

**ALS 199:  
TACKLING TEXTS**  
CRN 10636 Fall 2009  
Chiles 125  
Weeks 1-3—Tues. & Thurs.  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Tackling Texts focuses on developing effective approaches to reading, writing, and learning at the university. We'll explore strategies for improving reading efficiency, comprehension, recall, and critical thinking. Since writing is often integral to reading in the university setting, we will also discuss how to tackle writing assignments, including planning, drafting, revising, and incorporating outside sources.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of Tackling Texts are to provide students with an opportunity to practice and improve skills required to successfully complete assignments using college texts: reading, thinking and writing. By the end of the course students will be able to do the following:

- identify how texts fit in the context of a course
- read actively and use strategies to improve concentration, comprehension, and retention
- take notes in various formats
- understand a variety of ways to read and to think critically about a text
- identify when and how sources should be cited
- understand how the skills developed in this course apply to other situations

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

Required readings will be provided in class or are available on our course website. You can access the course website at <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1) **Attendance**—your presence and participation are necessary in order to make this course successful for you and for your learning community. Personal circumstances may prevent you from attending a class meeting, but keep in mind that with such a short, intensive course, each class meeting represents a big chunk of the overall course. The expectation for this course is that you will miss no more than one class. If you have difficulties getting to class, whatever the reason, please let me know as soon as reasonably possible. You are responsible for any missed work and information. **If you miss more than one class, makeup work will be required to pass the course.**
- 2) **Articles**—Short articles, thematically linked to our course objectives, will provide the basis for in-class activities. Read and be prepared to discuss and to work with the assigned material. Students will assist with discussion of one of the assigned articles. See the last page of this syllabus for specific assignments.

**3) Portfolio**—throughout the course, you will apply, track, and reflect on reading and note-taking methods. At the end of the course, you will submit a portfolio that contains samples of your work (instructions handed out in class and on Blackboard). This portfolio will be turned in the last day of class, Thursday, October 15th. Your portfolio will include the following:

- 10 reading journal entries
- 4 styles of notes
- a 2-3 page reflective essay

#### **GRADING:**

This is a one-credit, pass/no pass course. Your portfolio will receive feedback that includes an overall assessment in one of the following categories: *exceeds expectations*, *meets expectations*, *approaches expectations*, or *does not meet expectations*. If your overall assessment is *approaches expectations* or *does not meet expectations*, you will need to revise your portfolio for resubmission within one week. **In order to pass the course, your portfolio must *meet or exceed expectations*. If you miss more than one class or your assigned discussion leader day, you will also need to contact the instructor and complete assigned makeup work.**

#### **Communication**

I use Blackboard and email to communicate changes and clarify instructions. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard and their University of Oregon email accounts.

#### **Diversity**

Open inquiry, freedom of expression and respect for differences are fundamental to a comprehensive and dynamic education. Teaching and Learning Services is committed to upholding these ideals by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and the expression of divergent perspectives and diverse identities.

#### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to complete assignments in a manner consistent with academic integrity. Students must produce their own work and properly acknowledge and document all sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases). Students can find more complete information about the University of Oregon's Policy on Academic Dishonesty in the University of Oregon *Student Handbook*.

#### **Accommodations**

Students with disabilities: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that would result in barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You are welcome to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 345-1155 or [disabsrv@uoregon.edu](mailto:disabsrv@uoregon.edu)

#### **Course Success**

I am interested in working with you individually and helping you learn in the way that maximizes your success. Please come see me during office hours or after class if you have concerns about particular aspects of the course

Success in this course requires both physical and mental presence. Students are expected to refrain from behavior that interferes with participation in class including text messaging, surfing the internet and sleeping. Student who repeatedly engage in these behaviors may be counted absent on days when they are physically, but not mentally, present in class.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
09/29	Introductions & Course Analysis	
10/01	Active Reading & Effective Reading Strategies	Read "Mother Tongue," Amy Tan (on Blackboard)
10/06	Note-Taking	Read "'Only Connect' the Goals of Liberal Education" (on Blackboard)
10/08	Critical Thinking	Read/Review information on ProCon.org regarding lowering drinking age. Link and more complete instructions are on Blackboard.
10/13	Research & Writing	Read "Discovering Books," Richard Wright (handout)
10/15	Plagiarism & Using Citations	Read: "A Whole Lot of Cheatin' Going On" (on Blackboard)
10/26		Last day to drop off any portfolios needing revisions (Students will be notified by Monday, 10/19, if revisions are needed)