

Developing a Course: What Liberal Education Means for Miami University

A thesis submitted to the Miami University
Honors Program in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for University Honors with Distinction

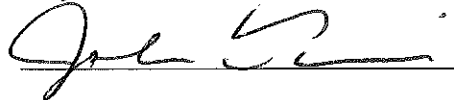
Emily Florence Schwarz

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Differdange, Luxembourg

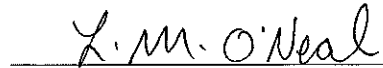
Developing a Course: What Liberal Education Means for Miami University

By Emily Schwarz

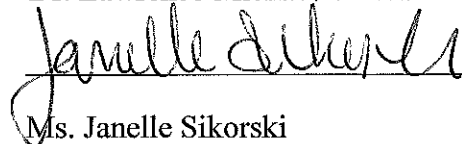
Approved by:

 _____, Advisor

Dr. John Tassoni

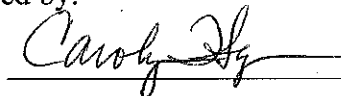
 _____, Reader

Dr. Lawrence Michael O'Neal

 _____, Reader

Ms. Janelle Sikorski

Accepted by:

 _____, Director,

University Honors Program

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Foreword

As all members of the faculty know, Miami University's curricular values are centered on liberal education. Organizations like the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) have done significant research showing the benefits of pursuing a liberal education (see the website of the AAC&U at <http://www.aacu.org>). For many generations a major goal of the nation's top undergraduate institutions has been the expansion of opportunity through learning and liberal education has long been the favored educational philosophy. Liberal education is frequently identified with intellectual rigor, democratic freedom, and scientific progress. W.E.B. du Bois equated liberal education with excellence when he argued that African American leaders deserve a college-level liberal education and not just narrow and technical occupational training¹. Liberal education empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. A liberal education helps students expand their sense of social responsibility as well as teaching transferable intellectual and personal skills such as communication and problem solving. These skills are widely applicable throughout one's life². To these ends, AAC&U set out essential learning outcomes for liberal education curricula: (1) Students should gain knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world through the study of science, math, social science, history, humanities, languages, and the arts. (2) Students should gain skills in inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving and develop a sense of personal and social responsibility³. While Miami University prides itself on being a liberal arts institution, it is not clear if our liberal education curriculum is as effective or

¹ http://www.aacu.org/publications/practicing_liberal_education.cfm

² http://www.aacu.org/leap/What_is_liberal_education.cfm

³ <http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>

efficient as it could be in meeting the learning outcomes established by AAC&U. This question lies at the heart of my senior project.

Miami's general education curriculum is called the Miami Plan for liberal education. Many of Miami's stakeholders recognize that there are significant limitations in the current Miami Plan. For several years now the Liberal Education Council (LEC), the University Senate's standing committee that oversees liberal education curriculum, has been discussing strengths and weaknesses of the Miami Plan and assessing what changes might be made. Last year's LEC conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the Miami Plan. In this analysis LEC identified a lack of student understanding of the Miami Plan as a significant weakness. This lack of understanding manifests in apathy, confusion, and frustration. Many students see their liberal education as a set of boxes to check that they need to "get done" before the "serious" work of their major can begin. Without understanding the context and importance of liberal education, students do not fully appreciate their learning opportunities and as such may not get as much out of Miami's core curriculum. This issue is not specific to Miami; in fact it is a problem faced by the majority of undergraduate campuses nationwide. According to AAC&U survey data only 5% of administrators nationwide think that a "majority" of their students "understand [their] institution's intended goals or outcomes for undergraduate learning" while 58% of administrators identify that only "some/not many" students understand the common learning goals and outcomes⁴.

I see the lack of student understanding of the goals and outcomes for their undergraduate education as a major weakness of the Miami Plan. For my senior honors thesis I decided to tackle this issue and come up with something that might work to mitigate this problem. I have

⁴ http://www.aacu.org/membership/documents/2009MemberSurvey_Part1.pdf

created a model for a course that would serve as an introduction to curricular life at Miami for first year students. I have written a sample course proposal (one that could be submitted to LEC) and a sample syllabus.

When creating this course, I found it worthwhile to investigate curricula from other liberal arts institutions across the country. Grinnell College is one university featured by AAC&U for their innovations in Liberal Education. Grinnell is now sponsoring a second year retreat themed “Creating My Liberal Arts Life” with programming designed to allow students to reflect on the purposes and value of a liberal arts education. The retreat provides guidance for students so they can be more intentional in the selection and direction of their courses of study. Activities at the retreat include an alumni panel, examination of alumni transcripts, discussion on the importance of careful course selection, lectures on the importance of liberal education, and the creation of an individualized “action plan” for each student’s educational path. Student evaluations of the retreat demonstrate its success. In surveys, large majorities of students agreed or strongly agreed with statements such as “the retreat has helped me to better understand the meaning(s) of a liberal arts education” and “the retreat has helped me develop a clearer sense of how my time at Grinnell College can help me pursue my life goals.” These student evaluations demonstrate that innovative programming such as this can help students navigate through and get more out of their undergraduate careers⁵.

While this program was very successful at Grinnell, retreat style programming is not easily scalable to a student body the size of Miami University. Another way to help students understand and appreciate liberal education is through an introductory course, taken at the beginning of a student’s college experience. Such a course, if offered (or required), introduces

⁵ http://www.aacu.org/aacu_news/AACUNews07/March07/feature.cfm

students to the values and purposes of a liberal education. One such course is required of all UNC-Ashville first-year students. This three credit hour course is called “The Liberal Studies Introductory Colloquium (LSIC).” Instructors for the course are faculty from departments across all disciplines; these faculty members also serve as academic advisors for their students. LSIC is designated by UNC-Ashville as “Writing Intensive” and “Information Literacy Intensive.” The course addresses the nature of liberal arts studies by examining intellectual approaches from many disciplines. Through this course students can see how their education helps prepare them for larger civic responsibility through service learning, exploring active learning through undergraduate research, and experiencing cultural events on campus.⁶ An experience like this is something that Miami students would benefit from, mitigating the lack of student understanding and appreciation of the Miami Plan. For these reasons I chose to focus my Honors thesis project on developing this type of solution for Miami.

When creating this course I included aspects of Dr. George Kuh’s 2008 AAC&U publication about high impact educational practices. Kuh identified several practices that have been shown to increase the depth of student learning, including first year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service and community based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects⁷. When creating a new educational opportunity for Miami students to improve their understanding of the Miami Plan, I thought it was important to include some of these high impact practices. A first year seminar brings small groups of students together with a faculty or staff member on a regular basis. High-quality first year experiences promote critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, and

⁶ www.unca.edu

⁷ <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>

collaborative learning to develop intellectual and practical competencies. A common intellectual experience can be defined as any core curriculum shared by the student body. These programs often cover broad themes and offer a variety of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students. This idea of having a common experience across the student body can help bring course concepts into every-day life and discussions.

Writing-intensity is also an important attribute of a course. Writing should be emphasized at all levels of instruction and across disciplines. Students should be encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing including both analytical and reflective writing. The effectiveness of this initiative is increased as it is repeated across the curriculum and throughout the years of a student's college experience, becoming truly embedded in the educational experience of students. Collaborative assignments teach students to problem-solve while working together with other learners. Students are able to improve their understanding of the material at hand by listening to insights of their peers. Learning is enhanced by working with individuals from different backgrounds and/or who have different life experiences. Diversity and global learning are of the utmost importance today given the interconnected nature of the world. Programs should help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. Frequently this learning is enhanced through experiential learning in the community and/or through study abroad⁸.

I have incorporated ideas from Grinnell College and UNC-Ashville as well as several of the high impact practices outlined by Dr. Kuh and the AAC&U into the course I have created. This course is intended to serve as an introduction to liberal education for first semester students. The primary purpose of this course would be to encourage students to think about the importance

⁸ <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>

of a liberal arts education. The course proposal and syllabus I have created are intended to be a model for a future course. This is a course that can be taught by faculty from any department. Faculty can use knowledge in their specialty areas to provide classroom examples that will add depth and help students apply the knowledge they are acquiring. Given that global learning is identified as a high-impact practice as well as the new focus of the Miami Plan, it would be ideal for a global aspect to be braided throughout the course in the form of readings, examples during lectures, and discussion topics. The course structure and assignments provided here are meant purely as a guide and are by no means complete. Several aspects of the course (the final exam for example) need to be expanded upon by future instructors based on course material they select. The resource list provided will serve as a good starting point for future faculty teaching this course. While these citations provide high quality information, some may not be at the proper developmental level for first-year students. Most of the research in this field is written by administrators and researchers with the intended audience of university faculty and administrators. Because of this, the reading list will need to be adapted so that students can have deep interactions with the material. Despite these issues this course can serve as a template while allowing room for faculty to add their own perspectives depending on their interests and areas of expertise. It is my hope that offering such a course for first-year students would help enhance students' appreciation of the Miami Plan in particular and of liberal learning in general.

Course Proposal

1. Title/number/credit hours of course and projected number of students per section.

LED 101: The Miami Plan for Liberal Education. This will be a 2 credit hour course with around 20 students per section.

2. Course description (no more than 100 words) as it will appear in the *General Bulletin*.

This course is an introduction to the curriculum at Miami, in particular the Global Miami Plan. It will cover liberal education theory and explain the current disciplinary model. The course will also provide an understanding of the importance of liberal education in developing effective citizens as well as successful careers. It will highlight the relevance of the global component to the curriculum.

3. Foundation area(s) proposed.

This course is not intended to fit one of the foundation categories as it is a general overview of the liberal education curriculum. Instead, this course is intended to be used as a core course of a Living Learning Community (LLC) to be accompanied by Residence Life programming to provide first-year students with an introduction to academic life at Miami. This course may also serve as a pilot for a future course that could be a required introduction to the new Global Miami Plan.

4. The Four Principles of Liberal Education.

While this course is not a Miami Plan foundation course, its learning outcomes focus on each of the four principles. Each of the four principles will be covered in detail in the course.

Critical thinking is an essential component of this course. Students will be asked to think critically about each component of the course, and make connections between them. The coursework will not emphasize facts, but instead stress complex interpretations and careful analyses of the material. There are several learning outcomes attached to this principle to help assess student competency in this area. Through this course students will be able to review theory from many sources and apply it creatively to their lives. Students will demonstrate this competency through the research paper component of the course work. The paper requires students to use research on liberal education theory to support the Miami Plan or help them suggest revisions to the general education curriculum. Through this paper students will demonstrate critical thinking skills.

Understanding Contexts is another important element of the Miami Plan and this course. This course requires students to consider the social context and practical applications of liberal education. Through readings and in-class discussions students will learn about different educational frameworks and how they relate to their environment. One of the primary learning objectives of the course is that students will better understand the personal and social benefits of

liberal education. Students will demonstrate this competency through a written assignment requiring students to use course material to demonstrate how the Miami Plan will impact their career path and life as an effective citizen. By demonstrating personal and social benefits students will gain an understanding of the greater context of liberal education.

Engaging With Other Learners is a fundamental aspect of this course. Every class session there will be time for small group and full class discussion about the topic of the day. Discussion with peers opens students' minds to different perspectives on course material. This helps students not only to appreciate different aspects of the topic, but to gain a better understanding of their own personal opinions, thereby enhancing their critical thinking as well. Students will be encouraged to prepare for and participate in these in-class discussions. One primary learning outcome of this course is that students will understand multiple perspectives on the course material. Students will demonstrate competency through several avenues. Given that this course could be part of a living learning community, students would be living with their classmates. This would provide opportunity for informal discussions as well as RA programming related to course material. In addition, there will be several formalized opportunities for students to work together. One example is the interview assignment. After students interview a professional in one of their possible future career paths, they will write a reflection paper. Then, in groups of 4, students will meet to read and discuss each other's reflection papers from the interview assignment. Students will then compare and contrast their experience with the 3 other group members' experiences through another written assignment, giving them the opportunity to compare their perspective (gained through experiences and perceptions) with those of three fellow classmates.

Reflecting and Acting is an essential element of this course. Reflection is an important part of internalizing knowledge. Reflection will help students to judiciously evaluate and engage with their liberal education experience at Miami. The learning outcome related to this principle is that students will learn to reflect on course material to develop their personal perspective. Students will demonstrate competency through weekly one-page reflection papers over the readings for the week. These assignments will help the students to put class readings into context. This aspect of the course will also help students learn how to gather their thoughts in preparation for discussion. These assignments will show the students that regular reflection can play a large role in the formation of thoughtful opinion and calculated action. One of the learning objectives of the course is for students to gain information that they can use in the selection of future Miami Plan courses that will enrich their academic experience at Miami. To inspire students to use course material to direct future action there will be a short written assignment around registration time where the student is asked to explain why they chose the courses they did. Additionally one of the final exam questions will ask the students to describe specifically how they will use the course content in future registration and curricular choices.

5. Assessment Plan

Tier I: The course will be examined by the instructor in conjunction with the Director of Liberal Education and a Liberal Education Council subcommittee. They will analyze the syllabus, Tier II assessment results (described below), as well as Tier III assessment results (also described below) to determine how well the course met the principles of the Miami Plan.

Tier II: Student perceptions of how well the course meets the Miami Plan principles will be assessed through the use of a questionnaire. Students will rate the following competencies on the following scale: 4= very much 3= somewhat 2= moderately 1=not at all. The questions are as follows:

- To what degree did you learn to think critically about the role of liberal education in your life through this course?
- To what degree did you learn to think critically about liberal education theory through this course?
- To what degree did you learn to think about the greater context of liberal education in regard to the role it will play in your career and societal engagement in this course?
- To what degree did this course provide opportunities for you to engage with other learners as you thought about multiple perspectives on liberal education?
- To what degree did you learn to reflect on the Miami Plan for liberal education through this course?

Tier III: To measure student-learning outcomes the professor will use the following rubric.

Category	Very Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking was consistently demonstrated in student research papers (as evaluated on Paper 2 grading rubric) .	Many of the students demonstrated critical thinking in their research papers (as evaluated on Paper 2 grading rubric).	Many student research papers lacked evidence of critical thinking (as evaluated on Paper 2 grading rubric).
Understanding Contexts	Contexts were consistently explored and understood in student papers (as evaluated on Paper 1 grading rubric).	Many of the students explored and understood the greater context in their papers (as evaluated on Paper 1 grading rubric).	Many student papers lacked exploration and/or understanding of the greater context in their papers (as evaluated on Paper 1 grading rubric).
Engaging With Other Learners	Student participation was frequent and substantive. Students consistently demonstrated comparison of perspectives in their group work (as evaluated through homework 3).	Student participation was moderate and may have lacked depth. Many students demonstrated comparison of perspectives in their group work (as evaluated through homework 3).	Students were reluctant to participate and may have lacked depth. Many students failed to demonstrate comparison of perspectives in their group work (as evaluated through homework 3).

Reflection and Action	Weekly student reflection papers showed sincere and deep reflection on course content.	Weekly student reflection papers showed moderate reflection that may have lacked depth, sincerity, context, or an acknowledgement of other/changing perspectives.	Weekly student reflection papers lacked depth and sincerity.
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LED 101: The Miami Plan for Liberal Education **Syllabus**

Introduction

This course is designed to be a guide to the academic experience at Miami. The majority of course content will focus on the role of Liberal Education in a student's curricular experience. Attendance is important, as discussion is a fundamental element of classroom dynamics and student learning. Class time will be spent in lecture, discussion, as well as group work. This course is ideally taught in seminar format and size to first-semester students living together in a Living Learning Community (LLC). The LLC allows class discussion to continue outside of the classroom and permeate a student's life. RA programming accompanies course work, allowing students to have co-curricular experiences with the course content.

The Four Principles of Liberal Education.

While this course is not a Miami Plan foundation course, its learning outcomes focus on each of the four principles of liberal education on which the Global Miami Plan is built. Each of the four principles will be covered in detail in the course.

Critical Thinking

Through this course students will be able to review theories from multiple sources and apply them creatively to their lives. Students will practice this competency every week in class discussions by asking questions about meanings and interpretations of assigned readings as well as comments made by peers. This competency will be reinforced through the research paper component of the course work. The paper requires students to use research on liberal education theory to support the Miami Plan or help them suggest revisions to the general education curriculum.

Understanding Contexts

This course requires students to consider the social and practical applications of liberal education. Through readings and in-class discussions students will learn about different educational frameworks and how they relate to their environment. The course focuses on the social context of liberal education. One of the primary learning objectives of the course is that students will better understand the personal and social benefits of liberal education. Students will demonstrate this competency through a written assignment requiring students to use course material to demonstrate how the Miami Plan will impact their career path and life as an effective citizen.

Engaging With Other Learners

In every class session there will be time for small group and full class discussion about the topic of the day. Discussion with peers opens students' minds to different perspectives on course material. This helps students not only to appreciate different aspects of the topic, but to gain a better understanding of their own personal opinions, thereby enhancing their critical thinking as well. Students will be encouraged to prepare for and participate in these in-class discussions. One

primary learning outcome of this course is that students will understand multiple perspectives on the course material. Students will demonstrate competency through several avenues. Given that this course could be part of a living learning community, students would be living with their classmates. This provides opportunity for informal discussions as well as RA programming related to course material. In addition, there will be several formalized opportunities for students to work together. One example is the interview assignment. After students interview a professional in one of their possible future career paths, they will write a reflection paper. Then, in groups of four, students will meet to read and discuss each other's reflection papers from the interview assignment. They will then compare and contrast their experience with the three other group members' experiences through another written assignment. This paper will give them the opportunity to compare their perspective (gained through experiences and perceptions) with those of three fellow classmates.

Reflecting and Acting

Reflection is an important part of internalizing knowledge. Reflection will help students to judiciously evaluate and engage with their liberal education experience at Miami. Students will learn to reflect on course material to develop their personal perspective. Students will achieve competency through weekly one-page reflection papers over the readings for the week. These assignments will help students to put class readings into context. This aspect of the course will also help students learn how to gather their thoughts in preparation for discussion. These assignments will show the students that regular reflection can play a large role in the formation of thoughtful opinion and calculated action. One of the learning objectives of the course is for students to gain information that they can use in the selection of future Miami Plan courses that will enrich their academic experience at Miami. To inspire students to use course material to direct future action there will be a short written assignment around registration time where the student is asked to explain why they chose the courses they did.

Expectations and Assignments

It is expected that students will attend class in an engaged and participatory manner. This course follows the attendance policy as stated in the student handbook (Part VII, Section 701).

Students are expected to do the weekly readings. In order to help students process the information, form opinions, and prepare for discussion, each student must turn in a one page reflection on the previous week's reading. The reflections should address an aspect of the reading the student found interesting.

Homework assignments are designed to explore course content through out-of-class activities utilizing on-campus and community resources.

Homework 1 is an opportunity for students to reflect on their current courses and how they fit into the Miami Plan. Students should evaluate what personal and professional goals might be advanced by their current courses. The assignment should also include a reflection on the registration process and how they hope to make decisions about course selection in the future.

Homework 2 is designed around each student's visit to career services. Students are encouraged to take advantage of available resources such as career counseling and development services. Following this visit you will write a reflection about your experience. Please address the following questions: What services did you engage with? What did you learn? How can you relate this experience to liberal education? How might you use this experience to improve your academic experience at Miami?

Homework 3 involves students conducting an interview of an individual who is in a career path the student might want to enter. The student may find their own individual or ask the professor for suggestions. Students should ask questions on the following topics: How did you get where you are today? What did you take advantage of in school that has helped you? What do you wish you would have taken advantage of while in school that would have been helpful? Did you receive a liberal education? Do you think a liberal education would be helpful in your career? If so, how? Students should turn in a summary of what they learned from the interview. Please include specific answers you feel are relevant.

Homework 4 Students will work in teams of 4 during class time. They will read each other's homework 3 assignment and discuss the findings. Students will then write a reflection on all 4 interviews. Please compare and contrast how these professionals utilized a liberal education in their career. The reflection should also include the student's perspective on the "results" of their analysis.

Homework 5 has students create an action plan for course registration. Please consult the bulletin and course list to determine how requirements might be met. Students should create a plan of at least 5 courses they would like to take (and 2 they would not) to satisfy their Miami Plan requirements. You must justify each decision on a course to take by saying how you will benefit from the course (intellectually, professionally etc.). For courses you do not want to take, please explain why.

Homework 6 requires students to have a cultural experience. This could take the form of attending a lecture or event, engaging with a student group, or having sustained communication with an individual over Facebook. This experience must be global in nature. If you have a question about whether an experience qualifies, please consult the professor. After this experience, you must write a reflection. Please address the following questions. What experience did you have? What did you learn? How does your experience enhance your liberal education? In what way (or not) did you gain cultural competency? If not, why do you think you didn't improve your cultural competency?

The first paper addresses how the Miami Plan will impact your career path and life as an effective citizen in society. It should be around 5 pages in length and utilize course readings. Outside sources are optional.

The second paper is a choice between two topics. Only address one. First option: justify your support of the Global Miami Plan through the use of relevant literature on liberal education theory. Option two: justify a modification to the Miami Plan curriculum and make suggestions for new components through the use of relevant literature on liberal education theory. This

research paper should be around 5 pages in length and use at least 5 peer-reviewed sources in addition to course material that all must be properly cited in your paper.

The final exam for this course will be a cumulative take home short answer and essay exam covering all course readings and concepts from the semester.

There will be a pre and post test administered to students. This is intended to show students what they have learned through the course of the semester; these tests do not factor into a student's course grade at all.

Grading

Attendance and Participation	8%
Weekly Reflections	10%
Assignments	12% (2% each)
Paper 1	25%
Paper 2	25%
Final Exam	20%

Schedule

Week One

- Theme: Introduction to academic life at Miami
- Readings: None
- Class lecture/discussion/activity topics: difference between Miami Plan Foundation, division, and major requirements; academic advising resources; utilizing faculty; other resources (Howe, Rinella, tutoring, library, etc.); how to read a syllabus; and look at your course schedule for the current semester.

Week Two

- Theme: What is liberal education?
- Readings: (1) Association of American Colleges and Universities, "What Is Liberal Education," http://www.aacu.org/leap/What_is_liberal_education.cfm
(2) Association of American Colleges and Universities, "Statement on Liberal Learning," http://www.aacu.org/About/statements/liberal_learning.cfm
(3) Association of American Colleges and Universities, "Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)," <http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>
- Class lecture/discussion/activity topics: How is this similar/different from your high school experience?
- Due: Homework 1

Week Three

- Theme: Why is liberal education important to society?
- Readings: Braskamp, Larry A. "Higher Education for Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement," *Diversity and Democracy*, Fall 2011.
- Class lecture/discussion/ activity topics: In what ways will this curriculum positively and negatively affect your role in society? How does society benefit?
- Due: Homework 2

Week Four

- Theme: Why is liberal education important to your career?
- Readings: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. for the Association of American Colleges and Universities, "How Should Colleges Prepare Students To Succeed In Today's Global Economy," <http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/Re8097abcombined.pdf>
- Class lecture/discussion/activity topics: How might the Global Miami Plan advance or hinder your career preparation? Discuss interview "results" in groups of 4.
- Due: Homework 3

Week Five

- Theme: Foundation III: global requirement
- Readings: (1) "Liberal Education: MPF III Global Perspectives," <http://www.miami.muohio.edu/liberal-ed/current-students/foundation-three-gmp.html>
(2) Association of American College and Universities, "Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility." http://www.aacu.org/SharedFutures/global_century/index.cfm
(3) Carnegie Mellon University, "New Undergrad Courses Increase Cultural Awareness," <http://www.cmu.edu/homepage/global/2007/spring/think-global.shtml>
(4) Association of American College and Universities, "Global Collaborations: The Role of Higher Education in Diverse Democracies." <http://www.aacu.org/publications/globalforeword.cfm>
- Class lecture/ discussion/ activity topics: Understanding the requirement. Presentation from Office of Life Long Learning about study abroad opportunities.

Week Six

- Theme: cultural competence
- Readings: Braskamp, Larry A. "Developing Global Citizens." *Journal of College and Character*. September 2008.
- Class lecture/ discussion/activity topics: What does cultural competence mean? Learning outcomes and how they are achieved.

Week Seven

- Theme: The first 2 of the 4 principles: Critical Thinking and Understanding Contexts
- Readings: Tsui, Lisa. "Cultivating Critical Thinking: Insights From an Elite Liberal Arts College." *The Journal of General Education*. 56(3-4).

- Class lecture/discussion/activity topics: What do these principles mean and why are they important?
- Due: Homework 4

Week Eight

- Theme: The remaining 2 principles: Engaging With Other Learners and Reflecting and Acting
- Readings: Watkins, C., E. Carroll, and C. Lodge. "Effective Learning." *NSIN Research*. Summer 2002.
- Class lecture/discussion/activity topics: What do these principles mean and why are they important? Discuss in small groups other possible pillars of liberal learning.

Week Nine

- Theme: Disciplinary model
- Readings: Lind, Michael. "Why the Liberal Arts Still Matter." *The Wilson Quarterly* 30(4). 2006
- Class lecture/discussion/activity topics: What do the different categories mean? How do they differ in terms of ways of thinking, problem solving, and creating knowledge? Advantages/disadvantages to this model.

Week Ten

- Theme: Course registration
- Readings: Review Miami Plan Foundation, divisional, and major requirements in Miami's bulletin.
- Class lecture/ discussion/activity topics: How do you choose courses? Presentation from a Student Affairs first year advisor (first-year students' primary academic advisor). Look at the course catalogue and bulletin and work in groups to find interesting courses. Discuss the kind of course choices a person might want to make. Which course decisions make the most sense? What things must one consider in charting a course of study?
- Due: Paper 1

Week Eleven

- Theme: Other models for liberal/general education
- Readings: (1) Schneider, Carol Geary. "Practicing Liberal Education: Practical Themes in the Re-Invention of Liberal Learning."
http://www.aacu.org/publications/practicing_liberal_education.cfm
- (2) Kuh, George D. "High-Impact Educational Practices."
<http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>
- Class preparation: Research 3 Universities and see what their Liberal Ed (or General Ed) curriculum look like.
- Class lecture/ discussion/activity topics: role of competencies, interdisciplinary studies
- Due: Homework 5

Week Twelve

- Theme: pre-professional and vocational programs
- Readings: Carr, David. "Revisiting Liberal and Vocational Dimensions of University Education." *British Journal of Educational Studies*. 57(1). 2009.
- Class lecture/ discussion/activity topics: What is the appropriate role for vocational education?

Week Thirteen

- Theme: Critical examination of the Global Miami Plan
- Readings: Fong, Bobby. "Liberal Education in the 21st Century." *Liberal Education*. Winter 2004.
- Class lecture/ discussion/ activity topics: SWOT analysis (each group brainstorms one area of liberal education). Class discussion about new ideas (or defense of status quo)
- Due: Paper 2

Week Fourteen

- Theme: Conclusion
- Readings: None
- Class lecture/ discussion/activity topics: Review important concepts. The role of change in theory. How can you best utilize what you have learned in your future course selection and career decisions?
- Due: Homework 6

Bibliography

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Appendix I

In order to both show students what they have learned in this course and to provide useful data for assessment, faculty could consider administering a set of questions at the beginning and end of the semester.

Sample pre and post test questions

Please answer the following questions using the following scale: 4= very much 3= somewhat 2= moderately 1=not at all.

- How well do you understand the Miami Plan requirements?
- How well do you understand the goals of the Miami Plan?
- Do you understand the professional benefits of liberal education?
- Do you understand the societal benefits of liberal education?
- How comfortable are you with the process of picking courses for registration in future semesters?
- How much do you anticipate learning/have you learned this semester?

Please provide a short answer (a few sentences) for each of the following:

- Briefly describe/outline the general requirements for Liberal Education at Miami.
- List five learning outcomes of liberal education.
- List three professional and three societal benefits of liberal education.
- List three criteria you will consider in future course selection.
- What are three important things you hope to/have learn(ed) this semester.

Appendix II

Sample short answer and essay final exam questions.

- Define liberal education and provide support for it from the course readings.
- For each of the four principles: define the principle, outline learning outcomes, and provide support for its importance from your readings.
- Describe and reflect on how your liberal education will make you more effective in your career as well as make you a better citizen in society. Please support your answer using class readings.
- Using your readings, defend the use of either the disciplinary, competency, or interdisciplinary model of liberal education.
- How will you use what you have learned in this course to make more informed choices regarding course selection?
- How has this course enhanced your understanding of your curricular experience at Miami?
- If you were in charge of a university's general education curriculum, what would it look like? Please support your answer using class readings.