Heritage IV:
American Cultures
Welcome back to Heritage Studies at Carthage.

This is a transitional year for the Heritage Program. Continuing students will complete the four-course sequence in place since 1989. Beginning students will complete a new three-course sequence redesigned as part of more comprehensive changes in our curriculum being implemented in 1995-1996. This reduced and reconfigured requirement in no way represents a retreat from our commitment to the goals, principles, and pedagogies of Heritage. On the contrary, the dynamic new curriculum—which also includes a new common Religion course as well as a required three-course Junior Symposia—refines, focuses, and amplifies much of what the faculty have learned through Heritage during the past six years.

Heritage remains and should remain a work-in-progress, a program accommodating diverse teaching and learning styles. And yet we believe that the program must be defined for students and faculty in ways that go beyond fairly broad statements of goals and competencies. We need to be able to explain with some accuracy what students should expect to do in each Heritage course in the sequence, whoever the instructor might be.

These pages begin the process of explanation and invite you into our conversations about identity, community, culture, and learning.

In Heritage IV, we engage American cultures and commitments directly, examining some traditions of cultural pluralism shaping our identities and our communities. These four diverse texts—written by a Vietnam veteran, a Native American woman, an African American woman, and a Nobel Prize-winning physicist—all pose cogent questions about just what it means to be an American at this moment in history.

The Things They Carried, for example, asks us to think about our cultural baggage. What things do we carry that our family or our community or our nation has given us? What do we carry out of choice and what out of necessity? What are the responsibilities and obligations of the individual to society and of society to the individual? What do we owe our country, our community? What does our country or community owe us? How do individuals and communities survive and remember and interpret traumatic events? How do we tell the truth about ourselves and each other?

These are just a few of the questions that will shape your study of American cultures this term.
Heritage Studies

The Heritage Studies seminars, taught collaboratively by faculty from academic departments across the college, cultivate the development of critical thinking and communication skills through cross-disciplinary cultural studies. These seminars are taken in sequence by all first and second year students.

By “Heritage” we mean a dynamic cultural legacy which must be actively constructed and reconstructed through constant negotiations among the past, present, and the future, and between individuals and their communities. “Heritage” is not contained within a predetermined set of books or artifacts; “Heritage” cannot simply be transmitted from teacher to student. These courses approach “Heritage” as ideas, values, and assumptions generated through complex transactions over time between human beings within and across communities.

Cultural transactions shaping a heritage are studied analytically, creatively, collaboratively; ideas, values, and assumptions are analyzed, tested, questioned, and re-articulated. The four Heritage seminars will challenge you and your teachers to deepen your powers of analysis, creativity, and expression; they provide opportunities to explore traditional and new ways of knowing, ways of thinking, ways of communicating. Critical thinking skills are cultivated through close attention to reading, observing, listening, conversing, writing, researching, and questioning. The four courses require progressively complex written and oral work (including increasingly independent research).

101 Heritage Seminar I: Western Experiences I
This first course in the Heritage sequence challenges you to reflect on the ideas, values, and assumptions shaping your own education in the West. Through sustained study of texts including Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, and Freud’s The Future of an Illusion, you will confront questions about the nature and consequences of personal and cultural knowledge: how can we best discover, construct, and transmit what we most need to know? how—for better or for worse—can knowledge transform individuals and societies?

102 Heritage Seminar II: Western Experiences II
This seminar deepens the inquiries of Heritage I, challenging you to understand and respect cultural differences within and beyond the West. By studying the different perspectives Conrad and Achebe bring to colonialism, the different ways they look at the world, we hope that you will begin to see yourselves and your own cultures more clearly.

201 Heritage Seminar III: World Cultures
In this course students will be challenged to make personal and intellectual sense of another culture. For 1995-1996, this seminar will focus on the cultures of Japan and India. Questions of individuality and community, tradition and innovation, rationality and spirituality, war and peace will be engaged. The course intends to foster cross-cultural and global thinking, understanding, and communicating.

202 Heritage Seminar IV: American Cultures
In this course students will study ideas, values, and assumptions intrinsic to American cultures. Questions of individuality and community, difference and mutuality, memory and change, will be engaged. What does it mean to be an “American”?
Competencies and Goals

In this year of curriculum renewal, the Heritage faculty reaffirms its commitment to five competencies that have been central to Heritage since 1989: Cultural Studies and Writing, as well as Reading, Oral Communication, and Critical Thinking.

The following goal statements are all adapted from among those embraced by the program for the last two years, as expressed most recently in last year's (white) Heritage Program booklet. We have attempted both to be more economical in stating goals and, more importantly, to establish some reasonable sequence and progression.

The learning goals for Heritage IV (202) reinforce and extend those of the first three Heritage seminars, while anticipating those of upper-level courses across the curriculum. Students (and teachers) should understand that these competencies are so fundamental to lifelong learning that they can never be fully accomplished within a four-course sequence or even a four-year college education; they require continuing practice. Significant and measurable progress, however, can be made in each of these five areas. Students (and teachers) should work together to define, practice, and measure progress toward appropriate levels of proficiency.

A. Our Cultural Studies goals for Heritage IV (202) include:

1. That students deepen their recognition and respect for the pluralism of society within the United States; that they cultivate some of the competencies necessary for full civic participation within pluralistic societies and organizations, including cross-cultural communications, interdependence, collaboration, and consensus decision-making.

2. That students continue to practice recognizing, analyzing, explaining, judging, and questioning multiple historical perspectives; that they continue to explore continuities and discontinuities between our own positions and those of other times and places.

3. That students test ways to recognize and assess their own cultural positions; that students become more aware of the cultures of the communities and organizations within which they interact; that they become more understanding of how the particular culture of a community or organization affects those whose cultures are different.

B. Our Writing goals for Heritage IV (202) include:

1. That students continue to develop and practice strategies for supporting, illustrating, analyzing, and testing their judgments, including techniques for conducting and incorporating the results of independent research.
2. That students practice strategies for constructing a plan and recognizing form as they organize and deepen and revise their thinking through writing.

3. That students continue to gain experience in evaluating their own processes of writing; that they assess and re-assess their own successes in saying what they want to say; that they practice judging how well their writing fulfills their own intentions and their audience’s needs.

C. Our Reading goals for Heritage IV (202) include:

1. That students continue to discover that learning to read in different ways allows them to enjoy a wider range of texts and to gain new perspectives on their cultural assumptions.

2. That students continue to recognize that different readers read for different reasons, just as different writers in differing social, historical, and economic contexts write for different purposes and with different expectations.

D. Our Oral Communication goals for Heritage IV (202) include:

1. That students continue to listen carefully to what others say, taking other voices seriously; and that students question each other and respond to the questions of others.

2. That students practice ethical uses of oral communication, recognizing the privileges, responsibilities, and risks of expression within a democratic society and within particular communities.

E. Our Thinking goals for Heritage IV (202) include:

1. That students continue to practice viewing situations empathetically from different perspectives.

2. That students continue to practice strategies for exploring the implications and consequences of ideas, actions, values, and beliefs.

3. That students distinguish how and when to think for themselves; how to maintain a healthy sense of skepticism, while recognizing and respecting appropriate kinds of tradition and authority.
Collaborating

“Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one’s own ideas and responding to others’ reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.”

“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.”

—Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

Your Heritage seminars remain deeply committed to these two fundamental principles for good practice in teaching/learning from The Wingspread Journal. Full participation includes in-class writing, speaking, and workshops, conversations based on course materials, and occasional out-of-class programs and activities. No notes, handouts, or make-up work can adequately compensate for your absence. This means, then, that each of you carries certain responsibilities to class:

1. To attend class regularly:

   Attendance is necessary and assumed.

   (Students who miss class frequently, or who do not prepare and participate fully, may fail the course.)

2. To come to class well prepared;

3. To listen;

4. To question;

5. To converse openly and with a sense of purpose;

6. To help create a learning environment in which you and other students feel encouraged and challenged to cooperate;

7. To respect the idea that each of you has unique talents, unique ways of learning, and unique perspectives to share;

8. To respect each other’s differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, beliefs, values.
A Note on Assessment

Please don’t mistake a letter grade for full or final assessment of your work. Because we all may be conditioned to see a letter grade as a stamp of approval or disapproval that marks the completion of a task, your teacher may be reluctant to shut down or short-circuit your process of critical inquiry by assigning such a grade prematurely.

However, you should expect your teacher to:

- respond directly and in detail to the strengths and limits of your work;
- suggest strategies for improvement;
- give you a clear sense of just how effectively you are progressing toward achieving the goals of a particular assignment and of the course as a whole.

A Note on Academic Integrity

Since we are, in fact, interested in what you think and why you think it, be sure to emerge from all your course preparations and research with ideas and ways of expressing them that are recognizably your own. So that you will learn when, how, and why to cite sources, we will pay attention to the principles and styles of documentation in oral and written communication. Read the section “Academic Honesty Guidelines” in the Student Community Code Book.

Heritage Scholarships

To recognize the accomplishments of disciplined and imaginative students, and to encourage and celebrate the ideas of Heritage, the College established a scholarship program in the spring of 1991. This scholarship program is administered by the Heritage faculty in cooperation with the Vice President for Enrollment. Watch for an announcement of procedures and deadlines. The criteria for selection, determined and articulated by Heritage faculty for 1996-1997 awards, will reflect the philosophy, purposes, and practices of the Heritage Program.

Required Heritage IV Texts

Spring 1996

*The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien

*Love Medicine*, Louise Erdrich

*Beloved*, Toni Morrison

“What Do You Care What Other People Think?”
Richard Feynman