

# First Year Experience

(IDS 105: Spring 2011)

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**Office Hours: By appointment**

## **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. Emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary learning strategies, life management skills, active participation in the college community and critical thinking skills.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students should seek to achieve/learn the following objectives:

- a) Make a positive and productive transition to college life
- b) Development of proactive coping skills and behavior
- c) Understanding and improving the teaching/learning process
- d) Development of skills that embrace planning, studying, communication and critical thinking
- e) Assess personal strengths and limitation to set and achieve appropriate goals
- f) Learn about and use the resources of Three Rivers Community College
- g) Become more confident with writing, reading and speaking in an academic environment
- h) Establish personal, career and academic goals, with an understanding of what are the obstructions to these goals
- i) Become aware of and develop attitudes towards tolerance and acceptance of diverse communities and their opinions
- j) Actively and effectively participate in group assignments and discussions
- k) Participation in activities/community functions on the Three Rivers Community College campus

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

*Cornerstone: Creating Success Through Positive Change, Concise (6th Edition)*

TRCC Student Handbook (available in Student Services suite)

Assigned Readings

## **PLAGIARISM**

In college courses, we are continually engaged with other people's ideas: we read them in texts, hear them in lecture, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. As a result, it is very important that we give credit where it is due. Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. 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 a ZERO for the assignment and may fail the course.

## **DISABILITIES STATEMENT**

Students with disabilities are guaranteed reasonable accommodation under the provisions of the American 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 accommodation is required.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Class attendance is expected and vital. You will be allowed **one (1)** absence. Credit for this course will NOT be earned, regardless of your average, if you miss more than one class.

If you miss a class, you will be responsible for getting the information/materials covered in that week of class and the completion of any assignments that were due, or assigned for the following weeks.

**There will be no class on 2/21 (President's Day) and 3/14 (Spring Break)**

## **TEXTING/CELL PHONE POLICY**

I ask that all phones and pagers be turned off (not simply put on vibrate) during class. You are allowed to make phone calls and send text messages only during the break. If you receive or send a text message – or, if I hear your phone ring or vibrate – during class, you will be required to write a three page research paper on how text messaging has changed the way we communicate (I will elaborate, if necessary – but, let's hope it is not necessary). If you are in violation of the texting/cell phone policy, and you fail to submit your research paper within two weeks of said violation, you will be marked as absent for that class.

## **ASSIGNMENTS (I will not accept any late work, for any reason)**

- **Class Participation: 15%**

Each week, you will come to class prepared to participate in discussions and group activities. This means that not only will you have read the assigned readings, but you have spent some time critically reflecting on them, developing appropriate questions and demonstrating that you have begun to create your own ideas. **If you are not prepared for class, don't come!**

- **Journal Entries: 15%**

Each week you will be assigned a short (about ONE page) journal entry. The topic of the entry will be relevant to the week's topic. Each entry is due one week after it is assigned. No late entries will be accepted. Journal entries **must be typed**. Be sure to edit your work before you submit it. Unsatisfactory work will be returned and must be corrected before the next class, or no credit will be given.

**Due: Weekly**

- **Cultural Quest Connecticut: 10%**

As a team of three, you will be required to visit a club, museum/cultural center, restaurant (that serves NON-"American" food – e.g. no Denny's or Burger King), place of worship, theatrical performance, concert, etc. Each team will take photos, collect materials and write a description to produce a poster that represents their experience. The posters will then be shared with the class.

**Due: 2/28**

**OR**

**Service Learning (plus, no final)**

You will be required to volunteer at least eight hours with an organization of your choice (you must get prior consent from the professor). You will submit a minimum of **four** reflections of your experience (one must come before you volunteer and one must come at the conclusion of your volunteer time). You will also be required to give a short presentation on your experience.

**Due: on-going**

- **Tests/Quizzes: 30%**

During the semester, there will be **biweekly** quizzes that will cover reading and lecture. There will also be a final. The quizzes and final will comprise multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, matching and essay questions.

**Due: Quizzes - Biweekly; Final – 5/16**

- **Current Events Project: 10%**

What's going on in the news – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally -- is incredibly important. To this end, working in groups of two, you will prepare on a regular basis a discussion of a news article. You will choose any article (no sports, sorry), and present it to the class. I expect a high level of reflection. A sign-up sheet will be created in week two.

**Due: on-going**

- **Information Literacy Project: 20%**

I will provide you with the details of this assignment in the early weeks of the semester. This will be an ongoing project that will introduce you to library resources, the research process and critical thinking skills. There will be three components to this assignment: an information literacy portfolio, the anatomy of a research paper (don't worry, you will NOT be writing an entire paper) and a presentation.

**Due: 3/7 (information portfolio); 4/25 & 5/2 (presentations); 5/16 (anatomy of a paper)**

- **EXTRA CREDIT: Fitness Log (+5 points to your final grade)**

Exercise is important, not only for the body but for the mind as well. Exercise has been proven to lower stress, among other things. All you have to do is keep a log of activities (yoga, cycling, weight training, running, etc.) in which you engage. These activities must be regular. I will offer opportunities for us to exercise as a class. This will be optional, but can be applied to the extra credit.

# ANY QUESTIONS???