

First Year Experience Three River Community College

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IDS K105
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Room E227

Course Description

The content of this course is designed to help you make a smooth and successful 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 for you. 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

Information covered and assigned work is intended to increase the likelihood that this transition is successful and rewarding for the student. Emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary learning strategies, life management skills, active participation in the college community, classroom discussion/public speaking, and critical thinking skills necessary for all college students. Students should seek to achieve/learn the following objectives:

- Make a positive and productive transition to college life
- Develop skills that enhance studying, coping, and behavior
- Understand and improve attitudes toward the teaching/learning process
- Develop skills that enhance planning, studying, communicating, and thinking critically
- Assess personal strengths and limitations to set and achieve goals
- Become more confident with writing, reading and speaking in the academic environment
- Establish personal, career, and academic goals, with the understanding of what are the obstructions to these goals
- To become aware of and develop attitudes towards tolerance and acceptance of diverse communities and their opinions
- Actively and effectively participate in group assignments and discussions
- Participate in activities/community functions on the Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) campus

Instructional Materials

- *Pearson Education, Cornerstone, Discovering Your Potential, Learning Actively, and Living Well, Columbus, Ohio, Prentice Hall, **2011**.
- *TRCC Student Handbook
- *Three ring binder; dividers are recommended
- *Student ID card: keep with you to log onto the computer when necessary
- *Handouts/Reading/Computer/Technology Assignments
- *Personal Journal
- Time management tools of your choosing, pocket folders, note cards, highlighters, post it notes, etc

****Required***

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's work or ideas in your writing. It is often known as copying word of word. However, even paraphrasing without the acknowledgement of using the ideas of peers garnered from class discussion or study groups 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 has plagiarizes will receive a grade of **ZERO** on that assignment, and will be reported to both the Academic Dean and Student Services Dean where disciplinary action can be taken.

Disabilities Statement

Student with disabilities are guaranteed reasonable accommodations under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. Disclosure of a disability must be voluntary. In instances where students have disabilities that are not discernible, valid and reliable documentation to verify eligibility for accommodations is required and must be submitted to the Student Development offices of Student Services. Please call 860-383-5217 for more information or to schedule a confidential meeting with one of our disability service providers.

Phones and Beepers

Please note: 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/text messages to accessed or answered during class. Failure to comply may compromise your class success. To make things easier for everyone, backpacks and purses should be keep on the chair next to you or the floor.

When there are extenuation circumstances that may require a student to be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor PRIOR to the beginning of the class, so together they can determine how the situation can be address to meet the needs of the class and the individual.

Expectations of You

1. Class *attendance and participation* is critical. Missing class will certainly affect your ability to learn and it will certainly adversely affect your grade. By contrast, *attending and participating in all classes will enhance your learning experience* and almost certainly improve your grade. This is a three credit course that meets once a week, therefore more than one class absence may compromise your final grade. Be aware of your responsibility to attend class.
2. You are responsible for reading the entire assignment before class. For example, you are assigned the introduction for the first class; please have the entire selection read before that class.
3. This class will consist of lectures, small group work, discussion, oral presentations and personal reflection/writing. Let me assure you that this course is designed for you, the student. Therefore, if you have any questions about the materials please feel free to ask/see me immediately.

Expectations of Me

1. While I expect you to prepare on a daily basis, let me assure you that I will be there to help you. Please feel free to contact me and set up an appointment to meet at any time. Even if you are not having difficulty with the class/material, and you just want to discuss something, don't hesitate. My goal is to assist you/direct you and help you reach your goals. In fact, each student must sign up for a before or after class meeting with me for a brief introduction within the first month of class. This is your responsibility and will be noted in the class participation of class.
2. FYE is such an interesting subject. It will be different every class with common themes or threads running through the semester. I will work diligently to make it interesting, relevant, and meaningful for you. Participation will enhance your learning experience; read the material as assigned, attend class, participate, work hard, and above all, enjoy the experience!

Grading Criteria

This course demands active involvement in learning experiences accompanied by reading, writing, and speaking activities that capture those experiences. The nature of the course content requires critical thinking skills to be learned, developed and applied. The following criteria will be used in evaluating your grade:

Participation (20%): Students are expected to come to class prepared each week and actively participate in discussions each week. One minute writes and student journal entries are part of the grade for participation as it reflection.

Readings (10%): Weekly reading assignments will be completed each week. Students will have questions to go along with the readings and will be submitted each week.

Tests and Final Exam (20%): During the semester there will be one (1) syllabus test and one (1) cumulative final exam (10% each) all scheduled in advance. The syllabus test and final exam may be composed of the following: multiple choice, true/false, short answer, matching, and essay questions. If for any reason you are absent from class on the day of a test, please contact me **in advance** to reschedule.

Scavenger Hunt (10%): Using the student handbook review five (5) resources. Interview someone that works in that office/department and get the following information from the resource you have selected: contact information, purpose of that resource, do you see yourself using this resource and if so how, have a staff member initial your handbook when you visit. **Your critical analysis of it/when you will use this resource is the most important part of the assignment and should be at least two paragraphs.**

Group Project (10%): Choose a famous person of the group's choice (e.g. athlete, author, actor, actress, politician etc). Explore the qualities that have led to their success. **Apply those qualities to your current life/goals and discuss how they may relate and help you in the college setting and beyond.** (Oral presentation with visual/media required)

TRCC Function Paper (15%): Each student will participate in at least one TRCC sponsored event or function and write a reaction paper on it. In advance, for approval, the student must submit in writing the event/function that will be attended.

Career Exploration Paper (10%): Write a resume and then bring it into the Writing Center for assistance with formatting/tips to see how you have done. Using your resume as a guide, write a 5 – 7 page paper that will **analyze** what skills, traits, college courses, and experience you should probably gain during your time in college in order to make yourself more marketable. Interviewing someone in the field you are considering is an important part of this assignment as well.

Notebook/Portfolio (5%): An organized comprehensive notebook that includes handouts and weekly assignments and writings from class and beyond. Your ability to organize and manage materials is important.

College Withdrawal Policy

The deadline for students to withdraw from a class is------. Students must withdraw from a class, in writing at the Registrar's Office. Before withdrawing from any course, please speak with me and be aware of the positive and negative consequences of that action.

Not attending class is not dropping or withdrawing from a class.

Final Grades will be posted by -----

Classroom Policy: I have only one rule, two words: **BE POLITE!**

It is my belief that if you follow this simple rule all things will fall into place. I adhere to this rule in my life and I encourage you to adopt this rule for yourself. It is necessary for this class as it requires two things from you: Respect and Responsibility. Being a mature college student entails both qualities. This means you are responsible for yourself, your education, your assignments, your behavior, your attitude, your timeliness, and your contributions show respect for self and others and help to make our classroom atmosphere positive and conducive to learning.

Respectful and Responsible students are generally:

Prompt: They avoid coming late to class. The class starting time is not a “suggested” start time, therefore it is my expectation that you will be here on time, stragglers distract from the learning for themselves and others and may have their grade compromised.

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 views. Cell phones distract from the learning environment.

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 to make the class an enjoyable and rewarding experience for every one. Don’t talk while classmates are talking or this will negatively affect your class participation/grade.

Attendance Policy

Class participation, in-class writing, speaking, and activities determine part of each student’s grade; therefore, each student is urged to attend all classes and to participate in all class discussions. I recognize this might not be easy or comfortable for each of you; however I expect that you will work toward that end. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class and you are expected to be prompt

Furthermore, many of the skills learned in First Year Experience cannot be acquired by just reading a text. For example, there will be several guest speakers and we may use the computer lab for hands on learning. There will classes where we meet with other disciplines or debate and discuss where critical thinking and argumentative skills will be refined. Group projects and activities will be accomplished during class time. In addition, there will be public speaking, oral presentations, and assignments where students will bring in interesting and informative material that will serve as a basis for discussion and possible test material. If you miss a class, it is YOUR responsibility to find what information was covered during your absence and what was assigned for homework. Talk to a class “buddy” to take note or pick up materials in your absence.

If you are absent on a day that homework is due, mail or email it to me **at my home email**. The envelope or email must be postmarked by the due date of the paper. **I expect homework to be on time**. Late homework will be accepted; however a point reduction will apply. If you are absent for an exam, notify me ahead of time and we will arrange for a makeup at a mutually agreeable time; exams must be taken within one week, however there may be a deduction of up to 10 points.

Early Warning: Students will be continually updated on their academic performance. Papers and assignments are usually returned within one week. Please note: Any grade is based on individual effort and achievement, not on teacher designations. Students earn the grades they receive and should take that fact as a serious responsibility.

Probable Topics for 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	

Reading

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 or highlighter to make note of 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

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE SCHEDULE

**Please note that this is a projected schedule. It may change during the semester. We will be having a variety of guest speakers during the semester as well and we will make adjustments according to their schedules and availability.*

Week 1 – Introductions

Introduce Class/Expectations/Syllabus Overview
How is College different from High School
Where Am I Now?

Week 2 – Success

Success Presentation
Why College? Developing Your Personal and Academic Motivation
TRCC Syllabus Test
**K Westerberg: Student Programs*

Week 3 – Building Relationships

Classmates Through Study Groups and Student Activities
Professor, Advisor, Counselors, Tutors
Handout on Scavenger Hunt Exercise
**R Walsh: Library Resources*

February 12

Week 4 – Thinking

Thinking Creatively & Analytically
Thinking Critically
Scavenger Hunt Due

February 19

Week 5 – Managing Your Time and Reducing Stress

Time Management
Library Resource Tour
Strategies to Reduce Stress
**L. Summa: Director of HR*

February 26

Week 6 - Career Exploration and Creating a Study Plan

Where to Begin/Making Connections
Aligning Career with Academic Goals
Scavenger Hunt Due

March 5

Week 7 – Information Literacy and Research Writing
Research Writing
Asking Dumb Questions
Career Research Writing Time

March 12 No Class Spring Break – Enjoy!

March 19

Week 8 Identifying Your Learning Style

Take the MIS Survey
Use MIS to Enhance Studying and Learning
Take LEAD Survey/Compare and Contrast to MIS

March 26

Week 9 - Quantitative Learning

Math and Science in Everyday Life
Overcoming “Math Anxiety” and Quantitative Mastery Strategies

April 2

Week 10 – Reading Skills

Reading Effectively and Increasing your Reading Speed
Randy Pausch Last Lecture

April 9

Week 11 – Writing and Speaking

Kinds of Writing in College/Resume Writing Techniques
Expectations
Speaking/Short Presentations

April 16

Week 12 – Managing Your Money
Prioritizing Your Finances and Budgeting
Scholarship, Loans, and Protecting Your Credit
TRCC Function Paper Due

April 23

Week 13 – Test Taking Skills

Developing Successful Tactics
Test Taking Tips
Learning from Your Exam Performance/Calculating your GPA

April 30

Week 14 – Empowering Your Memory
Best Practices/Knowing vs. Memorizing
Career Exploration Paper Due

May 2

Week 15 - Group Project Presentations

May 9

Week 16 – Presentations and Review

Week of dec 20

Final Exam