
INSPIRATION

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

"Inspiration" is a three-hour credit, undergraduate, upper-level intercultural studies elective course offered to juniors and seniors in the Interdisciplinary Studies Department with approximately 500 students. This course is taught at a regional state university in the United States. The course was designed in a collaborative effort between the department head and the faculty member who teaches the course. The department head specializes in English and philosophy, and the faculty member specializes in English, curriculum and instruction, reflective learning, and e-learning. One objective of the course is for students to develop independent lifelong learning skills by finding inspiration in people, books, short stories, art, poetry, movies, music, quotations, children's books, global and multicultural awareness, service to others, and meaningful purpose. They will also learn to analyze and evaluate readings through Moodle postings. Students will conduct extensive research of inspirational works as well as analyze and evaluate reliable works. They will also create compelling and persuasive written documents, such as the Acrostic, the PowerPoint presentation, and reflections on their multicultural and service-learning experiences that demonstrate excellent written communication skills. For example, the Acrostic poems are entered into a competition, and the winning poem will be published in the university's literary magazine, which showcases the best of student writing, art, photography and original music.

One course of 25 students is offered to a face-to-face class, and one course of 20 students is offered as an online course each semester including the summer session. I will be discussing the face-to-face version of the course. The entire class is seated in a circle, including the professor, to promote a non-threatening environment that promotes open dialog. The course is taught on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one hour and twenty minutes each class period. The professor discusses the week's topic, reads and discusses whole or parts of related works, and/or presents topic-related information via the Internet during the first 20-30 minutes of class. Each student is then expected to deliver the particular week's topic orally, lead the class in discussion, and post a written reflection to Moodle. The course also requires five discussion board postings. The instructor uses a rubric to grade the written and oral components of each student's weekly assignment. No late assignments are accepted unless the professor has approved proper documentation. The Exit Survey is the final assignment and its results are used to help future students, as well as to assess how well students are communicating as a college graduate.

According to Dr. Hal Urban (2003), professor of education at the University of California, Berkley, "Our schools, for the most part, do a great job...But there's something missing in the curriculum. We don't teach our students about life itself, about how it works or about what's essential. Never has there been a greater need for that." This course seeks to address these needs by focusing on bettering the human experience through the power of inspiration. When individuals become inspired, they are empowered with the desire to act. Through the examination of inspirational people, books, short stories, art, poetry, movies, music, quotations, children's books, global and multicultural awareness, service to the needy, and meaningful purpose, the course helps participants to understand that inspiration can be found all around

us on a daily basis, By acquiring and appreciating the importance of inspiration, students will become aware of how it may propel human beings into bettering the quality of life. Controversy is an expected factor in the discussion of topics of this nature, which promote higher-order thinking. Respect is to be displayed at all times, as all students are expected to practice opinion tolerance.

The main objective of the course is for students to develop independent lifelong learning skills. They will also analyze and evaluate readings, conduct extensive research, analyze and evaluate reliable works, and create, write, and deliver compelling and persuasive documents to demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills. The goal is that students witness what Oliver Wendell Holmes theorized, "A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience."

REFERENCE

Urban, H. (2003). *Life's greatest lessons*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: Junior standing. Intensive investigation of a question, theme, or problem through an interdisciplinary approach. May be repeated for additional credit when content differs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to

- develop independent lifelong learning skills by finding inspiration in people, books, short stories, art, poetry, movies, music, quotations, children's books, global and multicultural awareness, service to others, and meaningful purpose.
- analyze and evaluate readings through Moodle postings.
- conduct extensive research of inspirational works as well as analyze and evaluate reliable works.
- create compelling and persuasive written documents, such as the Acrostic, the PowerPoint presentation, and reflections on their multicultural and service-learning experiences, that demonstrate excellent written communication skills.

REQUIRED READINGS AND LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

All required readings will be provided by the professor. All students will be registered on Moodle. Moodle is considered the classroom, and it is the platform through which all course information and assignments should be posted and submitted. It is recommended that students visit Moodle daily to keep abreast of the latest announcements and to complete assignments.

COURSE POLICIES

GRADE CALCULATIONS

In order to make an accurate and complete assessment of each student's efforts and abilities, course grades are determined by a variety of measures. Completion of all coursework and the PowerPoint

presentation are mandatory. No late or make-up assignments will be accepted without prior permission from the professor. All assessments will be posted in the Moodle Grade Center.

MEASURE	EXPLANATION	
Learning Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Contract • Profile • Inspirational Person • Inspirational Book • Inspirational Short Story • Inspirational Poetry • Inspirational Quotations • Inspirational Movie • Inspirational Music • Inspirational Art • Inspirational Children's Book 	10 pts. 10 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts.
Reflective Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5) Discussion Board Topics • Acrostic or a New and Strange Source of Inspiration • Service-Learning Reflection and Picture • Signed Service-Learning Verification Form 	100 pts. 20 pts. 20 pts. 10 pts.
Final Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural Awareness PowerPoint • Attendance • Course Survey 	20 pts. 50 pts. 10 pts.
TOTAL	POINTS ASSIGNED	430 pts.

IMPORTANT NOTE CONCERNING GRADES

- To receive a final grade of "A" in the course, you must earn 90-100%.
- To receive a final grade of "B" in the course, you must earn 80-89%.
- To receive a final grade of "C" in the course, you must earn 70-79%.
- You will receive a grade of "D" in the course if you earn 60-69%.
- You will receive a grade of "F" in the course if you do not complete every course assignment.

FINAL NOTE

The needs of this class may dictate changes to this syllabus. The professor reserves the right to make those changes as she deems necessary. Changes to the syllabus will be announced on Moodle. Most students do well in this course, and everyone is given the opportunity to succeed and to produce excellent work.

ASSIGNMENTS TABLE	WEEK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Contract Profile Reading 1: Learning through Inspiration 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 2: Inspirational People Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Discussion Board Topic 1: The Root Meaning of Inspire 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 3: Inspirational Books Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Discussion Board Topic 2: The Inspire/Expire Connection 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 4: Inspirational Short Stories Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 5: Inspirational Poetry Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 6: Inspirational Quotations PowerPoint Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Discussion Board Topic 3: Inspiration: Anticipation or Surprise? 	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 7: Inspirational Movies Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 8: Inspirational Music Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Discussion Board Topic 4: Inspiration: Naturally Occurring or Manufactured? 	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 9: Inspirational Art Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Discussion Board Topic 5: Inspiration: Psychological or Spiritual? 	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Topic 6: Service-Learning Reflection and Picture Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Signed Service-Learning Record Sheet 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acrostic or a New and Strange Source of Inspiration Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class 	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 10: Inspirational Children's Books Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class 	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings on Global and Multicultural Awareness Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class 	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global and Multicultural Awareness PowerPoint Activity: Written presentation on Moodle/oral presentation in class Exit Survey 	14
<p>Note: All assignments are due by 12:00 midnight (Central Time) on the due date shown in this table. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. All assignments may be completed and submitted early.</p>	

ASSIGNMENTS

SYLLABUS CONTRACT

Name: (please print) _____

Date: _____

Section: _____

I have read and understand the syllabus provided to me by my professor. I agree to abide by the terms of this syllabus.

(Signed Name)

PROFILE

Click on My Profile Settings on the left of this screen and post a picture of yourself and add your home city and state plus a one-paragraph introduction of yourself so that we can begin to get a sense of who we are as a class.

INSPIRATION: COURSE INTRODUCTION

The Paradox of Our Times: A Gift of Inspiration

www.agiftofinspiration.com.au/files/Paradox_of_Our_Times.pps

INSPIRATIONAL PERSON

Please post on Moodle, a minimum one-page double-spaced reflection in Times New Roman, 12" font, from which you will speak about the person who inspires you the most in your life. Be prepared to reflect on how this person inspires you. Provide information that supports why this person is influential to you. The class will sit in a circle, and you may be seated when you read from your reflection and engage your classmates in discussion.

DISCUSSION BOARD TOPIC 1: ROOTS OF INSPIRE

Use a dictionary to find the definition of the word "inspire." Write exactly what is written in that entry.

What does the word "inspire" mean to you? What sorts of things inspire you? How do you feel when you become inspired?

Please post a minimum 300-word response to the Discussion Board in Moodle making sure that you use Standard English usage and spelling so that you communicate clearly. Your word count will include the definition.

INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS

Please post on Moodle, a minimum one-page double-spaced reflection in Times New Roman, 12" font, from which you will speak about the book that inspires you the most in your life. Be prepared to reflect on how this book inspires you. Provide information that supports why this book is influential to you. The class will sit in a circle, and you will be allowed to be seated, to read all or excerpts of your reflection, and to engage your classmates in discussion. You are expected to bring a copy of the book to class.

DISCUSSION BOARD TOPIC 2: INSPIRE/EXPIRE CONNECTION

Use a dictionary to find the definition of the word "expire." Write exactly what is written in that entry.

What does the word "expire" mean to you? What sorts of things cause you to expire from activity? How do you feel when you decide to expire from activity?

Please post a minimum 300-word response to the Discussion Board in Moodle making sure that you use Standard English usage and spelling so that you communicate clearly.

INSPIRATIONAL SHORT STORY

Please post on Moodle, a minimum 300-word response in Times New Roman, 12" font, from which you will speak about the true [Short Story](#), *The Professor is a Dropout*, which is provided. Please reflect on how this [short story](#) affects you. The class will sit in a circle, and you will be allowed to be seated, to read all or excerpts of your reflection, and to engage your classmates in discussion.

Johnson, B. *The professor is a dropout*. Website:

http://www.townsendpress.com/uploaded_files/tinymce/reading%20series/A5e_Part%20II_01ProfDropout_SE.pdf

INSPIRATIONAL POETRY

Please bring a copy of a poem that inspires you. You will read this poem in class. You will also submit a minimum 300-word written reflection on your thoughts concerning the poem. The class will sit in a circle, and you may be seated when you read from your reflection and engage your classmates in discussion. You will post the poem and your minimum 300-word reflection on Moodle. I will read the following poem in class to engage class discussion.

New Hampshire Al-Anon, Inc. (2014). Just for today. Website: <http://www.nhal-anon.org/Just4Today.html>

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTATIONS POWERPOINT

You are to create a PowerPoint Presentation of ten to fifteen quotations in which you draw inspiration. Please see the [Quotations Worth Notations](#) PowerPoint provided in Moodle. You are to name your presentation something creative and produce a presentation like the one posted. You are to also include the author of the quote on each slide--do not have all quotes say "Anonymous." Your last slide will be titled References and you are to include a list of all of the references used in creating this assignment. This

presentation should be developed with the ultimate goal of inspiring your classmates as a steppingstone for lifelong learning. You are to explain why each quote holds an inspirational message for you to apply to your life.

DISCUSSION BOARD TOPIC 3: ANTICIPATION OR SURPRISE

Is inspiration something that you anticipate or is it something that you are surprised about? Can it be both? What do you think? Give examples.

Please post a minimum 300 word response to the Discussion Board in Moodle making sure that you use Standard English usage and spelling so that you communicate clearly.

INSPIRATIONAL MOVIES

Please be prepared to show the [Movie](#) Trailer and to speak from 3-5 minutes about the [movie](#) that inspires you the most in your life. Be prepared to reflect on how this [movie](#) inspires you. The class will sit in a circle, and you will be allowed to be seated, to read all or excerpts of your reflection, and to engage your classmates in discussion. Please post on Moodle the [Movie](#) Trailer or the address to the trailer, as well as a minimum 300-word reflection about why this [movie](#) inspires you.

INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

You will present a YouTube of a song that truly inspires you. If possible, choose one that provides the lyrics embedded in the YouTube. If all you can find is the [music](#), you will also need to provide the lyrics to the class. You will post on Moodle your YouTube or YouTube address, the lyrics, and a minimum 300-word response on why this song inspires you.

DISCUSSION BOARD TOPIC 4: NATURAL OR MANUFACTURED

Is inspiration something that occurs naturally or is it something that is manufactured? Can it be both? What do you think? Give examples.

Please post your minimum 300-word response to the Discussion Board in Moodle making sure that you use Standard English usage and spelling so that you communicate clearly.

INSPIRATIONAL ART

Please bring enough information to speak from 3-5 minutes about a piece of [art](#) that inspires you. Be prepared to reflect on how this piece of [art](#) inspires you. Provide information that supports why this piece of [art](#) is influential to you. The class will sit in a circle, and you will be allowed to be seated, to read all or excerpts of your reflection, and to engage your classmates in discussion. You are expected to post a copy of this artwork and a minimum 300-word response on Moodle.

DISCUSSION BOARD TOPIC 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SPIRITUAL

Is inspiration something that is psychological or is it something that is spiritual? Can it be both? What do you think? Give examples.

Please post a minimum 300-word response making sure that you use Standard English usage and spelling so that you communicate clearly.

INSPIRATION THROUGH SERVICE

As soon as you have completed your service hours, please post on Moodle a minimum 300-word reflection and picture of you performing your service at your service site.

Identify the project, the date, and the details of your service. Explain what you learned as a person from the act of helping the needy and describe how it felt to know that you contributed such kindness? How important is it to you that you give back to your community? Is service going to be a part of your future? What are some areas that interest you the most as a means of providing volunteer work? How did this service-learning project tie in to the objectives of this course? Were you inspired by providing service to people in need?

INSPIRATIONAL ACROSTIC OR A NEW AND STRANGE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

Valuing education and developing an awareness of gratitude for the institution that provided that education are important virtues to acquire. We all share a sense of pride for our alma maters that helped to shape us.

Write an inspirational [acrostic](#) poem using the name of your university to express how the college experience has inspired your life. Poems will be entered into a competition, and the winning poem will be published in the university's literary magazine, which showcases the best of student writing, art, photography and original music. An example follows.

What Nicholls State University Means to Me

By Dr. Cathleen Becnel Richard

Nicholls State University is an
Institution that I
Cherish because I
Have fond memories
Of my college
Life, and I just
Love to reflect on all of those
Staories of my happy days here.
Studying in
This bayou region, which I call home,
Afforded me
The opportunity to obtain a quality
Education, for which I am most grateful.

OR

A New or Strange Source of Inspiration

You are able to provide your own new or strange source of inspiration. Please bring enough information to speak from 3-5 minutes sharing something that inspires you in your own life. Be prepared to reflect on how this source inspires you. Provide information that supports why this source is influential to you. The class will sit in a circle, and you may be seated when you from your reflection and engage your classmates in discussion. You are expected to bring a copy of this source to class and to post a minimum 300-word response on Moodle.

INSPIRATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK

Please bring enough information to speak for 3-5 minutes about the children's book that inspires you the most in your life. Be prepared to reflect on how this children's book inspires you. Provide information that supports why this children's book is influential to you. The class will sit in a circle, and you may be seated when you read from your reflection and engage your classmates in discussion. You are expected to bring a copy of this children's book to class and to post a minimum 300-word response on Moodle. For class discussion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1ftjwDkztw>

INSPIRATION FROM DIVERSITY

You are required to interview a person of a different nationality concerning the inspirational topics that are covered in this course. A PowerPoint and an oral presentation are required to share your overall views of this experience. You may collaborate with the Office of International Student Services on campus for assistance in making a connection with an international student as an interviewee.

Using the information from the readings on Global and Multicultural Awareness, display that you have gained an appreciation and understanding of global and multicultural awareness in a minimum 17-slide PowerPoint presentation. The first slide should be the Title/Name page, eight slides should pertain to the person you interviewed, seven slides should pertain to the information found in the readings, and the last slide should be the Reference Page of the readings used to create this presentation. You will discuss whether or not you gained a sense of inspiration from this experience at the end of your oral presentation.

READINGS

The Culturocity Group. *Take the diversity test*. Website:

<http://www.culturocity.com/articles/diversitytest.htm>

The Culturocity Group. *What is cultural awareness anyway?* Website:

<http://www.culturocity.com/articles/whatisculturalawareness.htm>

University of Wisconsin Superior. *What does it mean to be globally aware?* Website:

http://www.uwsuper.edu/facultysenate/executive/attachments/10-11/upload/Global_Awareness_Definition_2010-01-12.pdf

The Culturocity Group. *The case for a cultururious lifestyle.* Website:

<http://www.culturocity.com/articles/caseforculturocity.htm>

Language Corps. *Global competency with Jed Willard.* Website:

http://www.nafsa.org/_file/_global_competency_2.pdf

The Culturocity Group. *Guide to U.S. history and culture.* Website:

<http://www.culturocity.com/articles/guidetoUS.htm>

The Culturocity Group. *Ten tips for cross-cultural communication.* Website:

<http://www.culturocity.com/pdfs/TipsforCross-CulturalCommunication.pdf>

The Culturocity Group. *The growth of globally hip.* Website:

<http://www.culturocity.com/pdfs/GloballyHip.pdf>

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. *The globally competent student.* Website:

<http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=41>

Kwintessential. *Cultural awareness in the multicultural workforce.* Website:

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultural-awareness-multicultural.html>

ATTENDANCE

Attend all [classes](#). Every student starts out with 50 [points](#) for [attendance](#). Ten points will be deducted for each absence unless a document such as a doctor's note, court document, or the like is provided to and deemed [valid](#) by the professor. Arrive on time and do not leave before the class is dismissed unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Entering class after 9:00 a.m. will be counted as an absence.

COURSE SURVEY

The following exit survey will be counted as a grade. The information will be used to help future students, but I will also be looking to see if you are communicating well as a college graduate. Though there are no right or wrong answers, but be sure to answer questions with complete sentences; put some thought into your answers. One-word answers will not be acceptable. I will contact you if I need more information. Please expand the space between questions to allow for more developed answers.

1. Should *Learning through Inspiration* continue to be offered at this university? Why or why not?
2. Did you learn new knowledge in this class? If yes, what specifically did you learn?
3. Did this course enhance your writing skills? If so, how?
4. Did this course enhance your critical thinking skills? If so, how?
5. Do you feel that you engaged with your fellow classmates? If so, how?
6. Did you enhance your oral communication skills? If so, how?
7. Did you learn from the varying points of view of your classmates? Please explain.
8. Did you enjoy being seated in a circle? If so, why? If not, why not?
9. Will you be able to apply the information you have been exposed to in this course to your life?
10. Have the theories we discussed in class promote lifelong learning? If so, how?
11. Would you recommend this course to others? Why or why not?
12. Would this course be as effective as an online course? Why or why not?
13. What would you recommend to make this course better?
14. What message would you like to give your professor about her teaching of this course?

ASSIGNMENTS RUBRIC

Criteria	A (90-100) Outstanding	B (80-89) Proficient	C (70-79) Basic	D/F (0-69) Below Expectations
Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich in content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally competent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rudimentary and superficial

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Of thought, insight, and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought, insight, and analysis has taken place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is thin and commonplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No analysis or insight is displayed
Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Connections • To previous or current • To real-life situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas or connections • Lack depth and/or detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited, if any connections • Vague generalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No connections are made • Off topic
Uniqueness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas • New connections • Made with depth and detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas or connections • Lack depth and/or detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few, if any new ideas or connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new ideas • "I agree with..." statement
Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required postings • All in time for others to read and respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required postings • Some not in time for others to read and respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required postings • Most at the last minute without allowing for response time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some, or all, required postings missing
Stylistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few grammatical or stylistic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several grammatical or stylistic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors • Errors interfere with content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors • Makes understanding impossible

From Middle Tennessee State University (2014). Learning, teaching & innovative technologies center. Website:

http://www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc/docs/Discussion_Board_Rubrics.pdf