

# Honors 300 (TJ): Orphans! Adoption & Foster Care in US History, Literature, Law & Public Policy

Wittenberg University/ Spring 2023

Honors 300 (TJ)

Section 1W

Meeting time: 11:30-12:45 T/Th

Delivery: Face-to-face

Meetings in HH 217

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**Student Drop-In Hours:** Tu 1-2 pm; Wed 3-6 pm; Th 3:45-4:45

*For appointments, use <https://meet-with-laskeland.appointlet.com/b/lori-askeland>*

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**Course Overview:** Secrecy and privacy, trauma, shame, love, and joy. Adoption and foster care are human experiences grounded in complex emotions and complex realities. As institutions, they purport to be “in the best interest of the child,” but are fully shaped by adult needs and desires, and by the broader social/State, which always has an interest in creating certain kinds of citizens and keeping some people as non-citizens (or second class citizens). They are generally referred to as “child welfare” institutions, although critics sometimes call them “family-policing” institutions, as they are deeply shaped by policies and social practices related to settler colonialism, enslavement, immigration and anti-immigration efforts, as well as mass incarceration, racism, and poverty. All of those structures have produced significant numbers of displaced children at various times during U.S. history, including today—whether by design or as a (usually predictable) side effect. In this honors seminar, we will focus on stories by Americans throughout our history and from a variety of backgrounds and roles within the “adoption triad”—the adopted person, birth families, adoptive families, and the mediating agencies—and from differing roles within foster care. What can we learn from their stories of family separation, and family formation? How have such stories helped shaped, and have themselves been influenced by, social practices, laws, and public policies? And more. The course will necessitate an examination of the public policies that have had the deliberate or unconscious effect of making some parents and children, both in the US and in our increasingly globalized world, especially vulnerable to serious disruption of their family ties. And, on the other hand, we will also see how certain legal and social traditions privilege and empower “blood” relationships and certain kinds of families, usually those headed by two, white, wealthy, heteronormative, cisgender, 100% able-bodied, thin adults between 30-45 years of age, born to families of European descent whose US citizenship has historically been unquestioned. Our approach thus has to be intersectional (see Kimberlé Crenshaw). Meanwhile, kin relationships that are recognized and valued among Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQI+ folks, and those involving adoptive, fostering, or wider kinship care arrangements outside the “biological” or “nuclear family” norm, are frequently devalued. Who decides which families “count”?

Finally, we’ll be examining the supply and demand aspects of the “baby market.” Ricki Solinger puts it bluntly, “There is no such thing as adoption except off the backs of resourceless [pregnant persons].” Especially when large sums of money are involved, e.g., as adoptive parents pay for adoption services, some critics would in fact say that the whole enterprise inevitably serves their needs as consumers—and gravely risks turning children into commodities. (Scholar Kimberley McKee has coined the phrase “the adoption industrial complex” to describe this situation.) The asymmetries of power inherent in adoption and foster care can easily cause deep and lasting scars for birthparents (or “first families” as I will sometimes call them), even those who are given some agency in the process. Indeed, permanent separation is increasingly recognized as an “adverse childhood experience” (ACE) even for infants and very young children who are separated from their first parent(s)—separated from the continued presence of body of the person who nurtured them from embryo through birth and for some time after birth. Large-scale separation of children from parents is, in fact, recognized as a form of genocide by the UN and labeled as ethnic cleansing by some scholars. These painful facts, finally and inevitably create a fraught moral and ethical landscape for adopted persons, adoptive and fostering parents, social workers and adoption agents, and all those involved in creating laws and public policies related to adoption and foster care.

**Catalogue Description:** HONR-300TJ Orphans/Adoption/Foster (4 Credits)

An overview of the history of children separated from their families in the US, through European colonialism, enslavement, Native boarding schools, the "Baby Scoop" era, and current issues like immigration and LGBTQ+ adoption/fostering.

- o Note: In the Connections Curriculum, this course is a Civic Engagement Designated (CED) course, meaning it’s a course that “embeds a required civic engagement experience within the course. In addition to the learning goals associated with the course, students will make connections between course content and community experiences, gain an understanding of civic identity, and reflect on the value of diversity in communities.”

**Texts (in order of use):****Required:**

- Dorothy Roberts, *Torn Apart: How The Child Welfare System Destroys Black Families and How Abolition Can Build a Safer World*. Basic Books, 2022. 9781541675452
- Harriet E. Wilson, *Our Nig; Or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*. 1859. Edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Richard J. Ellis. Knopf/Doubleday, 2011. 9780307477453
- Dan Savage, *The Kid: What Happened After My Boyfriend and I Decided to Go Get Pregnant*. Plume, 2000. 9780143038979
- Ann Fessler, *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade*. Penguin, 2006. 9780143038979
- Shannon Gibney, *The Girl I Am, Was, and Never Will Be*. Penguin Young Readers, 2023. 9780593111994 (New! will be released in January 2023! So likely will not yet be on shelves!)
- Tiffany Haddish, *The Last Black Unicorn*. 2018. 9781501181832
- Jane Jeong Trenka, *The Language of Blood*. Graywolf, 2005. 9781555974268

**Recommended:**

- Gibney, Shannon. *See No Color*. 9780823445684.
- Jane Jeong Trenka, Sun Yung Shin, Julia Chinyere Oparah, editors. *Outsiders Within: Writings on Transracial Adoption*. South End Press, 2006 or reprint: University of Minnesota, 2020. (Will be placed on reserve at Thomas Library)

\* *There will also be a lot of handouts/readings, downloadable from Moodle.*

**Content note:** The works we read in this course will delve into many of the most harmful actions and institutions in our society—particularly including genocide, misogyny, child abuse, racism and slavery. These abuse structures shape our world today and continue to have differential effects on the daily life of people in this classroom. I will not generally provide a lot of trigger warnings, but am happy to discuss student concerns at any time. All discussions must be conducted with respect for one another.

**GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OUTCOMES:**

Older Gen Ed Curriculum: Western Historical Perspectives

Connections Curriculum: Learning Outcome 1 (LO1). Civic-Engaged Designated (CED) Course. Students will develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be engaged citizens in their communities.

- Students will make connections between new knowledge and community experiences.
- Students will understand civic identity and commitment.
- Students will reflect on the value of diversity in communities

**Primary Learning Objectives:** Students in this course will learn to:

1. Offer a general overview of the histories of adoption and foster care as social and legal institutions and as lived realities for many people in the United States, past and present.
2. Explain how forces like settler colonialism, racial and ethnic prejudices, sexism, heterosexism, and economic disparities have shaped the institutions of adoption and foster care in the US, with special attention to lives of persons from all parts of the adoption and fostering equation (“the adoption triad”)—including children separated from kin, birthparents, adoptive or fostering parents or other kin, and social workers or other agents.
3. More effectively use academic tools, such as reading and reflective / analytical writing and interdisciplinary research, to develop critical-thinking and problem-solving (or at least problem-identifying) skills as we grapple with current and past approaches to the problem of resourceless parents and children in need of care.
4. Use civic-engaged learning to test our understandings of the problems faced by troubled families and children and adoptive/fostering families, and to assist those professionals and institutions in our community who have as their mission to serve those needs. In so doing, students will also meet their LO1/ CED course goals.
5. Develop personal learning skills: to deepen understanding of one’s own personal learning style, alone and in collaboration with others, through speech and writing, as well one’s own values and ethics as, together, we grapple with the complex problems presented by family separation and child welfare policies and those most impacted.

**Course Requirements/Grading**

Initial analytical paper, 5-7 pages (Due Week 5/6)**	10%	[Objectives 1-3, 5]
Moodle journal/Perusall /daily work*	20%	[Objectives 1-3, 5]
Midterm take home exam (Due Week 8)**	15%	[Objectives 1 & 2]
Civic-engaged learning:		
o Attendance, reporting/reflection paper, presentation (Due Week 14) **	20%	[Objective 4 / LO1]
Annotated bibliography, abstract, presentation (Due last week of class)**	10%	[Objectives 1-5]
Research Project: Paper & Pres. (Final Due on Final Exam date)**	15%	[Objectives 1=5]
Attendance/participation / good course citizenship*	<u>10%</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\*Note that 30% of your grade comes simply from your being here as an active, engaged participant. You can miss 3 classes with no explicit penalty, but after 4, you should discuss the course with me in person and whether your best option is to drop the course. See notes below on participation and good course citizenship.

\*\*Assignments marked with two asterisks must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for the class, even if they are so late that they will receive a zero.

**Grading scale:**

<u>A = 92-100</u>	<u>C = 72-77</u>
<u>A- = 90-91</u>	<u>C- = 70-71</u>
<u>B+ = 88-89</u>	<u>D+ = 68-69</u>
<u>B = 82-87</u>	<u>D = 62-67</u>
<u>B- = 80-81</u>	<u>D- = 60-61</u>
<u>C+ = 78-79</u>	<u>F = 59 or below</u>

**On learning disabilities and differing learning styles/challenges:** I value learning differences and am happy to discuss learning strategies and styles with any student in this class. Additionally, Wittenberg is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any student with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation is encouraged to discuss this with me as soon as possible. If you have a documented disability, please provide me with your self-identification letter from Academic Services (COMPASS Center) so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations. This is an excellent resource for discussing and learning new study skills! If you don't have a documented disability, but do have concerns or challenges you would like to discuss, please discuss these with me. If you need to contact the Office of Academic Services, please contact [accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu).

**Additional Meeting Times: Civic-Engaged Learning as a required component of this course:** This course is deliberately designed as an engaged learning / CED course, and will require all students to directly engage with child-services in Clark County, in this case at On- The-Rise youth services (OTR), that are particularly concerned with adoption, foster care, or otherwise supporting children at risk of displacement from their families. Specifically, mainly during the months of February and March you will need to complete 12 hours of CED learning at OTR—4 visits of approximately 3 hours each, from 4-7 pm. If work at OTR is actually impossible for your schedule, let me know, ASAP. We will venture out for a class-time visit to OTR, prior to beginning your CED learning, and I will devote time in class to helping you figure out carpooling arrangements.

- OTR after school programs run from ~4-7 pm M-Th. They may have some teen programs beginning in Feb, from 5-8 pm on either T/Th (TBA—stay tuned).

**Statement on the Expectation of Work: Direct Instruction and Independent Work:** In this honors course, students should expect to spend at least twice as much time out of class doing work for each course as they spend in class. In addition to scheduled class times, students will also receive an average of an additional hour per week of direct instruction across the semester through a combination of the following activities:

- mandatory participation on Perusall, moderated by the instructor
- required viewing of films outside of class time.
- office hours with faculty

- required conferences with the professor
- detailed feedback on student writing and other work

**Some Attendance / Participation Basic Guidelines:** These are the rules that will make our life together much easier. The main gist: come to class consistently, with your cell phone (& other electronic devices) turned off, your brain ready to pay attention, and your daily work completed thoughtfully (with care and note taking, questions written out when possible!), and your life will be much simpler and so will mine. But life is not always perfect, so:

1. **“Good Course Citizenship”:** The best courses are the ones where we all have each other’s backs and where people step up. If you are willing to take notes for others who are gone, that’s great. If you want to set up a GroupMe (or whatever) for the students, that’s wonderful. Willing to carpool to OTR? THANK YOU! Toot your own horn. At the end of the term I will ask everyone about who they noticed being a “good citizen” in our class and we will celebrate you. Wouldn’t it be great if every student was able to be a good citizen in ways that other students valued and noticed?
2. **Absences:** If you miss class, you are still responsible for all information and assignments given during that class, without delay. Communicate with me in advance about absences you know about in advance, and make arrangements to complete work in advance or as near to your return as possible. Make sure you’re fully prepared for the next class after your absence by talking to a classmate (I’ll make sure you have been able to connect with classmates to share information).
3. **Illness / remote attendance:** I value your presence in class, but please do not attend class if you are ill, especially if you have symptoms that may be CoVid or the flu. I am happy to occasionally set up Teams so students who are unable to physically attend can participate virtually. However, I really need to know about this at least 2 hours ahead. If it is a same-morning notification, it’s ok to text. Please do not abuse this option, and if you are willing and the technology cooperates, consider leaving your camera on.
4. **Grace period for all assignments:** All papers in this course will be handed in on Moodle and are due by 11:59 pm-ish on the due date, unless otherwise specified. However, each major paper has a 48-hour grace period which you may use, without penalty. Try to use this grace period sparingly. If you repeatedly use it, it might be a good idea for us to have a conversation about what’s going on. After that grace period, papers will be deducted 5% per day late, starting from the initial deadline.
5. **Late papers:** Note again that you cannot pass this course if any major assignment is not completed, even if it is so late that it will receive a failing grade. If a paper is more than one week late, it may be considered permanently incomplete, and there is a risk of failing the course. Talk to me as soon as you can.
6. **In case of emergency or panic:** Communicate. Talk to me as soon as you can. If your situation is quite serious, alert the university via your RA or other appropriate authority like the Dean of Student Life’s office. As I suspect you are aware, it is vital to create a network of people who can help support you through a crisis, and I would like to be part of that network for you.

### **Initial Tentative Schedule:**

**Week 1: Introduction to the course, the texts, each other, the concept of community-engaged service learning.**  
1/9-1/13

**Tuesday:** Introductions to the course

- Intentions, aspirations, questions, and interests
- We’ll read this article: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/16584/16584>
- We’ll watch this short film about On-The-Rise (OTR): <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2099622636975662>

Topic I: Displaced Children in Early America: African American, Indigenous Americans, European American Roots.

**Thursday:** Introduction to the course (continued) and Historical Roots of the Child Welfare System

- **Read prior to class:** This syllabus (focusing especially on the policies, etc.)
- **And read prior:** from Roberts *Torn Apart*, Prologue, pp. 1-12; Chapter 4 — “Rotten at the Root,” pp. 85-101 (you can stop at header “Decimating Native Nations”)

**Friday: Week 1 Journal Writing due by end of day (on Moodle):** Three short things!

1. Write about a page in response to this fact: While only about 2% of American children are adoptees, fully 60% of adults have some “personal connection” to adoption—being adopted ourselves, having adopted, or having relinquished a child for adoption, or having a family member or close friend who is adopted. Although national foster care numbers are less reported on, and more invisible, at any given point from 500K-800K US children are in foster care. If you are willing, please share with me whether, and how, adoption, foster care or long-term kinship care (e.g., being cared for by a relative for an extended period of your life) has touched your life—directly or indirectly. (There may be more than one way for you—I’ll be honored to hear about anything you’re willing to share with me, but I understand that this topic can be sensitive. I am also happy to speak in person if that is better for you.)

Alternative: If you feel you have experienced no clear connection to adoption or foster care, you might contemplate an idea argued by anthropologist Judith Modell, who asserts that, as soon as a baby is born, he or she is a separate person who must be “adopted”—either by his birthparent(s) or someone else. To that degree, all of us who survive our infancy are “adopted.”

2. In about a paragraph, describe to me your major area of study, some courses that have sparked your intellect, and what academic interests you bring to this course.
3. Fill out the scheduling form that I handed out to give me a sense of your schedule, and answer the following questions relevant to civic-engaged learning:
  - Have you had a civic-engaged or service learning course before? If so, tell me a little about it, if you can (what was the course?, describe the service you did and your overall experience in the course, etc.)
  - Whether you’ve done this before or not, what are your initial feelings (including both positive and potentially more “intimidated” feelings) about doing service at On-The-Rise as part of this course?

**Week 2: 1/16-1/19**

**For Tuesday:** *Note longer reading due prior to Thursday—suggest read at least half prior to today.* **Road trip for lunch and learning at On-the-Rise (OTR)!** We’ll have lunch with Debbie and Cathie and learn about their approach to supporting at-risk youth and families.

- **Carpool leaving at 11 AM:** Meet in Hollenbeck’s circle drive (off Bill Edwards). We’ll return by end of class.

**For Thursday:**

- **Read prior to class:** all of Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig* (1859), including the title page, preface and the letters at the end of the text. If you are interested, here is [an online full-text version of Our Nig](#) from the University of Virginia.
- **As you read:** Focus especially on “Frado’s” experience (which, scholars currently agree, is almost certainly autobiographical) as an abandoned/indentured child, and her later experience in poverty as a single mother—be sure to read the preface and the letters appended to the end of this text.

**Friday: Week 2 Journal** due over Wilson’s novel. See discussion questions for prompts.

**Week 3: 1/23-1/27**

**For Tuesday:** Continued discussion of Wilson and Historical roots of Black child welfare programs:

- **Read / Comment on Perusal by two hours prior to class:** Sharifa Hampton, “Writing to Right the Spirit of Adoption: The Adoptive Mother / Savior in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig*, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s “Moses: A Story of the Nile.” *Amerikastudien* 67.3 (2022): 353-377.

**For Thursday:** Historical roots of Native and White child welfare programs:

- **Read/take notes:** Roberts, *Torn Apart*, chapter 4, pp. 101-24 (start at “Decimating Native Nation”)
- In class: View Film: “The Orphan Trains.” Dir. Janet Graham and Edward Gray. *The American Experience*, PBS. 1995.
  - Essay 1 Will be assigned. ○ Draft will be due Thursday, Week 4. Final due Friday, Week 5.

**Friday**, journal due on Moodle: Write a journal entry in which you:

- summarize the film and make a specific connection to one of the readings, and
- Explain what you plan to write your first paper on.

#### Week 4: 1/30-2/3. Continued discussion of the History of Adoption and Indigenous Peoples within US Borders

**For Tuesday** Watch/Read prior:

- **Read/ Comment on Perusall by two hours prior to class**, KILLSBACK, “A Nation of Families,” *AlterNative*, Jan. 2019, and press release about the author.
- **Watch prior:** “Unspoken: America’s Native American Boarding Schools.” Narr. Peter Coyote. PBS / KUED, Utah Public Television, 2017. YouTube,

**For Thursday:**

- **Read / take notes prior:** Perusall: Boarding Schools Materials and Materials related to Indian Adoption Project and ICWA
- **Draft of Essay 1 Due for Peer Workshop. No journal this week.**

*A little more tentative from here on out, but this is the basic plan:*

Week 5 2/6-2-10. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Issues in Adoption: “The Baby Scoop Era” (1945-1973)

#### Individual Conferences with Dr. A. all week

T Read excerpts from Fessler, *The Girls Who Went Away* (2006)

Th Read on Perusall: Elizabeth Samuels, "[Surrender and Subordination: Birth Mothers and Adoption Law Reform.](#)" Michigan Journal of Gender & Law, vol. 20, no. 33 (2013), pp. 33-81. Continued Fessler. We will view part of her documentary film [A Girl Like Her](#)

**No Journal. Friday: Essay 1 Due.**

Week 7 2/13-2/17. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Issues in Adoption: **LGBTQ+ adoption**

T Read prior: Dan Savage *The Kid* (1999).

Th Read prior: "DJ's Homeless Mommy" (2005) and other follow-up materials (packed)

Optional: Watch, on your own, [Amazon's Modern Love, episode 7: "Hers Was a World of One." It's based on Dan's essay](#)

F. Journal over Savage

Week 8 2/20-2/24. **LGBTQ+ adoption continued**

T Read excerpts from Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Child*, introduction, chapter 2 & chapter 7.

Th Take home midterm exam due by 11:59 pm Friday. (No class, no journal due this week).

Have a good FIRE Week & restful spring break.

Weeks 9 & 10 2/27-3/7

- FIRE WEEK & Spring Break - No Class.

Week 11 3/10-3/14. **20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century Adoption in YA Literature**

T Read Gibney, *The Girl I Was, Am, And Never Will Be*, all

Th Read Nelson, "The Orphan Figure in Children's Literature" (C&Y Ch. 6)

In class on Thursday GUEST SPEAKER: Shannon Gibney will be Skyped / Zoomed in!

F. Journal over Gibney

Week 12 3/17-3/21. **Topic: Contemporary Foster Care Issues: Foster Care as Family Policing?**

T Read: Roberts, *Torn Apart*, Introduction - "A Benevolent Terror," pp. 13-31

Th No new reading: In class we will watch a documentary about foster care entitled [From Place to Place \(2011\)](#)

F. Journal over Roberts / Foster Care

Week 13 3/24-3/28 **Foster Care & Family Policing, Continued.** *Try to complete your service learning this week, if possible.*

Tu. Read prior: Roberts, *Torn Apart*, Chs. 1-3 "Destroying Black Families," "They Separate Children At the Harlem Border, Too," and "Professional Kidnappers," pp. 33-84.

Th. Read prior: Selections from Tiffany Haddish, *Last Black Unicorn*

Week 14 **Conclusion of Foster Care as Family Policing / Final Discussion of Civic-Engaged Learning Experience**

T Read prior: Roberts, *Torn Apart*. Group Assigned selection from Chapters 5-10, everyone reads Chapter 11.

Th Civic-Engaged Learning Re-cap, reflections in class. (Informal go-around for entire class--speak a few minutes about what you experienced, your thoughts and ideas about it.)

Civic Engaged Learning Papers due on Friday by 11:59 pm

Week 15 Topic: **International Adoption, Returning to Homelands, and the Fight for Citizenship/Belonging(s)**

- T Jane Jeong Trenka, *The Language of Blood*
- Th Trenka discussion and Annotated Bibliography Draft Due for peer workshop

Week 16

- T / Th More readings related to Trenka and International Adoption

Drafts of research papers will be due by Friday night at 11:59 pm.

Finals Week



Presentations of research projects (@ 8 minutes each + q&a) During Final Exam Session for this class.

Final research paper and annotated bibliography also due.

### Interdisciplinarity and Writing in this Course

The field of critical adoption and foster studies is extraordinarily rich because it is interdisciplinary—hence the long course title! Under the older gen ed system, this is an “H” credit course, so we’ll be focusing on taking a historical perspective, and the course is organized historically. But, due to the subject matter, this course has been deliberately structured around readings from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, and you are all advanced honors students, coming from a variety of disciplines. Additionally as an honors course, it’s also both reading-and writing-intensive.

**Some basic understandings that I bring to differing disciplinary ways of seeing the world, writing:** Interdisciplinary courses often help make clear to us the basic assumptions and strategies that we take to learning about the world, which can be so “natural” to us, after a time, that they become invisible. If you are a history major, you are probably used to framing your research questions around working to determine the answer to the basic question “what really happened?” and its corollary, “how was this event understood by people at this time period, as opposed to how we may understand it now?” Specifically, you may focus on specific texts and ask: “how does this literature/document help us to better understand the events of the past, or how does it distort our understanding of those events?”

If you are or want to be a literature major, you are more used to using the historical documentation and information to figure out: “how does my enhanced sense of this historical period and issue help me to better understand the meaning(s) of this piece of literature, this text?”

If you are a sociology major, you might ask, “How does this specific document help reveal something about social interactions and structures now or in the past—or both?” And “what function did/does this institution, this way of dealing with people, serve in the larger society?”

...I could keep going on, because I’m sure that there are other disciplines represented in this room. And, in fact, I am sure there are other ways of reading and seeing, other questions that you find yourself asking. I hope we can all play with and learn from these different kinds of questions, even as we draw upon and build upon the questions that most interest us.

**Research paper:** Each student will be required to write a thesis-driven, researched paper of 8-10 typed, double-spaced pages with complete citations and references, and an annotated bibliography. (For your annotated bibliography you will write analytical abstracts of good—i.e., relevant, up-to-date, and authoritative for your topic—outside sources). To receive a passing grade, your paper 1) must answer a specific, grounded, focused research question to create a thesis-driven paper that, 2) incorporates primary texts and secondary texts, and 3) it must include texts we’ve used in this class as well as independent research. (NB: It hurts your credibility as a student if you cite a website or blog when I’ve provided a scholarly resource that covers the same information.)

Your final work will, I hope, build on your strengths and skills as advanced students in specific major fields. I hope that some of you may be inspired to draw your civic learning experience to explore certain local problems or questions in greater depth, as it relates to the broader picture, but that is not required. I am happy to consider a variety of creative approaches to this assignment, as well as more traditional ones. I will work with each of you individually to help you craft a meaningful research project for yourself, and hope that you will commit to exploring something that will require you to stretch yourself. Risk taking will be supported!

For instance, you might want to ask the question: “How does On-The-Rise Farm’s approach to the needs of dependent children and their families compare/contrast to that taken by the Children’s Aid Society of New York’s ‘orphan train’ program in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? What seems to explain the key differences and similarities?” Or, “How does the experience of Jenny, a foster child I met in my service learning work, compare to the research into foster children?”

Creative options might include: unusual format—a video? A collaborative piece? Creative writing supported by research? Some of these formats I can better support than others, but I’m open!



**Weekly Journaling and/or Perusall:** There will be weekly writing opportunities through Perusall and/or Moodle journal responses (due on Fridays), which I will read and engage with you in conversation on, as a tool for developing your idea for your research project. You are expected to complete a journal response most weeks that are primarily responses or reactions to the week's reading, ideally completed before each class, and then, when we get to it, your Civic Engagement experience at On-the-Rise. All entries should be equivalent to about a typed page or two (say 500 words approximately). Choose at least one significant quotation, with page citations (works cited not necessary), to explain and respond to in each entry.

- **Perusall assignments** will be graded on a 10 point scale based on the number and quality of your comments and other evidence of active reading. (Shoot for a minimum of 8 comments on longer readings—they don't all have to be substantive).
- **Journal assignments** will be given “outstanding,” “satisfactory,” “unsatisfactory” or “0,” if not turned in.

**Civic Engagement Journal Entries** Each week you do service at OTR you should report on the experience and explore connections to the course readings. Quotations from our readings, again, should be included in each entry. I will ask questions in response that I will expect you to show awareness of and engage with in your future entries, which will be designed to help you dig deeper into your own interests.

**Style/ Formatting requirement:** All out of class work should be typed, double spaced and, for the most part will be turned in via Moodle. As a result of the interdisciplinary approach to writing that we'll be taking and to the course as a whole, I will not require you to use MLA style, but that is kind of the “default” for me. You may write using the conventions of your disciplines, which I know something of, but possibly not everything about. My expectation is that your style will be internally consistent and as close to your discipline's conventions as possible. I will mark inconsistencies and inaccuracies as I see them, and expect simply that you will check with a reliable source (e.g., an official, or authoritative stylebook—many of which are available online from university-sponsored sources or in the Writing Center.)

**academic integrity @ wittenberg.edu** Respect and Trust. All work completed in this course, including all drafts, must comply with the code of academic integrity, to the best of a student's ability. All major work should indicate support for the Wittenberg honor statement: “I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance.” All students in this course are expected to read and understand the Code of Academic Integrity. If at any time you have questions about your use of a particular source or how to cite it appropriately, or how to appropriately collaborate with another student, please ask me.