

NU Summer Bridge: Exploring the Liberal Arts

Term: Summer 2022 – 8/8/2022-9/1/2022

Instructors: Carmen Crusoe & José Madrid

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Date/Time: Monday–Wednesday (Lecture) & Thursday (Discussion) 4:15 PM to 5:15 PM

Office Hours: Monday–Thursday 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM. Please sign up for 15-minute slots.

Course Description:

Throughout this course we will work to explore and discuss 1) how majoring and/or minoring in the liberal arts can enrich your undergraduate education and 2) what is the liberal arts broadly speaking? To this end, the course is structured in two parts: lecture and discussion. The lecture component is designed to offer you personal insight from current Northwestern faculty working across the liberal arts and how majoring and/or minoring in the liberal arts not only led them to pursuing careers as researchers, but perhaps more importantly, enriched their critical thinking skills and understanding of the world as undergraduates. During the discussion portion of our course we will work collectively to discuss what is the liberal arts broadly speaking and what you learned from hearing and engaging the weekly speakers. Lastly, we will draw from various speakers' experiences in order to develop a multifaceted comprehensive understanding of the importance of a liberal arts education and explore the various ways the liberal arts can enhance your scholastic journey at Northwestern and beyond.

Objective:

This introductory course is grounded in a pedagogical praxis of collective learning that fundamentally believes that a liberal arts education can foster a learning space in which we can collectively work to better understand the historical, political, social, and economic processes that inform our present moment, material conditions, and personal experiences. Therefore, the central objective of this course is to provide you all with a generative space to collectively engage in critical dialogue about weekly themes in an effort to develop a more robust understanding of what a liberal arts education has to offer in terms of developing your communication, critical thinking, and writing skills.

Course Expectations:

Attendance

As mentioned above, this class is structured into two key parts: lecture (Monday–Wednesday) and discussion (Thursdays) as a way to cultivate a dynamic and creative learning experience for students, guest speakers and the instructors. With that said, we understand that life happens and various circumstances may prevent you from attending a session. Therefore, each student is **allowed one unexcused absence**, while any additional absence will be reviewed and assessed by us on a case by case basis with valid documentation.

Active Participation:

This class is structured as a collective learning space, rooted in critical teaching practices in order to have open and honest conversations that hopefully produce vibrant enriching ideas and projects. In consideration of this, we are requesting that you not only attend class, but that you also come prepared to share thoughts and listen to your peers' with an open mind and respectfully.

To encourage your participation and engagement with faculty presentations, students will be required to develop two questions that they would like to pose to the guest speaker. Your questions can cover various points of interests, including but certainly not limited to questions on the speaker's personal experiences in the liberal arts as a student and educator, general queries about the area of study, or co-curricular/ internship offerings and career paths in the field. Please make sure your questions are thoughtful and respectful.

Questions are to be posted on the Canvas discussion forum by the start of each class session.

Assignments:

In addition to developing questions in preparation for guest speakers, students will be required to complete and submit (via our class' online Canvas portal) a weekly written short 1-page reflection paper and a final project (group or individual). A quick gentle reminder, this course is Pass/No Pass; in other words, we will not be providing letter grades, rather, we will be assessing you based on your level of active participation and critical engagement with the course material.

- *Weekly Written Response:*

These short papers are intended to be more of an exercise of self-reflection. Students will write a **1-page response** reflecting on the

given week's guest speakers and how they are thinking about these topics in relation to the broader themes of the course.

Due Date: Every Friday at 11:59 pm via Canvas

○ *Final Project:*

Based on the weekly topics, pick a medium and explore/discuss what you have learned throughout the course (e.g. What does “the liberal arts” mean to you? How can a liberal arts education further enrich your undergraduate education? What curricular pathways in the liberal arts are you most interested in exploring during your undergraduate career at Northwestern?). In an attempt to encourage creativity, this final research project can take many forms (e.g. song and/or music video playlist curation, art piece(s), performance, etc.). With that said, if you would rather write a final reflection paper detailing your experience in the course, that is also an option. If writing a paper, it must be between **4-6 pages** in length, double spaced, 12 point and Times New Roman font.

Due Date: September 3rd, 2022 at 11:59 pm via Canvas