

LIB100: Introduction to Liberal Education
Fall 2007

Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it
-Henry Ford II

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Telephone Number: 616-331-7137 Office 616-331-6890 Department	Office Hours: immediately before and after class period and by appointment, call 331-6890 to schedule an available time to meet in my office or elsewhere on campus Monday-Thursday 9am-6pm

Catalog Course Description: Introduction to Liberal Education-

A study of the nature and importance of liberal education, including the education of the adult free citizen, through extensive reading of classical and modern texts and through examination of the contemporary state of liberal education in the university and society. Fulfills Philosophy and Literature Foundation. Three credits.

Objectives:

- ☞ To be able to define what is a liberal arts education and to be able to apply that knowledge to the readings and to life goals.
- ☞ To develop the ability to think critically about what you read, view, and hear
- ☞ To learn to articulate those thoughts to an audience through written and oral assignments

Format:

This course will be taught seminar style with considerable time spent in discussion, both large and small group, and activities. This course is intended to be very interactive and dynamic. You are expected to come prepared to participate by completing assigned readings and activities prior to class. Because of the participatory nature of this class, your presence is especially important for the success of the course. Attendance is expected and will be part of your overall evaluation.

Course Texts and Materials:

- ☞ Whipps, J., Drewel, C., et al. (Eds.). (2006). *Reflection and engagement: Liberal education at GVSU*. Acton, MA: Copley Custom Publishing.
- ☞ Bronson, P. (2005). *What should I do with my life? The true story of people who answered the ultimate question*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- ☞ Urban, H. (2003). *Life's greatest lessons: 20 things that matter, 4th ed*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- ☞ Supplemental Readings as assigned (All supplemental readings are available on Blackboard under Course Documents, in pdf or full text online format)

Policies:

☞ Attendance

- ★ Attendance in class is fundamental to your academic success. You should plan on attending every day in order to make the most of this learning opportunity. I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused, you are either here or you aren't. If you have extenuating circumstances (death, serious illness, injury, etc.) please let me know, we can talk about options. However if it is "normal" illness, event, work, or other situation, that is part of what I consider making responsible decisions for yourself, do what you must, as you will need to do in the outside workforce.
- ★ If you are planning on being absent, please let me know in advance. Assignments will be due on dates listed, so plan ahead. You are also responsible for what was covered in class that day. **Notifying me does NOT mean it's excused, *see above*. **
- ★ If you are a GVSU athlete or have other university reasons for missing a class (fieldtrip, etc.), please provide official notification from your coach or instructor at least one week prior to your absence. You will be provided with an alternate assignment to "waive" the absence (so it does not count toward the absence tally). However you will not earn participation points for that day.
- ★ You will be allowed 1 "free" absence (however you will not earn participation points for any days you miss.) This includes completely missed classes and accumulation of partial absences (arriving late or leaving early). For each absence after that you will lose 10 points, up to 4 total absences, after which you will automatically fail this course no matter how many points you have earned.

☞ Cell phones, pagers, and other electronics

- ★ Please silence or turn off any electronics before coming into class. If there is a pending emergency where you may need to answer your phone, please let me know before class and leave the classroom before doing so as to not disrupt everyone else.

☞ Academic Honesty/Plagiarism Policy

- ★ "Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism" (from the GVSU Student Code, Section 223.01). There is no such thing as unintentional plagiarism. It results from ignorance of proper citation practices, but is nonetheless a violation of academic standards, and will not be tolerated. Students who plagiarize will fail the assignment, possibly the course, and are subject to disciplinary action.

☞ Assignments

- ★ No assignments will be accepted after 9:00pm on date due (in person or via email) unless EXTREME circumstances have caused your absence.
- ★ All assignments should be proofread for mechanical and grammar issues prior to being turned in. This is more than just using "spell check" on your computer. Consider using the writing center or asking a friend or classmate to review your writing.
- ★ Any assignments submitted electronically through email must be in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Any other formats (WordPerfect, etc.) will be returned unopened. If you do not send the correct file format by the date/time due, then it will be considered late, regardless of when you sent the incorrectly formatted one.

Homework Assignments:

☞ Individual

- ★ My Weekly Journal (12 x 3 pts each = 36 pts): You will be given a prompt via Blackboard announcement for the next week's journal topic on Tuesdays. You should respond to the prompt in written form either typewritten or LEGIBLY handwritten and brought to class **EVERY week** to receive credit. Once returned, these should be kept over the course of the semester to create a "journal" to assist you with the midterm and final reflective assignments. Due: at the beginning of EACH class session.
- ★ Reading Assessments (8 x 3 pts each = 24 pts): You will be asked to answer a few questions related to the readings at the beginning of some class periods. These assessments will be designed to ensure you have completed the reading assignments and are prepared to participate in class. Due: in class as assigned.
- ★ Reflective Reading Exercises (5 x 10 pts each = 50 pts): You will be randomly assigned by lottery to five class readings throughout the semester for which you will provide written reflection and prepare some discussion questions and responses which demonstrate your understanding of the reading's idea and supporting arguments (2 pages). These questions will be used for class discussion about that reading. See assignment sheet for further details. Due: Varies by reading assignment date, lottery held first week.
- ★ A Letter to My Professor (10 pts): Quite simply, I don't know you. Teaching you will be much easier on both of us, once we are no longer such strangers. Write me a letter introducing yourself and tell me what I should know about you. See assignment sheet for further details. Due: September 10th.
- ★ Midterm Reflection & Peer Interview (25 pts): You will write a 3-5 page paper, in lieu of a midterm exam. This paper should reflect on the reading and experiences we have had in this course to date. You should cite (APA format) at least 2 texts we have read and indicate how they, in conjunction with other activities, have impacted your learning experience and ideas about liberal education. This assignment will also include your results of an informational interview with a peer. See assignment sheet for further details. Due: October 8th.
- ★ End of Term Reflection & Faculty/Professional Interview (50 pts): You will write a 6-10 page paper, in lieu of a final exam. This paper should reflect on the reading and other experiences we have had throughout this course. You should cite (APA format) at least 4 texts we have read and indicate how they, in conjunction with other activities, have impacted your learning experience and ideas about liberal education. This assignment will also include results of an informational interview with a faculty member or professional in your field of interest. This paper must be reviewed by the Writing Center or peer reviewed by a classmate. See assignment sheet for further details. Due: December 10th.
- ★ Participation in class (35 pts): You will be evaluated on your contribution to class discussion and activities. Remember to be respectful of instructor and classmates, and to give everyone a chance to contribute. It's about quality not quantity.

☞ Group

- ★ **Group Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography (15 pts):** As a group (3-5 members), you will develop a 2-3 page proposal about an important issue that impacts society related to your intended profession or general field. This proposal should include a description of the issue, background information about the issue you are addressing, and how it impacts/relates to society. As part of this proposal, you should also cite (APA format) at least 2 of the texts we have read to support the ideas of liberal education as it relates to your project. The proposal should also include a 10 source annotated bibliography which is not included in the page count. See assignment sheet for further details. Due: October 22nd.
- ★ **Group Project Participation (10 pts):** You will evaluate the contribution of each of your group members for this project. See evaluation sheet for further details. Due: December 3rd.
- ★ **Group Project Written Report and Classroom Presentation (45 pts):** As a group, you will write an 8-10 page research report based on your project proposal topic. You will also give a 15 minute presentation to the class about your project topic. See assignment sheet for further details. Report Due: November 19th; Presentation Due: December 3rd.

☞ **Grading Scale:**

300-282 = A	269-261 = B+	239-231 = C+	209-201 = D+
281-270 = A-	260-252 = B	230-222 = C	200-192 = D
	251-240 = B-	221-210 = C-	191-000 = F

Week#	Date	Assignments/Readings are <u>due</u> on date listed
Week 1	8/27	Introductions, Syllabus Review, and Class Activities Read: <u>from the reader</u> , p. xi-xix In Class: Reading Assignment Lottery will be held today
Week 2	9/3	No Class – Labor Day Break
Week 3	9/10	Why are you here? Why is college “important”? Read: <u>Handouts</u> – <i>What students must know to succeed in the 21st century; Having a degree and being educated</i> History & Function of Higher Education Read: <u>from the reader</u> , p. 149-156 <i>What is a University?</i> ; p. 180-183 <i>Universities and their function</i> ; and p. 242-254 <i>The Interdependency of Vocational & Liberal Aims in Higher Education</i> Due: A Letter to My Professor
Week 4	9/17	What is Liberal Education & Why is it “important”? Read: <u>from the reader</u> , p. 58-68 <i>The liberal arts</i> ; p. 97-105 <i>Only connect...the goals of liberal education</i> ; p. 124-137 <i>The Banking Concept of Education</i> ; and p. 173-179 <i>Practicing Liberal Education</i>
Week 5	9/24	Liberal Education & Identity Read: <u>from the reader</u> , p. 273-278 <i>Now I Become Myself</i> ; and p. 333-353 <i>Lost in the Meritocracy</i> ; <u>Handout</u> - <i>Thoreau’s Life Without Principle</i> (part 1)
Week 6	10/1	Liberal Education & Life Read: <u>from the reader</u> , p. 138-148 <i>The Challenge of Liberal Education</i> ; <u>Handouts</u> – <i>Earliest Impressions; Selections from the Souls of Black Folks; Selection from the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i> In Class: Select groups for group project assignments

Week 7	10/8	Liberal Education & the Library Due: Midterm Reflection & Interview In Class: We will be working with library resources today to begin work on the group projects
Week 8	10/15	Liberal Education & Understanding Others Read: <u>from the reader</u> , pp 372-389 <i>On the uses of Liberal Education</i> ; p. 255-259 <i>Diversity makes you smarter</i> ; <u>Handout:</u> <i>excerpts from Shame of the Nation</i>
Week 9	10/22	Ideas from the Classics Read: from the reader, pp 21-28 <i>The allegory of the cave</i> and pp 29-51 <i>The Apology</i> Due: Group Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography
Week 10	10/29	Ideas from the classics Read: from the reader, pp 2-7 from <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> and p. 8-11 from <i>The Encheiridion</i>
Week 11	11/5	What Should I Do With My Life? Read: pp. 1-136
Week 12	11/12	What Should I Do With My Life? Read: pp. 139-265
Week 13	11/19	What Should I Do With My Life? Read: pp. 269-434
Week 14	11/26	The Power of One Read: from the reader, pp 183-201 <i>The World House</i> ; <u>Handouts</u> – <i>The Drum Major Instinct</i> ; Paul Rusesabagina essay available on BB Due: Group Project Written Report
Week 15	12/3	Group Projects Due: Project Presentations Due: Project Participation
Week 16	12/10	Final Exam Period 6:00 pm-8:00 pm Due: Individual Final Reflective Paper.

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

Advance notice will be given in class and announced on BlackBoard if an assignment or date changes. You are responsible for being aware of changes

☞ Support:

You are encouraged to use the many campus resources available to you to assist with your success as a college student in this course and others.

- ★ If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me or Disability Support Services (DSS) at 616-331-2490 as early in the semester as possible to ensure your needs are met.
- ★ The GVSU Writing Center is available to help you with the writing you do in any of your classes. Writing Center consultants, who are GVSU students, are trained to help you with all stages of your writing process. Writing Center assistance is free and appointments usually aren't necessary. See www.gvsu.edu/wc for hours and location, or call 331-2922.
- ★ GVSU Libraries have many links and tutorials available on their website (<http://www.gvsu.edu/library/index>) as well as helpful staff that may be of assistance for your assignments and projects in this class and others.

☞ Important GVSU Dates to Remember

Classes Begin	August 27, 2007
Last day to Add, Register or Pay	August 31, 2007 at 5:00 PM
100% Tuition Refund Deadline	August 31, 2007 at 5:00 PM (Student Assistance Centers)
Labor Day Recess	September 2 -4, 2007
75% Tuition Refund Deadline	September 21, 2007 at 5:00 PM (Student Assistance Centers)
Mid-term Evaluations	October 8 - 13, 2007
Drop Deadline - grade W	October 19, 2007 at 5:00 PM
Thanksgiving Recess	November 21 - 25, 2007
Classes End	December 8, 2007
Commencement	December 8, 2007
Examinations	December 10 - 15, 2007
Semester Ends	December 15, 2007
Grade Reports to Students	December 20, 2007