

**LIB100: Introduction to Liberal Education
Winter 2011**

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Telephone Number: 616-331-7137 Office 616-331-6890 Department	Office Hours: 4:00-5:45pm Mondays in B-3-232 MAK and by appointment Monday-Friday, call 331-6890 to schedule an available time to meet in my office or on Allendale's campus.

Catalog Course Description:

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.

Foundation: Philosophy & Literature:

Literary and philosophical works represent an ongoing conversation about the fundamental ideas and values that shape cultures and civilization. To participate fully in this conversation requires knowledge both of those works that are recognized as defining the history of the conversation and of works that offer original or critical additions to it in the present. Through the study of great works of Philosophy and Literature, students will come to understand more clearly their own response to the world and to the ideas that give it form and comprehensibility. Courses in this category will introduce students to the interpretation of a significant body of literary or philosophical work, and assist them in the careful reading, discussion, and analysis of primary texts.

Content Goals

All courses in the Philosophy and Literature category help students learn the following content:

1. The introduction of philosophy or literature as a "way of knowing"; an examination of principles and questions that define the field and its contributions to human knowledge and civilization.
2. A consideration of the relationship between the works discussed, the cultures in which they were created, and the human concerns they illuminate.
3. The critical analysis and interpretation of one or more primary texts as a major portion of course content.

Skills Goals

All courses in the Philosophy and Literature Foundation use teaching methods that help students become more proficient in the following skills:

1. To engage in articulate expression through effective speaking or writing.
 2. To think critically and creatively.
 3. To locate, evaluate, and use information effectively.
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Course Learning Objectives:

1. *Reading comprehension:* develop the ability to read, respond to, and engage with a variety of texts that explore the idea of a liberal education.
2. *Writing techniques:* develop the ability to write as a way of responding, both formally and informally, to the concepts we read about and discuss.
3. *Dialogue skills:* develop open-minded listening and speaking skills and learn through becoming an active participant in class discussions.
4. *Reflection and transformation:* reflect on the course material and apply the principles to your own life and to your connections in the community. Understanding that learning is an individual and lifelong process.
5. *Engagement:* become active as an educated, informed, and ethical citizen - locally and globally.

Liberal Education

A liberal education, of which General Education is a part, is a practical education and one that is the best preparation for life in a fast-changing world. GVSU is committed to providing an excellent liberal education and the General Education Program is a critical component of that education.

The courses in the General Education Program teach valuable skills and concepts. Employers want the skills that General Education courses are helping to develop including the ability to work with diverse people, excellent written and oral communication skills, a strong sense of ethics, and an ability to be a lifelong learner (National Association of Colleges and Employers 2006).

Students change their majors and their careers and they need to be able to interact with people from other disciplines. 78% of GVSU seniors changed their major at least once. These same students will inevitably change careers as well. A fundamental goal of the General Education program is to expose students to the breadth of knowledge that an educated person has. It is critical to understand and be able to communicate with people from other disciplines. To do this intelligently, you must understand their discipline.

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.

Required Course Texts:

- ☞ Whipps, J., Maodush-Pitzer, D., Mendoza, S., Wolverton, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Reflection and engagement: The possibilities of liberal education at GVSU, 4th ed.* Acton, MA: Copley Custom Publishing.
- ☞ Mortenson, G., & Relin, D. O. (2006). *Three cups of tea: One man's mission to promote peace one school at a time.* New York: Viking.
- ☞ Skloot, R. (2010). *The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks.* New York: Crown.
- ☞ Supplemental Readings as assigned (All supplemental readings are available on BlackBoard)

Suggested Course Materials

- ☞ A notebook to record your ideas, reflections, brainstorming, notes, etc -- the successful student will be reflective, responsive, and will want to note connections they make throughout the course.
- ☞ A three-ring binder or dedicated folder in which to keep and organize all materials. You should keep all assignments, notes, and course materials until the end of the semester. You are responsible for archiving your own materials and assignments. Check blackboard grade book regularly and bring forward any issues immediately.
- ☞ Colored pens, pencils, or highlighters for close reading.

BlackBoard

BlackBoard provides us with an opportunity to communicate between class sessions. Important documents, assignments, and resources will be posted. It is imperative that you check BlackBoard frequently. If you are unfamiliar with BlackBoard, please see www.gvsu.edu/it/bb for a tutorial.

Grading Scale

	449-435= B+	399-385= C+	349-320= D
500-475 = A	434-415= B	384-365= C	319-000= F
474-450= A-	414-400= B-	364-350= C-	

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, so we can talk about options. However if it is "normal" illness, that is part of making responsible decisions for yourself and your peers. Do what you must, as you will need to do in the outside workforce for the rest of your life. Please do not come to class if you are contagious ~ as I'm sure you would not want the person beside you to come if they were. What this means is you will need to make responsible decisions throughout the semester in case you are ill and need to use your "free" absence.
- ★ 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 for that day so the absence does not count against you.
- ★ You will be allowed 1 "free" absence. 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 for each absence up to 4 total absences, after this you will automatically fail this course no matter how many points you have earned. This is equivalent to missing 4 WEEKS of class or a ¼ of the semester!

☞ **Cell phones, laptops, and other electronics**

- ★ Please silence or turn off cell phones before coming into class.
- ★ This class does not require a laptop to be used during class. Please do not use your laptop or other electronics during our discussions as it will distract you and your neighbors from participating. If I see you using your phone, ipod, or other electronic item DURING our class discussions I will deduct points from your participation.

☞ **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**

- ★ Assignments are due in class at 6:00pm on date due (except BB discussion forums which are due by 5:30pm) unless EXTREME circumstances have caused your absence. You should contact me as soon as possible to discuss your situation. Otherwise, NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!
 - ★ The links for the Blackboard Discussion Forums will not be available after 5:30pm on the date due. Plan ahead! I am not responsible for technical difficulties. You should allow yourself enough time to work through any issues including contacting me right away. The links open a week prior to the due date so there is plenty of time if you are working ahead of the deadline.
 - ★ 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.
 - ★ Assignments sent directly to me via email will be returned unopened and not graded!
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☞ Important GVSU Dates to Remember

100% Tuition Refund Deadline	January 14
75% Tuition Refund Deadline	February 4
Mid-term Evaluations	February 21-25
Drop Deadline - grade W	March 11
Spring Break	March 6-13
Examinations	April 25-30

☞ **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 due to 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.

Homework Assignments

☞ **Individual**

- ★ **"About Me"** (20 pts): A 1 page personal history of who you are, what you interested in, your educational experiences, why you chose to attend college, your thoughts about liberal education, and what you expect to learn in this class and in college in general. See assignment sheet on BB for further details. **Due: via BB Discussion Board Posting January 17th**
- ★ **Midterm Exam** (50 pts): A selection of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in the blank, and short essay discussion questions related to the topics and readings that have been covered in class through mid-semester. **Due: In Class – February 21st**
- ★ **Final Reflective Paper** (50 pts): You will write a 3-5 page paper, as a portion of your final exam. This paper should reflect on the reading, weekly assignments, and other experiences we have had throughout this course. This paper must be reviewed by the Writing Center OR peer reviewed by a classmate. See assignment sheet on BB for further details. **Due April 25th in class via hard printed copy**
- ★ **Final Exam** (50 pts): A selection of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in the blank, and short essay discussion questions related to the topics and readings that have been covered in class throughout the entire semester. **Due: In Class April 25th**

☞ **Profession**

- ★ **Learning Journal** (14 x 10 pts each = 140 pts): To prepare for your role as a professional you will keep a learning journal to track your learning and progress throughout the semester. (This may be a useful tool for your major courses as well.) See assignment sheet on BB for further details. **Due: Each week in class via provided worksheet - see the assignment schedule for due dates.**

- ★ **Participation in class** (100 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.

☞ **Society**

- ★ **My News** (9 x 10 each = 90) To prepare for your role as a global citizen and life-long learner you will actively engage with a variety of news media outlets (domestic, foreign, social, etc) each week as assigned. You will select a news article relevant to your major, career interests, or future pathway from the media outlet identified. You will then summarize the content, and take a position on the issue contained in the article. See assignment sheet on BB for further details. **Due: Most every week via BB Discussion Board Posting- see the assignment schedule for due dates. Some students will be selected at random each week to present their article to the class**

☞ **Assignment Schedule:**

Week#	Date	Assignments/Readings are <u>due</u> on date listed
Week 1	1/10	<p style="text-align: center;">Introductions, Syllabus Review, Expectations, and Class Activities</p> <p>Read: McKendall - <i>An Innovative General Education (in class)</i></p>
Week 2	1/17	<p style="text-align: center;">Why are you here? What is college for?</p> <p>Read: <u>BlackBoard in the "Readings" Folder:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon - <i>The value of a college education;</i> • Uchida - <i>What students must know to succeed in the 21st century;</i> • Pellegrino - <i>Having a degree and being educated</i> • MLK, Jr. - <i>The purpose of education</i> <p>Due: "About Me" via BB Discussion Board</p>
Week 3	1/24	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundational Readings</p> <p>Read: <u>Reflection & Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 25-38 <i>The banking concept of education</i> • p. xviii-xx - <i>Shedding certainty: A student's reflection on liberal education</i> • p. xxi-xxiii - <i>GVSU Mission, Vision, & Values</i> <p>Due: My News #1 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 2</p>
Week 4	1/31	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundational Readings</p> <p>Read: <u>Reflection & Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 2-7 from <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> • p. 21-24 from <i>The Encheiridion</i> <p>Due: My News #2 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 3</p>

Week 5	2/7	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundational Readings</p> <p>Read: <u>Reflection & Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 43-51 <i>The allegory of the cave</i>; and • p. 52-77 <i>The Apology</i> <p>Due: My News #3 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 4</p>
Week 6	2/14	<p style="text-align: center;">Personal and Social Responsibility</p> <p>Read: <u>Reflection & Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 368-376 <i>Only connect: The goals of a liberal education</i> <p>BlackBoard in the "Readings" Folder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>MLK, Jr. - The Drum Major Instinct</i> • <i>MLK, Jr. - What is your life's blueprint?</i> <p>Due: My News #4 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 5</p>
Week 7	2/21	<p style="text-align: center;">Midterm Exam Period</p> <p>Due: Learning Journal from Week 6 Midterm Exam – in class</p>
Week 8	2/28	<p style="text-align: center;">The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks Part I - Life</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. ix - 86 <p>Due: My News #5 via BB Discussion Board Reflective Reading Questions</p>
Week 9	3/7	Spring Break – No Class Meeting
Week 10	3/14	<p style="text-align: center;">The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks Part II - Death</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 89-176 <p>Due: My News #6 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 8</p>
Week 11	3/21	<p style="text-align: center;">The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks Part III - Immortality</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 179-328 <p>Due: My News #7 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 10</p>

Week 12	3/28	<p style="text-align: center;">Conversation with Rebecca Skloot Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Location: 2nd Floor – Eberhard Center – Pew/Grand Rapids Campus</p> <p>Conversation with Rebecca Skloot, author of "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," the 2011 Community Reading Project selection. Ms. Skloot will speak at 7:00 PM with a book signing to follow until 9:00 PM. Doors open at 6pm. * We will attend this event as a class. Attendance will be taken.</p> <p>Due: Learning Journal from Week 11</p>
Week 13	4/4	<p style="text-align: center;">Three Cups of Tea Part I & II</p> <p>Read: <u>Three cups of tea: One man's mission to promote peace one school at a time</u> • p. 1-224</p> <p>Due: • My News #8 via BB Discussion Board • Learning Journal from Week 12</p>
Week 14	4/11	<p style="text-align: center;">Three Cups of Tea Part III</p> <p>Read: <u>Three cups of tea: One man's mission to promote peace one school at a time</u> • p. 225-331</p> <p>Due: My News #9 via BB Discussion Board Learning Journal from Week 13</p>
Week 15	4/18	<p style="text-align: center;">No In-Class Meeting</p> <p>Student Work Day – use this time to study for the final exam, work on the final paper, and go to the writing center with your paper draft for review and editing.</p>
Week 16	4/25	<p style="text-align: center;">Final Exam Period</p> <p>Due: Final Reflective Paper via hard copy turned in at the beginning of class Final Exam – in class Learning Journal from Week 14</p>

**Note: This schedule is subject to change.

Advance notice will be given in class and posted on BB if an assignment or date changes.

We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character--that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race, but also the accumulated experience of social living.

--Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Purpose of Education*

This course is part of GVSU's General Education Program.

The goal of the program is to prepare you for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

The program is designed to increase your knowledge and skills in the following areas:

Knowledge Goals

1. The major areas of human investigation and accomplishment - the arts, the humanities, the mathematical sciences, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.
2. An understanding of one's own culture and the cultures of others.
3. The tradition of humane inquiry that informs moral and ethical choices.

Skills goals

1. To engage in articulate expression through effective writing
2. To engage in articulate expression through effective speaking.
3. To think critically and creatively.
4. To locate, evaluate, and use information effectively.
5. To integrate different areas of knowledge and view ideas from multiple perspectives.

Ensuring that undergraduate students receive a broad general education has been a primary goal of colleges and universities since their inception. In this era of increasing specialization and growing demand for professional expertise, it is vital that we continue to emphasize the value of general learning.

GVSU maintains that a complete education involves more than preparation for a particular career. A career occurs in the context of a life, and a sound general education helps one "make a life" as well as "make a living." The university is committed to assuring that all undergraduate students, regardless of academic major, receive a broad education rooted in the arts and sciences.

Teaching in the liberal tradition is at the heart of Grand Valley's identity, and this focus is critical in our General Education Program. Liberal education transcends the acquisition of information; it goes beyond the factual to ask important evaluative and philosophical questions. Liberal learning holds the fundamental principles and suppositions of a body of knowledge up to inquiry, question, and discussion. It helps a person recognize the assumptions under which he or she operates and encourages the examination and questioning of those assumptions. Liberal learning begins in the General Education Program and continues through the more specialized studies comprising each student's major and minor areas of study.

Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.