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**LIBERAL ARTS 202–  
SEMINAR–DEMOCRACY & DIVERSITY**

**Fall, 2017**

**Lincoln Campus**  
COURSE SYLLABUS

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dick Ehrman

**PHONE:** Cell: 402/429-1327 (if no answer leave message; texting is okay as long as you identify yourself!)

**E-MAIL:** [richard.ehrman@doane.edu](mailto:richard.ehrman@doane.edu) (Note: I may not check my e-mail every day, so if your e-mail is particularly important, it may be a good idea to contact me by phone as well.)

**NOTE:** As per Doane policy, if you submit work electronically, you **MUST** submit ALL coursework for a grade via your Doane email account or via Blackboard/LiveText. So, please make sure that your Doane account is activated and functioning before beginning this class.

**“OFFICE”:** Of course, I don’t have an assigned office space, but if you need to see me in person, I will be at Doane before class on Tuesday from about 430-600 PM. Feel free to stop by and visit me at this time, otherwise, specific appointments can be scheduled.

**MEETING TIME:** **Tuesdays, Aug 15-Oct. 10, 2017, from 6:00 PM to 10:30 PM** (or thereabouts—this will vary through the term!).

**TEXT:** Bill Offutt, *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775-76* (Norton, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) ISBN: 978-0-393-93889-0-3.

Other readings/videos/etc. provided via Blackboard and/or email.

**LAR 202: Debating Democracy: New York / American Revolution:** This is a course studying the emerging 18th century American society at a moment of democratic crisis as Americans debated not only the question of independence, but also questions of basic rights and equality. Thus students will discuss key issues on how to establish democracy and unity, national identity and authority, and social and economic justice.

In a collaborative setting, students will apply and integrate knowledge and experiences to examine complex questions related to democracy and diversity from multiple perspectives such as: What are the sources of power of those who govern the society, and what constraints exist on that power? How do they balance the demands of the community (political, religious, or class) with individual liberty? What influence do issues of religion, race, or ethnicity have on questions of rights within the society? What

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tensions exist between differences in wealth and status and attitudes toward economic inequality?

Students will get a chance to explore these questions and others to come to their own reasoned conclusions on the promise and dilemmas of establishing truly democratic societies. These discussions will help them develop the critical thinking and communication skills necessary for intellectual inquiry, the empathy for differences in human conditions that help them develop appropriate values for a meaningful personal life, and the knowledge of the issues faced by democratic societies that can help them develop as an engaged citizen.

This course on Debating Democracy is being taught as a Liberal Arts Seminar 202 and provides an important component of the liberal education called for in **Doane's mission statement**.

*Doane College's mission is to provide an exceptional liberal arts education in a creative, inclusive, and collaborative community where faculty and staff work closely with undergraduate and graduate students preparing them for lives rooted in intellectual inquiry, ethical values, and a commitment to engage as leaders and responsible citizens in the world.*

## **Doane Core Curriculum description for LAR 202: Integrative Seminar: Democracy and Diversity**

*In a collaborative setting, students will apply and integrate knowledge and experiences to examine complex questions related to democracy and diversity from multiple perspectives. This course can address far-reaching issues that are enduring or contemporary in areas such as culture and values, science and society, global interdependence, citizenship, or human dignity and freedom. (Sophomore status, and successful completion of LAR 101 or equivalent, 3 credits)*

The course will be taught using a pedagogy known as **“Reacting to the Past.”** “Reacting to the Past” seeks to introduce students to major ideas and texts. It uses a role-playing format to replicate the historical context in which these ideas acquired significance. The course will provide diverse learning activities including collaboration, oral presentations, research opportunities and student-led discussions. This section of Debating Democracy will deeply explore the diverse qualities of the emerging American society through one game.

### **Examples of roles:**

- |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| -Patriot leaders         | - Loyalist leaders  |
| -Moderate indeterminates | - Landless laborers |
| -Women                   | - Slaves            |

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## *LAR 202 Program Learning Outcomes*

Students will work to:

- **Connect the methods and research of more than one field of study to address complex issues.** In Debating Democracy students will be asked to analyze varied sources – history, political philosophy, economics, and sociology – to make reasoned arguments supported by relevant evidence. Students will read and critically analyze several issues related to democratic decision-making. They will be asked to confront historical debates using classic texts and then come to their own reasoned conclusions on the promise and dilemmas of establishing truly democratic societies. They will be required to write persuasive essays and make oral presentations that develop the rational analysis called for the Doane Core Curriculum’s critical thinking and communication rubrics.
- **Recognize multiple social, political, religious, cultural or global perspectives on complex issues.** Each game will ask students to research and communicate roles that engage them in understanding diverse political, religious, social, and ethnic groups. Assessment of the Reacting to the Past games has demonstrated that they help students develop empathy for differences in human conditions that can help them appreciate the issues faced by democratic societies and the demands placed on responsible global citizens.
- **Develop collaborative skills, which may include research and presentation of knowledge.** Students will be grouped explicitly in factions or parties that collaborate to develop research and presentations on key issues as well as inform other students of their own unique identities within the context of the games. With the use of role-playing games, students will share the responsibility for establishing course learning goals, collaboration, and teaching each other for significant sections of the course and will receive further training in critical thinking and persuasive writing. They will be able to explore critical issues of leadership, dialogue, and collective responsibility through reflection on their roles in the games.
- **Use reflection to examine their distinctive voices and to explore how they will connect knowledge across disciplines and experiences to shape their values and goals.** Students will engage in several active learning techniques including goal-setting, group presentations, and role-playing debate. During the course of each individual game students are re-enacting democratic processes and researching powerful roles that immerse them in the vital issues of democratic debate. Thus the class activities simulate ways citizens participate in democracy today. These include discussing the interpretation of constitutional elements, considering if changes in law are required to promote issues of justice, writing and getting signatures for petitions, writing letters or newspaper articles to others about one’s opinion on public matters, voting, discussing policy concerns with those with whom one has a sense of shared interest -- and with those with whom

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one does NOT feel one has a sense of shared interest, etc. These are not only classroom activities but model ways in which citizens can share orally and in writing their public concerns with others and with the government. Each game will lead to a detailed post mortem in which the instructor leads the students in an examination of the historical and philosophical issues raised in the game as well as a review of the key skills in research, argumentation, written and oral communication, and/or multicultural competency developed during the game. The course can be framed by student reflective essays using the Doane Core Curriculum rubrics on integrative and reflective thinking in order to make the learning more explicit.

## ***This section will have these specific Learning Outcomes:***

Students who take responsibility for full participation in the class will enhance their abilities to:

1. Analyze important texts and ideas (demonstrated through research in primary documents as well as secondary interpretive works as documented for written essays)
2. Understand the historical context surrounding significant debates on the fundamental principles of democracy (demonstrated through written essays and oral in-class presentations)
3. Display improved skills in persuasion and argumentation both in speaking and in written form, particularly through establishing clear claims, reasons for belief in the claim, and evidence to support those reasons (demonstrated through written essays and oral in-class presentations)
4. Enhance leadership and collaboration skills through group discussions and teamwork on strategy and presentations (demonstrated through the functioning of factions/groups in course sessions).
5. Demonstrate an increase in empathy – an understanding that key questions have multiple human perspectives (demonstrated through reflective writing and the final essay examination)
6. Discuss the problems and possibilities in establishing democracy, and indicate the impact of that knowledge on their own perception of their role in a democratic system (demonstrated through reflective writing and the final essay examination)

Student pursuit of these course outcomes will continue their development of the Doane Core Curriculum's habits of an intellectual and balanced life to communicate effectively, use information wisely, and to examine their own attitudes.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

**REMEMBER: As outlined below, there are FIVE required activities on which you will be graded for this class:**

- 1. Three (3) Initial Reflection Papers;**
- 2. Two (2) quizzes on basic historical and philosophical concepts;**

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3. Two (2) Reacting to the Past (RTTP)/ “Character” papers (as time allows and depending on your game role, one or both of these papers will be delivered orally);

4. Class participation/Game outcome; and

5. One (1) final Reflection Paper.

The assignments and instructions, along with supporting material, will be posted on Doane’s Blackboard site; instructions for accessing this material will be provided at the first class meeting. In addition, depending upon class needs, I may email assignments and instructions directly to students.

### SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
Week 1 (Aug. 15)	Welcome & Introductions Reflective writing & student concepts The basics & historical setting Assignment of roles for the Game	Offutt, p. 3-61
Week 2 (Aug. 22)	<b>NO CLASS MEETING</b> <b>Reflection Paper 1 due</b>	
Week 3 (Aug. 29)	Philosophical background—Hobbes, Locke, etc. More historical setting <b>QUIZ 1—Basic history, Locke’s philosophy</b> <b>Reflection Paper 2 due</b>	Offutt, p. 97-131 Schechter, <i>Battle for New York</i>
Week 4 (Sept. 5)	Discussion of Game writing & rules Faction meetings Provincial Congress meets, elects Chair <b>Reflection Paper 3 due</b>	Offutt, p. 63-96 Review role sheet
Week 5 (Sept. 12)	PUBLIC SESSIONS 1 & 2 Debate on Association, import/export, & courts First papers/presentations at podium— Patriots vs. Loyalists <b>Character Paper 1 due for All Patriots and All Loyalists</b>	Offutt, p. 131-160
Week 6 (Sept. 19)	PUBLIC SESSIONS 3 & 4 Debate on petitions & military <b>First newspaper published/presented(Cuyler)</b> Presentations at podium: All Moderates	N/A

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All Laborers  
All Women  
All Slaves

**Character Paper 1 due for All Moderates,  
Laborers, Women, & Slaves**

Week 7  
(Sept. 26)

PUBLIC SESSIONS 5 & 6  
Debate/vote on independence

Offutt, p. 160-192

**QUIZ 2—History, Thomas Paine  
Character Paper 2 due—All Characters**

Week 8  
(Oct. 3)

Post-mortem—what REALLY happened?  
Discussion of *Federalist #10*  
**Final Reflection Paper Due**

*Federalist #10*

Week 9  
(Oct. 10)

**NO CLASS MEETING**  
**Final Reflection Paper Due**  
Finish any remaining work—I'll be available for  
consultation if needed!

N/A

#### **Assessment Methods/Grading**

Both oral and written forms of communication will be assessed including participation in group activities, such as ability to work through issues with others, preparation outside class, and sharing ideas in small group discussion. **EACH INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT/QUIZ/ETC. IS WORTH 30 POINTS TOWARD YOUR FINAL GRADE.**

**Initial Reflection Papers – 30 Points each (90 points total) ; due weekly in Weeks 2, 3, and 4). Respond to the writing prompts/questions as supplied.**

**Purpose of Assignments:** All students in LAR 202 will be grappling with complex issues of democracy and diversity. These topics can be difficult to explore and an appropriate starting point is often to consider where we are now at the beginning of the process.

**Quizzes– 30 points each (60 points total) (Weeks 3 and 7)**

**Purpose of assignment:** Provide basic historical and philosophical background for the Game.

**Character Papers – 30 points each (60 points total) -- Paper 1 due Week 5 or 6 depending on role; Paper 2 due Week 7**

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Character Papers (2-4 pages each) are to be written to make your Character's case for various causes (e.g. independence, loyalty, freedom, payment, etc.) and can be written in one of three primary styles:

1. The Pamphlet – containing an argument for a critical intellectual or ideological point;
2. The Petition – submitted with deference to the appropriate authority to achieve a particular goal;
3. The Newspaper Narrative – either as a letter to the editor or a narrative on particular events (debates, mob action, etc.) as you experienced them and an argument as to their impact.

Specific instructions on writing styles etc. will be provided in class prior to the Character papers being due.

**Purpose of assignments:** These two papers will allow you to develop a viewpoint and arguments which reflect your Game character, and support your faction in achieving victory. In addition, at least one of the papers (depending on class size, time, etc.) will be presented at the podium in order to develop your oral skills.

## **Participation (discussions, in-class presentations, debates, etc.) – 30 points.**

All students are required to participate in the debates during the public sessions of the Provincial Congress. As such, it is **ESSENTIAL** that you attend all class sessions if at all possible. If you miss class, you not only deprive yourself of the opportunity to interact with other students and support your cause in the Game, you also put your other faction members at a real disadvantage (and you'll receive a standard 15 pt. deduction as per the attendance policy outlined below). So PLEASE try to attend ALL class sessions!

**Purpose of assignment:** Develop interpersonal and collaborative skills (and get to know some people!).

## **Final Critical Reflection – 30 points** (Due by the end of term). **Respond to the writing prompts as supplied.**

**Purpose of assignment:** This assignment provides the opportunity to reflect on the impact of this course when added to your earlier experiences, academic and non-academic. By redefining your understanding of diversity and democracy you will be better able to identify those principles that you value and those experiences that you want to pursue in your remaining college years to build your knowledge and skills to prepare to build a just society with peoples of diverse backgrounds and to tackle difficult social and political problems.

**Game Outcome:** 30 points for members of the winning faction(s); 20 points for everybody else!

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**Purpose of assignment:** To provide a little encouragement to play to win! Seriously, though, I don't want to make a great deal of your grade dependent upon whether or not your faction "wins" the game. But this small difference (10 pts. between "winners" and "losers") will hopefully encourage you to play the game with creativity and enthusiasm!

**IMPORTANT NOTE: I generally do a good job of keeping track of student's submitted work, but occasionally mistakes and/or computer malfunctions do happen. SO, PLEASE BE SURE TO SAVE YOUR WORK on your computer (or make a copy if you're submitting it in hardcopy) until the course is completed, in case you need to resubmit any work.**

I will make every attempt to respond to any student's email submittals, questions, or requests for more information within one week of receiving an email. However, my regular job sometimes puts me in places where I may not have email access. That being the case, **if you send me an email and I have not responded to you within your desired timeframe and you need an answer or feedback, please contact me on my cell phone (402-429-1327) and I'll be happy to assist you.**

The online assignments, short essay exam, multiple choice exam, and term paper/project will be worth the points indicated above. **THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS AVAILABLE ON THE WORK DESCRIBED ABOVE WILL BE 300;** your final grade will be calculated against that 300 pt. total as outlined below.

**GRADE SCALE:** Grades will be assigned on a simple point accumulation basis. There are 300 points possible on the three required activities (assignments, exam, paper/project); your grade will be determined relative to those 300 points based upon the following scale:

<u><b>POINTS</b></u>	<u><b>GRADE</b></u>
290 & above	A+
280-289	A
270-279	A-
260-269	B+
250-259	B
240-249	B-
230-239	C+
220-229	C
210-219	C-
200-209	D+
190-199	D
180-189	D-
179 & below	See you next term



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**FINAL GRADES:** Final grades will be assigned after final due date for all work (the end of the term). Normally, I'll grade your assignments as I get them, then let you know via email or LiveText what your grade was for that particular activity. Assignments, exams, or papers/projects received at the end of term will be graded by the grade submission due date established by Doane for each term. **ALL ELECTRONIC SUBMITTALS OF ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, OR PAPERS/PROJECTS WILL BE DELETED NO EARLIER THAN 24 DAYS AFTER THE END OF A TERM. HARDCOPY VERSIONS OF THE SAME WILL BE DESTROYED AT THE SAME TIME UNLESS THE STUDENT REQUESTS THEIR RETURN.**

**SUBMITTAL OF WORK:** As described above, your work can be submitted via LiveText, email (as an attachment), or in hardcopy. However, **PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT ANY ELECTRONIC SUBMITTALS VIA EMAIL ARE IN MICROSOFT WORD FORMAT (.doc, or .docx) OR PDF.** I have considerable difficulty converting some other forms of submittals, so please submit your work in standard Microsoft format or as a PDF. And again, please make sure that you save your work to your computer just in case you need to resubmit it! Finally, remember that **I CAN ONLY ACCEPT WORK SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY FROM A DOANE EMAIL ACCOUNT!!!!**

**ATTENDANCE:** I completely understand that life, work, family, illness, etc. can sometimes intrude in an unwelcome manner on your schoolwork, and you may have to miss a class or classes through the term. However, especially during the Game phase of this class, it's really important that all students be in attendance so their character can participate in the discussion/debate/mob action etc. and help their faction accomplish its goals. If you miss a class, you're not only missing the content for that class, you're also putting some of your fellow students at a considerable disadvantage. That being the case, I feel that it's fair to impose a penalty if you miss a class. Therefore, for this class, **for each absence, I will deduct 15 pts. from that students' point total at the end of the term.** If you experience some sort of emergency or multi-week unavoidable circumstance (serious illness, military deployment, training, etc.) that will keep you away from class for more than one or two classes, please let me know ASAP and we'll work out a strategy to address your situation.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:** In keeping with the mission of Doane-Lincoln in particular and higher education in general, the Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of others' ideas and words without proper citation of sources is plagiarism and will result in a loss of all points for that particular assignment or test. You are allowed and encouraged to collaborate with other students as you work through this class, but **MAKE SURE THAT ALL WORK IS SUBMITTED IN YOUR OWN WORDS. I WILL UTILIZE A VARIETY OF PLAGIARISM DETECTION SOFTWARE THROUGHOUT THIS CLASS; IF YOUR WORK IS SUBSTANTIALLY PLAGIARIZED YOUR WORK WILL EITHER BE RETURNED OR YOU WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO AT MY DISCRETION.**

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**INCOMPLETES:** As you might be aware, Doane has a specific policy on incompletes. Please keep this in mind as you do your classwork; the policy is as follows:

An Incomplete (I) may be given if a student is not able to complete the work required for a course by the last day of the course due to sickness or other extenuating circumstance that the student has discussed with the instructor. When awarding an incomplete, the instructor will assign an expiration date **NO LATER THAN** the last day of the next term. If the expiration date passes without a grade change from the instructor, the incomplete grade will automatically convert to an "F". This is a final grade and will not be changed, per the grade change policy.

In order to receive an incomplete (I), a student must have completed at least 75% of the coursework required for the course. If a student wishes to receive an incomplete for a course, the student will obtain a form from the registrar that will allow the teacher and the student to detail the coursework required to remove the incomplete. The student must complete the form, obtain the signature of the instructor on the form, and return it to the Registrar's office.

**QUESTIONS:** Heartily encouraged at all times and about any subject you're having trouble with. Remember, in this class, **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A DUMB QUESTION!!!!** You may get some rather absurd answers from time to time, but don't let that stop you. Especially in a class like this, it's sometimes easy to get confused or lost, so don't let that happen. Send me an email, give me a call, or set up an in-person meeting and I'll help you out. That's not an inconvenience—it's what you're paying me for!

So, with all these pleasant thoughts in mind, relax, sit back, and enjoy a little history, philosophy, and character-acting. The most important thing to remember is **DON'T WORRY!!!!** Worrying about your grade, class status, image, etc. spoils more learning opportunities than just about anything else. With a little bit of work and thought, you'll pass this class, and you might just learn something to boot!