

NCLC 391-004: Introduction to Integrative Studies (3 credits)
New Century College, George Mason University
Mondays, 7:20pm-10pm, T 1018
Fall 2014

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Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize student-participants new to New Century College (NCC) with the theory and practice of integrative learning as practiced in NCC. Both the curriculum and the teaching in the Integrative Studies degree program challenge everyone to learn and to think deeply about what, why, how and for what purposes one learns.

This learning community will explore how NCC builds learning not around subjects or disciplines, but around a series of competencies, such as critical thinking, communication, group collaboration, civic engagement, digital literacy, and global understanding that nurture lifelong learning and prepare student-participants for living and working as active global citizens. They will explore the dynamics of active learning as well as group collaboration through specific lenses: international and community development, human rights/social justice, environmental and displacement issues.

Using active and group learning strategies and reflective practice, participants will strengthen skills for working collaboratively, and reflect on and integrate learning experiences in the past, the present, and the future. They will become familiar with experiential learning, self-assessment, including multiple ways of knowing, as well as their own learning style.

Learning Goals

Through actively participating in this class, you will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for and practice of integrative learning and learning communities;
- Integrate insights and create meaning across texts, theoretical knowledge, and hands-on learning experiences (both within and outside of the learning community);
- Discuss how knowledge of self and community contributes to enhanced understanding of our ways of learning, knowing, and engaging with our world – and vice versa;
- Articulate how group experiences contribute to understanding of the practice of collaborative scholarship and learning;
- Engage with, participate in, and value the practice of democratic conversation within a variety of learning situations;
- Reflect on and assess your learning within a competency-based framework.
- Demonstrate effective use of multiple media to communicate with diverse audiences about your identity and learning.

Principles Grounding this Learning Community

A learning community differs from most other courses in several specific ways. As YOU are an important part of the learning community, it is important that you understand its basic principles. Learning communities emphasize:

- Learning from experience and reflection
- Collaborative group work
- Valuing multiple sources of knowledge
- Integration of knowledge
- Learning competencies to facilitate self-directed learning
- Learning through evaluation and assessment

Commitment to Diversity

New Century College, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and disability.

As a member of this learning community, it is an expectation that you will help contribute to the creation of an open and welcoming learning environment. You are welcome to question and challenge, but with civility and respect for the variety of perspectives reflected here.

Course Materials

All reading materials will be made available to you via the blackboard and the instructor. Emails are utilized to convey important reminders as well as class summaries.

Assignments

Active Participation (250 points)

The learning community will involve classroom activities, simulation exercises, assessments, small and large group discussion, and personal reflection upon experiences and readings. Learning community participants are expected to arrive to class on time, be prepared, and ready to engage in active learning. Being physically present is not the same as active participation and these points will reflect the difference. When you are unable to attend class, notifying the instructor in advance is appreciated.

Reflection Writing/project (3 two-three page papers, 1.5 spaced, 11 pt font, and 1 metaphor activity - 50 points each)

A major element of the NCC curriculum and pedagogy is reflective practice. This ability to deepen or strengthen our learning through critical thinking, analysis, and reflection is an important writing skill that requires practice. These reflective writing assignments and metaphor activity are also critical to our community as we come together and learn from each other. All reflective writing assignments should be a minimum of 2 full pages, 1.5spaced using 11 point font, with 1" margins. You must cite at least ONE text from that week's readings in each essay.

Multi-Media Project (Digital Story or Webpage): Self-authorship (150 points)

How do you present yourself comprehensively and introspectively (including your dreams and aspirations in life) in a way that reflects NCC's integrative education and competencies, as well as your integrative and experiential learning?

Learning to live a self-authored life means building your own internal foundation and set of commitments. It means reflecting and analyzing experience in order to establish your own conception of what truth means. It means thinking for yourself and being the designer of your own life, rather than following the scripts written by others. You will develop a multi-media project (such as a webpage or digital story) that describes the nature of your self-authored perspective. The project should be grounded in NCC's integrative education, experiential learning, competencies, and clarify future directions for broadened horizons and learning.

Group Project (350 points)

- Collaborative research proposal (75 points)
- Actual Research Project (200 points)
- Group Project presentation – 45 min/group (75 points)

Small groups will identify a critical issue where action-research might be needed within the local community or on campus. Working collaboratively, the team will 1) research the issue, integrating multiple sources of information, 2) write a collaborative paper synthesizing these findings, 3) create social-media friendly public education piece, and 4) present a proposed solution to the class. Effective collaboration will be very important for this project, and the participation of individual students will be evaluated separately.

Class Policies

Statement on Electronic Communication Devices in the Classroom: A quality learning experience in this course rests heavily upon interaction and exchange of ideas among students and the instructor. While this issue is currently under debate, be advised that I do not believe quality engagement with each other can occur while simultaneously using electronic devices. Your participation grade WILL be affected when it is clear your engagement with phones, tablets and laptops during class is distracting you from our discussion.

Professionalism: When engaging with the local community you will be representing George Mason University. Students are expected to adhere to professional standards regarding appearance, conduct and confidentiality.

Religious or Cultural Observances: Some class times are in close proximity to religious or cultural observances. If a class date or assignment creates a conflict, please let me know in advance so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Office of Disability Services: If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the

beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell me.

Mason Email: In keeping with university policy, I will correspond only with your Mason email account.

Late Work: Part of working collaboratively with others is following through on your commitments in a timely way. For that reason, turning in your work on time is a critical part of your assignments. Late work may be accepted if a written medical excuse is provided, but generally, there will be no grace period for late work. Assignments will be reduced by a letter grade for each day they are late. Keep in mind that this means work turned in more than one week late will earn no points.

Honor Code: The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Campus Resources for Students

George Mason University offers a wide range of support to help students be successful. You should take advantage of the professionals who are here to support you while you are here. Please consult this webpage for a list of links to campus support services, ranging from academic assistance to opportunities for new experiences, to support with personal issues. <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

Grading System:

985 - 1000	A+
959 - 984	A
933 - 958	A-
907 - 932	B+
881 - 906	B
855 - 880	B-
825 - 854	C+
795 - 824	C
769 - 794	C-
- 768	D

Schedule

Some adjustments to the schedule may be made during the term. Students are responsible for keeping informed of changes in activities or due dates by attending class regularly and monitoring our class email.

August 25 (Week 1)

Community-building Exercises/Introductions
Setting up of community guidelines
Course Overview: Syllabus/activities/projects
Using Blackboard - verify account and course access
Discussion about NCC and Integrative Studies major

Discuss Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Read for this week:

http://epltt.coe.uga.edu/index.php?title=Multiple_Intelligences_and_Learning_Styles

https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=AwrSbgNIE.9TNwMA5JRXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTB0NDVzdGtnBHNIYwNzYwRjb2xvA2dxMQR2dGlkA1ZJUDQ0M18x?_adv_prop=image&fr=yfp-t-901&va=multiple+intelligences

What does a college education mean to you? What is Integrative Learning? (Workshop and Group discussion)

Assignment for next week: Essay 1 (2-3 page, 1.5 spaced, 11 pt font): *What a college education means to me.* (50 points)

September 1 (Week 2)

Discuss *Competency-based Education, Self-assessment*
Discuss *Integrative Studies*
To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What does it mean to major in Integrative Studies? c/o AI
(Key components of NCC: Learning communities, experiential learning, concentrations and Competency-based education, collaborative learning)

Review NCC website "Competency descriptions" (<http://www.ncc.gmu.edu/competencies.html>)

Note: AI will facilitate a workshop based on NCC's competency-based education

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Loaker, G., "Introduction," in *Self-Assessment at Alverno College*. Blackboard.
McCann, "Students on Interdisciplinary Education: How They Learn and What They Learn," in *Reinventing Ourselves*. Blackboard.

Due: Essay 1

September 8 (Week 3)

Discuss *Integrated Studies and Collaborative Learning*

Discuss *How do we know that we are learning something from an event/reading/experience, etc.?*

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

"Kaleidoscopic Learning..." by D. Cruikshank.

In-class writing prompt: Brainstorming ideas - list ten key moments of learning that jump out from your years in college. Don't censor yourself just because a moment seems insignificant, or you quite can't work out what you're remembering it. Just write down what comes immediately to mind.

In other words, choose "moments" from all your college experiences. If you are working, you can include "moments" from your professional life. The "moments" may occur in class or out of class, with friends, or on your own, on campus or off, in collaboration with a faculty member or in reaction to a faculty member.

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Smith & McGregor, "What is Collaborative Learning?" Blackboard.

Cruikshank, D. "Kaleidoscopic Learning: An Overview of Integrated Studies" Published on Edutopia (Note: Al will lead the discussion on this material)

<http://www.edutopia.org/integrated-studies-interdisciplinary-learning-overview>

Assignment for next week: Essay 1 (2-3 pages, 1.5 spaced), *Turning points or influences in my life (people I have met, events, personal experiences) that made a significant contribution to my college education and my commitment to help make the world a better place.* (50 points)

September 15 (Week 4)

Discuss *Critical Thinking and Reflective Practice*

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Due: Essay 2

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Faccione, "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts." Blackboard.

Plato, "Allegory of the Cave," The Republic.

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/platos-allegory-of-the-cave-meaning-and-interpretation.html>

<http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/cave.htm>

Amulya, J. "What is reflective practice?" Center for Reflective Community Practice. Mass Institute of Technology. (pp. 1-4)

<http://www.itslifejimbutnotasweknowit.org.uk/files/whatisreflectivepractice.pdf>

September 22 (Week 5)

Discuss *Participatory Action Research- PAR (Collaborative/Group undertaking)*

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Al will share his field research experience with Karen refugees on the Thai-Burma border and with the IDPs in Mindanao, Philippines.

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Robson, article will be posted on the blackboard.

Reflect on the following images (PAR):

https://images.search.yahoo.com/images/view;_ylt=AwrTcYAlFu9T2tsA26GJzbkF;_ylu=X3oDMTIyMGoyM2tuBHNIYwNzcgRzbGsDaWlnBG9pZANjM2FkNGRiOGExYTM5ZWY5ZThkZTViYWZmOWFhNDhiYgRncG9zAzIEaXQDYmluZW--?back=https%3A%2F%2Fimages.search.yahoo.com%2Fsearch%2Fimages%3Fp%3Dparticipatory%2Baction%2Bresearch%26n%3D60%26ei%3DUTF-8%26fr%3Dyfp-t-901%26fr2%3Dsb-top%26tab%3Dorganic%26ri%3D2&w=1522&h=1267&imgurl=upload.wikimedia.org%2Fwiki%2Fen%2Fd%2Fd5%2FVenn_diagram_of_Participatory_Action_Research.jpg&rurl=http%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FFile%3AVenn_diagram_of_Participatory_Action_Research.jpg&size=121.6KB&name=File%3AVenn+diagram+of+%3Cb%3EParticipatory+Action+Research%3C%2Fb%3E.jpg&p=participatory+action+research&oid=c3ad4db8a1a39ef9e8de5eac39aa48bb&fr2=sb-top&fr=yfp-t-901&tt=File%3AVenn+diagram+of+%3Cb%3EParticipatory+Action+Research%3C%2Fb%3E.jpg&b=0&ni=21&no=2&ts=&tab=organic&sigr=12jhunbr6&sigb=144il09jn&sigi=12oejriva&sigt=11th0q039&sign=11th0q039&.crumb=XNG14dXcn/F&fr=yfp-t-901&fr2=sb-top

September 29 (Week 6)

Continuation: *Qualitative Research: Community/field-based Inquiry*

Discuss *Ethical considerations in conducting field-based/participatory action research*

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- Group assignment

- Workshop

- a. Social issue you want to focus on as a group: Description of the issue; reason(s) for choosing- why this specific issue?; location where the research will be conducted.
- b. Research problem: what is it that you want to address in your field research/inquiry?
- c. Participants/Subjects in your study: who/what? why them? how to get a hold of them?
- d. Methodology (how to generate the needed data/information?): observation (what/how/when/where to observe), survey (sample of survey questionnaire), interview (individual/focus group – sample of interview questionnaire), etc.
Note:
- e. Timeframe: weekly itinerary
- f. Findings:
 - Analysis and Interpretation: why's and how's; how to make sense of the results of your research; what explains? common and unique themes that occur.
 - ***What tangible or concrete product or proposal will you present/submit in light of your research findings?***
- g. Conclusion/Summary
- h. Recommendations (How would you do it differently? What worked; what did not work)
- i. Lessons learned from the project: about your self, your group, your research issue.

Initial exploration and discussion in small groups.

Al will share his field based research project among Tamil communities in Northern Sri Lanka.

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Note: The reading will be posted on the blackboard.

October 6 (Week 7)

Collaborative Research Working session

Each group will address each of the items as indicated under Week 6. The entire session will be devoted to this workshop. Please send to your professor your group attendance after the session.

Assignment for next week: Submit a 4-5 page, 1.5 spaced, 11 pt font collaborative research proposal – letters a, b, c, d, and e only (75 points)

Note: Provide a cover page to your proposal with names of your group members

- Final product: ***What tangible or concrete product or proposal will you present and submit by the end of the semester in light of your research findings?*** (250 points). Note: All items under Week 6 will be addressed upon submission of your final project.

October 13 (Week 8)

Discuss *Experiential Learning*

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- Sharing examples of Experiential Learning
- What constitutes evidence?

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Doherty, et al., “Experiential Learning.” Blackboard.

Cantor, J. A. “Experiential Learning in Higher Education: Linking Classroom and Community.” ERIC digest, based on a full-length report in the ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report series 95-7 (Volume 24-7). <http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/95-7dig.htm>

In-class writing and group sharing: Applying experiential learning into a specific class/campus/community event that you have personally done/attended or experienced

Due: Collaborative Research proposal.

October 20 (Week 9)

Experiential Learning: EDGE on wheels (campus activity)

Debriefing/Processing

Assignment for next week: Essay 3 - Submit a 2-3 page, 1.5 spaced - based on your experiential learning with the EDGE (50 points)

October 27 (Week 10)

Digital Story or Webpage: Self Authorship

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

“Digital Storytelling Cookbook”

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/32765340/Digital-Storytelling-Cookbook>

workshop and discussion

Due: Experiential Learning essay 3 (EDGE)

November 3 (Week 11)

Work on Group Research project and Digital/Webpage Self-authorship.

Note: Each group will meet during the first half of class for their research project; the second half of class is for the digital webpage self-authorship.

- Each group will email to Prof. Al their attendance after the meeting.

November 10 (Week 12)

Strengthening the Foundations of Students' Excellence...

Mindfulness and Wellbeing

To facilitate the discussion based on the assigned reading (25 min)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read for this week (facilitators will base their presentation/facilitation on the reading materials below):

Colby, A. and Sullivan, W. M. “Strengthening the Foundations of Students' Excellence, Integrity, and Social Contribution.” *Liberal Education*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Winter 2009).

http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-wi09/le-wi09_Strengthening.cf

- Group reporting: each group is given 5-7 min to report on their research project.
- Invited resource person: Dr. Mark Thurston

Assignment next week: Digital/Webpage self- authorship (submit a link to your professor).

November 17 (Week 13)

Group Research presentations 1, 2, and 3

Note: Each group will have 45 min to present their findings and proposal/project

Due: Research project (for presenters only)

Due: Digital/Webpage self- authorship (submit a link to your professor).

November 24 (Week 14)

Group research presentations 4 and 5

Note: Each group will have 45 min to present their findings and proposal/project

Due: Research project

Assignment next week: Bring to class your metaphor – any object that to you symbolizes your academic and personal growth and development. Your metaphor and participation are equivalent to 50 points.

December 1 (Week 15)– Final Session

Metaphors Re. Academic Growth and Development (50 points)

- Course Summary/Overall Synthesis
- Course/University evaluation

Thank you... best wishes!!! – Al