

**The Ohio State University
First-Year Seminar Program
Course Proposal**

Course Information

1. Attach a syllabus that includes the following (sample syllabi can be found at <http://firstyearseminars.osu.edu>):
- the course goals
 - a brief description of the content
 - the distribution of meeting times
 - a weekly topical outline
 - a listing of assignments
 - grade assessment information (A-E or S/U)
 - required textbooks and/or reading list
 - the academic misconduct and disability services statements (sample statements can be found at <http://ascas.osu.edu/curriculum/asc-syllabus-elements>)

Instructor Information

2. Attach a brief biographical paragraph that includes the current research interests, teaching awards and honors, and undergraduate courses taught by the participating instructor(s). The paragraph will be included in materials for first-year students.

Katherine Stanutz, Department of English

Proposer's Name and Primary Academic Unit (please print)

Working for the Weekend: Productivity and Leisure in American Culture

Proposer's Title

stanutz.3@osu.edu

Proposer's e-mail Address

March 2, 2020

Submission Date

Robyn Warhol 

Approval of Department Chair of Academic Unit (please print)

Please return this form and any attachments to First-Year Seminar Program, 100 Denney Hall, 164 Annie & John Glenn Avenue, ATTN: Todd Bitters or e-mailed to bitters.4@osu.edu.

Working for the Weekend: Productivity and Leisure in American Culture

Fall 2020 Arts and Sciences 113*., First-Year Seminar
 1 Semester-hour Credit
 Tuesdays 5:20-6:15pm
 447 Denney Hall

Instructor: Dr. Katie Stanutz

Email: stanutz.3@osu.edu

Office: 416 Denney Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00-5:00pm and by appointment

Course Description

The Puritan work ethic has guided American culture since its inception, marshalling a colony to an independent nation through grit and labor, and emphasis on hard work fills early American texts. For instance, Benjamin Franklin emphasizes productivity as not only one of the key virtues but as a necessary trait for those looking to live in America. Over two centuries later, that cultural ideal still holds as Americans look to maximize their time and corporations develop new ways to ensure worker productivity, like automated programs that track worker key strokes at their computers. And yet, there also exists an alternative discourse in American culture – one of leisure, which is perhaps best encapsulated in Washington Irving’s Rip Van Winkle, a man whose desire to escape work results a twenty-year nap. But Rip is not punished for his indolence; rather, he is rewarded as his slumber allows him to skip the prime working years of his life (and the Revolutionary War) and to settle into a leisurely retirement. As such, Irving suggests that there is gain without (working) pain. In this seminar, we’ll examine this tension between productivity and idleness as it plays out in American culture and politics. From Ben Franklin’s early proverbs to Bartleby’s passive resistance to Theodore Roosevelt’s early 20th century treatise on work ethic to Harold and Kumar’s trip to White Castle, we’ll trace anxieties about productivity as we examine the American impulse to both work hard and hardly work.

Website/Carmen

This course will primarily use Carmen. Through the site, you will be able to access all of the readings for the course, the syllabus, assignments, and additional handouts. **You are responsible for keeping up with any information or updates communicated through the course site.**

Course Requirements, Assignments, and Grading

*This course will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U).

Reading Responses: 40%

Students will complete a series of reading responses intended to bolster their critical thinking skills, their ability to develop arguments, their analytical skills, and their critical reflection skills.

Cultural Artifact Analysis: 30%

Students will choose a cultural artifact (a text, a film, a TV show, a character, etc.) related to productivity to analyze. A list of potential artifacts will be offered to students, or they may choose their own.

Participation: 30%

Participation is more than just attending class. Come to class **on time**, prepared to discuss the text and to engage with your instructor and classmates. Read the assigned text carefully and mark significant passages so you can contribute to the discussion using specific textual evidence (quotes, references to specific page numbers, etc.). **Bring your copy of the assigned text to every class.** Speak up in class: sharing your insights and listening carefully to your classmates on a regular basis should help you strengthen your ability to develop and support arguments.

Students will be given a midterm status report of their participation in class.

Course Policies

Classroom Conduct. Be respectful of everyone's opinions, presence, and person in this course. Turn off your cell phone before class and put it away. Bring your book to class and be present in class. Laptops are permitted in class, but they must be used only for course-related purposes (accessing course content, taking notes, etc.). The instructor may ban laptops (individually or collectively) if they are misused in class. If you disrupt class, you will be asked to leave.

No audio and/or visual recordings of class permitted unless the instructor has given explicit permission.

Submitting Work. All written work for this course must be submitted online to the course Carmen site. All work must be submitted on time. For every day a paper is late, your grade will be lowered by half a letter grade (five percentage points), and papers more than ten days late will receive a zero (0). In case of a serious emergency preventing your timely completion of an assignment, contact me as soon as possible.

Discussing Your Grade. After you have received your grade and feedback for any final version of an assignment, **you must wait 24 hours to discuss your assignment with me** (including emails). Review my comments, establish thoughtful, intelligent questions, and then contact me and arrange a meeting to discuss the feedback.

Instructor Communication. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns about the course. My office is in 416 Denney Hall, and my office hours are 4:00-5:00pm on Tuesdays. If you cannot meet at that time, I am happy to make an appointment with you at a mutually convenient time. Email is the best way to get in touch with me, and my email address is stanutz.3@osu.edu.

I tend to check my email regularly during business hours (Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:30pm) but irregularly during the evenings and on weekends. Generally, I do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours, but expect a longer response time over the weekend.

For your part, get in the habit of regularly checking Carmen and your email, as I will send out announcements/assignments/updates.

Academic Misconduct. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct.

The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change during the semester.

Week 1

Introduction and John Smith, selections from “A Description of New England” (in-class)

Week 2

Benjamin Franklin, “The Way to Wealth” and “To Those Who Would Remove to America”

Week 3

Benjamin Franklin, selections from *The Autobiography*

Week 4

Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”

Week 5

Henry David Thoreau, selections from *Walden, or Life in the Woods*

Week 6

Walt Whitman, selections from *Song of Myself*

Week 7

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “Why I Wrote ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’”

Week 8

Theodore Roosevelt, selections from *The Strenuous Life*.

Week 9

Langston Hughes, selected stories

Week 10

Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty of the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, selections from *Work in America: A Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare*

Week 11

Office Space

Week 12

Office Space

Week 13

Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle

Week 14

Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle

Week 15

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, “everyone thinks you’re so lazy. don’t let them”; Firoozeh Dumas, “After Surgery in Germany, I Wanted Vicodin, Not Herbal Tea”

Week 16

Wrap-Up

Biographical Statement

Katie Stanutz earned her PhD in English from the University of Maryland, College Park. Specializing in multi-ethnic American literature with additional interests in media studies and literary reception history, she has published articles on Japanese American internment during World War II and prison literature. She has won several teaching awards at the University of Maryland, and her wide-ranging teaching experience has taken her from ancient Greek drama to contemporary science fiction. An adapted version of this first-year seminar, “American Idle: The Cultural Politics of Laziness,” was featured in the University of Maryland’s *Terp* magazine.