Course Description

"Perspectives on Inquiry" is a course taken by all first-year students at MTU. The classes are small and the main goal is to improve your critical thinking skills. Another goal is to engage you as learners by working together as a class on a challenging subject, with a range of difficult readings, doing different kinds of research, writing and talking about what we are learning, and always keeping an eye on the visual dimension of communication. Each section has its own theme—a set of questions to which we do not know the answers but think, "hey, this is worth spending some time on."

To get us started, I have gathered books, stories, articles, movies, etc. that address the question, why do we draw lines between 'public' and 'private' in the ways we do? Our readings come from different areas of study, different perspectives, such as sociology, philosophy, art, etc. I also organized the semester into three large units—home (domestic life), work (the workplace), and everything else or what sometimes we call the public sphere (the big area that stretches between home and work where we vote, run for office, jog, join community organizations, complain about taxes, and buy stuff).

The basic idea is that everywhere we go we draw—or come across—lines between the public and the private (think about 'public restrooms' or 'mobile homes' or 'private property' or 'time out' or 'solitude' or 'solitary confinement').

We may want to begin our investigation by asking:

*do we draw the line between public and private differently at home than we do at work, or elsewhere?
*why do we draw a line at all?
*when we say 'we' draw the line, who is this 'we' who draws it exactly?
*what does it do for us?
*what does it allow us to do? and what does it keep us from doing?
*and... what other questions should we be asking?

I think this class and this subject should be, well, far from boring—there will be lots of room to laugh and wonder and argue with one another. So let's go to work.

From the Bookstore

*Class Reader
Concrete Island, J.G. Ballard
*Into the Wild, John Krakauer
The Overworked American, Juliet Schor
NOTE: Always bring your reader to class.

NOTE: A change in the assignments.

Dorm "Assessment" Report (4 pgs)
Formal Oral presentation based on Dorm Report (5 min.)
Written Reports and Oral Presentations include sections on:
• what you have learned about how space, time, public and private are negotiated, divided up, dealt with, etc. through your own experience, observations, and interviews. Discuss how relationships are affected, habits emerge or change, social practices or behavior influences and is influenced by space/time/public/private.
• an issue or problem you observed or learned about.
• your recommendation regarding the issue or problem to: either someone living in a dorm, someone who designs dorm spaces, or someone official running a dorm.

Argumentative Book Review (with recommendation) (3 pgs)
Informal discussions of your recommendations
Written Reviews include:
• your summary of the book.
• your critical evaluation of the book’s argument or main point, or its effect on the reader— with quotes and examples.
• your recommendation to a potential reader whether to read it and, if read, of what to look for in the book or how to read it— with quotes and examples.

Scientific Work "Lab" Report (5 pgs)
Formal Oral Presentation on work report (5 min.)
Written Reports and Oral Presentations Include:
• introduction that explains why this study needed to be conducted, what we could hope to learn from it, why you chose the space you did, etc.
• methods section that lays out your plan for studying the space you chose
• a results and discussion section that explains how things turned out, what you observed, what you learned.

Visual Argument about Citizenship (make a neat thing)— Assignment to be handed out later
Interview (2 pgs) (to be integrated into)
Formal Oral Presentation based on Visual Argument and Interview (5 min.)

Also NOTE: Along the way, there are short writing assignments that lead up to the larger ones. Please hold onto all (in class or out of class) writing assignments and hand the shorter ones in with the early drafts and final drafts of the longer assignments. Look at all the work— writing, planning, designs—as a package.
Ill. Interview and interview plan.

• 4-8 pages, depending on what you include, how you put it together. Layout/design, font size, etc. of your own choosing.
• Choose an older relative, friend, or older person you want to get to know to interview about how they connect their private and public lives. (Older means 10 years or so older.)
• Based on our reading about interviewing, make an interview plan.
• Write up an explanation of your understanding of the point of the assignment so that you can give it to the person you interview (in advance if possible).
• Include this explanation piece with your final draft of the interview.
• Use the material from your interview to show us something about the person you interviewed, and what you learned from them and the interview.
• Again look for a main point to make and arrange the information from the interview (with any other material, quotes, pictures, drawings, etc.) into a form of your choosing.
• Include a paragraph at the end explaining the form or arrangement you chose.
• Include a paragraph at the end explaining the argument or main point you see yourself making.
• The goal is to teach us something about how people connect the public and the private in their lives AND to pay special attention to how the form or shape—including the visual dimension—of the thing you make helps you with the teaching.

IV. Oral presentation

Plan and make an oral presentation to the class based on one of your first two assignments. If it is the first, you will want to make an "persuasive oral presentation." If it is the second, you will want to make a "informative oral presentation." We will talk about the differences. Turn in a three page written plan or outline of the talk. I will pass around a sign up sheet.

V. Lead class discussion

In pairs, prepare to lead class discussion one day. Choose a day based on our readings (movies, novels, essays, articles, etc.). You will want to come up with questions you think we should ask about the reading, problems you had with it, and activities you might want us to do to get our juices flowing. Turn in a four page plan with questions and activities. I will pass around a sign up sheet.

Grading

I. Argument Paper (dorms/home) 20%
II. Report (work) 20%
III. Interview piece (public) 20%
IV. Oral presentation 15%
V. Leading class discussion 10%
VI. General Participation 15%

To receive a C in this class, you need to attend class and turn in all the work assigned. (You must complete all the assignments for the class in order to receive a passing grade.) An A or B means that you have gone beyond the basic requirements of the course and of each assignment. Going beyond includes:
• Come to class with questions, showing you have thought about the work.
• Listen carefully and thoughtfully to others, and consider how what they say to you might change your approach and ideas.
• Choose research topics carefully and thoughtfully, having considered several different options.
• Take pride in your writing, working and reworking it, proofreading and asking others to read a proofread what you write, as well. I will be happy to look at anything you have written.
Class attendance

...is so important that if you miss more than two classes, any subsequent absence will affect your final grade. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and making it up. If you miss a class you must show deep remorse, perhaps wailing and beating yourself (not too hard) with a birch branch.

MTU's Policy on Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. MTU's Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation," and the policy covers copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes or purchasing academic papers. If you ever have any questions about this issue, or about how to cite someone else's work properly, please talk with me or consult a coach in the Writing Center.

MTU's Policies on ADA and Harassment

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please contact Dr. Gloria Melton in the Dean's Office (phone: 7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may talk with me, your advisor, a department chair, or the Affirmative Action Officer (phone: 7-3310).

Caveat

I reserve the right to change this syllabus based on the needs of the class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE (theme)</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>assignments for the next day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 (home)</td>
<td>• Arrive in good spirits</td>
<td>• Look over syllabus: write on page summarizing the point of this class: what are our objectives?</td>
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<td>• Slide-show</td>
<td>• Draw a diagram of your dorm room space. Bring it to class. Prepare to talk about the way space and time are shaped in your dorm room. In doing so, raise an issue about the public and the private.</td>
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<td>• Gather questions</td>
<td>• Read &quot;On Solitude&quot; (Thoreau); what does he think about the relation of the public to the private? Identify relevant passages.</td>
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<td>• Introductions</td>
<td>• Read Handout (personal sp)</td>
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<td>• Discuss Dorm-Space-Time-Public-Private Assignment.</td>
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<td>• In class: write for 10 min. on your dorm experience thus far. Anything you can think of. Stop and look for issues arising. Discuss.</td>
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<td>• Discuss syllabus.</td>
<td>• Read “Interviews.”</td>
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<td>• Brief presentations.</td>
<td>• Make an interview plan.</td>
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<td>th</td>
<td>• In class: write 10 min. on how Thoreau defines 'public' and 'private' -- refer to passages.</td>
<td>• Conduct an interview of someone in the dorms about the space, time, publicness and privacy of dorms.</td>
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<td>• Discuss “On Solitude.”</td>
<td>• Type up results—two pages—and bring to class Tu.</td>
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<td>• Discuss personal space.</td>
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<td>• Compare dorm rooms to home.</td>
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<td>Week 2 (home)</td>
<td>• Discuss plans and results of interviews.</td>
<td>• Read “Icebreaker” on oral presentations.</td>
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<td>• Brainstorm ideas.</td>
<td>• Write 4 pg draft of dorm report and recommendation. (See “assignment” above.) Bring 2 copies Th.</td>
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<td>• Begin to pull together recommendations for your reports. Use observations, reading, and interviews.</td>
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<td>th</td>
<td>• Writing workshop on reports.</td>
<td>• Practice oral presentations.</td>
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<td>• Discuss oral presentations.</td>
<td>• Begin reading Concrete Island.</td>
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<td>• Practice.</td>
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<td>• Discuss 9/11 and emotion. Come back to this later.</td>
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<td>Week 3 (home)</td>
<td>• 11 oral presentations.</td>
<td>• Practice oral presentations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Monday (tu)</td>
<td>Tuesday (th)</td>
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<td>th</td>
<td>- I1 oral presentations.</td>
<td>- Write up self evaluation.</td>
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<td>- Peer reading of papers.</td>
<td>- Revise Written Reports. Reports Due: Tu.</td>
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<td>- Show Glenn Gould tape.</td>
<td>- Polish reports based on peer response. Due Th.</td>
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<td>- Library Day: research workplace studies, behavior, time management.</td>
<td>- Finish Review. Due Th. Tu next week?</td>
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<td>- Discuss Permissions to study humans</td>
<td>- Read Goffman: are we just performing all the time?</td>
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<td>- Informal presentations on what you have seen so far.</td>
<td>- Changes of plans?</td>
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<td>- Changes of plans?</td>
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Week 7 (Work)

**tu**
- Watch Truman Show.
- Discuss Truman Show.
- Discuss how plans are working out.
- Discuss report format.

**th**
- Discuss summaries of her argument. Who is her opposition? Who might disagree with her? What matters to them, and to her?
- Discuss oral presentations.
- Prepare outlines.

Week 8 (Work)

**tu**
- Discuss "Careers."
- Workshop on reports.

**th**
- Keep working on report.
- Discuss plan.
- Draft intro, methods, and results and discussion sections for your report.

Week 9 (Work)

**tu**
- 11 oral presentations.
  (Do self-evals before next class.)

**th**
- 11 oral presentations.
  (Do self-evals before next class.)

Week 10 (Transition from Work to Public)

**tu**
- Reports due.
- Discuss Overworked American.
- Discuss next assignment. What is a visual argument? How to make one about how we should relate public to the private and what kind of citizens should we be?
- Read Modern Primatives.
- Read Allen.
- Begin working on your visual argument.
- Make a sketch or plan to bring to class on Th.

**th**
- Let’s talk tattoos.
- Discuss your vis. arg.
- Read Habits of the Heart.
| Week 11 (Public) | tu | •Discuss Habits of the Heart. | •Read Soul of a Citizen. | •Continue working on your visual argument. Bring what you have of it Th. |
| th | •Discuss Soul of a Citizen. •Look at drafts of visual arguments. | •Finish this stage of your visual argument. |
| Week 12 (Public) | tu | •Watch Havana. | •Continue working on your visual argument. |
| th | •Discuss Havana and citizenship, responsibility, motivation, life-plans, caring, habits of the heart, etc. | •Continue working on your visual argument. Prepare presentations of your visual arguments. (a run through) |
| Week 13 (Public) | tu | •15 show your visual arguments. •Discuss who you might interview. | •Contact interviewees. |
| th | •7 show your visual arguments. •Look over "Interviews that Work." •Write up an interview plan with questions. | •Do interviews. •Write up results—2 pgs. (Due after T-Giving.) |
| Thanks | Giving | Turkey/Tofu/Tattoos |
| Week 14 (Public) | tu | •Read each others’ interviews. •Discuss how to integrate into presentations. | •Practice Oral Presentations. |
| th | •Assessment. •Prepare Oral Presentations. |
| Week 15 (Public) | tu/th | •Oral Presentations. |
| finals week | Portfolios Due |