

# Introduction to College Life

Fall, 2007

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is a half unit (.50) course requirement whose primary goals are to introduce first-year students to the intellectual life of Moravian College, to promote a smooth transition to college life, and to help students develop a coherent plan for their education. Assignments and activities center on becoming familiar with college policies related to your role as a student and member of the Moravian College community; becoming a successful college student; exploring the purpose of a liberal arts education at Moravian College and its relation to life after college; developing specific goals, objectives, and plans for your education; and enhancing your engagement in college life.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

Walls, Jeannette, *The Glass Castle*. New York: Scribner, 2005.

Moravian College Student Handbook

Moravian College Catalog

Vonnegut, Kurt, *A Man Without a Country*. New York: Random House, 2005.

Additional Readings handed out in class

## **COURSE POLICIES and GRADING PROCEDURES:**

To ensure fairness across different sections, the course grading principles are standardized for all sections. The workload expectations for students will also be comparable across sections. The course is graded and is weighted as a half unit course. The final grade is primarily determined by your willingness to become actively involved in this course that is aimed at enhancing your college

experience. As long as you commit to becoming involved and meet the expectations for the course, you can guarantee yourself a strong grade. Your instructor’s energy will be primarily devoted to helping you get the most out of this course and get off to a good start in college—which should allow you to develop a good, open working relationship with your new academic advisor. This also means that your ICL instructor will not be grading the majority of the assignments that you complete for the course; instead, your instructor will be functioning much like a bookkeeper, keeping track of the points you have earned over the course of the semester. The one instance in which your instructor *will* grade your work will be your personal reflection papers. We want you to be reinforced for putting forth high quality writing efforts, just as you will be doing in your other courses.

You should track your performance over the course of the semester as well, so that you know exactly how you are doing in this course. Final grades will be calculated by adding up the points at the end of the semester and using the following chart:

**POINT VALUE CONVERSION CHART**

930+	=	A
900 – 929	=	A-
870 – 899	=	B+
830 – 869	=	B
800 – 829	=	B-
770 – 799	=	C+
730 – 769	=	C
700 – 729	=	C-
670 – 699	=	D+
630 – 669	=	D
600 – 629	=	D-
less than 600	=	F

The workload for this course has been carefully designed to take into account that you are probably also enrolled in four other courses, as well as possibly taking Fitness and Wellness this semester. It is composed of seven different components, each of which is outlined below.

<i>Completion of 6 outside of class short personal reflection papers</i>	30%
<i>Attendance and participation in scheduled classes</i>	21%
<i>Attendance and write-ups of community events</i>	20%
<i>Development of a personal education plan or substitute assignment</i>	10%

<i>Participation in a speaking assignment</i>	10%
<i>Scheduling, preparing for, and attending an individual advising meeting</i>	5%
<i>Participation in the library orientation session</i>	4%

**Personal reflection papers**

Each of you will have six opportunities over the course of the semester to generate personal reflection papers (minimum 350 words). Some of these will be related to the reading assignments, while others will be designed separately by your instructor. Each of these assignments can earn up to 50 points. **Your instructor has the right to either turn back a submission as unacceptable or award fewer points than the maximum if the author does not use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation or does not clearly demonstrate acceptable college level work. Your instructor also has the right to turn back a submission as unacceptable and require you to resubmit a revision if your work doesn't clearly convey that you have tried to do a good job on the write-up. If this occurs multiple times your instructor may decide to award only partial credit for resubmissions, or simply not offer this option to you.** Late personal reflection papers can earn only 25 points. Your instructor will make the specific assignments and let you know of their due dates in class.

**Attendance and participation in scheduled classes**

This is a heavily weighted component of the course. This reflects our hope that much of your learning experience comes about by active participation in the classes. Some classes will involve group activities, while others will have guest speakers and or panels sharing information and important insights about college. If you miss a particular class you have missed that learning experience, and there really is no way to make it up.

Each class has 14 formal class meeting times, one during fall orientation to discuss our common summer reading and 13 seventy-minute classes, meeting once a week through out the semester. You will earn 15 points for each class, up to a maximum of 210 points. The operational definition of attending is coming to class prepared, on time or early, participating, and staying to the end of class. In other words, simply showing up is not enough effort to earn full credit. Your instructor may choose to award partial credit rather than all 15 points if you do not meet this expectation. Please note that if you miss a class, the points for that class cannot be earned. Attending all classes earns you 210 points, the equivalent of a 100 on a test that counted 21% of your final grade.

## Community events

College offers students many opportunities for additional learning that occur outside the classroom; however, most students straight out of high school are not used to taking advantage of such opportunities. To help you develop the habit of exposing yourself to new learning experiences, this course requires you to attend five community events over the course of the semester. The first will occur during freshmen orientation and the others will be spread out over the semester.

The first and only community event required of the whole freshman class is attendance at the presentation by the author of our common summer reading. In recognition of the significance of this particular community event, it is weighted more heavily than the other four (60 points vs. 35 points each for later events). Your write-up of this event is your first chance to communicate using the written word with a college professor. Make your submission something that you are proud of. It is also the first opportunity for your instructor, who is also your academic advisor, to get a feel for your writing ability and for your ability as a college student.

Two or more of these community events will be designated as class community events that you all go to together. If you have a legitimate conflict with a class community event your instructor will suggest an acceptable alternative community event for you to attend. In order for you to receive credit, this alternative must be arranged with your instructor before the date of the class community event. Instructors will assign one of three methods of assessing your participation in a class community event. You may be asked to do a write-up as explained below, participate in a class discussion, or participate in a class discussion right before or after the event.

In addition, you will be asked to choose two or three other approved events to serve as individual community events, depending on how many class community events are designated. A written reaction paper (write-up) is required for each individual community event that you attend.

Each write-up (250 word minimum) is due within one week of the date of the event. While these write-ups are not graded per se, it is hoped that you will make them high quality submissions, typical of what one could expect from a successful college student. **Your instructor has the right to either turn back a submission as unacceptable or award fewer points than the maximum if the author does not use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation or does not clearly demonstrate acceptable college level work.** Each community write-up can earn up to 35 points. If the write-up of the event is handed in late, the

maximum point value that can be earned is 20 points. Attending five community events and handing in a write-up on each on time earns you up to 200 points.

**What qualifies as a community event that an individual can attend?** Any program that is sponsored or co-sponsored by the M.C. Arts and Lectures Committee, and also the Cohen Lecture, automatically qualify. In addition, your instructor may announce other events that take place throughout the fall semester that qualify.

### **Personal education plan (PEP)**

We want your college experience to be positive. We also want you to be aware of all the different educational, personal, and social opportunities that Moravian College offers its students. One way to ensure that this happens is to ask each of you to take personal responsibility for your educational plan and to have you spend some time during your first semester in college thinking about your future. That is what this assignment is intended to do. Your instructor will provide you with the details of this plan that you will be completing for this course. It is due at the beginning of class on November 6. As long as it is handed in on time and your instructor deems it of acceptable quality, you will earn 100 points for completing this component of the course. A PEP that is turned in late can only earn 50 points.

### **Speaking assignment**

As part of our Learning in Common curriculum the college has mandated a Speaking Across the Curriculum component that every student should experience. In our ICL course you will have the opportunity to do this. Instructors have the option of choosing one of several formats for helping you to meet this requirement. The total point value that can be earned for this component of the course is 100 points. Depending upon which format is chosen, your instructor will clearly delineate what is required of you to earn the maximum number of points.

### **Scheduling, preparing for, and attending individual advising meeting**

Your instructor will ask you to arrange for an individual meeting with her/him preceding registration for the spring semester. The dates of these individual meetings may vary depending on whether you are an Add-Venture student, a Comenius scholar, or in the general program. As part of this process it is critical that you both understand the LinC curriculum and thoughtfully prepare for this

meeting with your academic advisor. This means, for example, that you check the college catalog for specific requirements for any fields that you are considering majoring in. You also need to identify six courses as possibilities to discuss with your advisor, writing down an explanation for why you chose each of these courses as a possibility. Your instructor will provide you with a form to help you to do this. It is your responsibility to thoughtfully fill this out and bring it to this meeting. The reason for requiring you to choose six courses, even though most students will only enroll in four full unit courses (with some also taking Fitness and Wellness), is to ensure that you still select an optimal schedule for yourself, even if one or two of the courses that you have selected are closed when it comes time for you to actually register. This planning is so crucial to your college success that you earn 60 points for scheduling, preparing, and attending these individual meetings. This is equivalent to earning a 100 on a test that counted 6% of your final grade.

### **Library orientation session**

The reference librarians have designed a valuable orientation session for you. As noted in your fall orientation booklet, our ICL class is to attend the session on Monday, Aug. 27 at 8 PM. If you have a conflict and cannot make it to the session that is scheduled for our ICL class, please make sure that you attend one of the other sessions. Attendance will be taken, and students will only earn the full 40 points if they are there for the full session. Prizes are also awarded, using a raffle system for all who attend. So don't miss out on this opportunity to learn about one of the most valuable resources on campus!

### **On Academic Honesty**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own. This includes such instances as quoting directly from a published work without giving the author credit (i.e. proper citation), inserting the author's words as your own, using or "borrowing" another student's work, buying a paper from a professional service, etc. It is your responsibility to be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism and, in the event of uncertainty, to ask in a constructive manner about a writing in question *before* it is due in a final version. You are also required to keep all note cards and rough drafts on papers and assignments until given a final grade for that course. Evidence of plagiarism and cheating will be dealt with in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty found in the Student Handbook. In the event of a suspected infraction – in fairness to your peers and the standards of the college – it is my job to send the materials in question to the

Dean's Office, at which time you are given the chance to provide your perspective on the matter.

### On Learning Disability Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for support of learning disabilities and/or ADHD, should contact Mrs. Laurie Roth, Director of Learning Services, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Students who wish to request accommodations for support of other disabilities, should contact Dr. Ron Kline, Director of the Counseling Center, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

### **PROPOSED SCHEDULE (subject to change)**

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|-------|---|
| 8/26  | 10:30 class discussion of <i>The Glass Castle</i> ; 1:30 Jeanette Walls at Foy Hall   |
| 8/28  | Reading: Haymaker handout; M.C. Student Handbook  |
| 9/4   | Reading: Bauchner handout<br>Due: Reflection Paper #1   |
| 9/11  | Reading: Handout on Liberal Education<br>Guest Speaker: James Skalnik, Assistant Dean of Academic Advising  |
| 9/18  | Due: Reflection Paper #2<br>Session on organization and time management with Student Assistant Jackie Blazier and Guest Speaker: Angela Lutzi, Assistant Director of Counseling/Learning Services |
| 9/25  | Reading: Vonnegut, chapters 1-5 (pages 1-52)<br>Session on college reading and writing  |
| 10/2  | Due: Reflection Paper #3<br>Session on academic honesty   |
| 10/9  | Fall Recess   |
| 10/16 | Reading: (handout)  |

Guest Speaker: Sharon Brown, Director, Multicultural Affairs/  
Institutional Diversity

10/23      Due: Reflection Paper #4  
              Reading: Vonnegut, chapters 6-8 (pages 55-93)

Required attendance this week: Cohen Lecture (10/23)  
Plus group Halloween tour (TBA)

10/30      Class led by Jackie Blazier; individual advising meetings  
              this week and next

Required attendance this week: MCTC production of *The Fantastiks* (11/1-5)

11/6        Due: PEP

11/13      Reading: Vonnegut, chapters 9-12 plus Author's Note (pages 95-  
              145)

11/20      Due: Reflection Paper #5  
              Reading: *Manuscript* study-abroad essays  
              Guest Speaker: Jennifer Creamer, Director, International Studies

11/27      Oral Presentations

12/4        Oral Presentations  
              Due: Reflection Paper #6



## **Intended Student Outcomes**

### **(1) Prepare for College Life at Moravian College**

STUDENT OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will:

- 1) become familiar with college policies related to their role as students and members of the Moravian College community.
- 2) understand the expectations and responsibilities of being a college student, and a member of the Moravian College community.

### **(2) Introduction to Liberal Education**

STUDENT OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) identify and understand the general goals and purposes of the liberal arts and sciences tradition for individuals and within society.
- 2) articulate the value of liberal learning for their own personal and professional success.

### **(3) Individual Planning for Education at Moravian College and Beyond**

STUDENT OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) articulate their specific goals, objectives, and plans for their personal education
- 2) execute strategies and tools to help them renew and revise these plans in the future.

### **(4) Academic Survival Skills**

STUDENT OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate intellectual skills, which should result in greater personal, professional, and academic success; including, but not confined to: effective study skills, time management, and goal setting.
- 2) pursue their educational goals with greater confidence and efficacy.

## **(5) Personal Coping Skills**

STUDENT OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) identify and understand aspects of themselves (learning styles, communication styles, coping styles, personal values, cultural values) that will affect personal well being and academic success.
- 2) engage in a variety of coping skills that work best for them in challenging situations.
- 3) pursue their personal goals and handle the challenges of adjusting to college with greater confidence and efficacy.