

Antioch University

The Bridge Program 2020-2021

Orientation Materials

Introduction and Overview

Welcome to the Bridge Program. The Bridge Program runs over three academic quarters of study in the humanities and writing arts. You'll study the humanities (philosophy, literature, art history) and writing, and you'll work with excellent faculty and teaching assistants who are committed to helping you grow and succeed. You'll also have the option of studying the urban landscape, designing a community project, and working closely with communities around you. Each quarter, you will be enrolled in two 2-unit classes: humanities and writing.



Note: The courses in Bridge will introduce and help you work on skills that employers seek when hiring employees. Such skills often include writing, critical thinking, public speaking, teamwork, and critical reading skills.

Humanities

In your humanities classes over the next nine months, we will study how philosophy, literature, and art reflect place and period in history and our own place in history.

Writing

In your writing classes, you will begin finding and expressing your own voice and articulating the story of your life. By recognizing and reflecting on your personal experience, you will start to communicate your story in ways that affect others so that you, too, can contribute to the conversation about who we are and who we might be as human beings.

Optional Saturday Classes, Bridge Service Learning (BSL)

Those of you who choose to participate in the optional Saturday classes will study neighborhoods and communities of Los Angeles. Together, over the nine months, you'll work with neighborhood members to design a community project.

Completing Bridge

Bridge classes provide college-level study, and as a student, you will have the opportunity to earn college units. To earn college units, students must complete all course requirements as outlined in the course syllabus. Typical requirements include regular attendance, class participation, and the completion of all written assignments.



Note: It is important to attend class on time and to complete each assignment. Otherwise, you may not earn college credit.

Having completed all your classes and the requirements for college credit in each class, you will earn 12 units of undergraduate college credit that you can transfer to any university or college. (Those of you who complete the field study will earn a total of 15 units.)

After completing the course, you will have an opportunity to celebrate with your friends, family, and loved ones by participating in Antioch University's commencement ceremony along with Antioch graduates from the B.A. and Masters programs. Completing the Bridge program can be an essential step toward pursuing other educational goals, deepening your understanding of yourself, and claiming your place in the world in new ways, so that you can make a difference in the world through your life.

What You Can Expect

The staff, faculty, and tutors of the Bridge Program are committed to providing a challenging, safe, and supportive learning environment. We hope to create a community of learners where you can challenge yourself, overcome your fears, broaden your study, expand reading and writing skills, develop your critical thinking skills, and enhance your academic self-confidence.

The Antioch Bridge Program classroom will probably be a little different from other classrooms. We want to help you awaken your passion for learning, so we do not use tests or assign grades to your work. Too often, grades have a punitive effect on students, who come to think of themselves as “C students” or as poor or average students—we don’t believe that, and we won’t do that.

Each student begins wherever they are and has the potential to develop in unique ways. And tests don’t demonstrate the kinds of learning we’re interested in. The best way to demonstrate the development of your self-confidence, your ability to articulate your thinking, and to engage in critical thought and analysis is through writing. In the Bridge Program, you write. No matter where your writing skills are right now, we will work with you and give you all the support you need to develop in this area. Through this process, you will become a better writer, a better thinker, a successful student, and someone who can participate with greater confidence in the world.



Note: Antioch University uses narrative evaluations rather than letter grades. We will instruct you on how to request your transcripts at the end of the program and (if you choose) present a GPA equivalent, so your units can be transferred to schools using a graded system.

As part of a vibrant learning community, you will be encouraged to reflect on the course materials and readings from your own perspective, to listen to and learn from your classmates (not just your teacher), and to contribute to class discussions. We aren’t interested in a learning environment that focuses on right and wrong answers—instead, Bridge encourages thinking and dialog to expand everyone’s understanding of what we’re studying. Your thoughts, ideas, and experiences will be taken seriously.

If public health and safety allows this year, there may be opportunities for field trips to local museums or other cultural venues. Sometimes these will be organized trips; at other times, they will simply be informal opportunities. We encourage students to bring along family and friends on these outings.

Your Commitment

While a supportive learning environment, the Bridge Program is also a challenging course of study and requires commitment and hard work from each student. The Bridge Program is a three-quarter, college-level course of study. Each quarter is ten weeks long, and between class and community time, you'll be spending quite a bit of time in our Zoom classrooms with one another. Also, you'll want to find time to do your reading and writing assignments for your classes—another 3-5 hours each week—and may want to organize study groups with fellow students or meet before class with instructors or tutors.



Note: Schedule time each week for homework. Most Bridge students require 3-5 hours outside of class to complete class readings and written assignments.

We recognize that this is a challenging commitment. Life often includes jobs, families, and other responsibilities. As a member of the Bridge Program learning community, you will need to give some thought to adjusting your schedule and organizing your priorities so that you can successfully complete the program. The staff, faculty, tutors, and your fellow students will be as supportive as possible, but the initial commitment is yours to make.

Learning Community

The Bridge Program is also a learning community. This means we are each responsible for creating a stimulating, supportive, and rewarding learning environment. Each student should carefully consider how they can contribute to making the community the best it can be. This certainly involves honoring your commitment to the course: doing your work and assignments and keeping good attendance. But other things help keep the learning environment vital as well:

- Checking in with each other—especially if someone is absent
- Making room for everyone to participate and learn
- Learning everyone's name

- Sharing information about community events or resources that might be of interest to others
- Treating one another with respect
- *Bringing it to Bridge* – and encouraging your classmates to do the same.
- Remembering that everyone has something to give to the group – and everyone has something to gain from the group. This is how we will (slowly) move from being a collection of strangers toward a real community of learners.



Important: There is no place in the Bridge Program for hateful comments or the belittling of any student. It's important that absolutely everyone in class feels included. Together we can build an environment where we can all feel understood and encouraged to take the risks necessary to learn and grow.

Bring It To Bridge

When you commit to *Bringing it to Bridge*, you commit to three things:

1. You commit to asking for support when you need it.
2. You commit to supporting your classmates when they need your encouragement.
3. You commit to being fully in the game – doing the readings, completing the assignments when due, being a fully engaged member of the community.

When each Bridge community member commits to all three of these things over nine months, we can have a dynamic and memorable year of learning, in which each of us supports one another and feels supported. We bring our learning, our stories, our moments of struggle with the material, and our moments of triumph. It does take a commitment from each of us, though. Your teachers and TAs can't do this for you. We all have to bring it to Bridge for this work.



Note: If you are struggling, do not suffer in silence. Talk with a TA, an instructor, or a classmate. We are all in this together.

Course Requirements

Bridge students have two options with each of the six courses they will take as part of the Bridge Program—an academic option and a community participant option. The academic option spells out what is required to earn academic credit in the course, and the community participant option spells out the minimum requirements for maintaining good standing in the Bridge Program without earning academic credit.

Academic Option (Leads to College Credit)	Community Participant Option (No College Credit)
<p><u>Attendance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students missing more than two class sessions will not be able to earn credit for this course.• It is sometimes possible to make up a session by attending a field trip—check with your instructors.• Your success in earning college credit depends on your consistent attendance.	<p><u>Attendance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students may maintain good standing in the Bridge Community with as many as five absences.• A sixth absence will result in dismissal from the program.• Your participation in the community depends on your regular attendance.
<p><u>Participation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each student is expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate by making comments, asking questions, supporting fellow classmates, etc.	<p><u>Participation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each community participant is expected to do as much of the reading as they can so that they can participate meaningfully in class discussions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a full list of ideas of ways to participate, please see the participation handout. • Bridge is a vibrant learning community, which means that each member of Bridge has an important role to play in the overall success of the course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students choosing the Community Participant option are important and vital members of our Bridge learning community.
<p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must complete all assignments to receive college credit for each course, without exception. • Each of your instructors will give you assignments that will require timely completion. These assignments will be explained thoroughly in class. • In some cases, instructors may require revisions of assignments. • If you have any questions about assignments or need any help, ask your teaching assistants or professor. 	<p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students choosing the Community Participant option are not expected to complete any of the assignments for the course (though they are welcome to participate in this way).

Course Policies

1. Bridge is a clean and sober learning environment. As a fundamental sign of respect for the community, no one (students, teaching assistants, or faculty) can participate while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Anyone who comes to class under the influence will be asked to leave immediately and may be dismissed from the program.



Important: Bridge is a sober space. Any community member who comes to class under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave class for the night. This policy is to respect those who may be working through recovery.

2. Principles of transformative justice are used in the Bridge classroom to handle community agreements. Your site director may introduce you to these principles as needed.
3. Grades. Antioch University does not award grades to students and instead provides each student with a narrative evaluation as evidence of credit earned for the course.
4. Incompletes. No incompletes are offered for the Bridge Program courses. Students must complete all work by week ten or they will receive no credit for the course.

Courageous Conversations

As a community, we will be talking about the Humanities, our own stories, and ways to ***stand against injustice***. Sometimes, these might be difficult conversations. As we approach this work, we seek courageous conversations with one another. The six values below can help:

1. Affirm inherent worth and value
2. Listen to understand
3. Take responsibility
4. Make room for diverse voices
5. Embrace ambiguity
6. Preserve the integrity of stories

Course Agreements

In your conversation with your site director, you made a few agreements about your participation in Bridge. These agreements are essential for the class. Here are the agreements we have all made as a community so far:

1. To be part of a community of learners and participate fully.
2. We honor everyone by celebrating diversity and inclusion in the Bridge community. We know that the class might include people of all ages. It could include people of many ethnicities and classes. It could include people who have many different stories and many different struggles in life -- sometimes extreme struggles. It could include people who are leaders in their communities. It could include parents and grandparents. Veterans. It could include people from the LGBTQ communities. It could include people from many different religions or those who do not follow any religion.
It's important that absolutely *everyone* feels included and celebrated in our community.
3. To *Bring it to Bridge*.
4. To remain committed to the Bridge Program from October through June.

Bridge Service Learning Option

Students may choose to participate in the Bridge Service Learning course. This learning opportunity gives students a chance to critically read and more fully engage space, community, and neighborhood. Students interested in participating must begin doing so in the Fall quarter and then may continue to participate in the Winter and Spring terms. If you do not start in the Fall you cannot begin in a later quarter. Our Bridge Service Learning instructor will introduce this option to you formally at the beginning of the quarter.

Your Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Tonight, you'll meet one or two teaching assistants (TAs) who are here in the class to help you out. Your TAs are here to make sure that you're not suffering in silence – especially during your first quarter. TAs might check in with you to see how it's going every so often, what you thought about the reading, how your

papers are going – or just to say hi. This might seem strange at first, but we want to be sure that you have someone to go to, a way to know that you haven't slipped through the system and that you really can bring it to Bridge.

Your TAs will be in the Zoom classroom before class and are available to help you with homework, with readings – with everything Bridge related. You can schedule a time to work with a TA ahead of time, or you can approach your TAs at the moment. They are here for you.

A Final Word on How to be Successful in the Bridge Program

Bridge is probably unlike any learning opportunity you've ever had before—at the heart of the program is a deep commitment by all your professors and teaching assistants to do two things: challenge you and support you. Together we will build a learning community in which we are each responsible to one another, in which we don't principally work for our own success but together work for the success of everyone. As a learning community, we want to learn together, support one another, and challenge one another.

Three things that help build success in Bridge:

1. Bring it to Bridge—struggling with the readings? Bring it to Bridge. Having trouble with an assignment? Bring it to Bridge. Cannot figure out how to do research online? Bring it to Bridge. No matter what problems you run into, Bring them to Bridge. You won't be judged or punished—the central purpose of Bridge is to help you have the best learning experience of your life.
2. Think of yourself as a member of this learning community. Participate, think of others, make space for others, contribute, and build relationships.
3. Commit fully to the process. This means being fully engaged in the course and the community.

Features of the Bridge Program

- Six two-unit classes over three academic quarters of study.
- The option of the Bridge Service Learning course.
- Up to 15 units of undergraduate college credit.
- Textbooks and reading materials provided free of charge.
- Teaching Assistants and Academic Advisors in every class.

- Tutoring available.
- Antioch University email address
- Access to Antioch University online resources
- Access to Antioch University Library resources
- Participation in Antioch's June 2021 commencement ceremony.

Finally, a personal note: We are excited to have you as part of the Bridge Program, and we are confident that together we can make this a transformative experience for all of us. Congratulations. Now let's explore some cool stuff!