I write entirely to find out what I’m thinking, what I’m looking at, what I see and what it means.

- Joan Didion

1. Participation in Class Discussions [15%]
Class discussion provides an opportunity for students to explore questions about exchange and the human condition, challenging the common perception of economics as distinct from the humanities. Through this shared inquiry, students gain experience reading for meaning and communicating complex ideas; thinking reflectively about an interpretive problem; and supporting and testing thoughts through dialogue with peers. Class discussion fosters the flexibility of mind to consider problems from multiple perspectives and the ability to analyze ideas critically. Students must enter the discussion with specific questions generated by texts as well as a desire to probe and reevaluate ideas. It is essential that students bring texts, journal, and questions to each class session.

2. Laboratory Experiments [10%]
Part of the experiential learning in this class involves participating in a laboratory exercise involving concepts that we will discuss in a future class. All you need to do is show up on time and make the decisions you deem to be the best for the situation presented to you.

3. Questions [15%]
Shared inquiry is a process for exploring the central ideas of the course. This means students must read for meaning, identifying possible interpretative problems they would like to address in discussion. For each class period with a reading assignment, students will type up in advance two questions to be handed in before class starts. Asking a good question is harder than providing a good answer. The student’s task is to delve into a claim that doesn’t appear correct or consistent with the human condition. Explore with your question why the claim is surprising, unexpected, just plain unsettling. Or the question can probe an apparent conflict between the themes in the humanities readings and the claims made by Ridley and later McCloskey. Why is there a clash?

4. Journal [10%]
The Humanomics journal is a space for students to reflect on class ideas, to capture text references, thoughts, questions, areas for further inquiry—their thinking about exchange and the human condition. This is not a place to take notes per se; rather, it is a place to work through ideas, to generate questions for class discussion and connections that will serve in writing the expository papers. Students will select a journal (bound) and bring it to each class session. While it is personal writing, it is not private writing; the journal will be shared and/or collected at times throughout the semester; it is important that it be current. For example, fieldnotes for the final paper will be a required component of the journal.
5. **Expository Papers** [15%]

**Paper 1: Due Monday, October 4**

*Writing Situation:*
You have read chapters 1 – 5 in Ridley’s *The Rational Optimist*, chapters 1 – 9 in Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, Irving’s short story “The Devil and Tom Walker,” Wordsworth’s poem “The World is Too Much with Us,” and excerpts from Thoreau’s *Walden*. In addition, you have participated in an experiment and class discussion.

*Writing Purpose:*
Consider how in your meaning-making process you are making sense of these texts in dialogue with one another and with the experiential component of the course. Possibly consider in what ways you are struggling with connections, what larger questions you are generating. Write an expository essay in which you discuss a connection that you have made or are attempting to make in exploring exchange and the human condition. Develop this connection with references to Ridley and at least one of the literary texts included in the course in a paper of approximately 750 words. Specific guidelines will be discussed in class.

**Paper 2: Due Wednesday, November 3**

*Writing Situation:*
Your reading now includes chapters 6 – 8 in Ridley’s *The Rational Optimist*, chapters 10 – 30 in Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, Frost’s poem “The Death of the Hired Man,” and excerpts from Morrison’s novel *Beloved*. In addition, you have participated in two experiments and class discussion.

*Writing Purpose:*
Consider what new ideas you are negotiating or ideas you are deepening as you work with the relationships between the economic and the literary texts. Be cognizant of the tensions generated and/or of the connections or clarifications the texts in dialogue manifest. Write an expository essay in which you discuss these tensions or connections as you explore exchange and the human condition. Develop this connection with specific references to Ridley and at least two of the literary texts included in the course in a paper of approximately 750 words. Specific guidelines will be discussed in class.

6. **Final Paper** [20%]

For the final project students will work in self-organized teams to write an investigatory human interest story on the exchanges made possible by the “middlemen” of Grand Central Market, the Flower District, or the Fashion District in downtown Los Angeles. The students’ task is to find an example of a wholesale product (e.g., plums, peppers, pinto beans, petunias, paisley cloth) or class of products and trace the exchanges from the origin of the product to a particular middleman and finally to the profile of the middleman’s customers. All information must be documented; interviews are one source of documentation. Additionally, your task is to embed the exchange process in the true, compelling story of a specific middleman.

The strict guidelines for the paper include 1.5 line spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, and 1" margins on all sides. The minimum length of the paper ($\ell$) depends on the size of the group working on it ($n$), specifically, $\ell = 2n + 4$ for $2 \leq n \leq 5$. Every student on the project earns the same grade on the paper.
7. **Final Examination** [15%]

Students will consider the course objectives for Humanomics: Exchange and the Human Condition and respond to questions posed by the professors in an individual oral examination.

Course Objectives

1. Understand how people create both material and immaterial wealth.
2. Challenge and deconstruct the perceived tension between economics and the humanities.
3. Articulate a coherent explanation for the evolution of human prosperity and flourishing.
4. Ask cogent, thought-provoking questions based upon critical reading of texts.
5. Present, explain, and evaluate economic- and humanity-based arguments orally and in essay format.