

FRESHMAN LEARNING COMMUNITY FALL 2008

“UNDERSTANDING POWER”

ENG 101: English Composition I (Professor Connie St. Clair-Andrews)

ART 101: Introduction to the Visual Arts (Professor Patrick Moser)

POS 221: Government and Politics in the United States (Professor Rachel Cremona)

Librarian: Brian Nesselrode

Learning Community resource website: <http://www.flagler.edu/library/lc.html>

*I hope our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us,
that the less we use our power the greater it will be.*

- Thomas Jefferson

Flagler College's Freshman Learning Community for Fall 2008 links together three General Education courses – ENG101, ART101 and POS221 – around a common theme: understanding power. Students in the Learning Community have been assigned common student housing and will attend classes together in two sections of approximately twenty students each. In addition to class meetings, students in the Learning Community will attend co-curricular activities and group meetings as designated by their instructors.

Why a Learning Community?

No problem can be solved by the same consciousness that created it.

We need to see the world anew.

- Albert Einstein

The ultimate goal of Flagler College's Freshman Learning Community initiative is to enhance both the academic and social engagement of students at the outset of their college experience. Our objective, through this experience, is to foster an educational environment in which you will become engaged partners in your own academic journey; in which you will discover compelling reasons to seek a personal commitment to learning; and in which you will be encouraged to pursue challenges, pose questions and seek out answers. Our hope then, is that by participating in the Freshman Learning Community experience, you will become a more engaged student both within the classroom and beyond.

From an academic perspective, the Learning Community will present an interdisciplinary approach to your general education courses allowing you to focus on issues from multiple perspectives beyond that provided by a solitary faculty member. In addition, the Learning Community will focus on interpersonal skills that will help you to develop a supportive community of peers at the outset of your college experience. Ultimately, participation in the Learning Community will be both challenging and rewarding, fostering a deep and productive relationship with Flagler College that we hope will endure throughout your years here. The more specific learning outcomes for students participating in the Learning Community can be found below.

Learning Community Student Learning Outcomes

In addition to the learning outcomes listed in the individual course syllabi, students completing the freshman Learning Community will:

- Demonstrate collaborative learning skills with both faculty and peers
- Be able to make written and oral presentations in a credible and coherent manner, drawing upon interdisciplinary works
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of integrated, interdisciplinary perspectives on the concept of power.
- Exhibit improved critical thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation of ideas and facts across the academic disciplines.
- Demonstrate an ability to find and utilize academic resources to fulfil interdisciplinary assignments.
- Be able to explain and apply concepts from more than one academic discipline to the common theme of power.

A Common Theme: Understanding Power

*New frameworks are like climbing a mountain –
the larger view encompasses rather than rejects the more restricted view.*

- Albert Einstein

Each of the three Learning Community courses will be linked together around the common theme of *understanding power*. Essentially what this means is that you will be regarding the different substantive content of the three courses – writing, art and politics – through the same lens, that of understanding power.

Though we often fail to acknowledge it, power is perhaps the most pervasive aspect of our lives – in our actions (or inactions), our behavior, our relationships (both personal and professional), in our successes and failures, and ultimately in our view of the world around us.

Through the common theme of *understanding power*, the freshman Learning Community seeks to facilitate the ability of students to recognize, understand and exercise power – in the written word, in images and culture, and in the practice of politics and the structure of government. The greater our understanding of the many faces of power, the greater our ability to empower ourselves. Through the integration of three very different courses around this common theme, students will be encouraged to think critically about common understandings arrived at along divergent paths.

LEARNING COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in the freshman Learning Community have agreed to remain enrolled in the three courses that comprise it. If, for some reason, exceptional circumstances arise and a student needs to drop one of the courses, he/she will also be dropped from the remaining two – thus, under such circumstances, the student will need to find three alternative courses in which to enroll.

In line with Flagler College policy, Learning Community students are required to attend all class meetings. In addition, however, Learning Community students with more than two unexcused absences in any of the three Learning Community courses will lose five points (i.e. half a letter grade) from their final course grade for each subsequent unexcused absence in that class.

In addition to class meetings, Learning Community students will be required to attend certain co-curricular activities, details of which will be provided by your instructors. There will also be a number of “highly recommended” co-curricular activities which students will be strongly encouraged to attend.

As well as the course requirements detailed in your individual course syllabi, Learning Community students will be required to complete two integrated assignments that are common to all three courses as detailed below. Each of these two assignments will constitute 15% of your final grade in each of the three courses (i.e. a total of 30% of your final grade in each class will be constituted by the integrated assignments).

Finally, all Learning Community students will be required to complete the **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)**, a 90-minute exam scheduled as follows:

Learning Community A: Wednesday September 10th 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Learning Community B: Friday September 12th 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Both exams will take place in L-111.

INTEGRATED LEARNING COMMUNITY ASSIGNMENTS

Group Project I: Campaign Advertisement

Students will be placed in groups of four or five, with each group being assigned either to Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, or to Republican presidential candidate John McCain. In their groups, students will be required to produce a televised campaign advertisement of 60-90seconds in length.

The technology/visual aspects of the ad will be addressed in the ART 101 class where students will begin working on “practice” ads beginning in week 2. In ENG 101, students will work on the rhetorical/argument aspects of ads, as well as review and critique actual TV ads from the Obama and McCain campaigns. In POS 221, students will discuss the substantive issues as well as follow the progress of the campaigns, the candidates and their stances on the issues.

Students may select to create a “new” ad or to create a “response” ad to an actual campaign advertisement. Groups will also choose for themselves whether or not to “go negative.” Advertisements can focus on issues, personal character or other aspects of the campaign as students see relevant.

Final advertisements will be uploaded on *Youtube* and displayed on monitors in Flagler’s *Crisp-Ellert Museum* 5-7pm on Wednesday October 29th (and will remain on display through parent’s weekend). Museum visitors will be asked to vote for the most effective advertisement.

Assessment of advertisements will be made collectively by the three course instructors based on criteria which they will provide to students at the beginning of the semester.

Group Project II: The Power to Change Our World

While the first group project detailed above requires students to focus on national issues and concerns, the second integrated assignment requires students to place a more concentrated focus on their immediate community. This assignment will require students to create projects aimed at convincing the broader Flagler College community that they can (and should) empower themselves to affect change in their local community.

Again assigned to groups of four or five, students will be required to “adopt” a local issue or charity and create a project to persuade their peers that change can and should be affected. This “persuasive performance” will incorporate some type of creative visual component that will be determined among group members. Projects will be exhibited at a fair on the West Lawn in the final week of classes.

Again, assessment of this project will be made collectively by the three course instructors based on criteria which they will provide to students in advance.