GNST 21: Freshman Seminar: “Becoming an Educated Person”
GE Area E

Instructor:
Office:
Phone:
E-mail:
Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

GNST 21 is a freshman seminar intended to provide students with an introduction to the nature and possible meanings of higher education, and the functions and resources of the University. This course is designed to help students develop and exercise fundamental academic success strategies and to improve their basic learning skills. The seminar will also provide students with the opportunity to interact with fellow students and the seminar leader and to build a community of academic and personal support.

COURSE GOALS/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

I. The student will have an enlarged understanding of the ideas and values related to education which will include:

- The philosophy and history of higher education and the CSUS mission
- The relationship of education to personal development
- The significance of the teaching and learning process

II. Demonstration of active learning and improvement of intellectual skills:

- Academic skills (speaking, writing, note-taking, study skills, time management)
- Evidence that student is taking responsibility for his/her own education and development
- Academic dishonesty

III. The student will begin to develop information competence and computer literacy

IV. Demonstrate and understanding of “self” as an integrated biological, psychological, and social being:

- Students will gain an understanding and appreciation of the multicultural nature of society and this University

V. Acquisition of organized knowledge:
• Reading about, writing on, and discussion of course topics

TEXT/MATERIALS:

• Textbook (common to all sections)
  Gordon and Minnick. Foundations: A Reader for New College Students
• Occasional supplemental reading specific to the section
• Weekly calendar (required for all students)
• CSUS catalog

EVALUATION:

Percentages may vary according to instructor, but all components must be included in evaluation of student performances:
written assignments 30%
participation 10%
oral presentation 20%
midterm exam 20%
final exam 20%
TOTAL 100%

A=90%-100%
B=80%-89%
C=70%-79%
D=60%-69%
F=59% and below

MODEL CALENDAR

Supplements to this calendar are allowed and may be appropriate to specific disciplines teaching the course.

TOPIC 1: Building a Community of Learners
WEEK 1 and WEEK 2
TOPICS:
1) Introduction and course overview
2) Review of syllabus
3) The idea of a community of learners: what makes it work?
   • The concept of the seminar
   • Introduction of the Socratic method
• Interpersonal communication: active listening

4) Orientation to Academic Resources (saclink, library orientation, academic advising, college-based resources)

ASSIGNMENT:
Assignment related to use of academic resources

READING:
-Ruthann Fox-Hines, “Standing Up for Yourself-Without Stepping On Others” (pp.68-80)
-Barbara Newman & Philip Newman, “Loneliness” (pp.65-67)

TOPIC 2: College and Universities
WEEK 3 and WEEK 4

TOPICS:
1) History and traditions of higher education
   • California
   • CSUS (may include discipline-specific information)
   • CSUS mission statement

2) The classroom and the college community
   • The roles of professors (differences between high school and college, academic life, professional responsibilities)
   • The roles of students (student rights and responsibilities)

ASSIGNMENT:
Introduce information competence/computer literacy materials. Information competence is the ability to find, evaluate, use, and communicate information in all of its various formats.

Beginning interviewing faculty as part of the roles of professors topic

READING:
- CSUS Students Rights and Responsibilities
- William R. Brown, “Why I don’t Let Students Cut My Class” (pp.118-121)
- William H. Halverson, “American Higher Education: A Brief History” (pp. 20-26)
- John N. Gardner, “Decoding Your Professors” (pp.122-131)

TOPIC 3: Becoming an Educated Person
WEEK 5 and WEEK 6

TOPICS:
1) Changing roles in higher education
   • Institutional roles: CSUS Mission Statement
• Individual roles

2) The nature of the curriculum
• General Education
• The disciplines as areas of inquiry

ASSIGNMENT:
Presentation of faculty interviews (begun in week 3)

READING:
- Thomas L. Minnick, “Ideas as Property” (pp. 224-229)
- Thomas B. Jones, “The Educated Person” (pp.27-29)
- David R. Pierce, “What Does Society Need from Higher Education?” (pp. 81-84)

TOPIC 4: The Values of a College Education
WEEK 7
TOPICS
1) The values associated with a college education
2) Issues in classic or traditional education: professional training and “liberal” learning

ASSIGNMENT:
Writing: assessment of personal educational goals

READING
- Edmund D. Pelligrino, “Having a Degree and Being Educated” (pp.283-287)
- Jack Meiland, “The Difference between High School and College.” (pp.7-10)
- Howard R. Bowen, “The Baccalaureate Degree: What does It Mean?...” (pp.33-38)

Mid Term Exam (beginning of eighth week)

TOPIC 5: Education and Personal Development: Self. Career, Community
WEEK 8 and WEEK 9
TOPICS:
1) Developing habits of the mind: education as growth
   • Developmental theories
   • Professional concerns in the discipline
2) Developing as a member of a community
   • The campus community
   • The civic community
   • The professional community (discipline specific)
3) The healthy self

ASSIGNMENT:
Writing: report on a community or campus event
READING:
- William Zinsser, “College Pressures” (pp.61-64)
- Virginia Gordon, “The Developing College Student” (pp.47-52)
- Richard L. Morrill, “Developing a Personal System of Values” (pp.303-314)

**TOPIC 6: Education, Culture, and the Democratic Ideal**
**WEEK 10**

**TOPICS:**
1) The nature/idea of culture
2) Community of learners as culture (local, national, global, cyber)
3) Diversity and community as “educational goods”
   - Appreciation of diverse cultural heritages
   - Attitudes, beliefs and values (stereotypes)
   - Multiculturalism

**ASSIGNMENT:**
Writing: Campus or community event

READING:
- Edward A. Delgado-Romero, “The Face of Racism” (pp. 248-251)
- James A. Banks, “Multicultural Education for Freedom’s Sake” (pp. 267-270)
- Ernest L. Boyer, “Two Essential Goals” (pp.30-32)
- Mortimer B. Zuckerman, “The Times of Our Lives” (pp.159-164)

**TOPIC 7: Academic Planning**
**WEEK 11**

**TOPICS:**
1) Balance between General Education and the major
   - Structure of GE
   - Requirements of majors

2) Advising
   - GE advising
   - Major advising
   - Related advising resources

**ASSIGNMENT**
- Prepare spring semester schedule
- Begin preparation for presentations on world of work in weeks 13 and 14

READING:
- Thomas L. Minnick, “Fourteen Ways of Looking at Electives” (pp. 111-117)
-James Tunstead Burtchaell, “Major Decisions” (pp.99-107)
-William Raspberry, “College Major Doesn’t Mean That Much” (pp.108-110)

**TOPIC 8: Education and the Work College Graduates Do**
WEEK 12 and WEEK 13

**TOPICS**
1) Liberal Education and the world of work
2) Understanding the relationship between college degrees and jobs
3) Career exploration, planning and professional development
   - “Underemployment”
   - Experiential education: interests, skills, abilities, work values
   - Research opportunities (discipline)
   - Cooperative education/internships/service learning (discipline)
   - Portfolio/resume preparation (discipline)
   - Campus pre-professional organizations (discipline)

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Career Center orientation
- Writing: assignment related to occupational information
- Oral presentations on work world
- Information competence module must be completed (see topic 2 assignment)

**READING:**
-Henry David Thoreau, “Getting a Living” (pp. 185-187)
-Mark R. Ballard, “Job Search: Chance or Plan?” (pp. 188-194)
-Peggy Simonson “Career Patterns for the 21st Century” (pp. 205-212)

**TOPIC 9: Is There Life After College?**
WEEK 14 and WEEK 15

**TOPICS:**
1) Lifelong learning
2) Values of democratic citizenship
   - Community/service learning
3) Developing a philosophy of life

**ASSIGNMENT**
- Prepare draft of personal mission statement
- Arrange individual meeting for early next semester follow-up
- Administer student evaluations

**READING:**
-Mary Sherry, “Postgraduate Paralysis” (pp. 195-198)
- Donna Uchida, “What Students Must Know to Succeed in the 21st Century” (pp. 91-98)

FINALS WEEK:

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