

Introduction to College Life
Section J – Thursdays 8:50-10:00 - PPHAC 117
Fall 2007

Faculty Advisor:

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Course Description:

Introduction to College Life is a half unit course for all first year students.

The Primary Goals of the course are to:

- facilitate a smooth transition to college life
- introduce students to intellectual and academic practices (discussion, debate, critical thinking, problem solving, group work) required for success in college and beyond
- explore the meaning of a liberal education
- foster a productive advising relationship
- engage students in reflection about aspects of themselves (personal and cultural values, communication styles) that will affect personal well being and academic success

Required Reading:

Nathan, Rebekah. *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.

Moravian College Student Handbook

Moravian College Course Catalogue

Additional readings may be distributed in class.

Course Policies and Grading Procedures:

This course has been designed in a way that ensures students can receive an “A” if they complete all assignments and requirements with an evident level of seriousness and care. The components of the course are as follows:

- Attendance and participation in scheduled classes 21% (210 points)(15 ea)
- Completion of 6 short personal reflection papers 30% (300 points)(50 ea)
- Attendance and discussion of community events 20% (200 points)(40 ea)
- Participation in a speaking assignment 10%(100 points)
- Preparing for and attending individual meeting 5% (50 points)
- Development of a personal education plan or substitute assignment 10%(100 points)
- Participation in the library orientation session 4% (40 points)
- Total 1000 points

Attendance and Participation in scheduled classes:

Attendance and participation is the most heavily weighted component of the course because we believe that much of your learning experience will come from active participation in our class. There are 14 class sessions. You will earn 15 points for each class up to a maximum of 210 points. Full participation and engagement is expected for the full 15 points per class — you must do more than show up!

Personal reflection journals

Each of you will have 6 opportunities to generate personal reflection papers (no more than 1.5 pages). Topics are assigned, and are attached to this syllabus. Each of these assignments, if deemed acceptable and if handed in on time, will earn 50 points for a total of 300. Late personal reflection papers can earn only 20 points.

Community Events – Please see final page for a full description:

Moravian College offers students many opportunities for learning outside the classroom. This course incorporates attendance/participation in 5 such events to help you develop the habit of exposing yourself to new experiences. We will attend 4 of them as a group and meet together afterwards to discuss them. Each student chooses a fifth event to attend and to write a paper for; Dr. McKeown must approve the choice. The community event programs and discussions earn 50 points each for a total of 250.

Speaking Assignment:

As part of the Introduction to College Life course, each student participates in at least one activity that requires speaking before the class. Our formal speaking assignment will be an individual, brief (approximately 3 minutes) get-acquainted activity called "Any Old Bag Will Do." Details will be provided during class on August 30.

Advising and registration meetings:

Kasey will have an informal session with you to help with spring course selection. Afterwards, you will have an individual advising appointment with me to finalize your course selection and to review your goals. These activities will contribute 50 points to your grade, and will replace one class period.

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

Academic Honesty:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. You are responsible for being familiar with the college's statement on academic honesty found on pages 51-56 of the student handbook

Calendar

- Aug. 30** **Topics:** *The Glass Castle*- follow-up discussion
 Syllabus
 “Any Bag will Do” – Dr. McKeown, Kasey
 College Life: Student to Student Discussion
- For Sept. 6:* *Read College Handbook and syllabus for quiz, game*
Four “Bags”
- Sept. 6** **Topics:** “Any Old Bag ...” – four people
 Quiz Game–Do you know the *Handbook* and Syllabus well?
 Introduction to *My Freshman Year*
- For Sept. 13:* *Read Preface and Chapter 1 of My Freshman Year*
Write Personal Reflection Paper # 1.
- Sept. 13** **Topics:** *My Freshman Year*
 Mem 202 **CIT - demonstration**
- For Sept. 20:* *Four “Bags”*
Read My Freshman Year – Chapter 2
Write Personal Reflection Paper # 2
- Sept 20** **Topics:** “Any Old Bag ...” – Four people
My Freshman Year
Presentation: “Time Management” – Angela Lutzi
Prepare Questions for Upper-class panel
- For Sept 27:* *Read My Freshman Year - Chapter 6*
Write Personal Reflection Paper # 3
- Sept. 27:** **Topics:** *My Freshman Year*
Upper-class Panel
Assign Meyers Briggs (or equivalent) for Oct. 11
- For Oct. 4* *Read My Freshman Year - Chapter 3 – discussion questions*
- Oct. 4** **Topic:** *My Freshman Year*
Diversity
- For Oct. 11* *Read My Freshman Year - Afterword*
Write Reflection Paper # 4

- Oct. 11** **Topics:** *My Freshman Year*
Academic Integrity – activities
Proposed Honor Code at Moravian - discussion
- For Oct. 19: Four “Bags”*
Write Reflection Paper # 5
- Oct. 19** **Topic:** **Four “Any Old Bag ...”**
Meyers Briggs (or equivalent)
- For Oct. 26 Two “Bags”*
*Read **My Freshman Year** – Chapter 5*
Write Personal Reflection Paper # 6
- October 26** **Topic:** **Two “Any Old Bag...”**
My Freshman Year
What is a Liberal Education? – Dr. Jim Skalnik
- For Nov. 1 Four “Bags”*
- Nov. 1** **Four “Any Old Bag ...”**
Tomb-Stone – Preparation for PEP
- For Nov. 8 Work on Spring Schedule*
- Nov. 8** **Informal Registration Session with Kasey**
Doghouse
- For Nov. 15: Three “Bags”*
*Read **My Freshman Year** – Chapter 4*
Answer discussion questions
- Nov. 15** **Topics:** **Three “Any Old Bag ...”**
My Freshman Year
Presentation on Study Abroad – Dr. Creamer & students
- Nov. 29** **Tour of Historic B’hem with Prof. Ketterman-Benner**
- For Dec. 6 Read **My Freshman Year** – Chapter 7*
Answer discussion questions - Lessons from your First Semester
- Dec. 6** **Topics:** ***My Freshman Year***
Wrap-up
- This calendar is subject to change*

Six Personal Reflection Papers

Please write a minimum of 1 page (maximum of 1 1/2 pages) double –spaced, Times New Roman, 12 count for each paper.

1 Read Preface and Ch. 1: “Welcome to AnyU”

Rebekkah Nathan is a fifty-year old university professor who goes back to college as a freshman resident student for a research project. For her, being at a university as a student is a shocking, eye-opening experience even though Nathan has been teaching her whole adult life; indeed, most of what Nathan sees is alien to her. Keep track of what she finds odd in her first weeks and compare her list to one of your own. Although you surely have more in common with your fellow freshmen and even upper-classmen than she did with hers, you can probably relate at some level to her “culture shock.” Explain what you find new, different, strange here at Moravian and how you think you can cope with it.

2 Read Ch. 2: “Life in the Dorms”

a) Nathan talks about the student values captured on bulletin boards and on bedroom doors in the dormitories (p. 27). In what ways does your life at Moravian conform (or not conform) to these descriptions? If you are a commuter, do you feel you are missing out on something important? What are advantages of commuting?

b) In the section “School Days,” Nathan talks about the difficulty of creating community, especially in an American environment where individuality is highly valued. She writes, “University community becomes both elusive and unreliable.” Do you feel some pressure to join in communities against your will? Explain. What communities do you want to join – explain why.

3 Read Ch. 6: “The Art of College Management” (This assignment will be read and graded by Kasey)

List what Nathan learned about students’ college survival and success strategies today. Are you surprised by any of these? Do any of them conflict with your own value systems? Do you enthusiastically reject or embrace any of them? Explain.

#4 Read the Afterword.

Explain the ethical dilemma Nathan confronted. Do you admire her choices? Do you find any of them unnecessary? How would you feel if you were one of her friends and she used you in her study?

#5 – Interview one professor, ideally in a discipline that interests you.

Write a list of questions to learn how that person achieved what s/he did, why s/he chose this path, perhaps what professional obstacles s/he has confronted and finally what rewards s/he experiences. Ask if s/he has had to deal with plagiarism by students, and what this has been like.

6. Read Ch. 5: “Academically Speaking”

Summarize “the biggest attractions of college” for Nathan’s student friends. What are they for you? In other words, what is college for? Have your ideas on any of this changed at all since you began your studies and life here at Moravian?

Compare your idea of a “perfect class” with the one described by Nathan.

When Personal Reflection Papers are not due, you will prepare these discussion questions after completing the reading assignment.

Discussion Questions for Ch. 3, pp. 55-66: “Community and Diversity”

- 1) Reflect on how you are choosing friends at Moravian. Does your method(s) resemble what Nathan observed at AnyU?
- 2) What kind of diversity exists in your groups(s) of friends: racial, ethnic, religious, intellectual, economic, physical, medical, character, moral?
- 3) In what ways was the environment in which you grew up diverse?
- 4) Is Moravian diverse enough for you?

Discussion Questions for Ch. 4: “As Others See Us”

- 1) List the comments international students made to Nathan about American students and friendship, social life, academics, and worldliness/worldview. To which comments do you respond particularly strongly? Explain.

Discussion Questions for Ch. 7: “Lessons I Learned from my Year as a Freshman”

- 1) Are you surprised by anything Nathan learned?
- 2) Would you want to have her as a professor?
- 3) What have *you* learned about being a college student in your 1st freshman semester?

Four Community Events

Effective advising is built on relationships. The better that Kasey and I know you (and vice versa) the better we will advise you. By knowing more about your interests, background, and aspirations, we can help you take the greatest advantage of what Moravian has to offer. This is why we have chosen to do 4 community events together, and to meet after each one to discuss them. We have selected events that we think you will enjoy and that show the diversity of opportunities available. We will meet in the Leadership Center in the HUB after each event to discuss it. This discussion will replace a written reaction paper for these four events (students who do not attend the discussion will have to write a reaction paper for the class meeting following the event). Please do everything you can to attend the event and the discussion. Inform me of any conflicts prior to the event; I will assign a replacement event and you will write a reaction paper for it.

Wed., Oct. 17, time: Alumni Panel: Inspirational Grads with Stories to Tell

Tues., Oct. 23, time: Cohen Lecture:

Sun., Nov. 4, 8:00 pm: Fantastics – Moravian College Theater Company

Thurs., Nov. 15, time: Movies on Monocacy: *L’Auberge Espagnole*

For the Fifth Community Event

- 1) choose an event that takes place before Nov. 30
- 2) get approval for the event from Dr. McKeown
- 3) attend the event and write a reaction paper (same length as personal reflection papers) that briefly describes the event and explains what you got out of it.
- 4) submit the paper by Dec. 6 (our last meeting).

My special thanks to Dr. April Vari, whose 2005 syllabus for this course was particularly inspirational for me.