

## SYLLABUS

### IDS 801: Introduction to Graduate Liberal Studies

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**OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:** An orientation to the M.L.S. as an opportunity to enhance the critical thinking, analytical, and writing skills so valued in today's world and workplace. The purpose of the course is to help the student become acquainted with the concept of interdisciplinary liberal education and understand its potential in fostering intellectual growth, personal satisfaction, and the ability to enhance employ-ability in a world where knowledge has become the key resource.

**GOALS:** The goals of this course are four:

- 1) To introduce you to the Master of Liberal Studies Program
- 2) To help you develop your ability to think critically
- 3) To acquaint you with the nature of liberal studies
- 4) To bring to your attention some of the benefits that can arise from engaging in liberal study.

#### How the course works

The readings, taped lectures, taped guest speakers, and assignments go together. And the syllabus is the overall guide for going through these things. The "outline of the class" below coordinates the four elements (readings, taped lectures, taped guest speakers, and assignments). An important part of the class is the completion of various assignments by using a website for this class. Although there are no particular times of the day or night that you have to be on the website, there are some deadlines that you have to meet. Those are listed on the website. The address for the website is <http://blackboard.fhsu.edu>

#### OUTLINE OF THE CLASS:

- 1) **Introduction, Lecture 1a and 1b, tape 1**
  - a) To the Master of Liberal Studies Program (some of this is now outdated)
  - b) To this class
- 2) **Critical thinking, Lectures 2 and 3, tape 1**
  - a) Prior reading: "Critical Thinking: What, Why, and How" and "Background Logic, Critical Thinking, and Irrational Language Games," by Richard Paul (contained in *Introduction to Liberal Studies Readings* – ILS is a course pack)
  - b) Discussion of critical thinking:
    - i) *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* by Dennett
  - c) Application
- 3) **The nature of liberal studies, Lectures 4 and 5, tape 1**
  - a) Prior reading:
    - i) Excerpts from *The Republic*, by Plato (contained in ILS)
    - ii) "Education and the Pursuit of Happiness" and "Labor, Leisure, and Liberal Education," by Mortimer Adler (contained in ILS)
  - b) Consideration and discussion of readings

- 4) **Possible benefits of liberal studies, Lectures 6 and 7**
  - a) Prior reading:
    - i) "The Age of Social Transformation," by Peter F. Drucker (contained in ILS)
  - b) Economic and social benefits
  - c) Liberal studies and the meaning of life
  
- 5) **Guest lecturers**
  - a) Prof. Shala Bannister, Guest Lecturer 1 (tape 2)
  - b) Prof. Lloyd Frerer, Guest Lecturer 2 (tape 2)
  - c) Mr. Hannes Zacharias, Guest Lecturer 3 (tape 2)
  - d) Prof. Jean-Marie Salien, Guest Lecturer 4 (tape 3)
  - e) Prof. Greg Farley, Guest Lecturer 5 (tape 3)
  - f) Prof. John Durham, Guest Lecturer 6 (tape 3)

Required Work -- the specific details of the assignments are found on the website for the class (<http://blackboard.fhsu.edu/>) of which you will have access to just prior to the beginning of the semester.

THERE ARE NO EXAMS IN THIS COURSE. The assignments in this course are completed by posting papers and discussion questions and answers online through Blackboard. Your grade will be determined by the content of your papers and how you interact online with the other students in this course.

- 1) Read all assigned material.
  
- 2) Raise questions about readings, of instructor, and of other students in the class. Four sorts of questions are particularly appropriate:
  - a) Clarity: What do you mean by that? Can you give me an example of what you mean?
  - b) Basis: On what information do you base that? Does that follow from your basis?
  - c) Adequacy: Does this solve the problem? Has the question been answered?
  - d) Implication: What follows from that? Or doesn't X follow from that?
  
- 3) Civil and informed discussion with other class members.
  
- 4) Satisfactory completion of three papers
  - a) A critical thinking paper (about 1500 words or five, double-spaced, typewritten pages).
  - b) A "studying liberally" paper (about 1500 words or five, double-spaced, typewritten pages).
  - c) A final project (about 900 words or 3 typewritten pages).
  
- 5) Satisfactory participation in on-line discussions. No minimum length for either questions or responses (The specific details of the assignments are to be found under the Discussion Board and Assignment sections of the website. See "Discussion Assignment 1," "Discussion Assignment 2," "Discussion Assignment 3," "Discussion Assignment 4," and "Discussion Assignment 5.")

**Due Dates:**

Due dates are found under the Course Documents button on the website for the class (<http://blackboard.fhsu.edu/>) of which you will have access to just prior to the beginning of the semester. The following time frames may vary slightly from semester to semester.

Writing Assignment 1 - Usually due about 3 1/2 weeks after 1st day of class.  
Writing Assignment 2 - Usually due about 2 weeks after Writing Assignment 1..  
Discussion Assignment 1 - Usually due about 1 week after Writing Assignment 2.  
Discussion Assignment 2 - Usually due about 2 weeks after Discussion Assignment 1.  
Discussion Assignment 3 - Usually due about 2 weeks after Discussion Assignment 2.  
Discussion Assignment 4 - Usually due about 1 week after Discussion Assignment 3.  
Discussion Assignment 5 - Usually due about 3 weeks after Discussion Assignment 4.  
Writing Assignment 3 - Usually due about 1 week after Discussion Assignment 5.

\* Note that due dates for the Summer will be considerably condensed as the Summer semester is shorter.

### **TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS:**

Video Tapes (3)

Course Packet - "Introduction to Liberal Studies Readings"

*Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* by Dennett

Syllabus

All of the above materials are available through the University Bookstore at <http://fhsu.bkstore.com/>. Be sure that you order the correct section for the class (CA, CB, etc.)

### **POLICIES:**

**Make-up work:** If a student misses deadlines for completion of work, the work may or may not be accepted by the instructor, at his or her discretion. If the late work is accepted, it may be given a lower grade due to its lateness, at the discretion of the instructor.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance, having prepared all assigned work, is expected of each student. When the student must be absent, it is her responsibility to notify the instructor (in advance whenever possible) of the reasons for the absence. Excessive absences may result in a lowered grade.

**Grade of "incomplete":** In all its classes the Department of Philosophy adheres to the FHSU definition of the grade of "I" (Incomplete), which is "work of otherwise passing quality incomplete for adequate reasons, usually beyond the student's control."

**Academic honesty:** All work submitted is expected to be the work of the student submitting it. Any violation of this is grounds for a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the MLS program, and dismissal from Fort Hays State University.