

First Year Experience Syllabus

The secret of a person's success is discovered in his daily agenda.

John C. Maxwell

**Course # IDS K105
CRN: 30543
Mohegan Campus
Room 111**

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Office Hours:
Before & after each class
and
by appointment

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Course Description

The content of this course is designed to help you make a smooth transition to college. Information on how to succeed in college in terms of studying, balancing family and job responsibilities with new college demands, planning for the future, and just knowing “the ropes” will be provided. You can expect regular reading and writing assignments along with classroom discussion as you investigate how to be successful in this new environment.

Course Objectives

Students should seek to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ To make a positive transition into college life
- ❖ To learn and develop skills that enhance studying, coping, planning, and critical thinking
- ❖ To develop a support network
- ❖ To improve attitudes toward the teaching/learning process and toward teachers and learners involved in that process
- ❖ To learn about and use the resources of the institution such as the library, the student services area, the computer labs, etc.
- ❖ To feel more confident about writing, reading and speaking in an academic setting
- ❖ To develop personal career and academic goals and to minimize the factors of life that obstructs the attainment of these goals
- ❖ To become aware of attitudes towards tolerance and acceptance of diverse communities as reflected in the microcosm of the Three Rivers’ community.
- ❖ To understand the value of active participation in a community through attendance at TRCC functions
- ❖ To discover what a great place Three Rivers Community College is and to know that in this setting, you can develop to your fullest potential.

Disabilities Statement

If you have a hidden or visible disability, which may require classroom or test-taking modification, please see your instructor as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, please be sure to notify Chris Scarborough, Learning Disabilities Specialist (892-5791).

Evaluation Criteria

The First Year Experience course demands active involvement in learning experiences accompanied by reading and writing activities that synthesize those experiences. The nature of its content requires critical thinking skills to be learned, developed, and applied. Therefore the following criteria will be considered in evaluating your performance:

- a. class participation
- b. weekly writing assignments and other assignments
- c. two examinations
- d. demonstrated participation in college activities
- e. journal/notebook/portfolio

Explanation of Criteria

- a. Class Participation
Students should be prepared to participate in every class. Absence from class prohibits you from taking part, and absences prevent you from gaining credit for in-class activities. (Note: Past experience shows that students who miss more than four daytime or two evening classes often end up failing the course.)
- b. Weekly writing assignments and other assignments
Writing assignments are designed to provide opportunities for exploration of ideas or for confirmation of understanding. It is to your benefit to complete all assignments on time. Writing assignments received past the due date will be marked accordingly.

c. Two examinations

One exam will be composed of multiple choice, short answers, true false, and essay questions. The other may be in a different format. They are designed to monitor students' progress and understanding of the underlying principles of college success. They are also intended to be opportunities for practice in test taking. Students who do not complete a final examination MAY not pass the course. Exams cannot be made up unless arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the time of the exam.

d. Demonstrated participation in college activities

You will be required to take part in at least one function sponsored by the college. This may be to attend a play, to participate in the annual math contest, to work on a community activity, etc. You should expect to do this outside of usual class time. In some instances only attendance will be required. In others, a complementary writing assignment may be given.

e. Notebook / portfolio

Students should plan to keep all materials and assignments in a three-ring binder. Each page is to be dated. In effect, this becomes a portfolio of all that is accomplished in a semester. You will refer to this notebook even after this class has ended. You may be asked to submit selected pieces of your work for research purposes.

Grade Computation

The following is a general breakdown of the final grade:

Attendance/class participation	20%	20 points
Assignments, written and other	20%	20 points
Class Project/Oral Presentation	20%	20 points
Two examinations	20%	20 points
Notebook/portfolio	10%	10 points
College activity participation	10%	10 points

Early Warning: Students will be continually updated on their academic performance. Papers and assignments are usually returned within one week. On days that notebook/journal/portfolios are due, I will advise each student individually as to his standing in class.

Please note: Any grade is based on individual effort and achievement, not on teacher designation. Students earn the grades they receive and should view that fact as a serious responsibility.

Grading System

Students may earn the following grades:

A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F

Numerical Components

A	94-100	C	73-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's works or ideas in your writing. It is often known as copying word for word. However, even paraphrasing without acknowledgement or using the ideas of your peers garnered from class discussion or a study group is considered plagiarism. Whether it is conscious or unconscious, plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Your writing for this course, and any other course at TRCC, is expected to be original, the product of your own thinking. A student who is determined to have plagiarized will receive an F on the assignment and may fail the course.

Instructional Materials

Required: *Learning to Think Things Through A Guide to Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum* by Gerald M. Nosich

Required: A three ring binder. Hole puncher, a stapler, & dividers for binder are recommended

Required: Student ID card - keep with you so that you can log onto a computer when necessary.

Required: A 3½" data disk

Recommended: Three Rivers CC Catalog and Student Handbook (Student Development Office)

Recommended: A time management tool of some kind

Phones and Beepers

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

Prerequisites

Satisfactory reading placement test scores and completion of the ESL K060 and K061 courses (if appropriate) are the only prerequisites for this course.

Probable Topics for IDS K105 The First Year Experience

Academic Information	Modes of Academic Thinking
Expectations: Student and Teacher	Taking Exams
Participation in the College Community	Oral Communication
Value of Education	Writing
Learning Styles	College Life Management Skills
Teaching Styles	Critical Thinking
College Policies	Time Management
College Resources	Appreciating Diversity
The Library	Problem Solving
The Computer Lab	Stress Management
Student Services	Alcohol and Drugs
The Career Center	Finances
Academic Skills	Nutrition
Listening	Career and Education Planning
Lecture Note-taking	Linking Education with Life
Textbook Reading and Note-taking	Value Clarification
Annotating	Goal Setting
Mapping	Career Exploration
Study methods	
Differences for disciplines (Math, Social Science, Science, Humanities)	
Summarizing	

College Withdrawal Policy

Students may withdraw from a class, in writing at the Registrar's Office, for any reason until the end of the 10th week of classes. From the 11th week through the end of the 13th week, a student may withdraw with the signature of the instructor or advisor. Check the college catalog for specific dates. Formal withdrawal eliminates receiving an F for the course.

Attendance Policy

Since participation, in-class writings, and in-class activities determine a part of each student's grade, each student is urged to attend all classes and to participate in all class discussions. Gratuitous cutting is strongly discouraged. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. You are expected to be prompt.

Further, many of the skills learned in First Year Experience cannot be acquired just by reading a text. For example, there will be several guest speakers, and I will be taking you to the computer lab and to the library for hands-on learning. There will be class debates and discussions where critical thinking and argumentative skills will be refined. Group projects and activities will be accomplished during class. Further, there will be oral reports, PowerPoint presentations, and assignments where students will bring in interesting and informative material that will serve as a basis for discussion and test material. If you miss a class, it is YOUR responsibility to find out what was covered during your absence and what was assigned for homework.

If you are absent on a day that homework is due, mail or email it to me at Three Rivers. The address is on the cover page of this syllabus. The envelope must be postmarked by the due date of the paper. Late homework will be accepted, however, there will be a point reduction. If you are absent for an exam, notify me ahead of time. I will make arrangements for makeups; which must be taken within one week; however, there will be a ten point deduction.

Classroom Policy I have only two rules: *Responsibility & Respect*

I respect you and expect respect from you.

Being a mature college student entails responsibility. This means you are responsible for yourself, your education, your assignments, your behavior, your attitude, your timeliness, and your contributions to the classroom atmosphere.

Responsible students are generally:

Prompt: They avoid coming to class late. The class starting time is not a "suggested" started time. Stragglers distract from opening lectures.

Attentive: They pay close attention to their classmates while they are speaking. They are objective, open-minded, and tolerant of ideas, especially those that seem opposed to their own point of view. Federal Express was considered a dumb idea when presented as a business project in a college class.

Prepared: They are prepared for active discussions. Reading and homework assignments are essential background for in-class assignments and discussions. We must recognize that a thoughtful question is at least as valuable as a conclusive response.

Supportive: People are sensitive and anxious about oral and written communication. Encouragement and expressions of appreciation play an important role in teamwork. Strive to find the strengths in your classmates' work. Also, suggestions for improvement are always welcome and improve everyone's creativity and critical thinking skills.

Contributors to a positive classroom atmosphere: Every assignment provides us with an opportunity for discussion. The quality of discussion depends on you. If you listen carefully, find something of value, and respond enthusiastically, you will help make the class an enjoyable and rewarding experience for everyone. Don't talk while classmates are talking or this will negatively affect your class participation/ contribution grade.

Reading: A Special Note

There are many ways to read and there are many purposes for reading. Certainly you do not read the newspaper in the same way and for the same reasons as reading a contract you are about to sign or pick up a novel you have been anxious to read.

There are also many ways and reasons to read your college textbooks. Not all texts should be read in the same way. Also, not all texts are to be read for the same reasons. It is important in your college classes that you understand what the professor means when he or she says, "Read chapter 10 for the next class." Would it be enough for you to glance your eyes across the pages? Should you mark the pages? Outline them? Memorize anything? Know only the biggest points? Know every detail? Does he or she really mean to read every word of the 60 pages in the chapter? Only you and your professor know the answers to those questions. Be sure to have a clear understanding of reading expectations at the start of the semester in each of your classes. Otherwise, you might not be doing enough - or you might be doing too much! In your First Year Experience class, I expect you to read the assigned chapters in your text before class.

I would like you to do so in the following manner:

- ❖ First to look over the pages. Note the general set up, the pictures, graphs, the headings and subheadings. Gauge how long it will take you to read.
- ❖ Make sure you will have enough time to complete the reading in the time you have allotted.
- ❖ Read the questions (if any) at the beginning of the reading and consider how you would answer them without reading anything. This kind of sets in your head what to think about as you read.
- ❖ When you actually begin to read the words, sit back and enjoy the material. The text is not difficult. It is meant to give you ideas. Think about whether the suggestions might be useful to you.
- ❖ Use your pencil to check off ideas that intrigue you. If you're thinking as you read, there should be plenty of these. (When you return to class I would like to hear about the ideas you checked off.)
- ❖ Sit back and let the ideas gel. They will be easier to retrieve from your very busy memory when you return to class.
- ❖ Go back to the questions at the beginning of the reading. Can you answer them? If so, you probably have a good enough understanding of the material to be a significant part of our classroom discussion. If not, go back to review the weak points.
- ❖ Remember: This is not necessarily the way to read in all of your classes. Be sure to know what an instructor means by "read".
- ❖ To get the most out of reading anything, think while you do it

Quotable:

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." --Richard Steele

"To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting." --Edmund Burke

"When we read too fast or too slowly, we understand nothing." --Blaise Pascal

Writing Help from the Tutoring Center

Live and electronic assistance are available through the Writing Center. While the Center closes at 5:00 daily, students can get help from the Center after hours by sending their draft papers either as MS Word attachments or by cutting and pasting them into regular e-mails and submitting to:

TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu

Students should type "WC draft submission" in the topic line and include name, Banner ID number, a description of the assignment, and specific concerns about the paper. A tutor will respond usually within 24 hours!

Also, Jon Brammer, Writing Center Coordinator, can be reached at 860-892-5769 or Jbrammer@trcc.commnet.edu

The professor reserves the right to revise syllabus