

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING – UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

LL 280 – Liberal Arts in Action: Rats in the City

Autumn 2017

Class Time: Tuesdays, 9/12 through 11/21 (finals day), 5:45–9:00 pm
Classroom: Daley Building, 14 E. Jackson, Room 404
Faculty: Prof. Donald Opitz, PhD, dopitz@depaul.edu
Office: Daley Building, 14 E. Jackson, Room 1437, (312) 362-6426
Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course directs students to analyze an engaging topic (here, urban rats) from multiple perspectives in the liberal arts. Students strengthen their problem-solving skills by drawing upon the ideas and methods of three different liberal arts disciplines. The learning activities clarify how the liberal arts can be put into action to solve problems. The course strengthens students' development of critical thinking and academic writing across the curriculum. Students also will learn about resources that will be useful for their academic success at DePaul.

Required Learning Media

The following required text is available for purchase at the Loop Campus bookstore (Barnes & Noble) and other booksellers (any edition is acceptable):

Robert Sullivan, *Rats: Observations on the History & Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants*, Bloomsbury USA, ISBN 978-1582344775 (paperback)

Also required is the following movie, widely available online and from a range of film providers:

Brad Bird and Jan Pinkava (directors), *Ratatouille*, Disney–Pixar, 2007 (runtime: 1:51)

Further required readings are available on DePaul's electronic reserves (*ares*) site:

<http://library.depaul.edu/services/Pages/Course-Reserves-Services.aspx>.

About the Instructor

Prof. Donald Opitz, PhD is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean in DePaul's School for New Learning. He is also an Affiliated Scholar in the Department of History and faculty member in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies Program. He holds a BS with majors in physics and mathematics and a PhD in the history of science and technology. His research concerns the intersection between science and culture with an emphasis on the roles of class, gender and sexuality. He is an editor of the anthology, *Domesticity in the Making of Modern Science* (Palgrave Macmillan 2016).

Learning Outcomes

This course consists of multiple sections with distinctive learning outcomes. Students enroll in specific sections to develop respective learning outcomes as follows.

Liberal Arts in Action (LA1) (Sections 704 or 705, 4 or 6 credits)

This section satisfies the Liberal Arts in Action requirement of the Liberal Learning core curriculum of the School for New Learning's professional studies majors. Students who successfully complete this section will be able to *compare typical questions, methods of inquiry and kinds of evidence in the liberal arts*. Specifically, students will be able to

- identify, compare and contrast the questions, methods of inquiry and kinds of evidence that characterize three liberal-arts approaches to knowing; and
- compare and contrast the uses of writing in each of these approaches.

Civic Engagement (L3) (Section 701, 2 credits)

This section fulfills the Civic Engagement competency requirement of the Lifelong Learning core curriculum of the School for New Learning's competency-based degrees. Students who successfully complete this section will be able to *assess the social and personal value of civic engagement for achieving change*. Specifically, students will be able to

- analyze national or local civic issues from a systemic perspective;
- explain the impact an engaged citizen can make to improve the effectiveness of a society;
- articulate a strategy for personal civic engagement; and
- engage in an activity that positively contributes to the civic life of a community.

Interconnections in the Natural World (S4) (Section 702, 2 credits)

This section fulfills the Interconnections in the Natural World competency requirement of the Liberal Learning core curriculum of the School for New Learning's competency-based degrees. Students who successfully complete this section will be able to *describe and explain connections among diverse aspects of nature*. Specifically, students will be able to

- describe one or more natural systems;
- explain how parts of the system are interconnected; and
- demonstrate how such connections are found elsewhere in nature.

Scientific Reasoning (S5) (Section 703, 2 credits)

This section of the course fulfills the Scientific Reasoning competency requirement of the Liberal Learning core curriculum of the School for New Learning's competency-based degrees. Students who successfully complete this section will be able to *explain and evaluate the nature and process of science*. Specifically, students will be able to

- explain and analyze the types of questions, assumptions and claims that define science as a way of knowing;
- assess how evidence, theories, and hypotheses are used to establish scientific claims;
- explain the role of uncertainty in science; and
- evaluate the role of communication, collaboration, diversity and peer review in the scientific process.

Negotiated Competencies (with college approval)

For students in competency-based programs at the School for New Learning, other competency requirements aligning with the course content and faculty's expertise may be fulfilled by special petition. To petition for a negotiated competence, consult with your instructor and faculty mentor and submit the [online form](#); see <https://snl.depaul.edu/student-resources/undergraduate-resources/Pages/forms.aspx>.

Crosscutting Competencies

In addition to the section-specific outcomes, all students will develop crosscutting competencies including: *inquiring, reflecting, connecting, deciding, communicating, and engaging*.

Assignments and Assessment

An overview of assignments and their point values are given below. Detailed instructions and rubrics will be provided on separate handouts. See also the course schedule.

<i>Due</i>	<i>Assignment and Description</i>			<i>Points</i>
Each class	Class Participation (See <i>Policy on Attendance</i>) Weekly, contribute to class discussions and other in-class activities.			500
To be assigned	Class Discussion Leading Lead or co-lead class discussion once during the term.			50
10/31	Site Visit Report Report on your visit to a civic site or event relevant to this course's topic. <i>The selected site requires prior instructor approval.</i>			100
11/21	Final Self-Assessment An assessment of your learning with respect to your section's learning outcomes and statement of your plans for putting liberal arts in action.			50
11/21	Oral Presentations on Projects Present on project (see below) in class.			50
ACTION PROJECTS All students must complete the Project Core <i>plus</i> the section-specific variations.				
Stage 1 (50pts) 9/26	Project Core All Sections: You will write a research-based action plan about an urban issue <u>involving rats</u> , drawing upon two (2) or more liberal arts disciplines—or, three (3) or more disciplines if enrolled in six (6) credits.	Liberal Arts in Action Sections Only: In addition to the Project Core, in a further section of your paper, you will analyze the relevance of interdisciplinary research for effective action on your selected issue.	Competency-Based Sections Only: In addition to the Project Core, for <u>each</u> competency you will explain how your analysis and action plan for the selected issue meets the competency criteria.	250
Stage 2 (100pts) 10/17	Your paper will first analyze the issue by synthesizing the research, and then it will propose an action plan for enactment in a city.		For students in the Civic Engagement (L3) section, describe your initial steps taken to enact your action plan, and how you might sustain its enactment beyond the conclusion of this course.	
Stage 3 (100pts) 11/14				
Total				1000

Policy on Attendance

DePaul University anticipates that all students will attend all class meetings of this course. If a religious observance, an emergency, or other extenuating circumstance necessitates an absence, inform the instructor as soon as possible and arrange for an alternative means by which to fulfill any assignment due during the missed class. No credit can be awarded for assignments missed due to an unexcused absence.

Workload Expectations

For satisfactory achievement in this course, for every two credits enrolled, in addition to the scheduled instructional time, students are expected to fulfill at least an additional four hours of assigned work per week outside of class.

Grading

As outlined above (see “Assignments and Assessment,” a total of 1000 points are possible. To assign grades, the following grading scale and University grading standards will be used. (Any partial points will be rounded up to the nearest whole point.)

A+	n/a	B+	870-899	C+	770-799	D+	670-699	F	0-649
A	930-1000	B	830-869	C	730-769	D	650-669		
A-	900-929	B-	800-829	C-	700-729	D-	n/a		

The following University grading standards will be used in assessing students’ work:

- A** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in an EXCELLENT manner
- B** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a VERY GOOD manner
- C** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a SATISFACTORY manner
- D** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a POOR manner
- F** Did NOT accomplish the stated objectives of the course
- PA** Passing achievement in a pass/fail course. (Grades A through D.) **Students who take this course pass/fail must request this option by the end of the second week of the term. Students who request pass/fail grading cannot revert to A-F grading.**
- W** Automatically recorded when the student’s withdrawal is processed after the deadline to withdraw without penalty, but within the stipulated period.

Policy on Late Work

Any work submitted after an assignment deadline will receive a grade of 0, unless an extension was negotiated with the instructor prior to the deadline. All negotiated, late submissions are subject to a grade reduction of 5% for each non-holiday weekday that elapses following the due date, up to the date of submission. An unforeseen, documented emergency is an exception to this policy, and should be brought to the instructor’s attention as soon as possible. See also “Dean of Students Office” section below. Any assignment for which work is not submitted will receive a grade of 0.

Resources for Student Writers

The DePaul University Center for Writing-Based Learning offers resources for student writers through on-campus and online services. See <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>. The School for New Learning Writing Program also offers a range of resources. See the SNL Writing Guide, available online at <https://snl.depaul.edu/student-resources/writing/Pages/default.aspx>.

Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence Notifications to faculty, Late Withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals, support students both in and outside of the classroom. Additionally, the DOS has resources and programs to support health and wellness, violence prevention, and substance abuse and drug prevention. See <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/>.

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations that can provide you with enrollment information, or inquire via email at csd@depaul.edu.

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use during this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential.

College and University Policies

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies as summarized below and in the University Catalog, available at <https://www.depaul.edu/university-catalog>.

Policy on Incompletes

An Incomplete (**IN**) grade may be issued to a student who has completed a satisfactory record of work, but for unusual or unforeseeable circumstances not encountered by other students in the class and acceptable to the instructor, is unable to complete the course requirements by the end of the term. The student must request this grade from the instructor, using the appropriate college request form. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, a remaining IN grade will automatically convert to an F grade. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change IN grades after the end of the grace period without college approval.

Academic Integrity Policy

Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating, plagiarism*, fabrication, falsification or sabotage of research data, destruction or misuse of the University's academic resources, alteration or falsification of academic records, and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Policy may, at the instructor's discretion, result in sanctions that include a grade of F for the assignment or the entire course and do not preclude further University action, including dismissal and/or criminal or civil prosecution. For the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

**Definition of Plagiarism:* a major violation of academic integrity involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own, including but not limited to:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgment.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.

DePaul Code of Student Responsibility

The Code outlines the minimum acceptable level of conduct expected of every student of DePaul University, including respectful classroom behavior. DePaul condemns any form of harassment, discrimination, and/or assault behavior and any such conduct is subject to University disciplinary sanctions.

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CLASS SCHEDULE			
Class	Topic	To Read / Watch / Listen	To Submit
<p>You are expected to read / watch / listen to all assigned media <i>prior</i> to the class that meets on the date indicated. All articles are available on ARES, accessible via login at the DePaul Library website. Sullivan’s book, <i>Rats</i>, may be rented or purchased from DePaul’s bookstore.</p> <p>All submissions are due <u>on the dates indicated</u> to the course’s D2L site.</p>			
9/12	Course Overview		• Discussion post
LIBERAL ARTS IN ACTION: THE INTERDISCIPLINARITY OF RATS			
9/19	Knowing and Acting What is an academic discipline? Interdisciplinarity? Why relevant to urban rats?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anders, “Unexpected Value of the Liberal Arts” [10pp] • Nissani, “Ten Cheers for Interdisciplinarity” [16pp] • McDonnell, “<i>Journal of Urban Ecology</i>” [5pp] • Parson, “Scientist at Work” [7pp] 	• Discussion post
URBAN ECOLOGY: OF RATS AND RAT SCIENCE			
9/26	Observing How do we access natural phenomena?	• Sullivan, <i>Rats</i> , Chapters 1–12 [129pp]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 of Project • Discussion post
10/3	Chronicling How do we turn observations into data?	• Sullivan, <i>Rats</i> , Chapters 13–20 [89pp]	• Discussion post
10/10	Analyzing What is analysis, and how does it become knowledge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rader, <i>Making Mice</i>, Ch. 1 [33pp] • Parsons, “Trends in Urban Rat Ecology” [8pp] • Feng, “The Secret Life of the City Rat” [13pp] 	• Discussion post
PUBLIC POLICY: MANAGING RATS			
10/17	Informing What must be known for pest control?	• Corrigan, “Rats & Mice” [94pp]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 of Project • Discussion post
10/24	Policymaking Are rats a matter for public policy? How might we civically engage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McLaughlin, “The Pied Piper of the Ghetto” [20pp] • Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” [14pp] 	• Discussion post

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CLASS SCHEDULE			
Class	Topic	To Read / Watch / Listen	To Submit
10/31	Controlling What is being done? Are there risks? Who has responsibility for what?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your selected reading on rodent control policies and services of a local municipality. Kleine, "Rat Patrol" [7pp] *Christensen, "Are Cats the Ultimate Weapon?" [12pp] *SenesTech, "SenesTech Confirms Reports" [2pp] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *<u>plus linked videos</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visit report Discussion post
CULTURAL STUDIES: OF RATS AND MEN			
11/7	Representing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ratatouille</i> (Movie) [2hrs] Brandes, "Ratatouille" (article) [23pp] Gómez Romero, "The Jurisprudence of <i>Rat...</i>" [23pp] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion post
11/14	Symbolizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall & Hall, "<i>American Icons...Mickey Mouse</i>" [7pp] Hendrickson, "An Authorized Biography" [11pp] Zinsser, "Much about Rats—a little about mice" [22pp] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 3 of Project Discussion post
THE FUTURE OF RATS			
11/21	Finals Day: Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridle, "Preparing for an Interdisciplinary Future" [10pp] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See below
Finals Day: Due in D2L: Final Self-Assessment Due in Class: Project Presentation			