

HSS 404 027 – Humanities Capstone – Fall 2025

Tu. / Th. 8:30-9:50 CKB 314

HSS 404 – Humanities Senior Seminar, (*Prerequisites:* senior standing, completion of all lower division General Education Requirements): Learn to explore the world by listening to audiobooks as you engage in your daily routine. We will listen to two individual audiobooks and two in groups, sharing experiences in oral presentations and classroom discussion. Attendance and a subscription to Audible are required.

Dr. Carol Siri Johnson

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Office –316 Cullimore

Hours: by email appointment

HSS 404 – Lifelong Learning with Audiobooks

--Subscription to *Audible* is required—There is no final in this class—

Course Goals:

In this course you will learn to:

- ◆ Expand your world view while doing common tasks such as driving, cleaning and exercising.
- ◆ Practice oral presentations and working in groups.
- ◆ Share your thoughts and ideas about stories and books with others.
- ◆ Research genres to find the types of stories and books you enjoy.

Assignments & Grading:

- ◆ **Attendance is required and is graded:** 0-1 absences = 20 (highest score); 2 absences = 18; 3 absences = 16; 4 absences = 14; 5 absences = 12; 6 absences = 10; 7 absences = 8; 8 or more = 0. If you are absent due to illness or other problems, email me *before* class.
- ◆ All grading will be done numerically (if an assignment is worth 10%, it will receive a grade from 1 to 10) which will be added at the end of the semester. Grades are **not** fully recorded in Canvas. Small assignments receive full credit after completion.

Misc. Rules:

No self-help or religious books allowed. If there is a movie made from a book, you must compare them during your presentation.

Final Grades:

A = 91 – 100 B+ = 86 – 90 B = 80 – 85 C+ = 75 – 79 C = 70 – 74 D = 65 – 69 F = 0 – 64

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to follow the [academic code of integrity policy](#). Any student in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing, or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade, suspension, or dismissal.

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Assignment List

Assignment Name and Description	Length	%
<p>Nonfiction Exercise –research on Audible to find three nonfiction books that you <i>may</i> want to listen to. Prepare a presentation that describes the three books, ending with which book you would choose and why (we are <i>not</i> listening to these books, it's just an exercise).</p> <p>Purpose: locating topics of interest, researching summaries and reviews on Audible; public speaking.</p>	2-3 min.	5
<p>Group Book 1 Presentation – with your assigned group, prepare a presentation on the first group book you chose. More details about the presentation requirements are in Canvas.</p> <p>Purpose: group work; presentation design; public speaking.</p>	8-12 min.	5
<p>Individual Book 1 Selection Process Presentation – research on Audible to find three books that you <i>may</i> want to listen to. Prepare a presentation that describes the three books, ending with the book you would chose and why (this is your first individual book).</p> <p>Purpose: vocalizing thought process; idea sharing; public speaking.</p>	2-3 min.	5
<p>One-Act Screenplay – with your group, select a genre. Then use ChatGPT to generate a brief screenplay in that genre. Regenerate and revise until you get a coherent and entertaining plot. Your group will read the play in front of the class.</p> <p>Purpose: using AI creatively; genre exploration; play-reading with an audience.</p>	8-15 min.	5
<p>Individual Book 1 Presentation – prepare a presentation about the book you listened to. More details about presentation requirements are in Canvas. Include a screen capture of your published review in your presentation.</p> <p>Purpose: designing presentations; public speaking; writing online book reviews.</p>	6-10 min.	15*
<p>Group Book 2 Selection Process Presentation – with your group, describe which books you considered and how you agreed on a common book to listen to.</p> <p>Purpose: vocalizing group decision-making process; public speaking.</p>	4-6 min.	5
<p>Group Book 2 Presentation – with your group, prepare a presentation on your book. More details about the presentation requirements are in Canvas.</p> <p>Purpose: discussing books in groups; group presentation design; public speaking.</p>	8-12 min.	5

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Assignment Name and Description	Length	%
<p>Individual Book 2 Selection Process Presentation – research to find a fiction book that you want to listen to. Prepare a presentation that lists at least three books and conclude with the one chose and why.</p> <p>Purpose: vocalizing thought process; idea sharing; public speaking.</p>	2-3 min.	5
<p>Future First Book Selection – students will work in groups to research and discuss possibilities for future class first group books. The group should make a presentation of all the books they considered and the one they recommend.</p> <p>Purpose: group work, public speaking, choosing books for future semesters.</p>	4-6 min.	5
<p>Stuck-in-a-Cabin Exercise – you are going to be snowed in, for a month, alone with no internet. Choose three audiobooks to bring with you. Prepare a slideshow with their Audible image, author, length and description. Describe to the class why you chose each book.</p> <p>Purpose: researching, presenting.</p>	4-6 min.	5
<p>In-class Quiz on Individual Book 2 – short in-class, on-paper, no-devices quiz about the book you are listening to.</p> <p>Purpose: forming creative responses to the book, its characters, and its social impact.</p>		5
<p>Individual Book 2 Presentation – prepare a presentation about your book. More details about the presentation requirements are in Canvas.</p> <p>Purpose: synthesizing reading and research into a presentation; public speaking.</p>	6-10 min.	15*
<p>Class Participation – 0-1 absences = 20 (highest score); 2 absences = 18; 3 absences = 16; 4 absences = 14; 5 absences = 12; 6 absences = 10; 7 absences = 8; 8 or more = 0. If you must be absent, email me <i>before</i> class.</p> <p>Purpose: most of the graded work takes place in class. It is necessary to be there to share ideas and hear requirements.</p>		20

* Presentations are graded mainly on time (6-10 minutes) and grades will appear in Canvas with comments from me.

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Course Schedule (subject to minor changes)

Tuesdays

Thursdays

Date	Class Activity	Date	Class Activity
9/2	Go over syllabus; download Audible; describe first group books; interviewing in teams for class introductions	9/4	Team Class Introductions; students announce first group book choice; make groups for first presentation
9/9	Introductory Lecture –overall course goals and presentation tutorial; in-class team exercise (choosing books for long drive, groups of 2 or 3)	9/11	Non-fiction lecture; assign Non-fiction exercise; work session for group presentations.
9/16	Non-fiction Presentations	9/18	Repeat Introductory Lecture; group work to finalize first group presentation.
9/23	Group Book 1 Presentations	9/25	Individual Book 1 Selection Presentations
9/30	Create groups to start One-act Screenplays; work in groups	10/2	Wellness Day
10/7	Work in groups to finalize One-act Screenplays.	10/9	One-act screenplay readings
10/14	Individual Book 1 Presentations (8 per class)	10/16	Individual Book 1 Presentations
10/21	Individual Book 1 Presentations	10/23	Form groups for Group Book 2; work in groups to select book.
10/28	Group Book 2 Selection Process Presentations; Assign Stuck-in-a-Cabin exercise	10/30	Class off for listening.
11/4	Stuck-in-a-Cabin Presentations	11/6	Stuck-in-a-Cabin Presentations
11/11	Individual Book 2 Selection Presentations; group work session for group presentations.	11/13	Class off for listening.
11/18	Future First Book Selection Exercise	11/20	Group Book 2 Presentations
11/25	Class off for listening.	11/27	Thanksgiving
12/2	In-class quiz on Individual Book 2	12/4	Individual Book 2 presentations (8 per class)
12/9	Individual Book 2 presentations	12/11	Individual Book 2 presentations