The task of bringing about communion within a modern university can be performed, if it can be performed at all, only through a common training, a common appreciation of the different kinds of knowledge and of the different methods and techniques appropriate to each, and a common, continuous discussion on the Socratic model of those ideas which can pretend to be important, together with the consideration of the practical implications of those ideas.

*Robert Maynard Hutchins,*
FRESHMAN SEMINAR

Mission Statement

The Monmouth College general education program is a structured attempt to engage students in a variety of questions and concepts pertaining to a liberal arts education. The Freshman Seminar is a gateway course to the general education program. The college catalog states:

The seminar, taken by all freshmen in their first semester, addresses the purposes of liberal and collegiate education. It helps freshmen to integrate themselves into the life of the College and to develop those skills essential to college work: critically reading a text, writing papers, using the library, thinking analytically, and communicating ideas orally. As a foundation course for the general education program, the seminar raises basic questions about human beings and their achievements, values, and purposes—questions the student will encounter again and again, in one form or another, both in the College and outside it.

Students meet three times a week with a faculty seminar leader, and all seminar groups meet together on Tuesday at 11 a.m. for a colloquium, lecture, or other presentation. Students earn four semester hours of credit for the seminar.

Freshman Seminar is taught by faculty members from a variety of disciplines. The course’s theme is “Journey and Quest: Issues in Character and Collective Identity”. We utilize a model based on focused units which is implemented through a range of media: texts, videos, articles etc to look for various connections among central ideas.

As stated in the college catalog, the goals for the course are:

1. Integration of students into the life of the college
2. Development of student abilities to critically read a text
3. Development of student skill in writing college-level papers
4. Development of student knowledge ability to use library resources
5. Development of student analytical thinking skills
6. Improvement of student oral communication skills

The following pages discuss methods of assessment for these goals.
### Assessment of Freshman Seminar Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Integrating students into the life of the College</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Instructors, in collaboration with the Dean of Student's office, library staff, and other college personnel play an important role in the new student orientation process.</td>
<td>• College Student Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructors administer the College Student Inventory within the first week of classes. Based on the results of the inventory, instructors meet with the Dean of Students to identify students who may need extra guidance in the integration process.</td>
<td>• Measured attrition rate between fall and spring semesters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructors inform of upcoming study-skills workshops.</td>
<td>• Individual meetings between instructors and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructors attend with their students convocations on such topics as: Introduction to Liberal Arts, History of the College, Motivation and Time Management.</td>
<td>• Detailed in-house evaluation instrument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students attend, early in the semester, workshops on using the library and the college's computer network.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructors, in the role of academic advisor, are responsible for guiding and directing students through course selection, choosing a major, explaining the purposes of a liberal arts education, and offer general, overall guidance to students as they begin their academic careers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3
## 2. Critically reading a text

- Students are made of various issues when they confront a new text such as: strengths and weaknesses of different writing styles, author’s background and intent, historical and social contexts within which the text was written, and identifying themes throughout the work, etc.

- Students are introduced to a number of different writing styles: autobiography, novella, contemporary fiction, scholarly articles, and various essays and articles.

- Instructors lead students to the realization that works of literature and scholarly texts and articles have many layers of meaning, and that a detailed study of a text requires looking beyond the immediate meaning of the words as they appear on the page.

## Means of Assessment

- Formal, thesis-focused essays in which students are asked to compare and contrast various issues that arise in a single text or series of texts studied in the course.

- Many and varied informal writing assignments, in which instructors generally ask students to explicate smaller portions of a given text, or to respond to comments from a recent convocation speaker.

- In-class quizzes and special projects, in which students are asked to verify their ability to pull information from a text.

- Final examination, where students are asked to synthesize themes carried throughout the texts.

- Discussion grade for the course, where students are assessed in their ability to analyze and share with each other issues arising in the text.
3. Writing papers

- Students are required to prepare four thesis-focused essays in response to specific guidelines given by the instructor. The assignments are intended to have students grapple further with the themes raised in the discussion of the course texts. The papers are typed, 750-1000 words in length. Proper citation of sources is taught early in the semester and is expected to be used for the remainder of the student’s college career. (A recent addition of a “Teaching and Learning Center” on campus allows instructors to help students access peer tutoring for their writing skills.)

- The first essay, written during the first week of the course, is a diagnostic tool. Students are required to revise and resubmit this essay.

4. Using the library

- Each instructor designs a library research project. The instructors collaborate with the professional library staff so that the students can receive as much guidance as possible as they begin to research their topics.

- Techniques the students learn as a result of this assignment: searching for various texts using the on-line card catalog and other electronic data bases; finding appropriate reference materials,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critiques of writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of student portfolio, containing one of the first essays and the final essay of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final grade in the course.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal critiques and grades from instructors on student papers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Thinking analytically

- Students begin to realize that complex arguments and the issues and ideas they are based upon have many parts which may be systematically studied for their validity, thereby leading toward an appreciation of synthesis and understanding.

- All students perform a science experiment which acquaints them with the scientific method by requiring the formation of initial hypotheses, the collection of data by direct observation, and the analysis of the original hypotheses based on the observations.

6. Communicating ideas orally

- Seminar style course structure encourages student participation in class discussion.

- Oral presentations are sometimes required.

- Panel debates are held.

- Students may be asked to lead class discussion.

Means of Assessment

- Informal critique of each students contribution to class discussions.

- Formal and informal writing assignments which ask students to confront and analyze issues from the texts studied in class, or to react to the statements of convocation speakers.

- A final examination, where students are asked to synthesize various themes throughout the course.

Means of Assessment

- Discussion grade: a portion of each student’s final course grade is based upon the quality and quantity of that student’s participation in class discussions.
THE LANGUAGE RUBRIC

Mission Statement

As a component of General Education at Monmouth College, the Language Rubric is predicated on these assumptions: that the creation and use of language is the most significant achievement of human beings, that our ability to organize our understanding in verbal symbols and to communicate sets us apart from other life forms, that a sure understanding of language is the foundation of all knowledge, and that the ability to use verbal symbols effectively in speech or writing, whether for instrumental or aesthetic purposes, is the most important of all skills.

Recognizing the foundational nature of language for all academic work and any genuine appreciation of the liberal arts, the requirements of the Language Rubric are normally met during the student's first collegiate year. The three elements which comprise this rubric are:

The course English 110 - Composition and Literature
The course SCAT 101 - Fundamentals of Communication
Competence in a foreign language at the 102 level

The Language Rubric supports the mission of the college by providing the basis for success in an intellectually challenging environment within which patterns of meaning can be discerned and by beginning the student's appreciation of aesthetic experience and cultural diversity. In particular, the rubric directly contributes to student progress on college purpose 8, “Develop creativity and skills in written and oral communication.” It also supports purpose 7, “Foster and promote intellectual inquiry and critical analysis through mentoring relationships characterized by individual attention.” and purpose 2, “Prepare students for positions of leadership, service, and citizenship in a global context"
Goals of the Rubric

The general goals of the Language Rubric require that students:

1. Understand that language "shapes" experience and intellect, both constructing and revealing world-view.
2. Recognize ways in which language structures relationships and identities.
3. Develop sensitivity to the artistic uses of language.
4. Become skillful at a college level in the instrumental uses of language in speech, in writing and in critical reading and thinking. (Specific objectives for message composition skills are detailed in the Appendix.)
5. Achieve sufficient competence in a foreign language to recognize and make use of both its structural and semantic features at a first-year level.
6. Develop an understanding of the key elements of cultures in which their "second" language is spoken.

Assessment of Rubric Goals

Progress on Goals 1 and 2 is assessed within the courses SCAT 101 and ENGL 110. Progress on Goal 3 is assessed in ENGL 110. Progress on Goal 4 is assessed in SCAT 101, ENGL 110, Freshman Seminar and at various points throughout a student's college career. Final progress on Goal 4 will be assessed in the student's ISSI course during the senior year. Progress on Goals 5 and 6 is assessed in the student's 102 foreign language course or by proficiency examination.
COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN WHICH ALL STUDENTS SHOULD BE PROFICIENT BY THE END OF THE FRESHMAN YEAR

(Students should be able to ... )

1. **FORM AND DEVELOP A THESIS.** "Thesis" may be defined as the central idea of an essay. A thesis (most often an introductory thesis) should not only identify the essay’s topic but assert something about that topic (your position). In other words, a thesis may be thought of as an arguable assertion coming at the head of an essay. "Thesis" then requires development: illustration, elaboration and support in the body of the essay. A thesis is generally not a statement of fact (self-evident). Nor is it a matter of pure opinion (inarguable). Responsibilities of a thesis statement may entail a series of topically focused paragraphs (the body of the essay) and a conclusion (restatement of thesis. final examples, implications of the essay's work, etc.).

Formation and development of a thesis statement may involve several or all of the following prewriting exercises:
   a. identification of subject
   b. identification of topic
   c. analysis of assignment
   d. determination of approach and audience
   e. brainstorming for ideas; free writing, list-making
   f. grouping and arrangement of ideas
   g. tentative thesis
   h. revision of thesis during drafting of the essay/speech

Faculty usually comment on the quality of the thesis and its development in EVERY assignment which calls for a thesis.

**PRIMARY COURSES:** Freshman Seminar, SCAT 101, Engl 110

2. **DETERMINE PURPOSE FOR A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE.** Messages should be designed to accomplish some specific purpose (to inform....., to analyze....., to change belief/attitude....., to call for action......, to express personal "feelings"....etc.). The author's awareness of his/her audience should influence the message purpose and the technique used to accomplish that purpose. The parts of the message should be selected with the purpose in mind. For example, particular arguments are included because the author feels they will appeal to the audience; the vocabulary matches the audience's level of sophistication; the support material has some relevance to them.

**PRIMARY COURSE:** SCAT 101

*Secondary course:* Freshman Seminar
3. ORGANIZE MAIN POINTS. Messages should be organized so that the main points raised to develop the thesis appear in an effective order (as opposed to the more common "stream of consciousness" approach). Typical organizational strategies used in developing the body of a message include: temporal, spatial, compare/contrast, problem/solution, pro/con, general-to-specific, weak-to-strong, etc. Some disciplines prescribe organizational patterns for particular scholarly purposes. Faculty often comment and base grades partially on the effectiveness of organizational strategies for all messages.

PRIMARY COURSES: Freshman Seminar, SCAT 101
Secondary Course: Engl 110

4. SUPPORT ASSERTIONS. The thesis is a "large" assertion which is comprehensive of the whole essay or speech. Similarly those points raised in developing the thesis take the form of "smaller" assertions (usually declarative sentences). An assertion is a statement which indicates what the author thinks is true. If the audience is not inclined to believe the author without question, an assertion alone is not sufficient to make them believe him/her (or, perhaps, even to understand what the author means). Students must provide support for all but the most obviously clear and correct assertions. Support material (sometimes called evidence) includes facts, illustrations, examples, reasoning, or statements from authority which will lead the audience to recognize that the author's assertion is correct and/or appropriate. The presence of good, clear assertions which have compelling, appropriate support material is the hallmark of college-level communication.

PRIMARY COURSES: Freshman Seminar, SCAT 101
Secondary Course: Engl 110

5. AVOID MECHANICAL ERRORS. Mechanical errors include all punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Of particular concern are those major errors we have called the Seven Deadly Sins of English: sentence fragments, comma splices, tense errors, case errors, run-on sentences, agreement errors, and barbarisms (e.g. "He don't have no ..." "ain't"). The elimination of these errors does not guarantee good writing but it is a minimum standard. Faculty mark these errors when they appear in student papers and indicate that competency in mechanics influences grading.

PRIMARY INSTRUCTION: Teaching / Learning Center & Programmed materials
Secondary Courses: (all courses)

6. USE LIBRARY RESOURCES. Students should recognize that adequate research at the college-level demands more than the use of the card catalog and the Reader's Guide. They should be familiar with the variety of resources available in the reference collection including: specialized indexes (and the scholarly journals they include), abstracts, interlibrary loan, biographic, bibliographic and review collections, newspaper indexes, and microfilm materials. Faculty generally require that students go beyond the most basic sources in constructing bibliographies and often point out scholarly resources of particular value.

PRIMARY COURSES: Freshman Seminar, SCAT 101
7. DOCUMENT SOURCES. Anytime a student borrows language or ideas, that student must acknowledge clearly the material borrowed and make appropriate source attribution. In addition to direct quotation, these borrowings may include paraphrase and summary. Faculty will explain documentation procedures to students and insist that proper documentation be used in all cases where it is required.

**PRIMARY COURSE:** Freshman Seminar  
**Secondary Courses:** Engl 110, SCAT 101

8. IDENTIFY ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES. Students should be able to identify various organizational strategies and rhetorical models when they encounter them while reading. For some assignments in some courses students may be asked to make use of these strategies in composing their own messages. Some of these models are:
   a) descriptive strategies (spatial arrangements, organization)
   b) narrative strategies (chronology, anecdote, flashback)
   c) definition strategies (denotation, connotation, examples, comparison, negation, operation, etc.)
   d) classification and division (grouping the many; dividing the "one" into parts [analysis])
   e) comparison strategies (block model, point-by-point model, similarities-differences, analogy)
   f) process analysis (chronology, enumeration)
   g) cause-effect analysis
   h) argumentative strategies (induction, deduction, refutation, persuasion)

**PRIMARY COURSE:** Freshman Seminar  
**Secondary Courses:** Engl 110, SCAT 101

9. PRESENT IDEAS ORALLY. For informal situations students should be able to clearly state assertions and provide support material (without necessarily being asked for support). When giving prepared messages, the oral presentation should show evidence of skills 1, 2, 3, and 4.

   All messages should be delivered at sufficient volume, with at least some eye contact, and with a minimum of distracting movement. Students should not merely "read" to the listeners. Faculty have a clear preference for answers which develop an idea (as opposed to single phrase answers or opinion only).

**PRIMARY COURSES:** Freshman Seminar, SCAT 101  
**Secondary Course:** (all courses)

10. THINK CRITICALLY. Students should be able to recognize at an introductory level that college work in all disciplines involves critical thinking and that the elements of this process include the reflective evaluation of ideas, evidence, sources, reasoning, author's position, purpose and audience.

**PRIMARY COURSES:** Freshman Seminar, Engl 110, SCAT 101  
**Secondary Courses:** (all courses)
THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE AND ITS LIFE FORMS

Mission Statement

The “Physical Universe and Its Life Forms” rubric rests on three broad goals. The first is for students to understand and appreciate the relationship of human beings to the rest of the natural world. The second is for students to understand the philosophy and methods of science in order to be aware of the strengths and limitations of the scientific understandings of the world. The third is to provide students with information that will allow them, in their role as educated citizens, to deal with issues of public and personal concern that have scientific components.

The courses intended to meet these goals are divided into two categories: Those dealing most directly with the physical universe (generally courses in chemistry or physics) and those dealing more directly with life forms (generally courses in biology or psychology). Students are required to take one course (with a lab) in each category. All of the goals are addressed, at least to some extent, in each course and are evaluated using examinations and laboratory reports.

Courses meeting requirements of the rubric are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Forms</th>
<th>Physical Universe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOL101. Life on Earth</td>
<td>CHEM100. Chemistry: A Cultural Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL111. General Zoology</td>
<td>CHEM130. Organic Chemistry I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL112. General Botany</td>
<td>PHYS103. Astronomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL201. Field Botany</td>
<td>PHYS130. Introduction to Physics I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC101. Introduction to Psychology</td>
<td>PHYS132. Introduction to Physics II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rubric supports the mission and purposes of the college in a variety of ways. Most directly the rubric enables students to increase their understanding of the methods of inquiry and expression in the sciences (Purpose 9). By addressing issues of philosophy and method and through the use of laboratory experiences, the rubric fosters intellectual inquiry and critical analysis through mentoring relationships (Purpose 7). By preparing students to grapple with issues having scientific components, the rubric helps prepare students for positions of leadership, service, and citizenship (Purpose 2).
Goals of the Rubric

The specific goals for the rubric are as follows.

Students will:

1. Understand and be able to apply the scientific method and appreciate its limitations
2. Understand basic concepts and vocabulary used in the sciences.
3. Understand the scientific basis for some of the phenomena they observe in their daily lives.
4. Be able to apply scientific concepts to issues they encounter in their daily lives.
5. Develop basic skills of observation, verification, collection and analysis of data, including the use some scientific instruments.
6. Understand the relationships among theory, observation and conclusion and be able to evaluate the support for various theories and conclusions.

Assessment of Rubric Goals

Student progress in meeting the specific goals of the rubric is assessed primarily within the individual courses taken by students as they meet the requirement. Tests and laboratory assignments are the principal means used to evaluate progress on goals. Faculty members teaching in the science rubric conduct “Occasional Studies” to further explore our successes and weaknesses across courses in helping students reach specific rubric objectives. For endpoint assessment, progress by students on the goals of this rubric is also evaluated through the Senior Portfolio Analysis and through the Transcript Reflection instrument.
BEAUTY AND MEANING IN WORKS OF ART

Mission Statement

The mission of the "Beauty and Meaning in Works of Art" component of the General Education program, as stated in the Monmouth College 1996-97 Catalog, is straightforward:

To value the arts fully, students should learn to appreciate works of art and participate in their creation. In this component the study of great examples of a particular art form is balanced by creative work: writing, painting, composing, playing, or making.

To achieve this mission, a suite of courses has been selected and prepared. Fifteen courses, selected from departmental offerings in Art, Classics, English, History, Music, Philosophy and Religious Studies, and Speech Communication and Theater Arts, emphasize appreciation and interpretation of works of art, from both analytic and historical aspects; twenty-seven course offerings, from Art, English, Music, and Speech Communications and Theater Arts, give opportunities for participation in the creative process. One unique feature of the Monmouth College program is that all students are required to complete course work in both the appreciative and the participatory sections of the component. We believe that artistic appreciation is incomplete without some experience in the production of artistic work and that the production of art must be informed by critical understanding.

The Monmouth College mission statement refers to the institution's commitment to maintaining an aesthetically inspiring environment on campus. The "Beauty and Meaning in Works of Art" component of General Education makes an important contribution to the realization of this goal. The mission of the component and its implementation also reflect the broader mission of Monmouth College in other ways. The inclusion of courses from seven specific disciplines acknowledges the interconnected nature of the liberal arts experience; the appreciation requirement expresses our intention that each student has awareness and understanding of diverse cultural concepts; the participation requirement is an application of our institutional commitment to experiential learning. Most specifically the rubric supports college purpose 8, “Develop creativity and skills in . . . artistic expression,” and purpose 9, “Understand the methods of inquiry and expression in the arts . . . ”
### Goals of the Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Applicable Courses</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation and interpretation of works of art</td>
<td>ART 200, 201, CLAS 210, 230, ENGL 240, HIST 206, 207, 208, 209, MUSI 101, 203, PHIL 315, SCAT 110, 316, 317</td>
<td>Examinations, research projects, class reports, multimedia projects presentations, journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the creative process</td>
<td>ART 121, 123, 125, 126, 142, 211, 236, ENGL 210, MUSI 131, 132, 133, 134, 145/146, 151/152, 153/154, 155/156, 161/162, 165/166, 171/172, 181, 182,184, 185, 186, SCAT 111, 113, 212</td>
<td>Portfolios of course work, public presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment of Rubric Goals

Student progress in meeting the general goals of the rubric is assessed primarily within the individual courses taken by students meeting the requirement. Because the arts included in the rubric are so varied, necessarily the standards of successful participation and appreciation will similarly vary by discipline and art form. For endpoint assessment, progress by students on the goals of this rubric is also evaluated through the Senior Portfolio Analysis and through the Transcript Reflection instrument.
HUMAN SOCIETIES

Mission Statement

The Human Societies Rubric takes its position in the general education program of the college by virtue of its focus on humans in interaction. Humans are social beings, our lives and ideas considerably shaped by society and its institutions. Formative influences come to us from our immediate contact with others (our family and friends), from our experiences in institutions and organizations (schools, corporations, churches, and government), and from that large, subtle, pervasive set of ways of thinking and doing we call culture. Society shapes us in ways we may not suspect. It may affect our attitudes of trust and mistrust, of optimism or pessimism; it may influence our sense of community or individual identity and provide the store of ideas within which we do our thinking.

Just as we need to understand the influences of our own society, so to function effectively in an age of cultural pluralism we need to study societies different from our own. The comparative study of societies helps us look critically upon assumptions we might otherwise never challenge and it enhances our appreciation of our own culture.

The rubric supports the mission and purposes of the college in a variety of ways, particularly as a beginning point for recognition of our “citizenship in a global context.” Most directly the rubric serves to “introduce students to multiple perspectives on the human condition . . . (purpose 6).” The rubric is also central for students majoring in the arts, humanities or sciences to “understand the methods of inquiry and expression in . . . the social sciences (purpose 9).” INTR 201, as a sophomore level course, continues student progress begun in the Freshman year on purpose 8, “develop . . . skills in written and oral communication.” Given the nature of the courses in the rubric, students inevitably make progress in “. . . the discovery of connections among disciplines and of larger patterns of meaning.” and in understanding “a value system that is shaped by individual and collective experiences. (purpose 4).
The two course requirement of the rubric includes INTR 201, “Comparative Societies” a course taken by all students in the sophomore year, followed by one course within a discipline focusing on a particular society or institution. Students may be exempted from this latter course through participation in an off-campus program.

Courses fulfilling the second portion of the requirement are listed below.

| ARTD 304 Asian Art & Culture | HIST 202 Modern Japan | RELG 101 Introduction to the Old Testament |
| BUSI 110 Evolution of Commercial Institutions | HIST 211 History of Greece | RELG 203 History of Christianity |
| CLAS 211 History of Greece | HIST 212 History of Rome | RELG 204 History of Christianity I: Origins to Reformation |
| CLAS 212 History of Rome | HIST 222 Medieval History | RELG 210 Judaism and Islam |
| CLAS 240 Ancient Society | HIST 240 Ancient Society | RELG 244 The Politics of Islam |
| ECON 120 Contemporary Economic Systems | HIST 302 History of the Middle East | RELG 300 Philosophy & Religions of Asia |
| ECON 200 Principles of Economics | HIST 303 History of India & South Asia | RELG 302 History of the Middle East |
| ECON 351 Comparative Economic Systems | HIST 304 History of Sub-Saharan Africa | RELG 303 History of India & South Asia |
| GOVT 103 American Politics | HIST 305 History of Mexico | SOCI 327 Sociology of Medicine |
| GOVT 202 Modern Japan | PHIL 207 Ethics: Philosophical & Religious | SOCI 341 Urban Sociology |
| GOVT 244 The Politics of Islam | PHIL 300 Philosophy & Religions of Asia | SOCI 347 Gender, Race and Ethnicity |
| GOVT 245 The Politics of Developing Nations | PHIL 307 Modern & Contemporary Philosophy | SCAT 221 Mass Media and Modern Society |
| GOVT 270 Global Affairs | PHIL 309 Classical & Medieval Philosophy | |
| HIST 110 US History 1492-1750 | PSYC 340 Personality | |
Goals of the Rubric

The specific goals for the rubric are as follows.

1. To acquaint students with the variety of ways that groups of human beings have organized themselves into societies and cultures.

2. To develop students’ understanding of major descriptions and explanations that social scientists have used to make sense of human society and culture.

3. To enhance student abilities to apply social science understandings to concrete settings within their own experience.

4. To insure that students have a focused understanding of a particular institution or society, including its historical character and the nature of interactions among its members.

5. To develop student awareness of the role social structures play in the formation of individual identities.

While both courses in the Human Societies requirement to some degree address all five of the rubric objectives, INTR 201 emphasizes objectives 1, 2, and 3. Objectives 4 and 5 are especially central to the goals of the “elective” second course.

Assessment of Rubric Goals

Student progress in meeting the specific goals of the rubric is assessed primarily within the individual courses taken by students as they meet the requirement. Tests and written assignments are the principal means used to evaluate progress on goals. Faculty members teaching in the rubric conduct “Occasional Studies” to further explore our successes and weaknesses across courses in helping students reach specific rubric objectives. For endpoint assessment, progress by students on the goals of this rubric is evaluated through the Senior Portfolio Analysis and through the Transcript Reflection instrument.
ISSUES AND IDEAS

Mission Statement

The Issues and Ideas course is the final requirement of our rubrics. It is, in a sense, the capstone course of general education for students at Monmouth College. Courses in this rubric address issues and ideas that any responsible citizen must confront. These are courses that draw upon the maturity and intellectual flexibility of students in their senior year. They engage the student with problems and ideas that directly address the conditions and well-being of life.

Inevitably courses listed as part of the Issues and Ideas rubric incorporate the perspectives of various viewpoints since they deal with questions that transcend immediate professional and intellectual vantages. They elicit a recognition of and a critical response to shared and continuing human concerns.

Students complete one course in their senior year. Courses currently meeting the requirement include the following: ISSI 402, Classical Mythology and Religion; ISSI 405, The Future of Religions in the 21st Century; ISSI 408, Personal Identity; ISSI 410, Environmental Ethics; ISSI 426, Feminist Approaches to Literature and Society; ISSI 424, War and Peace; ISSI 435, Political Philosophy from Plato to the Present; ISSI 436, Poetics of the Self; ISSI 437, The New Individual; ISSI 444, The Politics of Islam; ISSI 468, The Arts in Society; ISSI 472, Fiction and Industrial Society; ISSI 477, Energy Resources; ISSI 479, Cosmology and Creation.

As the culminating experience in general education, ISSI courses directly support the mission and purposes of the college and take much of their meaning from mission and purpose. As indicated below, the ISSI course is one which uses a topic of significance as the means to permit student acts of integration and synthesis across a range of liberal arts understandings. In particular, purposes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are all reflected in each of the ISSI courses (see “The Purposes of Monmouth College” in Section I).
Goals of the Rubric

The objectives of ISSI encompass at least two general goals for students:

1. To clarify the intentions of general education.

As the last formal requirement in general education, the courses in the rubric serve in part to relate the particularities of a specific ISSI to the concerns of the Monmouth curriculum, generally. ISSI places the interests of major fields of study onto the larger stage of enlightened awareness. The student is encouraged to appreciate that the goals of liberal education, while grounded in technique, entail more than its mastery. The skills and purviews of disciplines are perspectives meaningful in themselves, yet they, also, depend on complementary and at times contending visions. The typical ISSI pursues comparisons and integration to recognize that problems and their potential resolutions are at times complex patternings woven from many strands of thought.

It follows, then, that ISSI intends:

2. To present ideas and issues which foster the arts of living well.

ISSI reminds the student that a bachelor’s degree is an invitation and an imprimatur. It is both a sign of attainment and a certificate of continuation. ISSIs help to prepare students to receive their futures and to guide their destinies. While one thrust of ISSI is to reconnoiter, the other is to project. Coming at the cusp of the student’s undergraduate education, ISSIs are both turning points and launch pads. It is at this point and at this moment that ISSIs have their greatest potential, for it is now that the student must be encouraged to reflect upon the course traveled thus far and to anticipate critically what and how one ought to know and believe so that the acts of the future may not be simply fortuitous nor coercive.

By promoting the arts of living well and of living better, ISSIs are grounded in specific issues and ideas addressing communal and personal well-being. It is from this perspective that ISSIs are radically utilitarian: they address concerns of ultimacy for our students, both for the moment now and for their future lives.

Besides the general goals above, all ISSI courses share several expectations for learning outcomes. Students will deal with interdisciplinary questions and make use of the knowledge and methods of more than one of the divisions of study (arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences). They will grapple with issues for which there is no clearly right or wrong answer and they will be able to articulate why that is so. And students will come to appreciate how it is that the "large questions" of the course can animate both the intellectual life and the personal.
The Role of Issues and Ideas in Assessment

In a very real sense, ISSI is not so much a requirement to be assessed; it is an assessment itself. ISSI plays an instrumental role in the assessment process as the point at which we seek, in several ways, to determine how well students have achieved the purposes of the college (see the Transcript Reflection and Portfolio Review descriptions in Section II). The general goals of the rubric listed above are probably beyond empirical measurement. Nevertheless, individual instructors do use tests and, especially, written assignments and discussion to evaluate the specific objectives of their individual classes, revising materials and assignments as needed.

Beginning in the year 2000, the first group of seniors to have developed four-year portfolios will begin taking ISSI courses. At that time course instructors will begin to use the MPP as both a means of assessing general education and a vehicle for providing feedback to the seniors on their progress and prospects. Over the next several years we intend to design and implement several “occasional studies” using students and faculty in the ISSI courses. These studies will assess specific goals that cross the boundaries between disciplines and between rubrics. These studies may range from senior “exit” interviews, to course assignments designed to tap college purposes not easily measured before the senior year. In this regard, assessment efforts within ISSI provide information to the assessment committee and from there enter the decision-making and planning efforts of various college groups and agencies.