It is not so very important for a person to learn facts. For that he does not really need a college. He can learn them from books. The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks. (Albert Einstein, 1921, in response to Thomas Edison’s opinion that a college education is useless)

The growing precision of our understanding should enhance, and not diminish our sense of wonder. (Alfred Brendel)

In much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase in sorrow. (Ecclesiastes 1.18)

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. (William Butler Yeats)

You must unlearn what you have learned. (Yoda, Star Wars V: Empire Strikes Back)

The unexamined life is not worth living. (Socrates [Plato, Apology, 38a])

EN OÏDA OΤΙ OYΔEN OIΔA. (= ἔν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα. — Socrates)

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ. (= Γνῶθι σεαυτόν. — Temple of Apollo at Delphi)

Welcome to Westminster College and to Inquiry 111. The course title describes our general objective, which is to inquire and learn how to learn, especially by learning how to formulate and refine questions.

Read the “Introduction to the First-Year Program” in the Inquiry textbook (also online: First-Year Program) for details of Inquiry 111, including course outcomes and objectives.

As we pursue the goals of Inquiry 111, and as we cultivate the appreciation of reading, writing, and exploring different ideas, you can expect this course to be full of challenging, enlightening, exciting, frustrating, and rewarding experiences.

Requirements and evaluation for the course

• evaluation

For my criteria for evaluation go to my Evaluation page and read the information carefully.

• If you have any questions about any assignment, ask in class or make an appointment to see me.
• If you have any questions about any evaluation or how you are doing in the course, make an appointment to see me.
• If you miss an assignment or exam, call or make an appointment to discuss any makeup work.

Due dates for submitting assignments are on D2L (click on the “Dropbox”).

• assigned readings

Assigned readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned—use your best judgment to divide the readings evenly for each week. You must come to class with at least 2 written questions or comments in response to the readings (see Participation). Cultivate the ability to ask informed questions about the readings based on the knowledge you gain along the way; the demonstration of your ability to formulate questions will affect the evaluation of your semester grade. The primary focus of the course will be on discussing the bolded assigned readings in class (see schedule below). Keeping notes on the readings is highly recommended. I would encourage you to use this form for every reading assignment (also on D2L).
You are expected to read the text(s) thoroughly and be able to share the penetrating questions or issues you dealt with in your reading, preparation, and further research. You do not have to understand everything before class, but you should demonstrate that you prepared and that you can discern and are familiar with the major issues in the text(s). Remember that questions are more valuable than answers.

Not all assigned readings may be covered in class or on exams, but they are assigned for your edification in achieving the goals of the course. The more you refer to them in class and in your work, the better your mastery of the readings will be. Your use of them in class discussion and in your work will affect the evaluation of your semester grade.

Occasionally I may assign additional readings, but these will ordinarily be short.

In the schedule below is a link for a variety of recommended "readings" (e.g., articles, movies). Although they are not required, you may find them helpful, humorous, stimulating, useful, etc.

**presentation**

You will present a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation of:

- the main idea(s) or point(s) of the reading assignment(s)—see the course schedule below for the texts to be presented
- your critique or response to (any part of) the reading assignment (including references to previous readings)—this should be the focus and main portion of the presentation
  - Include within your presentation critical questions, challenges, discoveries, insights, etc. for the class discussion that will follow your 10-minute presentation.

Everyone is expected to do the preparatory work described above, not just the presenters.

Submit your PowerPoint presentation on D2L before coming to class to present (file name = "your last name presentation").

See my Evaluation page under Presentations for evaluation criteria (do not be concerned about the "Communication Skills" section of the presentation evaluation page).

All students will fill out an evaluation sheet, which will be (1) used to offer peer critique to the presenter and (2) collected by me to review students’ critical ability and participation.

**library assignment**

You will submit an annotated bibliography after the week we spend in the library for information literacy instruction. It should include at least 10 secondary sources you found to be promising for your research paper, including at least 5 academic journal articles (articles in newspapers or magazines are acceptable if appropriate for your paper).

- Electronic sources count only if you provide evidence that they are scholarly sources.
- Use the Chicago Manual of Style for bibliography.

**co-curricular activities**

You will attend or participate in at least 3 co-curricular activities (you are encouraged to attend as many and as often as you can). They can be plays, lectures, service projects, athletic events, etc.—even movies.

- One must be a performance art (e.g., visual, musical, theatrical, oral).
- You may choose from among the various activities available throughout the semester. If you are not sure something qualifies as a co-curricular activity, ask me before you write the paper.
- A co-curricular activity that is offered in your major or minor—e.g., a biology major attending a special lecture by a guest biologist—would be acceptable only if it is not required by any professor or course.

For 3 co-curricular activities of your choosing, you must submit a reflection paper (450–900 words) on D2L (file name = “your last name co-cur 1”). The substantial portion of the reflection paper should articulate your critical reflection on the co-curricular activity—i.e., not mere description or summary of the activity—and how it relates to liberal arts education and to Inquiry themes, including:

- at least one of the readings thus far in the semester and
- the summer reading

Include in a footnote information about the co-curricular activity, e.g., title of the event, kind of activity, place, date, time, duration, attendees.

Use the Chicago Manual of Style for footnotes (or endnotes). No bibliography or works cited.
Follow the guidelines for Written assignments.

**research paper**
You will write a research paper (1,500–2,000 words) on a topic of your choice. Make an appointment as soon as possible to discuss your topic with me. Whatever your topic and thesis, make sure that connections with Inquiry themes and materials, including the summer reading, are evident in your final work. You are expected to learn the discipline of continual research, writing, and editing throughout the semester. You may find the Tips for writing papers helpful.

- You must submit (in one file on D2L) a paper proposal that includes:
  - a thoughtful and clear articulation of your research interest—the more detailed, narrower, and specific the research interest, the better (try to formulate a thesis)
  - a preliminary bibliography that includes at least 10 secondary sources (besides course textbooks and reference books) you found to be promising for your paper, including 5 academic journal articles (articles in newspapers or magazines are acceptable if appropriate for your paper)
    - Electronic sources count only if you provide evidence that they are scholarly sources. Use the Chicago Manual of Style for footnotes (or endnotes) and the bibliography.
  - Submit your proposal as early as possible in the semester, so that it can be approved for you to begin work. Make an appointment as early as you can to bring a printed copy of your proposal for discussion and approval.
- You are strongly encouraged to make further appointments for feedback on your progress.
- The paper should represent original work (i.e., your own thoughts), not a mere digest of other people’s opinions. Your own reading and re-reading of the relevant texts, as well as review of other materials, are fundamental to the task. I want to know what you discover in your engagement with the text(s)—a “text” can be written works, art works, music, plays, movies, interview, research results, poll data etc.—whether or not you agree with the authors or the opinions presented in class, including mine.
  - Focus on honing your ability (1) to argue for your opinions and conclusions persuasively and (2) to support them with evidence from texts (especially primary sources) and other relevant sources.
  - Your final bibliography (N.B. not works cited) must contain at least 8 sources used in your paper, including at least 4 academic journal articles (articles in newspapers or magazines are acceptable if appropriate for your paper).
  - Electronic sources count only if you provide evidence that they are scholarly sources.
  - Use the Chicago Manual of Style for footnotes (and endnotes) and the bibliography. Learn the automatic footnote (and endnote) function of your word processor.
- Follow all the instructions given on my Evaluation page under Written assignments.

**terms**
Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for learning significant terms used in our texts or in class (see the “terms” file on D2L). You will be responsible for the definitions. Your knowledge of significant terms may constitute a part of a quiz or exam.

**exams**
There will be 2 quizzes (ca. 30 minutes) and a midterm exam (ca. 45 minutes). They will cover the materials in the course you will have learned by the time of the tests. There may be pop quizzes, the results of which will affect the evaluation of your participation. See my Evaluation page under Quizzes and examinations.

**grades**
Grades will be determined as fairly as possible. See my Evaluation page under Grades for more information. The final grade for the course will consist of the following:

- research paper — 30%
- participation (including pop quizzes & library assignment) — 10%
- presentation — 10%
- 3 co-curricular reflection papers — 30%
- midterm — 10%
- quiz #1 & 3 — 10%

**extra credit**
You may earn extra credit any time during the semester.

Participation is a significant part of this course. See my Evaluation page under Participation for more information and instructions.
Submit a paper consisting of 700–1,000 words relating something from popular culture (e.g., movie, play, TV show, book, any performance) to a particular course topic (consult the instructor).

The paper should be mostly critique (not mere description or summary).

The instructor reserves the right to make the final determination concerning any extra credit. You can earn a maximum of 5% toward the final grade. You may write more than one, if you wish, but you will not receive more than 5% total in extra credit.

Required books


Recommended books (* = highly recommended)


Resources to consider

Student's Guide to Freakonomics

My Resources page.

Course materials on D2L: online resources, e.g., study guides

The Sarajevo Haggadah (PBS, 11 April 11 2014)
Geraldine Brooks's essay on the actual Sarajevo Haggadah

Keeping in touch

During the semester check your e-mail regularly for messages regarding course matters (e.g., changes in the syllabus). Visit and reload (refresh) this page for updates to the syllabus; see also my home page for other information and resources related to the course. Please feel free to make an appointment any time about any course matters.

Tips from former students

For some practical advice from former students, see the tips page.

One last word . . .

Regardless of how demanding all of this is, I promise to be as fair as possible. I recognize that you will be very busy this semester pursuing various obligations and passions. I understand. I have my passions too, e.g., my family, music, philosophy, nature, mountain biking, fixing things, food. But I am also very passionate about education, both yours and mine—I mean not just the
business of acquiring knowledge but more importantly the total development of honorable human beings. I do not require you to share my excitement about all the things we will cover, but I do expect you to do your best to complete the requirements for the course. To help you do that, I will make myself available outside the class time and the office hours. I will be glad to help you when you are struggling with an assignment. Or if you have any questions, concerns, complaints, and even compliments, I will do my best to take the time to listen and offer my response. Keep in mind that I am here to help you learn. So again, welcome to Westminster and to Inquiry 111.

Schedule

- = required
+ = in the library (Please do not check them out of the library.)
bold = primary text(s) for presentation or class (discussion)
> = recommended / suggested

Week 1 Aug 28 M, 30, Sep 1

General orientation: introduction to Inquiry 111 & liberal arts education

- Course syllabus (including Evaluation link; review requirements, expectations, and criteria for grading—as Qs, if you have any)
- Inquiry preliminaries: Inquiry 111 (textbook), v–xvi
- Westminster College: Mission statement (also online)
- Westminster College: Academic Integrity Policy (also online)
- The Westminster Plan (also online)
- What is Liberal Education? (cf. online)
- Statement on Liberal Learning (also online)
- Fisher: Effective Learning
- University of Chicago: letter to the class of 2020 (2016)

- Think about the research paper topics
- Remember: bring your written Qs & Cs to each class (see Participation).
- Copy all relevant Web pages and resources to your hard disk or flash drive, etc. for easy access. Keep the copies updated.

Week 2 Sep 4 M, 6, 8

Intro to Inquiry 111 & liberal arts education

* Sep ?: movie night at the Nas 7:48 PM-ish

Feel free to bring DVDs of movies you think your classmates should see. For directions click here.

- Newman: The Idea of a University (excerpts); complete text
- Shapiro: Liberal Education, Moral Education (also here; reading guide)
- Finkelmeyer: Grades
- Josefson: Learning Is Not Fun (also online)
- Andersen: The Emperor's New Clothes
- Fiamengo: “The Unteachables: A Generation that Cannot Learn”

Week 3 Sep 11 M, 13, 15

Epistemology: What’s worth knowing?

- multitude of perspectives (Can a physicist & a mystic see together? Can biology majors & English majors talk? Seeing is believing?)
- Plato: Allegory of the Cave (take notes showing analysis of the allegory): draw the cave described in the allegory
- Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant
- Calandra: Angels on a Pin
- The Matrix (highly recommended movie for comparison with Plato; can be borrowed from the library)
- The Greeks (interactive site): read about Socrates, Plato, etc.
The purpose of (liberal arts) education: seeing through—despite—veils

Sep 18: Melissa C. Beadle, Assistant Director, Learning Center

- Csikszentmihalyi: Veils of Maya
- Newman: The Idea of a University (excerpts)
- Westminster College Mission Statement (also online)
- Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask (helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)

Week 5 Sep 25 M, 27, 29

Self-knowledge: growing pains, growing gains

Sep 25: Quiz 1
Sep 30: last date for co-cur #1

- Maslow: Defense and Growth
- University of Chicago: letter to the class of 2020 (2016)
- Csikszentmihalyi: Veils of Maya
- Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask: (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)

Week 6 Oct 2 M, 4, 6

Information literacy instruction (aka library week)

Oct 2–6: meet in McGill Hub (bring your own laptop or use one provided by the library); see D2L for the library week materials before Monday’s class
Oct 6: last date for the proposal

The human condition: the Genesis of the human condition
- Words and world(s): epistemology and language • the art of thinking & the art of questioning

- Genesis: The Tree of Knowledge; also read my brief commentary on Genesis 3.1–6
- Gioia: Words (also here)

> Calendar matters

Week 7 Oct 9 M, 11, 13

The human condition: the Genesis of the human condition
- Words and world(s): epistemology and language • the art of thinking & the art of questioning

Oct 11: last date for the library assignment
Oct 13: midterm

- Genesis: The Tree of Knowledge; also read my brief commentary on Ge2nesis 3.1–6
- Gioia: Words (also here)
- Presentation evaluation: be ready to offer each presenter good critique (focus is not on summary but on the critical response evident in the presentations)
- a helpful reminder (cf. the first week)

Week 8 Oct 16 M, 18, 20 Oct 21–24 (break)

Cross-cultural (mis)understanding: hermeneutical circles and contexts

- Read Dr. Perkins’s story “Conceptual Art and Galvanizing” in the Inquiry reader and see his video before attending his talk in Witherspoon-Lakeview; bring at least 2 questions to ask the author (esp. about writing).
- Review:
  - Course syllabus (including Evaluation link; review requirements, expectations, and criteria for grading—ask Qs, if you have any)
  - The Westminster Plan (also online)
  - What is Liberal Education? (cf. online)
  - Statement on Liberal Learning (also online)
  - Fisher: Effective Learning (also in Inquiry text)
  - Csikszentmihalyi: Veils of Maya

- Rachels: The Challenge of Cultural Relativism; text with Qs
- Bohannan: Shakespeare in the Bush
- Levitt & Dubner: An Explanatory Note; Introduction; Bonus Matter
- Presentation evaluation: be ready to offer each presenter good critique (focus is not on summary but on the critical response evident in the presentations)
- Menkiti: Person and Community in African Traditional Thought (pp. 19–22; reading guide)
- Miner: "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" (also here)

> Recommended readings
> Taking Sides (study questions):
> Herskovits: "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Values"
> vs.
> Pojman: "Ethical Relativism: Who's to Judge What's Right and Wrong?"

**Week 9**

*Oct 25 W, 27, 30*

**Ethics:** How to live with others? Who is the neighbor in "The Good Samaritan"? Who is *my* neighbor?

**Oct 25:** Faculty Scholarship Panels (co-cur options throughout the day)
**Oct 27:** no class (keep working on the assignments)
**Oct 31:** last date for co-cur #2

**Oct 26 Presentation** (Luke):
**Oct 28 Presentation** (Luke OR Levitt & Dubner):
**Oct 31 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

- Winthrop: A Model of Christian Charity
- Mill: *Representative Government*, ch. 3
  also read *Cotton Patch*: Lk 10.25–37
- *Levitt & Dubner*: ch. 1: schoolteachers & sumo wrestlers
- *Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask* (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)

**Recommended readings**

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**Week 10**

*Nov 1 W, 3, 6*

**The arts:** The other arts in liberal arts • Debate: hearing or sight?

**Nov 2 Presentation** (Copland):
**Nov 4 Presentation** (Copland OR Levitt & Dubner):
**Nov 7 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

- *Levitt & Dubner*: ch 2: Ku Klux Klan & real estate agents; "Why Vote" (pp. 238–42)
- *Copland*: What to Listen for in Music
- *Scudder*: Learning to See
- Strategies for Looking (cf. *context & perspective*)
- *Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask* (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)

**Recommended readings**

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**Week 11**

*Nov 8 W, 10, 13*

**Citizenship:** liberal arts, civil rights, and law

**Nov 9 Presentation** (King):
**Nov 11 Presentation** (George):
**Nov 14 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

- *Levitt & Dubner*: ch. 3: drug dealers
- Letter from clergy
- *King*: Letter from Birmingham Jail
- *George*: "Natural Law and Civil Rights" (also read this introduction)
- *Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask* (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)
- *Mill*: *Representative Government*, ch. 3; also here

**Recommended readings**

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**Week 12**

*Nov 15 W, 17, 20*  **Nov 22–26 (break)**

**Science:** The art of thinking and of questioning • How "objective" is "science"? To whom should we listen? Why?

**Nov 17:** "Does Morality Depend on One's Culture?" (take notes on video in class; cf. Rachels, Menkiti, Bohannan, Blind Men and the Elephant, *Miner*)
**Nov 20:** Quiz 3

- Course syllabus (including Evaluation link; review requirements, expectations, and criteria for grading—ask Qs, if you have any)
• **Levitt & Dubner**: ch. 4: criminals
  • Charles Seife's *Proofiness: The Dark Arts of Mathematical Deception*
    • John D. Mueller, "Dismal Science" (click on "view as PDF" for the print version)
    vs.
    • John J. Donohue III and Steven D. Levitt, "The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime"
      (cf. "Further Evidence that Legalized Abortion Lowered Crime: A Reply to Joyce" & *Freakonomics*, chap. 4: "Where Have All the Criminals Gone")
  • **Einstein**: *Science and Religion* (N.B. Einstein's claim: "No amount of experimentation can ever prove me right; a single experiment can at any time prove me wrong.")
    See also [this](#) or [this](#).
• **Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask** (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)
  > Dawkins: "Science, Delusion and the Appetite for Wonder"
  > Dawkins-McGrath debate (23 Mar 2007): [part 1](#); [part 2](#) (also [7-part video](#))
  > McGrath-Atkins debate (27 Mar 2007; 1hr 19min)
  > Recommended readings
  • Debate (?)

#### Week 13 Nov 27 M, 29, Dec 1

Critical thinking: Cause and correlation

**Nov 30**: last date for co-cur #3

**Dec 1**: last date for the research paper

**Nov 28 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

**Nov 30 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

**Dec 2 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

• **Levitt & Dubner**: ch. 5: parent
• **Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask** (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)
  > Recommended readings
  • Debate (?)

#### Week 14 Dec 4, 6, 8

Critical thinking: Cause and correlation

**Dec 8**: last date for extra credit

**Dec 5 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

**Dec 7 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

**Dec 9 Presentation** (Levitt & Dubner):

• **Levitt & Dubner**: ch. 6: parent, pt. 2; Epilogue
• **Propaganda Alert & Questions to Ask** (N.B.: helpful for reading texts & writing research papers)
  > Behind names
  > illegal names
  • Debate (?)

#### Final week Dec 11 M 1130–1400

Final thoughts (Or: Anything and everything you wanted to ask Prof. Na but were too afraid or busy to ask)
  • The art of thinking & the art of questioning • Quo vadis?

• Bring an anonymous, printed list of the following to hand in:
  1) the most influential readings
  2) the least significant readings
  3) the most challenging experiences during the semester
  4) what you really want(ed) to ask Prof. Na

• What is this?
  > **Xmas Carol Quiz**
  > **Xmas Quiz**
  > What is this?
Without education we are in a horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously. (G. K. Chesterton)

Health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die. (Anonymous)