

Course: Research Seminar: Educational Explorations in the Liberal Arts

Office Hours: by appointment

Teacher: Chris Elwood and Dr. Gayle Beebe

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School Year: 2019-2020

Dual Enrollment: Providence High School and Westmont College (2 credits)

Course Description: This course is a seminar course taught to Providence Seniors that serves as a capstone for their high school career; it is also a first year college course that explores debatable topics within the liberal arts and teaches research methods. There are readings and discussions that the entire group participates in, however the course is designed to allow a student to fully pursue an academic area of interest that culminates in the presentation of a research paper to a faculty committee. Each student will be assigned to an appropriate member of the faculty or staff to serve as their advisor for the project. Students will select a debatable topic to research, do self guided study, develop a thesis, meet weekly with their advisors to monitor progress, and then write a minimum ten page research paper using a minimum of seven sources. The student will then create a multi-media oral presentation and then defend their paper to a faculty committee. Three students will then be chosen to present their research to the Providence greater community at a special event.

Required Texts: Josef Pieter, "Leisure: The Basis of Culture."

Foster, Richard and Gayle Beebe, "Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion."

Research Project Individualized Readings (7 Sources Required)

Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will

1. Strengthen their abilities to read, write, and think critically (measured by research strength, oral defense, and written paper).
2. Improve their ability to research (measured by a minimum ten page research paper).
3. Refine their ability to engage in interdisciplinary conversations with others (measured in graded Socratic and classroom conversations).

Assignments and Student Responsibilities: The quality of student research will depend on diligent use of class time and advisors. Students will have all class period to pursue their particular area of interest for self-study. Mr. Elwood will also be available to assist

them with their work in addition to their advisor. Students will need to meet with their advisor once a week and receive a signature affirming the meeting took place with written comments from the advisor. Research methods at the Westmont library will be taught and more than adequate library time will be granted during the initial phase of the project. Students then must bring their sources to class as well as their computers to work on their research projects. Students will not be allowed to work on any other subjects during class. All topics must be approved by both the instructor and the assigned advisor. A calendar of class requirements by date will be given to assist the process of completing the project. Failure to complete time specific goals and receive weekly signatures from advisors will result in deductions from the project grade.

Weekly Readings and Reflective Essays

Although the bulk of the work for this course will be the individual research project on a debatable topic within the liberal arts, two books will be collectively read throughout the course and a 1.5-2 page reflective essay response for each reading will be required. Be prepared to share your reflection in a group setting.

Meetings with Professor

Once a week, all students will meet with the primary instructor to track progress on their research project. Additionally, all students will meet once a week with their faculty advisor for their particular project.

Grades and Expectations

Research Paper with MLA format: 50%

Public Defense of Paper: 25%

Classwork, Graded Discussions, and Two Reflective Essays 25%

Academic Integrity Policy: The Providence HS and Westmont College community uphold the importance of integrity in all areas of life as this promotes a climate of mutual trust and respect. Integrity is an adherence to moral and ethical principles and a soundness of character. Academic integrity, a person being both ethical and moral in an academic setting, is fundamental to teaching and learning. We expect all students and faculty to demonstrate the highest standards of academic integrity in their pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. Instances of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously – engaging in behaviors that abuse the academic code will not be tolerated. Any instance where a student misrepresents the work of others as his or her own work (whether by plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication) constitutes a violation of the academic code.

Absences: Students with unexcused absences will receive 0s for any work missed during their absence. This includes work assigned or collected on the day of the absence. Students with unplanned excused absences must turn in any work that was due on the day of the absence on the day they return to school. It is the student's responsibility to talk with Mr. Elwood to find out what work he or she has missed and to complete it by the

above deadlines. Students with planned, excused absences (for a trip, appointment, etc.) must submit a “Request for Work” form at least one week prior to the absence. All missed work is due the day the student returns to school.

Late Work: Homework and assignments are fundamental to the learning process. Students are required to turn in all assigned work on or before the due date. The late work will receive a 10% reduction in grade or credit given for each calendar day that it is late up to a maximum of 50%. Students who repeatedly fail to complete assigned work will be referred to the Academic Dean.

Academic Accommodations

Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (learning, physical or psychological) are strongly encouraged to contact the Providence Academic Dean as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course.

“Self-education is, I firmly believe, the only kind of education there is.”
– Isaac Asimov