Siena Heights University  
Lansing Community College Campus  
LAS 401: General Education/Senior Seminar  
Winter, 2009: Session One  
Jan. 5—Feb. 23  
6:00 to 9:15 pm  
Room:  

Course Syllabus and Outline

Instructor: Terry Ferguson  
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E-mail: terryferg@juno.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION:  
The General Education Seminar represents a community of scholars engaged in free, open intellectual inquiry. The primary goal of the seminar is to enable students to integrate their undergraduate education along the lines of inquiry established by the instructor. These guidelines will vary but all section of the seminar will engage students in a significant learning experience that will call upon them to articulate their personal philosophy of life, their ethics, their social consciousness, and their life/career aspiration and commitments (*Siena Heights University: Undergraduate Catalog, 2002-2004*, p. 106).

TEXTBOOKS:  


COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:  
Students will evaluate and analyze the components of an issue assigned by the instructor. this analysis will incorporate the application of the methodology of different disciplines to ideas using the creative process.
2. **Ethics/Mission: Modes of Learning.**
   Students will research and articulate chief ethical issues in their chosen discipline in a paper and presentation, including their own criteria for assessing each issue.

3. **Life-Long Learning: Diversity Leadership**
   Students will articulate a vision of life-long learning that addresses diversity in the development of leadership.

4. **Philosophy of Life: Spiritual and Intellectual Life and Personal Growth.**
   Students will be able to express their philosophies of life, evaluate that philosophy’s ability to respond intelligently, creatively, and compassionately to change and diversity, and explain how it will be manifest in all aspects of living.

5. **Social Responsibility/Service: Personal Growth.**
   Students will identify and apply their unique social consciousness in service toward family and community.

**COURSE METHODOLOGY:**
Our goal is to become a community of learners, benefitting from each other’s perspectives and experiences. The instructor’s role in this course is not so much as an expert in any or all of the disciplines that we will address in class, but rather as a catalyst sparking your to mix your views with each other in provocative and enriching ways. The instructor’s purpose will be to challenge unquestioned assumptions, complacent thinking, and to raise questions. At the heart of our learning will be the exchange of ideas. Since all class discussions will focus around the assigned readings, it will be extremely important for us to come to each class fully prepared to discuss the readings.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
The final grade for this course will be determined by how each student completes all of the requirements. No grade of incomplete will be given in this course. Students are expected to do all the work to the best of their ability. Each student is expected to fulfill the following course requirements:

1. **Class Attendance and Participation** (10% of the final grade)
   The student will be expected to attend all classes, to arrive and leave on time. Attendance will be taken; absences, late arrivals and leaving early will affect the student’s grade. Absences are not excused, except in the case of a death in the family or a personal injury that renders the student unable to attend class. Each student is also expected to participate in all class discussions and activities.
Reading (15% of final grade)
The student will report at the end of the semester what percentage of the assigned texts were read.

Reflection Papers (The first paper will be worth 15% of the final grade, the second paper will be worth 15%, the third paper will be worth 30% of the final grade and the third paper will be worth 15% of the final grade for a total of 70% of the final grade)

First, the student will write a paper between 2-3 pages in length. This paper will articulate the student’s aspirations for life: 1) What do you want to do upon graduation from Siena Heights professionally and personally? 2) Where do you see yourself professionally and personally five years from now, ten years from now? 3) How will you determine if you have been “successful” professionally and personally? This paper will be due on the second class meeting.

Second, the student will write a paper between 2-3 pages in length. This paper will articulate the student’s “Bucket List” and consist of the following: 1) Five to ten things that you would like to accomplish before you “kick-the-bucket,” 2) Why you would like to accomplish each of these items. What meaning do they have for you? Why are these particular items significant to accomplish in your lifetime? This paper will be due on the fourth class meeting.

Third, the student will write a paper between 4-6 pages in length. This paper will integrate the student’s philosophy of life and the ethical principles by which the student lives. The paper will be due on the sixth class meeting.

Fourth, the student will write a paper between 2-3 pages in length. This paper will address the following issue/question—“A Personal Treatment Plan for Your Own Affluenza: How Are You Going to Change Your Life After Reading Affluenza?” This paper will be due on the last class meeting.

COURSE POLICIES:
1. No late papers will be accepted.
2. Papers must be typed. Hand written papers will not be accepted.
3. If you anticipate being absent from a class you must let the instructor know before class that you will be absent.
4. Students are not permitted to bring guests to class without prior permission from the instructor.
5. Children are not allowed in the classrooms nor can they be left unattended in any room or hallway of the building.
6. Cell phones and pagers must not disrupt a class. All cell phones and pagers must be
either turned off or set to “vibrate” when the student is in class.

7. This syllabus is dynamic and subject to change.

**GRADING SCALE:**

Grades will be based on the following scale:

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<tr>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY:**

“Academic dishonesty is the unethical behavior which in any way violates the standards of scholarly conduct. It includes such behaviors as cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing, submitting the same or essentially the same papers for more than one course without the consent of all instructors concerned, misappropriating library materials, or the destroying of or tampering with computer files. Also included in academic dishonesty is knowingly or intentionally helping another violate any part of this policy” (SHU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2002, p. 155).

“In cases where guilt is substantial or admitted, the instructor may penalize the student in any way deemed appropriate, including the failure of the course” (SHU, p. 155).

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION (Disability Statement):**

“Siena Heights University is committed to providing a learning environment that benefits all students. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 all reasonable accommodations will be made to meet the documented needs of students. The Siena Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities requires a student to provide written documentation of his/her disability to the Office for Students with Disabilities. If you require special accommodations, it is your responsibility to notify each instructor during the first two weeks of the semester” (SHU guide-sheet)

In accordance with University Policy and the equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may be eligible for as a student with a disability.
Please contact me for an appoint to discuss possible accommodations. Students must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities for disability verification and determination of reasonable accommodations. Requests for accommodations must be done in a timely manner and are not retroactive.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS:
All who participate in this class will display the highest professional ethics based on the principles of integrity, credibility, mutual accountability and appropriateness. Any form of disrespect or harassment will not be tolerated. Especially in a course of this nature, it is paramount that each participant respects the differing perspectives and viewpoints represented in the class.

SEMINAR TOPICS:
1. Education and Society:
   a. Personal, professional and social perspectives.
   b. Sources of self-definition: Heritage, religion, gender, geography, nationality, language, education, work, love, etc.
2. Relationships:
   a. Family, friends, significant others, gender differences
   b. Giving and receiving, autonomy, dependence and interdependence, maturity, civility.
3. Work and Play:
   a. Is work something you do for a living or something you love doing?
   b. Career choices–goal setting, planning, process.
   c. The changing workplace, economic and class issues.
   d. Celebrating each moment of life.
   e. What is play for you? Do you have time to play?
4. Accomplishment and Success:
   a. What is success? From whom or where did you get your definition?
   b. How will you know when you’ve achieved success?
   c. What is your ultimate aim in life? What is happiness?
   d. What role will success play in your sense of identity?
   e. How has your university education changed your self-identity?
   f. What comprises your sense of identity?
   g. What is the meaning of life? How do you fit into that meaning?

TENTATIVE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE:
Jan. 5
   Introduction to course
   Syllabus
   Reflection on the history, mission, philosophy, and goals of Siena Heights University
   General education and learning outcomes at SHU
Consideration and discussion of Morris’ *If Aristotle*, the Introduction and the first three chapters

Jan. 12
What does it mean to be an “educated person?”
What is success? From whom or where did you get your definition?
How will you know when you have achieved success?
Consideration and discussion of Morris’ *If Aristotle*, chapters four through six.

Jan. 19
Gaps: what and where? What area(s) of your education has(have) lagged? Why is it important to improve this aspect(s)? How do you plan to accomplish this?
How have you changed as a result of your experience at Siena Heights University?
How has your picture of the world changed?
What is lifelong learning?
Consideration and discussion of Morris’ *If Aristotle*, chapters seven through nine

Jan. 26
The place and meaning of work in your life
Professional ethics: What ethical difficulties do you find in your work?
How will you determine to solve these?
Consideration and discussion of Morris’ *If Aristotle*, chapters ten through twelve and the epilogue

Feb. 2
Work and family: How do you manage the balance?
Social responsibility
Social justice
Consideration and discussion of *Affluenza*, Introduction and chapters one through seven

Feb. 9
What does it mean to be a citizen?
How has your university education changed your self-identity?
How has your education affected your sense of gender differences? Racial differences?
Consideration and discussion of *Affluenza*, chapters eight through fifteen

Feb. 16
What benefits do you receive from being a citizen?
What responsibilities might you have?
How has your university education changed your social consciousness?
Consideration and discussion of *Affluenza*, chapters sixteen through twenty two

Feb. 23
What is your ultimate aim in life?
What is happiness?
What is the meaning of life? How are you integrating that into your life?
Consideration and discussion of *Affluenza*, chapters twenty three through thirty.