

## **INTG 101-20: INTRODUCTION TO LIBERAL ARTS (1 CREDIT), FALL 2015**

**MEETING DAYS, TIMES, AND PLACE:** M-F, 11:00-11:50, Wallace 115

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

Dr. Robert Holschuh Simmons

21 Wallace Hall

**Office Phone:** 309-457-2378

**E-mail:** rsimmons@monmouthcollege.edu

**Office Hours:** M-F 9-10 AM, and by appointment.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

### **FOR WHOM PLANNED:**

This course is designed for incoming students to Monmouth College.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Introduction to Liberal Arts is a seminar required of all first year students and taught by faculty from a number of different disciplines. Theme-related texts in the course raise basic questions about the variety of human experience, and about personal and shared values and goals. Students are expected to think critically about the issues raised, to participate in discussions, and to write papers on the works studied.

### **STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:**

Students who complete the course will do the following, and more:

1. Engage in the practice of reading, in order to see books as sources of pleasure as well as knowledge;
2. Engage in an effective critical thinking process;
3. Utilize an effective writing process;
4. Demonstrate proficient listening and speaking skills;
5. Explain the distinctiveness and value of a liberal arts education;

### **EVALUATION AND GRADING:**

#### **WRITING**

This is a class that emphasizes critical thinking, and one of the ways that it will engage your critical thought is through a lot of writing, both formal and informal. On many days, perhaps even most, you will write in class in response either to discussion questions you have had for a given day, or to something that comes up in the course of class. You should have a section of your notebook dedicated to writing of that sort. Periodically, I will collect these in-class writing samples and grade you on the thought and preparation that went into them. If you are not present when we do one of these assignments in class, you will not be able to make it up. However, I will drop your two or three lowest scores at the end of the semester to account for rare occasions when you are either not present or not as prepared as you could be. You will also have short assignments throughout the semester that you will need to prepare in advance of class; each of these will be announced in advance of their due dates. And you will have more formal projects as well. One of these will be a library exercise that will help you to learn to use the resources of the Hewes Library. There will be three thesis-focused essays—two of them 750-1000 words, one of them 1000-1500 words, that will require several steps of idea-generating and revision.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION/ORAL COMMUNICATION:**

This will be a tremendously active and interactive class. The class is dedicated, primarily, to developing you as college-level thinkers, and a big part of how that is done is through talking through ideas, and doing activities to get you actively engaged in meaningful class material. Thus it is critical that you be willing to take active part in class, both intellectually and physically. To do the best job in carrying out class activities, it will be important for you to be well prepared for each class. If you have not done your reading, you are not going to be able to make the most of class, and you are likely to feel rather foolish as the rest of us are having discussions and doing activities in class based on that reading, and you do not know what we are doing. Thus a significant part of your grade will come from your participation in class, which is based on your preparation for it. Your grade in this category will be based on a combination of my observations and notes and your own assessment of your performance in this area.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Because attendance is crucial to your success, and because our class meetings are where a great deal of the course's value comes, I will hold you to a high standard of attendance, just as every ILA instructor does. You may occasionally, however, need to miss a class for illness or other reasons. **Thus you will not be penalized for your first four absences, whatever the reason for them. If you miss more than four classes, however, you will automatically fail the class.** If you have a situation that you consider to be extraordinary, please speak with me about it, but this standard is one that is maintained across the ILA sections, so it is unlikely that I will have room to be sympathetic to you. Further details:

- Missing 25 or more minutes of class (whether at the beginning, middle, or end) counts as an absence.
- Three times arriving late counts as an absence.
- If you walk in after I have taken attendance, it is your responsibility to make sure I have marked you present for the time that you were in class.
- Among the things you will need to attend are convocations, library sessions, and other such gatherings that will be announced to you. In addition to appearing for them, you will be asked to write and/or speak about all, or nearly all, of them.
- You will need to attend, and write about, at least three campus and/or community events/activities. No more than two of them may be of one sort (athletic/theatrical/artistic/academic, etc.).

**Convocations:**

Monmouth College is “a community of learners [who] strive to create and sustain an environment that is value-centered [and] intellectually challenging...” ([Monmouth College Catalog](#) 1). Convocations are one opportunity for us to challenge ourselves intellectually and learn the value of careful listening and reflection. The speakers we invite to present convocations are chosen because we anticipate gaining much from their experience and knowledge. The speakers are professionals in their discipline. Respect for others and dedication to the academic enterprise is a value we cherish and that is reflected in our expectations for behavior during convocations.

**Convocation expectations:**

- 1) Out of respect for the speaker and fellow students, please do not talk during the convocation;
- 2) Please refrain from any behavior that might be distracting to your fellow students;
- 3) Please turn your cell phone off until the convocation is over;

- 4) Please do not open your PDA or laptop unless you are using it to take notes as part of the convocation;
- 5) Arrive early or on time for convocations. Convocations begin promptly at 11:00 a.m.;
- 6) Sit in the area assigned to your section;
- 7) Remain seated until the speaker is finished and the question and answer session is over. A moderator will announce when you are dismissed;
- 8) Attendance is mandatory at all convocations listed on the course syllabus and any additional convocations designated by your instructor. Missed convocations count as a missed class.

### **Behavioral Consequences:**

Should students engage in loud and/or obviously disruptive behavior, they will be given one warning. Should the students fail to be responsible and correct the behavior, they will be escorted from the convocation and the absence counted as unexcused.

### **QUIZZES AND EXAMS:**

Because it is critical that people are well-prepared for class in order for the discussions and activities we will do in class to work out, I will have you take a short quiz almost every day on which we have a reading assignment. If you are not present when we take one of these quizzes, you will not be able to make it up. However, I will drop your two or three lowest scores at the end of the semester to account for rare occasions when you are either not present or not as prepared as you could be. There will also be a final exam, and perhaps another one earlier in the semester, about which you will hear details well in advance of each.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:	Writing (formal and informal, including the library assignment)	55%
	Class participation/oral communication in class	20%
	Quizzes and exams, including the final exam	25%

***Please note that not completing any major assignment will be grounds for failing this class.***

### **PERCENTAGE/GRADE EQUIVALENTS:**

93+ = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	59 and below = F
90-92 = A-	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D	
	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-	

### **REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER MATERIALS:**

Homer, *The Odyssey*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Hackett. 2000. ISBN: 9780872204843

Leslie, Ian. *Curious*. Basic Books. 2014. ISBN: 9780465079964

Lightman, A. *Einstein's Dreams*. Warner Books. 1994. ISBN: 9781400077809

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. Vintage International. 2007. ISBN: 9780307278449

You will also need to have the *Bedford Handbook* for use in class writing assignments, and I will either print, or post on Moodle, a number of other texts for you to read.

### **COURSE ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS:**

This course is scheduled to meet, one way or another, four days per week for 50 minutes each meeting, for the whole semester, with a meeting on the fifth day of the week on a number of occasions throughout the semester as well. Very often, one or two of the four or five meetings per week will be

spent experiencing a colloquium speaker, a library presentation, an individual meeting with me, a peer critique session, or another gathering of that sort. You should expect to spend four to five hours per week just on course reading, with about three more hours per week on writing assignment and other activities. Assigned activities may take each student a different amount of time to finish; however, the weekly average for all students in the course for those matters should be 12-13 hours. Intensive preparation for papers and studying for exams will be in addition to the standard weekly preparation, but will likely average out to an extra one hour per week. The time estimates for the course thus break down as follows:

Class meetings	4.0-5.0 hours
Reading	5.0 hours
Writing	3.0 hours
Intensive studying and preparing for papers (averaged out)	1.0 hours
<b>Average per week:</b>	<b>13-14 hours</b>

### **CLASS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:**

To maintain a classroom environment in which everyone can learn, please show the respect and courtesy to others that you would expect in turn. Here are a few of the ways in which you can show respect and courtesy:

- Be in your seat on time for class, and remain for the duration of each class.
- Have a notebook, pen, and relevant materials out and ready to use throughout class.
- Be ready to answer questions about the day's homework and other relevant subjects, to work on in-class assignments individually and with peers, and to share your work in small groups with the whole class.
- Remain quiet while I or others in class are speaking.
- Show support for those who speak in class by your demeanor and body language.
- Focus on the content of the class, not on personal electronic devices; all such items should be turned off and packed away during class, unless they are being used for class matters, in a way that is not distracting to your classmates or me.
- You may eat and drink in class, but only if it is not distracting to other students or me.

### **E-MAIL COURTESIES:**

When sending me e-mail, please observe the following courtesies:

- Begin the message with a salutation of some sort (Dr. Simmons, Prof. Simmons, Mr. Simmons, etc.).
- Include a reasonably accurate subject line.
- Capitalize and punctuate where appropriate, and proofread to make sure that you are communicating clearly.
- At the end of the message, please identify yourself by the name by which I know you (first name or nickname).

I will get back to you as soon as I can. Sometimes a response will be immediate; on other occasions it may take me several hours, and quite possibly a full day if you write late in the day, at night, or on a weekend, if I need to give some thought to a response before providing one, or if I simply have other things I need to get done before I can get to e-mails.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Anyone who has a special need that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should see me as soon as possible. I will be pleased to make the appropriate



arrangements in consultation with you. Depending on the modification, you may need to be registered with Disability Support Services.

**Disability Support Services:**

If you have a disability or had academic accommodations in high school or another college, you may be eligible for academic accommodations at Monmouth College under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Monmouth College is committed to equal educational access.

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Students with disabilities can apply for accommodations at the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). The TLC is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Poling Hall. For more information, call 309-457-2257 or connect online at <http://ou.monmouthcollege.edu/life/disability-services/default.aspx>.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

From the Monmouth College Academic Honesty Policy: “We view academic dishonesty as a threat to the integrity and intellectual mission of our institution. Any breach of the academic honesty policy – either intentionally or unintentionally – will be taken seriously and may result not only in failure in the course, but in suspension or expulsion from the college. It is each student’s responsibility to read, understand and comply with the general academic honesty policy at Monmouth College, as defined here in the Scots Guide, and to the specific guidelines for each course, as elaborated on the professor’s syllabus.

“The following areas are examples of violations of the academic honesty policy:

1. Cheating on tests, labs, etc;
2. Plagiarism, i.e., using the words, ideas, writing, or work of another without giving appropriate credit;
3. Improper collaboration between students, i.e., not doing one’s own work on outside assignments specified as group projects by the instructor;
4. Submitting work previously submitted in another course, without previous authorization by the instructor.

“Please note that this list is not intended to be exhaustive.”

The complete Monmouth College Academic Honesty Policy can be found on the College web page by clicking on “Student Life” then on “Student Handbook” in the navigation bar on the top of the page, then “Academic Regulations” in the navigation bar at the left. Or you can visit the web page directly by typing in this URL: <http://www.monmouthcollege.edu/life/residence-life/scots-guide/academic.aspx>.

In this course, any violation of the academic honesty policy will have varying consequences depending on the severity of the infraction as judged by the instructor. Minimally, a violation will result in an “F” or 0 points on the assignment in question. Additionally, the student’s course grade may be lowered by one letter grade. In severe cases, the student will be assigned a course grade of “F” and dismissed from the class. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Associate Dean, who may decide to recommend further action to the Admissions and Academic Status Committee, including suspension or dismissal. It is assumed that students will educate themselves regarding what is considered to be academic dishonesty, so excuses or claims of ignorance will not mitigate the consequences of any violations.

**HELP OUTSIDE OF CLASS:**

You should not hesitate to talk with me about any difficulties you are having—this course is challenging, and I want to help you do the best you can at it. Speak with me as soon as you are having trouble; letting a problem fester is likely to make it worse. Also, there is help available at the locations below.

**Teaching & Learning Center:**

The Teaching and Learning Center offers FREE resources to assist Monmouth College students with their academic success. Programs include Supplemental Instruction for difficult classes, drop-in and appointment tutoring, and individual academic coaching. The TLC is here to help students excel academically. TLC services are not just for struggling students, but can assist all students to get better grades, practice stronger study skills, and manage time.

Visit Dana and Rita at the TLC on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Poling Hall from 8am-4:30pm or online at <http://ou.monmouthcollege.edu/academics/teaching-learning-center/>

We can also be reached at: [tlc@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:tlc@monmouthcollege.edu) or 309-457-2257

Like the TLC on Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Monmouth-College-Teaching-and-Learning-Center/203117166403210?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Monmouth-College-Teaching-and-Learning-Center/203117166403210?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)

**Writing Center:**

The Monmouth College Writing Center offers unlimited, free peer tutoring sessions for students at Monmouth College. Peer writing tutors work with writers from any major, of any writing ability, on any type of writing assignment, and at any stage of their writing processes, from planning to drafting to revising to editing. We are located on the 3rd floor of the Mellinger Teaching and Learning Center, and we are open Sunday-Thursday 7-10pm and Monday-Thursday 3-5pm on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointment necessary! Learn more about the Writing Center at our website: <http://blogs.monm.edu/writingatmc/writing-center/>

**Speech Tutors:**

Speech Tutors are available on a limited basis in the Writing Center to work with students who are preparing for a presentation in any course. Speech Tutors can help fine-tune thesis statements, review outlines, suggest organizational strategies, provide feedback about visual aids, help students develop ways to manage speech anxiety, and watch speech practice sessions. For information about tutor availability, visit the Writing Center's website at <http://blogs.monm.edu/writingatmc/writing-center/>.

### **SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS (TENTATIVE AND INCOMPLETE):**

**Note:** The assignments below are **due** on the days on which they are listed. If there is no other instruction given, you are to do the following:

- Carefully read the pages assigned to you;
- On many days, there will be discussion questions accompanying the reading. You should take notes on your reading based on those discussion questions, and be ready to write in response to those questions in class, and discuss them;
  - You do **NOT** need to write out your responses to each day's discussion questions carefully ahead of time, but you **DO** need to take careful enough notes on your reading, with the discussion questions in mind, that you will be able to write a coherent, thoughtful response to any of the questions for five minutes when you get to class. You are free to look at your notes when you write out your discussion responses in class.
- If there is a different assignment, please complete it as instructed and have it ready to hand in at the beginning of class.

#### Day 1 (Monday, August 24)

- Get to know one another
- Notice the town
- Go through the syllabus
- Discuss our articles
- Meet for a few minutes each in my office

#### Day 2 (Tuesday, August 25)

- Convocation talk by Prof. Craig Watson—meet in Dahl Chapel

#### Day 3 (Wednesday, August 26)

- To class, bring a reflection (at least 200 words long, typewritten, and proofread, with a word count written at the bottom of the page) on Prof. Watson's talk. Among the questions you might consider are the following:
  - What interested you about it? What stood out to you? Was there anything that you did not understand? Was there anything which you did not agree?
  - You might also choose to summarize the main ideas which Professor Watson emphasized in his convocation. This should not just be a list. Instead, it should be one or more paragraphs where you explain not only his individual points, but also how they fit together and what overall message he was trying to convey.
- Be ready for a quiz on his talk, and be ready to discuss it.

#### Day 4 (Friday, August 28)

- Readings from *Curious*:
  - Introduction (pp. ix-xxiv)

#### Day 5 (Monday, August 31)

- Readings from *Curious*:
  - Ch. 1, pp. 3-18
  - Ch. 2, pp. 19-24 (stop after "curiosity is a joint venture")

**Last day to drop a course without a fee**

Day 6 (Tuesday, Sept. 1)

- Library session with Lauren Jensen—meet in the Barnes Electronic Classroom (Hewes Library 03, in the basement of the library)

Day 7 (Wednesday, Sept. 2)

- Readings from *Curious*:
  - Ch. 3, pp. 31-56

Day 8 (Friday, Sept. 4)

- Readings from *Curious*:
  - Ch. 4, pp. 59-77

**SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM TIME: Monday, Dec. 14, at 8 AM, in Wallace 115**

**The assignments given here are subject to change based on the needs of the class, and further assignments will also come once I have a better sense of the class's needs. There may be more added to some of the assignments given here, and there may be some taken away. Any changes to the assignments printed here will be given to you in writing, as will assignments going forward.**