Inquiry 111: Introduction to a Liberal Arts Education

Course Description
Inquiry 111 serves as an introduction to Westminster College, an introduction to the philosophy and practices of the liberal arts, and an introduction to the life of the mind. It will provide you with the opportunity to develop skills in the areas of critical thinking, oral and written communication, and information literacy. In addition to gaining insight into the process of learning and the purposes of education, you will consider various “ways of knowing” and how these ways are structured by our cultures. Students will also begin to explore the potential conflicts which can result from the development and dissemination of new understandings of the world. This class will involve minimal lecturing. Most class periods will be discussion-based. Student learning will be, as always, primarily a function of student effort and preparation.

Outcomes and Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. **Articulate and practice the values and methods of liberal arts education.**
   a. Study liberal arts practices and theories.
   b. Recognize the greater expectations associated with college-level work and develop appropriate critical thinking and information literacy skills.
   c. Consider moral and ethical responsibilities they have to various communities as a result of their education.

2. **Engage, experience, and explain different ways of knowing.**
   a. Examine and compare each of the Intellectual Perspectives as a way of knowing.
   b. Recognize and respect different world views.
   c. Challenge their own assumptions to promote inquiry and intellectual growth.

3. **Pursue interdisciplinary study and discussion of important issues.**
   a. Investigate and discuss significant or controversial issues from multiple cultural and intellectual perspectives.
   b. Engage diverse views of common readings and issues.
   c. Participate in an active learning community sharing a first-year experience.
Skill Development
A major goal of the First-Year Program is to help build skills that will be useful to you in your education, your vocation, and throughout your life. In each of your First-Year Program courses you will be learning and practicing four major sets of skills.

1. Critical Thinking
2. Speech
3. Writing
4. Information Literacy

Texts
Each student in this section will be expected to use the following titles:


Attendance Policy
Class attendance is mandatory. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will not be able to come to a class (e.g. illness, family emergency). Each unexcused absence beyond the first will result in a reduction in your class participation grade. See the Westminster College Undergraduate Catalog (pp. 66-67) for more details.

Academic Integrity
“Central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community is academic integrity. All members of the Westminster community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the College.” [Westminster College Undergraduate Catalog, pp. 67-71.]

Please reference the Catalog for full details on the academic integrity policy at Westminster College. Of particular note in Inquiry 111 is plagiarism. Be advised that your instructors at Westminster will be using software (turnitin.com) to determine the originality of your work. If you have any questions about this policy, please ask me.

Needs for Special Accommodation
Students with special needs of a physical or academic nature should speak with me so that accommodations, consistent with college policy, can be instituted.
Assignments and Grading
Your grade for Inquiry 111 will be based on weekly homework, individual assignments, and class participation. These items will be incorporated into your final grade as follows:

- The Week oral presentations: 2 @ 7.5% each = 15%
- Co-Curricular papers: 3 @ 5% each = 15%
- Your Perspective paper: 5%
- Library Week final paper: 15%
- Final paper: 15%
- Class Participation: 35%

Your written assignment grades (Co-Curricular, Your Perspective, Library Week, and Final Papers) will be determined by the following criteria, each on a scale of 1-5:
1. Content. Completion and quality of required components, such as the use of cited sources when necessary.
2. Application of thought. Evidence of your individual thought process on the assignment beyond the retelling of facts.
4. Mechanics. Use of proper grammar. Note that I may ask you to schedule an appointment with the Learning Center to review your writing for an assignment.
   a. If you work with a peer tutor on your paper and send a revision of your paper, you will receive a higher grade.
   b. If you work with a peer tutor on your paper but do not send a revision of your paper, your grade will remain the same.
   c. If you do not work with a peer tutor on your paper, you will receive a lower grade.

Any assignment not submitted by the due date will have 10% deducted for each additional day it is late from the final grade.

Class participation is the biggest overall part of your final grade (35%), although there are several different elements involved in it.
- Attendance, preparation for class (including questions about readings), and appropriate classroom behavior (attentive to and respectful of faculty and classmates; questions asked of student oral presenters)
- The Week journal entries (12)
- Westminster Plan/peer advising (worksheet, meetings with mentor)
- People of the Book essay revision
Office Hours
If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to see me in my office (McGill Library G-07) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. We can also schedule to meet at a different time, or you can e-mail (garrisjc@westminster.edu) or call me (x7329).

E-Mail
Be sure to check your e-mail frequently! I will send messages regularly throughout the semester, either to inform you of updates or asking for materials or a response from you. Getting into the habit of consistently checking your inbox and responding where necessary is a crucial habit to develop, both for your studies at Westminster College as well as for your life and career beyond.