

Course Syllabus
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[updated: Tuesday, August 30, 2011]

Course: *UNIV 100*
Title: *Freshman Seminar (3 units)*

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.”
---Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Program: All CSUN students (Business cohort)
College: Office of Undergraduate Studies

Semester: Fall, 2011
Class: 16711
Day/Time: Tue/Thu 12:30pm - 1:45pm
(Tue 8/30 - Thu 12/8, 16 weeks)

Location: JH2206
Lead Student: Wayne Smith
Office Room: JH4225
Office Hours: Tue/Thu 11:45pm – 12:15pm
(and by appointment)

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Public Web: <http://ocw.smithw.org/2011fall/univ100-16711/>
Private LMS: <http://moodle.csun.edu/>

Required Materials (Bookstore):

1. Staley, C. (2009) *Focus on College Success (Concise Edition)* (1st ed.), Cengage Learning, Mason:OH (ISBN:13 978-1-4266-3377-5, ISBN:10 1-4266-3377-7, CSUN cover).
2. Walls, J. (2005) *The Glass Castle*, Scribner:New York (ISBN:13 978-0-7432-4753-5).

Recommended Materials:

1. Hacker, D., and Sommers, N. (2011) *A Writer's Reference* (7th ed.), Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston:MA. ISBN-13 978-0-312-60143-0, ISBN-10 0-312-60143-3
(or any writing handbook required or recommended in any CSUN Writing course)

You must bring your required materials, including any instructor-supplied name tag or desk tent card, with you to each class.

Course Description (from the CSUN catalog):

The course introduces first-time freshmen to the university as an institution, a culture, and an intellectual experience. *Academic success is the central goal of the course* (emphasis added). Topics include:

academic skills (writing, reading, note-taking, test-taking, and information competence, as well as critical, analytic, and creative thinking);

the value of higher education, and the history and culture of CSUN;

lifelong learning, and the discourse of higher education;

ethics and responsibility;

diversity in higher education;

advisement, health, and self-assessment.

This course is *not* an online course. Attendance in class is required. This course is designed on a traditional university schedule. This course requires, at a minimum, three times the number of hours per week outside of class as the number of hours in class.

Also, students who wish to add must attend each class and submit all assigned work.

Course Prerequisites:

(none)

Learning Objectives:

The primary emphasis in this course is to ensure student success at CSUN. The term “success” might have several meanings to an individual. The CSUN faculty might define success in UNIV 100 as motivating and preparing students for persistent intellectual development and academic engagement, and the CSUN administration might define success in UNIV 100 as substantively improving a student’s opportunity to graduate with a Bachelor’s Degree and become a engaged, purposeful citizen. While all of the elements of the CSUN catalog description above are important in UNIV 100, the *most important* are likely to be:

- the ability to take ownership and responsibility over one’s own educational attainment,
- the development of foundational academic skills needed in all classes,
- the active engagement in curricular and extra-curricular activities and campus life, and
- the rudiments of knowledge needed to begin crafting the world that you want to flourish in.

Pedagogical Approach:

The course will use a variety of approaches in class including lectures, videos, class discussions, and experiential exercises. This course will use a variety of approaches out of class, including assignments, on-campus trips, cultural events, and occasionally, teamwork.

Learning Rhythms and Patterns:

I tend neither to read nor summarize the required reading materials in class. I tend to offer clarifications, differences of perspectives, or explorations of the core material. Additionally, I tend not to use a large number of presentation slides, much less post them online. Students must allocate sufficient out-of-class time to do the required reading in order to participate in class and ask substantive questions as necessary. Students will need to have mastered necessary skills in reading comprehension, retention, and recall. Each class session will generally begin with an opportunity to ask questions regarding the required reading materials or lecture topics from the previous class session. Each class session is generally oriented around one or two learning themes. The textbook materials support the core ideas of that theme, and supplemental readings offer additional thoughts, including challenges and extensions, to the core ideas.

Examinations and Quizzes:

Unlike nearly all other college courses, this course does not have any exams, including a final exam. Due to time constraints, we will not be able to cover each and every aspect of the textbook readings or other readings for class. Nonetheless, you are responsible for all the material (i.e., it is “fair game” for the exam) unless explicitly directed otherwise by the instructor. No make-up exams will be given without a signed note from a medical doctor or public safety agency.

There will be several quizzes, probably every other week. The quizzes will not be announced ahead of time (“pop quizzes”); you will need to keep up with the reading, classwork, and assignments. Additionally, please bring all the requirement materials, your notebook with some college rule notebook paper, and a blue pen or black pen with you to class each day.

Assignments:

There will be several assignments noted in advance. The assignments will be described in advance and will be available on the course website.

- Assignment: Moodle (Profile and Picture)
- Assignment: Student Essay #1 (beginning of the semester)
- Assignment: Student Essay #2 (end of the semester)
- Assignment: Information Competency (team-based)
- Assignment: Cultural Experience

Assignments announced in class may consist of self-assessments, analytical work, or short essays. Assignments are due promptly at the beginning of class. Assignments not submitted promptly at the beginning of class (I will make a “last call” announcement) are assessed an immediate 50% point penalty. No assignments will be accepted after the end

of the class session without a signed note from a medical doctor or public safety agency. Therefore, if you fear you might miss class or might not be able to turn in your assignment on time, you may give it to another student to turn in on the correct day and at the correct time. Assignments will be generally graded on straightforward point scheme (“scoring rubric”) enumerated within each assignment. In addition, the writing requirements will be scored for each assignment as well (in general, I take off 10% for each error in language use and composition).

Be sure to collect your scored exams and assignments (in other words, anything you turn in) and retain them in your records.

Exercises:

There may be one or more exercises in the course. Some exercises are completed in-class, and some are completed out-of-class. Exercises will always be due in-class.

Participation:

I occasionally ask for volunteers in class. I often provide participation points to students for this effort. Additionally, if I call on you and you are either absent or not prepared, you will lose participation points. There is extrinsic and intrinsic value to volunteering in class and being prepared for class.

Student Peer Mentors:

Peer mentors are students in the College of Business and Economics who are working with you throughout this semester and beyond to help you connect with the university through your academics, co-curricular activities, and career explorations. You will participate in at least three activities with your peer mentors: 1), one-to-one meetings, 2), academic activity, and 3) CSUN Event.

Grading System:

The contribution of each component to the final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Component	Relative Weight
Participation	10%
Assignments	40%
Exercises	10%
Quizzes	40%

Weights within the “Participation,” “Assignments,” “Exercises,” and “Quizzes” components are distributed evenly. The Department strives for some uniformity in final letter grading distributions. Therefore, students are ranked in class by weighted points. Letter grades are not assigned to any quiz, exam, or assignment. For each quiz, I will provide not only the mean and standard deviation, but also the relevant letter grade percentiles as well. These percentiles can be used as a guide as to help assess your relative performance in class. Each student has the same opportunity to earn high marks. Students should study diligently and strive for high marks on a persistent basis. All of your work matters. There is no “non-important” work in this class.

Grades will be assigned based on the following (plus/minus suffixes may be used):

Letter grade you earn	University interpretation	“Real World” interpretation
A	Exceptional	Promote early
B	Very Good	Retain and provide merit pay increases
C	Average	Retain and provide cost of living increases only
D	Barely Passing	Let go when replacement is found
F	Failure	Fire immediately

I have minor hearing loss in my right ear. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand and wait until I call on you. It helps me to be able to see you before you begin your question. Thank you in advance. All audio or video recording of class is prohibited.

Classroom Disruptions:

Please ensure that the audio portion (“ringtone”) of your cell phone is off during class. No interaction with your cell phone, including texting, is permitted during class. If you wish to use a computer in class to take notes, you must sit as far forward in the class as possible (usually in the first row of the room).

Academic Integrity:

Any cheating in or out of class will result in a failed exam, an “F” in the course, and a letter the Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs recommending that the student be expelled from the University. Additional classroom behavior requirements for this class are listed at:

<http://ocw.smithw.org/general/behavior.pdf>

At the start of the semester:

My class roster identifies students by name, CSUN ID, class level, and major. On the first day of class, I know very little about each student. However, I have found that some students benefit by visiting me in my office during scheduled office hours at least once very early in the course. Please do let me know if you fall into one of the following categories:

Differently-abled students. The textbook for this course is available in electronic form for students who are registered with the CSUN Disabilities Resources and Educational Services. Further, all materials in this course have been designed to be accessible as possible to those with visual, aural, motor, and cognitive impairments. If there are additional needs, please let me know as soon as possible.

Military service. If you are either currently in the active service, reserves, or ROTC, or will be attending OCS soon, please let me know. In particular, I want to ensure that the class schedule doesn’t conflict your service schedule. I also would like student veterans

to self-identify themselves to me as well. Veterans have unique experiences and can make important contributions to a class.

Student athletes. I try to attend at least one game or meet for each student athlete, even if your sport is in a future semester. Again, you will need to self-identify yourself to me.

International students. Managing expectations is difficult; managing expectations regarding higher education and culture is *extraordinarily* difficult. Please see me as soon as possible if you do not completely understand any aspect of this course, including writing and grading standards.

At the end of the semester:

I do not discuss any aspect of scores or grades via email after the last class session. I can discuss scores or grades in my office after the beginning of the following semester.

Students who earn an “A” or “B” may request a written letter of recommendation from me. If such a letter is desired, please try to ask me before the end of the following semester. A request for a letter of recommendation begins and ends with a discussion in my office during office hours.