Strategies for Success

COURSE GUIDE

Searching for Heroes

Title III Strengthening Institutions Project
Strategies for Success: Increasing Achievement, Persistence, Retention and Engagement

The Strategies for Success Title III initiative is a major, five-year project (2009-2013) funded by a two million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This initiative is intended to transform Middlesex Community College by improving the academic achievement, persistence, retention, and engagement of its students.

The project focuses on reformed curricula and comprehensive advising. *Reformed Curriculum* involves the design of developmental and college Gateway courses and learning communities embedded with Core Student Success Skills related to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, organization, and self-assessment. Overall, 45 courses will be impacted over the five years of the project. *Comprehensive Advising* involves the design of integrated advising services to include identification of academic and career goals, creation of realistic educational plans, and continuous tracking and intervention with an emphasis on the Core Student Success Skills. Comprehensive Advising Services will be specifically tailored to each program of study. Cross-division curriculum and advising design teams composed of faculty and staff are designing, piloting, and assessing the curriculum and advising initiatives.

The Title III grant provides resources to support faculty professional development related to designing and piloting new curriculum and advising students. The grant also supports the purchase of advising software programs and the hiring of a Pedagogical Instructional Designer, Learning Engagement Specialist, Advising Coordinator, and two academic advisors. The resources provided by the grant offer an exciting opportunity for the college community to work together to develop the strong programs and services that will increase student success.
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Introduction

As a result of a Title III grant, Strategies for Success: Increasing Achievement, Persistence, Retention and Engagement, this course has been designed to incorporate the following Core Student Success Skills (CSSS): Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Organization, and Self-Assessment. The concept is to lead students to apply these skills as a method for learning course content. The expectation is that by practicing these skills in this course, they will develop into more successful college students overall, and as a result, persist in their college studies.

*Searching for Heroes* analyzes modern-day heroes to heroic figures from the mythology of ancient civilizations in order to promote an understanding of the concept of hero and the role heroes play in various societies. The course will examine heroes from classical mythology and folklore as well as historical and contemporary figures who have achieved heroic status.

Through reading, writing, and discussing, students will consider how core elements of the hero’s journey common to all cultures can inspire and inform their own college experience, their career choices, and their lives.

The course was redesigned as part of the Title III Strategies for Success grant. Along with knowledge of heroism in all its aspects, the course promotes development college student success skills: Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Organization, Communication, and Self-Assessment. (A further explanation of how these terms are defined by the grant can be found in the sample syllabus at the end.)

The lesson plans in this guide were created by Christine Ryan, an instructor. If you wish to ask her questions about the material contained in this guide, please contact her.

**Team Member**

Christine Ryan  
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Lesson Plan: Tell Me a Story, Please

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Recognize storytelling as a method of transmitting historical and cultural elements of a society.
- Distinguish between stories that are true and those that are imagined.
- Comprehend that myth (although not totally factual) is a kind of story through which a society’s parameters and values are revealed.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

Materials:

- For class: Handouts for initial consideration and notes on a family or neighborhood story that reveals something about the history or values that are significant to that group.
- For assignment: Form to be completed that guides students in specific reading selection from packet of Olivia Coolidge’s Greek Myths.

Instructions:

1. Discuss “story.” The goal at this point is dialogue, not to impose a specific concept.
2. Distribute class sheets for five minute individual consideration of a story to share.
3. Share with groups of three the beginning of notes on sheet; each person in group is expected to explain the story that is significant and encourage active responses, such as: What more might be included? Do the stories make you want to ask questions? What do the stories reveal about the storyteller? What do the stories reveal about the situation or context in which the actions happened?
4. Discuss (whole class group) – elicit some sharing of personal stories.
5. What elements did all the stories include? (gear discussion if necessary toward characters, conflict, humor, emotion, beginning, ending, resolution)
6. Assignment: Introduce form for assignment and assign the reading in packet.
**Assessment:**

Behavior is assessed through observation and interaction with the small groups. Individual contributions in small groups and ease of participation in the large class group discussion will be noted.

Assignment about *The Origin of the Seasons* will be collected at beginning of the following class and graded. Criteria will be based upon (1) details that the student includes in response to the form’s outline and (2) evidence of critical thinking in considering whether the story was factual or a myth, as well as venturing a reason why a story 2500 years old is still being told.
Lesson Plan: Themes Found in Many Traditions

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify common themes that occur in many cultures.
- Compare two tales about a great flood and two tales about the creation of woman and the origin of “evil” or “original sin.”
- Compare the similarities and differences in each rendition.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Organization

Materials:

- Pandora – The Coming of Evil  p. 73
- The Great Flood  p. 76
- *Genesis 6 9-22, 71-16, parts of 8 and 9 (flood)
- *Genesis 3 1-24 (eating of the forbidden fruit)
- Reading guides

*Contact Christine Ryan for copies

Instructions:

1. Introduce stories to be read individually-explain purpose of reading to compare.
2. Distribute reading guides (worksheets) to be completed by groups of three – one completed copy for each theme to be submitted by group.

Assessment:

Group worksheets will serve as assessment artifacts. Criteria will be numbered, and accuracy of the similarities and differences reported on the worksheets. The goal is to begin using concrete details to inform suppositions and general ideas about the intent and condition of the tales’ originators.
Lesson Plan: Cast of characters (Part 1)

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify names of major gods and goddesses in Greek mythology.
- Demonstrate an understanding that gods in mythology are anthropomorphic projections of human fears and feelings.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

Materials:

- Selection from packet of Olivia Coolidge Greek Myths Phaeton, Son of Apollo
- Chart with names and positions of major gods and goddesses
- DVD History Channel Clash of the Gods Disc One Zeus
- Selection from packet of Olivia Coolidge Greek Myths Arachne (Assignment)

Instructions:

1. Have students read Phaeton, Son of Apollo.
2. Have students complete IFAT cards (Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique)* about the reading in small groups.
3. Clarify concept of myth.
4. Pose the following questions: What is the bard demonstrating about men/women? Would Greek audience understand the symbolic nature of the story? What lesson would the Greek audience perceive in this tale? Are there any lessons that we as modern hearers can perceive?
5. Distribute chart of Greek gods with short descriptions.
6. View DVD History Channel Clash of the Gods Disc One Zeus (The DVD of Zeus is violent and graphic – discuss that in context of Greek society, 800-500 BCE and in context of the power attributed to the gods as forces of nature beyond control of human forces.)
7. Assignment: Have students read selection Arachne.

*Contact the Office of Professional Development for availability of cards.

Assessment:

Learning is assessed through observation and interaction with the small groups during the IFAT cards activity. Individual contributions in small groups and increase in participation in the large class group discussion will be sought and noted. Day 2 will begin with quiz on Arachne assignment to assess reading comprehension and retention of details.
Lesson Plan: Cast of characters (Part 2)

Learning Objective: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify characteristics of the heroic character.

Materials:

- Chart with names and positions of major gods and goddesses (review)
- DVD History Channel Clash of the Gods Disc One: Minotaur
- Selection from packet of Olivia Coolidge’s Greek Myths - Theseus & The Minotaur (for reference and assignment)

Instructions:

1. Following quiz, discussion of Arachne myth with emphasis on identification as a myth and of what significance it could hold for Greek audience and a modern audience.
2. Students review chart of Greek god characters and the competition/vanity in Zeus DVD.
3. Students review significance of their relationships as mirroring human relationships and conflicts.
4. Introduce Theseus as character (“wise, just ruler”) – “heroes” as those who fought against the “evils” of lawlessness, robbery, injustice.
5. Outline Theseus’ youth and childhood. Place emphasis on 2 of the 8 classical heroic characteristics.
6. Have students view part of DVD section on Minotaur.
7. Distribute outline sheet with relevance to both DVD and assigned reading.
8. Homework Assignment: have students read from packet of Olivia Coolidge’s Greek Myths Theseus & The Minotaur.

Assessment:

Assessment will be determined by quiz results, participation in class discussions, and completing the crossword puzzle by using names of gods and their domains.
Lesson Plan: Are all Mythological Characters Heroes?

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify elements of heroic behavior from stories already read.
- Identify actions and motivations of the characters that are significant to the quest.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Collaboration
- Critical thinking
- Organization

Materials:

- Packet of selections from Olivia Coolidge already read and discussed
- IFAT cards
- Chart and handouts of eight stages in classical model of heroic experience
- Summary of the Gilgamesh story with commentary
- From Spirits, Heroes & Hunters (North American Indian Myth) The Strong Man

Context within the Course:

This lesson plan builds upon work done in previous lesson plans.

Instructions:

1. Review stories that have been read and discussed.
2. Elicit from students descriptions of some common experiences of the protagonist in each one.
3. Ask students to identify behaviors that allow the reader to recognize who the hero character is.
4. Ask students to identify the characters who perform supporting roles and identify what tasks are associated with those roles.
5. Ask students to break into groups and identify which role they would feel most comfortable with and why (if they were one of the characters in the story).

Assessment:

Assessment is based on a group-completed worksheet and a short presentation by each group on characters to discover and debate the conclusions they came to on attributing the honor of “hero” to that person.
Lesson Plan: The Searchers

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of the eight stages in the journey of the classical hero.
- Identify criteria that we will use in our classroom to evaluate modern world heroic behavior.
- Compare the idea of quest with their personal experiences and recognize some “stages” as natural and intrinsic to the process of maturing into functioning adults.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Organization
- Communication

Materials:

- Chart and handouts of stages in classical model of heroic experience
- Chart and handouts of possible list of stages in modern heroic quest

Instructions:

1. Have students read and discuss the stages charts.
2. Break into small groups to discuss and come to consensus about the second chart, which will be an important tool for the rest of the semester.
3. Ask them to come up with examples of these stages in young adult life.

Assessment:

Observation of group work and evaluation of their “product” – the chart.
Lesson Plan: The Odyssey – a Transformative Journey

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Comprehend the basic facts of the Odysseus character and quest.
- Apply the heroic criteria established in last class to Odysseus’ journey.
- Recognize the value of intellectual cunning, not just brute force, as a means of achieving heroic tasks.
- Identify, and recognize examples of, the stages of the transformation.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking

Materials:

- DVD History Channel Clash of the Gods Disc 2: Odysseus - Curse of the Sea
- Written summaries of these chapters in The Odyssey and a character list
- Outlines for note-taking during and after viewing the videos
- Quiz to assess retention of content detail
- Written assignment to assess if the students recognize how Odysseus’ use of intelligence and cunning resulted in eliminating the obstacles preventing his arrival at Ithaca

Context within the Course:

This is the last section using ancient “monomyth” material. The next unit begins with the Clash of the Gods DVD episode on Tolkien which moves us into contemporary issues. Therefore, these lessons should reinforce the concepts of “heroism” and make students enthusiastic about evaluating contemporary characters with a reliable set of criteria. As such, it should not be introduced too early or too late in the course schedule.

Instructions:

1. Refer students to The Odyssey outline and character list in the reading packet. Discuss the history and relevance of Odysseus tale to literature and world culture. Distribute outline form for note taking during viewing of videos; these will focus on the way that Odysseus and his men change in response as the journey continues.
2. On Day One, have students view the part of the DVD which deals with Lotus Eaters and the Cyclopes. On Day Two have students watch the parts about Circe, Hades, and Calypso.
**Assessment:**

The quiz will assess if the note-taking was an aid in detail retention. In addition, a written assignment will require that students cite three examples of how Odysseus responds to the challenges and how his methods of overcoming obstacles changes as the journey progresses.
Lesson Plan: Bridging the Pre-Modern and Modern Conceptions of Hero

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Explain the unique role that the Lord of the Rings has in the canon of modern fantasy genre
- Explain how Tolkien used this genre to exemplify problems that he saw in modern society, just as elements in ancient myths revealed values and problems in those societies
- Identify the elements of modern society that Tolkien wants the reader to examine
- Identify what characterizes the modern “hero” that Tolkien creates. Frodo is not a likely hero, but inherits the ring which leads to his quest

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Communication
- Critical thinking

Materials:

- DVD History Channel Clash of the Gods Disc Three Tolkien’s monsters
- Outline for note-taking while viewing video
- Assignment points to prepare for small group to share following the video or in the next class

Context within the course:

This lesson provides a transition to the study of modern heroes--non-mythological men and women who confront challenges to themselves or society with natural, not supernatural, resources.

Instructions:

1. Elicit reactions and points of interest by those who saw Lord of the Rings films.
2. Write comments and points on whiteboard.
3. Specifically ask for comments on the “hero” motivation and behavior.
4. Talk about the different approach to the material in the History channel DVD.
5. Review the note-taking outline.
6. Discuss biography of Tolkien and his purpose in writing the mythology. Include some background of common elements in Norse and Anglo-Saxon oral traditions.
7. View Disc 3 section on Tolkien.
8. Move to small groups to discuss their own notes and also refer to points on the whiteboard from discussion at beginning of class. Did the video clarify anything or change your view of
the events or symbols in the film version? How does the discussion of Frodo in the video affect your view of his heroism?

9. At beginning of next class (or in T-Th group, at the end of class), have students share results of their discussions.

**Assessment:**

Use participation in full class discussion to assess interest level and readiness for the Tolkien video. A review of student notes can also serve as assessment activity.
Lesson Plan: Escaping from an American Labyrinth (Part 1)

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Explain ideals of the foundational documents of the United States and how the existence of slavery is the antithesis and perversion of those ideals.
- Identify the political, economic, and social aspects of slavery as a monster threatening to destroy not only lives of the enslaved, but the society which perpetuates its existence.
- Explain how the Abolitionists were “heroic” characters challenging the monster that threatened their society.
- Compare the “Underground Railroad” and to the labyrinth of Greek mythology.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Communication

Materials:

- History Channel Underground Railroad, a documentary that unveils the history, heroes, and villains of the Abolitionist movement. (MLN #973.7115)
- Clips on the following website are short, but will serve as summary of a couple of points. http://www.history.com/search?search-field=Underground+Railroad&x=11&y=14
- Written assignment to assess how well students begin to recognize certain heroic behavior as (1) response to social, political and legal circumstances, and that (2) individual response emerges from the personal ideals and passions of the hero.

Instructions:

1. Review the ideals of the foundational documents of the United States by reading several short passages. Ask students what the words mean to them and what they think the words meant to the American colonists.
2. Identify the existence of slavery as the antithesis and perversion of those ideals. Give a short review of why the existence of slavery was legally sanctioned by the writers and politicians who prepared the constitutional documents.
3. Review the Minotaur tale and how the king of Crete sought to hide the monster in a labyrinth and used foes to satiate his appetite for human flesh.
4. Discuss how the Minotaur represented the “beast inside of all men” or “humanity trapped inside its bestiality.” In order to escape one’s fate, he or she had to find a way out of the maze, impossible without help, as Ariadne helped Theseus.
5. Explain how the political, economic, and social aspects of slavery might be seen as a monster threatening to destroy not only lives of the enslaved, but the society which perpetuates its existence.
6. Show first segment of the History Channel DVD with outline guide for notes.
7. In small groups, have students discuss the “monster” of slavery that was embedded – not exactly hidden, but not given the light of day – within American society in 19th century.
8. Ask students: How did the Abolitionists aid in exposing the “monster”? Use the “Underground Railroad” as a symbol of slave escape from the “monster” within the labyrinth.
9. Students use notes taken during viewing of video to prepare a list of heroic characteristics that abolitionists and slaves displayed in order to complete the journey to freedom successfully.

Assessment:

In part 2 of this activity, students will give oral reports based on group discussions. The report will serve as the assessment artifact.
Lesson Plan: Escaping from an American Labyrinth (Part 2)

Learning Objective: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Explain how the efforts of white abolitionists and black slaves adhere to the classic conception of heroic behavior.

Instructions:

1. Have students provide oral reports to whole class about the heroic characteristics discussed in the small group meeting in last class.
2. Show first segment of the History Channel DVD with outline guide for notes.
3. Explain that the notes will be helpful in completing the written assignment.
4. Assign a short paper which requires students to (a) identify past unjust social, political, or legal circumstances that led to heroic behavior on the part of individuals or groups and (b) identify a contemporary societal issue that might be considered worth of heroic intervention by citizens of conscience. Students must explain how the situation examined adheres to the principles of heroic behavior.

Assessment:

The written assignment will serve as an assessment artifact.
**Lesson Plan: How to Use a Book**

**Learning Objective:** After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to access the organization and the research resources within the Gibbon text.

**Core Student Success Skills Addressed:**

- Organization

**Materials:**

- *A Call to Heroism – Renewing America’s Vision of Greatness*
- Worksheets to be completed in pairs after introduction to parts of the text. Each student must submit a completed worksheet

**Context within the Course:**

We will not have time to completely use the content of this text. As such, I want the students to know how the content might be of supplemental use in other courses, and so they need to know how to access information to suit their own purposes.

**Instructions:**

1. Provide a guided introduction to various sections of text.
2. Request that students complete a detailed worksheet that (1) reinforces the academic vocabulary that applies to texts and (2) requires that the students understand how to use title page, content page, foreword, introduction, chapter notes, bibliography, index.

**Assessment:**

Each student must submit a completed worksheet that will serve as the assessment artifact.
Lesson Plan: Heroes as Problem Solvers

Learning Objective: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify contemporary social problems that require heroic vision and effort to solve.
- Define the concept of “ideology” and how it influences perceptions.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

Materials:

- A list of the contemporary issues the students suggested as worthy of heroic intervention
- Chart of heroic characteristics that students suggested and discussed in lessons 7 to 9. (Students should have copies of these in binders. If not, they will be shown on projector and also be in Blackboard)
- A Call to Heroism text
- Sets of four 5” by 8” index cards. Each card in the set has written on it one of the contemporary issues chosen by the students as worthy of heroic intervention

Context within the Course:

This lesson builds upon the foundation created by the examination of the classical conception of “Hero” that was undertaken in earlier class sessions. This lesson should help students begin to think in a concrete way about contemporary problems and issues that affect persons and society in such a negative way that they threaten the existence of individuals or groups.

Instructions:

1. Read with students sections of the text pages 1-17 “What is a Hero?”
2. While reading, write on whiteboard characteristics of “hero” that the students agree are valid to list.
3. Have students compare the characteristics on the class list already gathered in earlier lessons. Combine with students a final set of characteristics that will guide us as we read about and discuss modern heroes.
4. Distribute the sets of index cards to groups of 3 or 4, depending upon total present.
5. Instruct students to come up with a scenario for each of the problems or issues that could “solve” the problem. Be clear that the scenario must include obstacles to solving the problem or resolving the issue. (After all, if the problems or issues were easy to resolve, they would not be on their list.)

6. Try to identify some of the assumptions or value judgments that are embedded in the solutions being proposed by students.

7. Define the term “ideology” for students.

8. Have students complete a written paragraph that explains their ideology or basic value system. Ask them, “What are the values, parts of life, persons, and personal goals that strongly influence the way you live and the decisions that you make?”

Assessment:

Collect sets of index cards and grade for plausibility and completeness in steps to the goals. Also collect the short writing assignment, and grade for completeness and detail.
Lesson Plan: Self Discovery

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Explain how Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s transformational moment put him on a positive path to inner fulfillment and professional success and how this relates to the hero’s journey.
- Explain how the assistance of a greater force or power even in antiquity is often part of the hero’s journey.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:
- Self-assessment

Materials:
- Excerpts from *On the Shoulders of Giants* for sharing in class and independent reading, including short biography of Kareem to put his story in context of the 1950s and 60s.
- Information about Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s later contributions to justice for African Americans.

Instructions:
1. Ask students to pair up and draw up a list of well-known athletes – athletic “heroes” – that everyone admires.
2. Determine if the students are even aware how many of the “heroes” are African American or Hispanic.
3. Show pictures (from online research not yet done) of teams in the 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s. Let the students come to conclusion about what was going on.
4. Discuss one of Kareem’s points that because black basketball leagues existed outside of the “white” major leagues, they were able to develop their own style without the constraints of professional “rules.”
5. Use this context information to frame Kareem’s early experience.
6. Homework assignment: Students will read more excerpts of *On the Shoulders of Giants* and consider whether Kareem deserves the title of “hero.” Also they will find out online or in library information about Jackie Robinson, baseball hero.

Assessment:

The instructor will observe the level of discussion and participation by students.
Lesson Plan: The Athlete as Hero

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify criteria for evaluating athletes as “heroes.”
- Explain why and how the athlete is so revered in society.
- Demonstrate historical perspective about the role of sport in American society.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Communication

Materials:

- The Fall of the Hero Athlete pages 74-85
- PBS DVD Ken Burns Baseball – 1940 to 1951 – Sixth Inning
- Excerpts from Jonathan Eig’s Opening Day Prologue p 1-5; Jack Roosevelt Robinson p 7-19; Opening Day p 48-61

Instructions:

1. Review discussion of athletes from previous class on Abdul-Jabbar.
2. Assign several passages to be read in small groups.
3. Distribute IFAT card activity to review some important points.
4. View sections of Ken Burns Baseball – 1940 to 1951 – Sixth Inning.
5. Written assignment: Have students defend the status of Jackie Robinson as a true “hero.”

Assessment:

The IFAT card activity and the written assignment will serve as assessment artifacts.
Lesson Plan: Contemporary Heroism

Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Identify what constitutes heroic quest and heroic behavior in contemporary American and world community.
- Describe the unique challenges of immigrants in their search for acceptance into contemporary American society.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Collaboration

Materials:

- Zeitoun by Dave Eggers
- Online research information about the Katrina crisis in New Orleans

Instructions:

1. Students will read selections from Dave Egger’s Zeitoun about a Syrian-American immigrant’s struggle to help people in Post-Katrina, as well as research material on the effects of Hurricane Katrina.
2. Students will move into small groups and discuss how Zeitoun’s false arrest as a terrorist relates to the special problems of heroism in 21st century America.
3. A group member will report to the whole class on the group’s ideas and observations.

Assessment:

The instructor will observe the level of discussion and participation by students.
Lesson Plan: Modern History & Mythic Archetypes

Learning Objective: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Compare the struggles of Anti-Nazi partisans to the journey of Odysseus

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Collaboration

Materials:

- DVD Secrets of the Dead - Escape from Auschwitz

Instructions:

- Students will view the DVD program Escape from Auschwitz as well as read selections from Schindler’s list.
- In small groups, students will discuss parallels between the protagonists of Escape from Auschwitz and Oskar Schindler.

Assessment:

The instructor will observe the level of discussion and participation by students.
Lesson Plan: The Warrior Hero in Modern America

Learning Objective: After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to

- Compare changing attitudes about the relation of war to heroism.

Core Student Success Skills Addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Collaboration

Materials:

- Letters from American soldiers in World War I and II
- Letters from American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Ron Kovic Born on the Fourth of July – examination of heroism in non-combat behavior

Instructions:

1. Students will read sample letters written by American soldiers letters sent from early 20th century through the early 21st century as well as selections from Ron Kovic’s Born on the Fourth of July.
2. In groups have students discuss the similarities and differences of the soldiers’ attitudes towards war and heroism.
3. Each student is responsible for a short writing assignment in which they describe the attitudes of the soldier-writers regarding heroism and what evidence they have from the text that can support their claims.

Assessment:

The writing assignment will serve as the assessment artifact.
Appendix A: Sample Syllabus

HUM 101: SEARCHING FOR HEROES
Fall 2010: (T-TH) 900 a.m. - 1015 a.m.
Henderson Hall 220

Instructor: Christine M. Ryan
E-mail: ryanc@middlesex.mass.edu
Phone number: 978-621-1524

Course Description
This 3 credit course will investigate heroes from ancient Greek, Hindu, and Native American mythologies and compare them with modern and contemporary heroes and fictional heroes from literature. Through reading, writing, and discussing, students will consider how core elements of the heroes’ journey common to all cultures can inspire and better inform their own college experience, their career choices, and their lives.

This course fulfills the Freshman Seminar requirement.

Co-requisite(s) Concurrent enrollment in two developmental courses. This course satisfies the General Education Humanities Elective and Multicultural/Global Awareness Intensive Values requirement.

This course was redesigned as part of the Title III grant, Strategies for Success Increasing Achievement, Persistence, Retention and Engagement. The course materials will focus on key skills of Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Organization, and Self-Assessment. As students in the pilot version of this course, you will have an opportunity to think more explicitly about these skills, to apply them to course concepts and then to demonstrate how you have improved in these skills by the end of the semester.

Operational definitions for each term are listed below

Critical Thinking: Critical Thinking involves a variety of means for integrating knowledge, using reasoning and solving problems. At its “Developing” Level (Application) it requires that students identify and use relevant information and reach conclusions consistent with evidence presented. At more “Proficient” and “Advanced” Levels it requires that students compare and contrast differing views, analyze and evaluate information logically, and make inferences based on testable hypotheses.

Communication: Communication entails the ability of students to explain ideas related to what they are learning in clear oral or written forms. Such information may be presented individually or in groups. Skills may include the ability to break content down into smaller pieces, organizing and summarizing information, and demonstrating informational, technological, and quantitative literacy.
Collaboration: Collaboration includes the skills necessary for students to work together in group activities and projects. This includes direct skills such as dividing tasks into parts, collecting and sharing information, and making group decisions. It also includes skills related to the processes for learning in community with others such as learning to appreciate differences, negotiating, compromising, and reaching consensus.

Organization: Organization involves a variety of related abilities. These include the ability to systematically relate areas of content to each other, the ability to take an overarching piece of information and to present concepts in a logical manner, and the ability to come up with an outline to show how concepts relate to one another. It may also include the ability to read and follow the syllabus, time management, and the use of effective study skills.

Self assessment: Self assessment includes setting academic and career goals, developing and following a plan to achieve those goals, and utilizing college resources to help students achieve their goals. It involves the ability to assess oneself to gain insight into how one learns, plans, makes decisions, and studies. It also involves the ability to examine how relevant theories apply to real life.

Required Texts


Additional material to insure successful participation in this course

- 1 or 1 ½ inch three ring binder for reading packet to supplement the texts and for journal and other student-generated material necessary for the course work.
- Five divider tabs to organize the material in this binder.
- Active Middlesex CC student online account, including access to Blackboard and use of college email.
- Access to Internet for viewing of videos and GBH online programs. (See below for on-campus facilities to use computers and Internet during day and evening.)
- Access to word processing program for completion of written assignments.
- An English dictionary for clarifying unfamiliar vocabulary is essential for full comprehension of readings.
**Academic and Personal Objectives** After successfully completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Define and explain the traditional concept of “hero” as exhibited in Classical Greek, Indian, Native American and African American-folk cultures.
- Identify how sociological conditions create opportunities for heroic responses.
- Show how modern heroes demonstrate the journey and core experiences of the classical models.
- Analyze the influence of modern media on the rise and relevance of “heroes” in current American society.
- Identify similarity and contrast in traditional concept of “hero” and the current media model of “hero.”
- Demonstrate in a final project how this course has affirmed or altered student’s assessment of heroism, citing character(s) studied and discussed in the course, as well as an “heroic” figure individually chosen and researched by students.
- Decide on a goal for his or her academic journey, and determine the steps that need to be successfully navigated to reach that goal.

I wish to support your commitment to succeed in this course, as well as encourage your desire to pursue higher degrees and further study after Middlesex. The course objectives, requirements, and methods of instruction are geared toward achieving those ends. In addition, Middlesex Community College offers valuable resources to students, and some class time will be used for very short presentations by a spokesperson from a few of these college programs.

- Personal counseling and consultation
- Career programs and counseling
- Health services
- International student support
- Veterans resource centers
- Trio programs
- Academic support and tutoring centers
- Academic accommodation resources

Detailed guides to access these services are found through the **Student Services** link on the General Information MCC page [https://mymcc.middlesex.mass.edu/tabs/GenInfo.asp](https://mymcc.middlesex.mass.edu/tabs/GenInfo.asp)

**Lowell Campus** The Language Arts Center is a multimedia facility that offers Internet, software programs, Microsoft Office, listening and speaking equipment, and other audio visual aids. This 26 computer facility, located in Room LC403, provides support to students. Students can visit independently during open hours.
The Lowell Language Arts Center hours are

Monday-Thursday  830-330pm  
Friday           830-230pm

The Writing Center hours will be posted on the college web site. This is also on the 4th floor. Bedford Campus The Writing and Computer Centers are located in Academic Resources Building 1- (Library Bldg) second floor.

Achieving goals in this course

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is mandatory because this is a lecture/workshop course. There will be Blackboard access to some course materials and some assignments will be based online in Blackboard. However, this is a supplement to class activities, not an indication of an online mode of presentation. It is essential to participate in classroom activities. We will discuss and practice the application of skills that will be utilized on exams, writing assignments both in content and form, and completion of in-class and final projects.

Absence or tardiness in this type of course detracts from a student’s ability to achieve our goals, and therefore, more than four absences will result in lower final grade. Please consult with me if you will be absent more than one consecutive day. I am available through email or phone.

Punctuality

I do not like to waste students’ time or my own time. We will begin class at the scheduled time, and both instructor and fellow students expect everyone to be ready to start the planned activities. I find that students in early morning classes are very punctual, energetic, and motivated to start their day. I expect you are the same. There may be times when the class is dismissed a few minutes early, if planned activities are completed.

Punctuality in submitting assignments is also imperative, since instructor feedback is a prime way of acquiring content information and skills. Assignments will assume that prior work has been completed, so “making up” or “catching up” with class work is not optimal. Building skills is just what that verb suggests—construction from lower to higher levels. We only have three months to build together, so we all need to be consistent in our efforts to make progress.

Academic Accommodation

Students who have worked with individual education plans previously, or those who suspect that accommodations would facilitate their learning experiences in MCC, should schedule an
appointment with one of the counselors in the Disability Support Services Department. The staff is extremely effective and knowledgeable. There are several different options available, including one that assists those who are the first in their family to attend college. Students who have been accepted into one of these programs should discuss options with their professors during the first two weeks of class, and give professors a copy of the recommendations’ form provided by the Support Staff.

Communication with Professors and Staff

Please communicate early and often with professors and staff here at Middlesex. The beginning of your first semester, especially, can be daunting. New schedules, regulations, required texts and materials, geographic and transportation issues can be confusing. etc) It all takes time and toll on your energy. However, do not wait too long to approach instructors and staff if you have questions about anything, and continue that habit throughout the semester. Remember, if you are unsure about something, it’s most likely that other students are unsure as well, and they will appreciate having someone else clarify it. Instructors and staff welcome questions because they help to guide our own work.

Your success from this point on in your education (and in your career as well) depends upon how effectively you negotiate your environment. This is a favorable environment to begin that process. Communicate with the people in it in order to achieve your goals.

Integrity in Academic Life

You are both the builder and the beneficiary of your success here at Middlesex Community College or any other institution of higher learning you will attend. You will grow in intellectual, professional and social skills only by committing to work to the best of your ability. Unless you make that commitment, you will not fulfill your potential. Therefore, only your work and your ideas are acceptable and valid evidence of your right to be part of this broad community of academic learners. We welcome you and your contribution to that community.

Part of the contract we embrace as members of an academic learning community is to avoid plagiarism. The person who is guilty of it does not demonstrate personal integrity. Plagiarism does not demonstrate respect for self or for other students. No matter what activity in life we are engaged in, the most important element is our personal integrity. Because Middlesex is committed to your success, we are trying to address issues of plagiarism with effective and fair consequences.

Plagiarism as defined in the college handbook:

The Middlesex Community College student handbook defines plagiarism as, “taking and using the ideas, writings, or data of another without clearly and fully crediting the source. Examples include not citing another person’s actual words or replicating all or part of another’s product; using another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories without reference, even if they are
completely paraphrased in one’s own words; borrowing facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials without giving credit to the source; unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects.” Consequences for plagiarism are failure of individual assignments or, if a student refuses to eliminate the practice, failure in a course.

One of the topics we will discuss early in the semester is the use of material that is so readily available to every Internet user. How do we benefit from the abundance of information and opinion? How do we integrate this knowledge into our own work while giving adequate credit (attribution) to the sources?

*Email Expectations*

I am usually able to respond to email within 24 hours. To ensure that your email receives a timely response, put *Explorations in the subject line of the email*. If you are unsure how to complete an assignment or need an extension, be sure to email me as soon as possible so that I can be aware of the problem. However, I should not be expected to repeat the content of a missed class in an email. Journal assignments are given in class, so check with a classmate if you missed the assignment. Formal assignments with due dates will be posted on the Blackboard site. I will notify students of changes in the ANNOUNCEMENT section.

*Office of Student Life and Activities*

PLEASE spend some time visiting the student activities page and consider joining at least one of their myriad opportunities that will make you feel a real part of our Middlesex community

[http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/StudentActivities/](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/StudentActivities/)

This page begins Welcome to the Office of Student Life and Activities, the center for leadership development programs, co-curricular activities, and student organizations. There is a broad spectrum of activities available to students including opportunities to enhance leadership skills and participate in clubs, events and student government. Students are encouraged to get involved on campus and make the most of their college experience.

You will find opportunities on and off campus to explore personal interests, develop talents and enhance student social connections. As you probably already know, participation in student organizations is also very valuable for resumes and applications to other colleges.

*Class Participation* (used as component of Assessment)

Class participation is a very broad term. It is a part of the course grade that professors make every effort to assess fairly and accurately. Remember that asking questions as well as answering them
contributes to vitality in exchange of ideas. I welcome student input on topics that arise from reading, viewing videos, and class discussion. Remember that at any time in our class meetings when you offer comments, you are addressing your total audience – students and instructor – to determine their level of attention and response to your comments. Therefore, address your comments to everyone, and look at classmates, not just the instructor. Every person in our mini-community of learners deserves to be heard and responded to in a respectful and mature manner. There will be some classes which will require student preparation in order to participate creditably. Other discussions will follow presentations or reading or viewing in class. Attentive, appropriate and good-humored contributions to the group are requirements, not options.

One of the current distractions to attentive participation is the convenience and pleasure of electronic communication. It is not unusual for other students, parents, friends, employers to want to contact you at any time throughout the day. Although students often say that checking texts does not disturb their intellectual process, there have been numerous studies which contradict this assertion. It is important to let your contacts know when you are NOT available to read and answer messages. One of these times is Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 10:20 AM. As a college student, you should exert your right to privacy when you need to attend to what is important to you. Participation is part of the course grade – your contacts should respect your efforts to succeed in your studies. Please make it clear that you are not going to have access to cell phone, texting or email during class hours. Emergency situations will be dealt with on an individual basis.

**Assessment**

(Synonyms judgment, evaluation, appraisal, estimation)

As instructor for this course, in December I will submit to the Registrar the grade to be included in your academic record. It is my responsibility to judge, evaluate and appraise your class participation and your performance on specific assignments. However, since you will be provided with the criteria upon which that score is calculated, you will determine what that grade is.

WIKIPEDIA: The humanities are academic disciplines which study the human condition, using methods that are primarily analytic, critical, or speculative, as distinguished from the mainly empirical approaches of the natural and social sciences.

Humanities concern the way human beings function on personal, intellectual, and societal levels. The criteria for evaluation in this class are based on this description; I like to think of assessment in terms of three R’s: respect, reflection, and resolution.

**Respect** for content and fellow participants. This is demonstrated by regular attendance, serious consideration of content introduced in class, attention to the video presentations that will deliver significant content, attention to the texts and the excerpts from other books and periodicals. Respect for fellow participants is demonstrated by attention to instructor presentations in class and attention and response to the contributions of other students. Class participation grade is based on these. You won’t pass the course without this component.
Reflection the content of this course is intended to stimulate intellectual reflection. This reflection will be demonstrated in several ways Journal entries, short quizzes, midterm exam, at least three short written assignments, and a final project that can be submitted in a form chosen by the student. Participation in class and small group activities also provide opportunity to articulate ideas and questions.

Resolution The Exploration courses provide opportunity to solidify academic skills necessary to succeed in college and university degree programs. Students are responsible for resolving any academic issues that require remediation. This means hard work, determination, and appetite for change. These courses are also a time for students to strengthen their resolve to qualify for an enriching and challenging career.

Course Grade based on 100 points is calculated in the following way

| Class participation (includes attendance, punctuality, involvement in and contributions to discussions and group activities) | 30 points |
| Informal assignments (Journals, quizzes, reading and video guide sheets) | 20 points |
| Three written assignments | 15 points |
| Midterm exam | 10 points |
| Final project | 15 points |
| Final exam | 10 points |