

# ***Introduction to College Life***

## **Fall, 2009**

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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. Specific topics include: becoming familiar with college policies related to your role as a student and member of the Moravian College community; assisting your transition to 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 assisting your engagement in college life.

### **Student Advisor:**

"Welcome and congrats on making it here to Moravian! I'm so excited to work with you all this upcoming year. I was a freshman not very long ago so I know all the questions and worries you may be having, don't hesitate to ask me ANYTHING. In these next weeks you'll be hit with tons of information about the school procedures and it's a major life style change, but don't worry! Everything will make sense soon enough and I'm here to help. With that said, be excited for an awesome first year! Again Welcome! Anna

### **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 totally determined by your willingness to become actively involved in this course that is aimed at enhancing your college experience. Please make sure that you understand what you have to do in order to earn a superior grade in the course. As long as you commit to becoming involved and meet the expectations for the course you can guarantee yourself a superior grade in at least this one course in your first semester at college.

This also means that your instructor's energy will be primarily going to trying to help you get the most out of this course and in helping you to get off to a good start in college. This should also 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, per se, each assignment that you complete for the course. With respect to grades your instructor will be functioning much like a bookkeeper and keep track of the points you have earned over the course of the semester. It is suggested that you 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 summing up the points at the end of the semester and comparing them to the various point values for each grade.

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 explained below.

<i>Attendance and participation in scheduled classes</i>	21%
<i>Completion of 6 outside of class short personal reflection papers</i>	30%
<i>Attendance and write-ups of community events</i>	20%
<i>Development of a personal education plan</i>	10%
<i>Participation in a speaking assignment</i>	10%
<i>Scheduling, preparing for, and attending individual meeting</i>	5%
<i>Participation in Library Orientation Session</i>	4%

## **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. Unfortunately if you miss a particular class you have missed that learning experience and there really is no way to make it up. So 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. I 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.

## **Personal Reflection Papers**

Each of you will have six opportunities over the course of the semester to generate personal reflection papers (minimum 300 words). Some of these will be related to the reading assignments and some will be designed by me. Each of these assignments, if deemed acceptable (proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, demonstrates acceptable college-level work and clearly conveys that you have tried to do a good job on the write-up) and handed in on time, will earn 50 points. If this criteria is not met, I may hand back a paper as unacceptable and will award fewer points if this occurs multiple times. Late personal reflection papers can only earn 25 points. Specific assignments and their due dates will be assigned in class. Handing in six acceptable personal reflection papers on time will earn you 300 points. *Entries should be at least 300 words in length, typed, double spaced. Please include your name, the date, and word count on each assignment.*

## **Community Events**

College offers students many opportunities for additional learning that occurs outside of 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 during 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 (60 points) it is weighted more heavily than the other four (35 points each). Make your submissions something that you are proud of! It is also an opportunity for me as your instructor and your academic advisor, to get a feel for your writing ability and for your ability as a college student.

The types of events that qualify as community events are programs sponsored by various organizations on campus as well as other events announced in class. If any clarification is needed throughout the semester, please see me before you attend the event. Some community events will be designated as class community events that we all go to together. If you have a legitimate conflict with a class community event please see me for an acceptable alternative community event. One of two methods will be used to assess your participation in class community events. You may be asked to do a write-up as explained below or participate in a class/group discussion.

In addition, you will be asked to choose and attend additional programs to serve as individual community events. A written reaction paper is required for each event you attend. Each write-up (250 word minimum) is due within one week of the date of the event. *Be sure to include your name and the name and date of the event along with the word count.* Please be careful not to make this a description of the event but rather your thoughts and feelings when reflecting on the event.

As long as a good faith effort is made full point values (35) will be earned. If the write-up of the event is handed in late the maximum point value that can be earned is 20 points. I will 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, college-level job on the write-up or do not use proper grammar, spelling or punctuation. If this occurs multiple times I may decide to award only partial credit for resubmissions. Attending five community events and handing in high quality write-ups on time earns you 200 points.

## **Personal Education Plan**

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. I will provide you with the details and due date of this plan that you will be completing for this course. As long as it is handed in on time and I deem 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. The total point value that can be earned for this component of the course is 100 points. I will delineate what is required of you to earn the maximum number of points.

## **Scheduling, Preparing for, and Attending Individual Meeting**

I will be arranging an individual meeting with each of you preceding registration for the spring semester. As part of this process it is critical that you both understand the LinC curriculum and thoughtfully prepare for this meeting with me. 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 me. I 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 (some may also be 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 50 points for scheduling, preparing, and attending these individual meetings.

## **Library Orientation Session**

The reference librarians have designed a valuable orientation session for you. The schedule of dates and times is in your Orientation booklet. If you have a conflict and can not make it to the session that is scheduled for your ICL class please make sure you attend one of the other seven sessions. Attendance will be taken and students will only earn the full 40 points if they are there for the full session. There are also prizes being 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!

## **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

## **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.

## 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 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.

## Required Reading

Leading Speakers in Education. (2007). *Lessons from the Road*. Massachusetts: Zing Leadership Development Systems, LLC

Weisman, Alan (2009). *The World Without Us*. New York: Harper Collins Publisher

Moravian College Student Handbook/Catalog

Other readings may be assigned by the professor

### **Note:**

Please note that it is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignments and for the course final grade.

Please note that while I will try to hold to the flow of the syllabus it is subject to change over the course of the semester.

## 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 adjustment college with greater confidence and efficacy.