concept, the authors [describe why

		the concept is important]. In addition, we discussed this concept in class [describe how].
Upvote	[Student uses the green checkmark to upvote another student's comment]	[Upvote comment] This makes a lot of sense to me because [describe why]. But, I can also see how [introduce a different point of view].
Question	What are the impacts of [describe something]?	What are the impacts of [describe something]? I think that the impact is [describe impact] because [describe reason]. This is important because [describe why].
Agreement	I agree.	I agree because [describe why]. [Tell story about experience you have had related to the concept being discussed].
Example	This is true today.	This is true today because [describe specific instance]. I know people impacted by [describe topic and how people are impacted].
Clarification	What does this mean?	What does [describe phrase] mean? My interpretation is that it probably means [describe possible meaning], but I also found a source online [list source] that says [describe what the source says]. Clarifying this definition is important because [describe why].
Interesting	This is interesting. I had not thought about this before.	This resonated with me because I have had [describe some experience]. I also see [describe the topic] mentioned frequently in the news like in a recent story [describe story].

Submission and Evaluation: You should submit annotations for the indicated readings. **Your three lowest annotation grades will be dropped (this includes any annotations you do not turn in, so feel free to skip when you are busy).** Be sure to check your annotation grades frequently, as simply completing five annotations will not get you credit if those annotations are not substantive.

If you experience some problem completing annotations in Perusall, you can e-mail me your annotations by the time they are due.

I evaluate annotations in the following way:

- I will engage with you in Perusall by responding to questions and annotations.
- After annotations are due, I count the number of annotations you submitted to ensure you submitted at least five annotations. I then check to ensure that your annotations are substantive. This is not an exact science, which is why I drop your three lowest annotation grades. You will receive an evaluation of:
 - Complete (13 points): Spends an appropriate amount of time reading the text. Excellent annotations: at least five substantive annotations; material is engaged well. Substantive annotations are typically at least three sentences each.
 - Incomplete (0 points): Unsatisfactory annotations: poor quality annotations (only short responses or not substantive responses) or fewer than five substantive

- annotations. Or does not spend an appropriate amount of time reading the text to make substantive annotations. Or no submission/submitted late.
- Each individual annotation grade is only a small part of your overall course grade. Missing one annotation will not impact you much, but missing many will.

Activities (208 points: Choose 13 activities x 16 points each)

Activities are all items marked “activity” that occur at set dates throughout the semester. You may complete the activity at any time prior to the due date. You may complete up to four additional activities for extra credit.

Evaluation: There are 22 activity options. I will grade 13 activities, worth 16 points each. Each activity is graded as complete or incomplete.

- Complete (16 points): Submitted on time and fulfills all of the assignment requirements.
- Incomplete (0 points): Not submitted or submitted late. Or does not fulfill one or more of the assignment requirements.

Midterm Reflection (80 points)

The midterm reflection has two components and should be submitted in one file.

1. Peer Mentor Reflection: Review your notes from class as they relate to the activities led by your peer mentor. Brainstorm key things you learned during these activities. Synthesize the things you learned into three or more common themes. Describe each common theme, citing specific examples from peer mentor sessions to discuss why these themes were impactful to you. This should be 250+ words.
2. Self-Assessment: Write a 350+ word evaluation of your performance in the course thus far. In doing so, describe at least three specific aspects of your in-class performance where you have been successful and at least three specific aspects that you would like to improve. Then describe a plan to improve your areas of improvement for in-class performance. Finally, list specific aspects and discuss potential areas of improvement for your out-of-class performance.

Evaluation: Submit the midterm reflection electronically by the due date. Assignments not meeting the minimum word count for a given component will receive a 0.

Midterm Reflection Rubric

80 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Peer mentor reflection identifies three or more common themes.	10		0
Peer mentor reflection discusses why each theme was impactful.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Peer mentor reflection cites specific examples, text, and activities from class.	20 16	12 8	4 0

Self-assessment describes specific aspects of your in-class performance, listing and describing at least three areas you are successful and at least three areas you would like to improve.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Self-assessment describes a plan to improve the three areas listed above.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Self-assessment describes specific aspects of your out-of-class performance including when you start assignments, how long they take you to complete, and areas of potential improvement.	20 16	12 8	4 0

Final Reflection (80 points)

The final reflection has two components and should be submitted in one file.

1. Peer mentor reflection: Review your notes from class as they relate to the activities led by your peer mentor *during the entire course*. Brainstorm key things you learned during these activities. Synthesize the things you learned into three or more common themes. Describe each common theme, citing specific examples from peer mentor sessions to discuss why these themes were impactful to you. Focus attention on the activities since the midterm reflection. This should be 250+ words.
2. Self-assessment: Write a 350+ word evaluation of your performance in the course as a whole. In doing so, describe at least three specific aspects of your in-class and out-of-class performance where you have been successful and at least three specific aspects that you would like to improve. Reflect on your midterm reflection improvement plan and whether your performance has indeed improved. Then, provide a well-articulated, factual argument describing what grade (A-F) you believe you have earned in this course.

Evaluation: Submit the midterm reflection electronically by the due date. Assignments not meeting the minimum word count for a given component will receive a 0.

Final Reflection Rubric

80 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Peer mentor reflection identifies three or more common themes.	10		0
Peer mentor reflection discusses why each theme was impactful.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Peer mentor reflection cites specific examples, text, and activities from class.	20 16	12 8	4 0
Self-assessment describes specific aspects of your in-class and out-of-class performance, listing and describing at least three areas you are successful and at least three areas you would like to improve.	10 8	6 4	2 0

Self-assessment reflects on improvement plan from the midterm reflection and addresses whether this plan was followed, and improvement was made.	10 8	6 4	2 0
Self-assessment provides a well-articulated, factual, detailed, and specific argument for the overall grade you believe you earned in this course.	20 16	12 8	4 0

Final Common Exam (144 points)

Complete the final common exam and submit your answers to Brightspace. The common reading is chosen by the FREX directors.

Evaluation: The final exam will be completed during the final exam period for this class.

Final Common Exam Rubric

144 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Critical reading response correctly identifies at least two explicit references/uses of context in the reading, and can connect them to the most important arguments made by the text.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Can make at least one accurate inference about implicit influences of context on the text and can connect it to a central argument made by the text.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Can accurately identify at least two other voices recognized/cited by the text, and can demonstrate the contribution of those different voices to a central argument made by the text.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Can ask a question of the author that raises accurate critical questions about the text drawn from problems of argument or context.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Can identify and describe the central claim made by the text in a way that reflects the nuance of its argument and which reflects the contribution of the text within a larger perspective.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Select a claim other than the main thesis or central claim. Identify that claim.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Can correctly identify a piece of evidence that directly supports the claim identified earlier, and can make an accurate judgment about the quality or sufficiency of that evidence.	16 14	12 8	4 0
Can correctly identify the specific warrant that links the evidence identified earlier with the claim identified earlier, and can make an accurate	16 14	12 8	4 0

judgment about the quality or sufficiency of that warrant.			
Describe how the claim connects to and supports the thesis or central claim.	16 14	12 8	4 0

Course Policies:

- General:
 - You agree to the provisions in the Common Syllabus, available on Brightspace.
 - All assignments are to be turned in on Brightspace and are due at class time on the date indicated unless otherwise noted.
 - You are responsible for ensuring that your assignments submit to Brightspace successfully and that the file you submitted can be displayed. All file submissions must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format (include selfies in these files). Files in other formats cannot be read by Brightspace. I grade your last Brightspace submission for a given assignment.
 - Should you have an accommodation, please meet with me during the first two weeks of classes, either during office hours or by appointment, to discuss.
- Plagiarism:
 - Citations must be in American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Use of this style is important, as it governs the writing of professional political science. The APSA style manual is posted on Brightspace.
 - Book format: Grace, Philip. 2016. *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel*. London: Routledge.
 - Journal article format: Walsh, Germaine Paulo. 2002. "Is Jane Austin Politically Correct? Interpreting Mansfield Park." *Perspectives on Political Science* 31(1): 15-26.
 - In-text citation format: Professors at TLU are doing interesting research (Grace 2016; Walsh 2002).
 - Plagiarism, including inappropriate attribution, is an Academic Honesty Violation and is grounds for failure from the course.
 - Always cite your sources. If you are unsure if you are paraphrasing, rewrite to use either a direct quotation or paraphrase differently. Feel free to talk to me if you are unsure whether or how to cite a source.
 - You can use the Turnitin draft coach on Word Online to run a Turnitin report.
 - Wikipedia is not an appropriate academic source.
 - Artificial intelligence tools will be of little help in this course. Only tools that assist with brainstorming concepts or basic spelling and grammar are allowed in this course. If you use one of these tools, you must cite it. All work must be wholly your own, and sentences must be constructed without assistance. All other uses are Academic Honesty Violations.
- Student Office Hours:
 - Student office hours are a time for you to come by to speak with me without an appointment. Please come by to see me early in the semester. I am happy to discuss your progress in the course, political science topics, and potential career

paths. These student office hours are for you; please do not feel like you are imposing by stopping by. If you want to come by but don't know what to ask, ask me about my favorite fruit!

- Extra Credit:
 - Complete up to four additional activities by following the requirements listed above and submitting them to the “extra credit” activities section by the due dates listed above.
- Technology:
 - We will use technology in class. As a result, you are expected to bring a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to each of our class sessions (laptop or tablet preferred). If you will not have regular access to one of these devices, you can borrow a laptop from the bookstore, use a classmate's laptop, or speak with me and we will work out an alternative approach.
 - You are expected to use your devices for class purposes only. Using your device in other ways is distracting to other students, and I reserve the right to deduct up to 10% of your final grade or to drop you from the class in serious cases.
 - Taking photos, recording audio/video of class, or distributing any class materials is not permitted.
- Attendance:
 - I understand that there are reasons that you may need to be absent from class. I expect that you will be responsible and attend class as much as possible. Accordingly, **you do not need to let me know when you will be absent** unless it is a university sponsored absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to learn what we did from someone else in class, to review all material on Brightspace, and to come speak with me during student office hours.
 - Attending class is the biggest key to success in this course. **It is best to limit absences to 3 or fewer during the semester. 6 or more absences result in automatic failure from the course.**
- Late Work:
 - All assignments in this course are most relevant to you and to the rest of the students if they are turned in the day that they are due. As such, assignments will only be accepted late if prior arrangements for an extension have been made.
 - Extensions will only be given in extraordinary circumstances. Feel free to speak with me if numerous assignments are due around the same time; we can develop a plan together to help you complete everything on time. To request an extension, you must e-mail me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due with the reasons behind your request. We can then work together to figure out how you can turn the assignment in on time or make alternate arrangements in extraordinary circumstances.
- Grading:
 - Everyone can succeed in this course, and it is my goal to help you do so! Coming to class prepared, completing assignments on time, working hard, and doing your best are the biggest tickets to doing well.
 - Grades will only be changed if I made an arithmetic error or mistake. If you feel that this happened to you, please send me an e-mail no later than three days after the assignment is returned detailing the error.

- If you are concerned about a grade you receive, please discuss it with me. I am happy to discuss how you can improve in future work.
- I do not give incomplete grades unless there is a documented medical crisis or documented emergency late in the semester and you have communicated about this to me when the incident occurs.
- Checking Your Grade:
 - You can always check your grade in the course by looking at the Grades tab. Be sure to view all rubric feedback on graded items.
 - The course grade reflects the points you have earned thus far in the course (starting at 0 points). You can calculate your estimated final grade using the grade estimator spreadsheet on Brightspace.
- Contacting Me:
 - E-mail is the best way to contact me outside of student office hours. Please do not use Brightspace Messages, as I am unlikely to see your message promptly. You can call my office phone, but my e-mail response time is likely to be quicker.
 - I will respond to your e-mails promptly. In general, you can expect a response within 24 hours and that e-mails will be answered between 9AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. While I understand students work outside of these hours, please plan ahead to give me time to respond.
 - Be sure to check the syllabus before e-mailing; questions answered in the syllabus will not be answered via e-mail.
 - Often, e-mail is best used to set-up an individual meeting. It is easier for us to understand each other in a meeting rather than via lengthy e-mail exchanges.
 - Please treat e-mails as professional correspondence. E-mails may only come from your tlu.edu e-mail address and should include a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. O'Brochta), a clear message, and a signature with your name and the class you are enrolled in.