

Medaille College  
18 Agassiz Circle  
Buffalo, NY 14214

## Course Syllabus

Course Number:	GEN 410
Course Title:	Baccalaureate Capstone I
Section:	H1, M W F 1:40-2:40 p.m.
Semester:	Spring 2007
Credits:	3.0
Prerequisites:	Junior standing and completion of all lower-level General Education requirements (GEN 110, GEN 220, GEN 230, GEN 240, ENG 110, ENG 200, and SPE 130); <i>this honors section is reserved for students participating in the Medaille College Scholars Program.</i>
Instructor:	Dr. Gerald J. Erion
Instructor Availability:	M 4:00-6:00 p.m., Tu 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., and by appointment, 221 Main Hall
	telephone: 716.880.2174
	e-mail: <a href="mailto:gerion@medaille.edu">gerion@medaille.edu</a>

### A. Catalog Description of Course

The baccalaureate capstone is a course about ideas and the ways in which the educated person contends with them. The course deals in an integrative, interdisciplinary fashion with the five broad General Education themes: Self and Others, Global Perspectives, Creative Expression, Science and Technology, and Communication. The course invites students to engage in a sophisticated way with ideas and works that raise questions about and shed light upon contemporary life. Through the process of reading, reflection, writing, and discussion, students will be required to demonstrate the critical thinking and communication skills generally held to be the hallmark of the educated individual pursuing and enjoying an informed life.

#### *College Scholars Program Addendum*

*GEN 410 serves as a capstone course for the Medaille College Scholars Program; so, students should expect that their work in GEN 410 will apply the important critical thinking tools and concepts introduced and reinforced in earlier courses, and with a quality and significance appropriate for honors-level work.*

### B. Objectives

Students will:

1. Analyze readings of an interdisciplinary nature.
  - A. Recognize authors' arguments and consider their implications.
  - B. Establish connections between works.

2. Evaluate readings in light of the five General Education themes.
  - A. Develop and express awareness of the place of specific readings within thematic frameworks.
  - B. Develop and express awareness of the connections among the themes and the various readings.
3. Communicate knowledge of course material through writing, speaking, and other appropriate media.
  - A. Write clear, sound, and substantial essays that take account of the complexity of their subject matter.
  - B. Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations.
  - C. Engage in academic argument and criticism.
4. Apply critical thinking skills to the problems raised within the course.
  - A. Recognize arguments.
  - B. Identify strengths and weaknesses of arguments in the context of specific problems.
  - C. Synthesize materials from a wide variety of sources.
5. Develop and present an acceptable proposal for a research project to be completed in GEN 411.
  - A. Identify an academically valid, interdisciplinary area of inquiry.
  - B. Develop an initial research question within the area.
  - C. Identify potential research sources.

### C. Outline of Course Content and Tentative Schedule

date	topic	assignment
Mon. Jan. 15	holiday	
Wed. Jan. 17	introductions, course syllabus	
Fri. Jan. 19	Logic and Argumentation	
Mon. Jan. 22		<b>NB: last day to drop or add is Jan. 23</b>
Wed. Jan. 24	Consilience	complete reading assignment 1
Fri. Jan. 26		complete reading assignment 2
Mon. Jan. 29		complete reading assignment 3
Wed. Jan. 31		
Fri. Feb. 2		
Mon. Feb. 5	exam 1	<b>study for exam</b>
Wed. Feb. 7		
Fri. Feb. 9	Technopoly	complete reading assignment 4
Mon. Feb. 12		complete reading assignment 5
Wed. Feb. 14		complete reading assignment 6
Fri. Feb. 16		
Mon. Feb. 19	holiday	
Wed. Feb. 21		complete reading assignment 7
Fri. Feb. 23		
Mon. Feb. 26		
Wed. Feb. 28	exam 2	<b>study for exam</b>
Fri. Mar. 2	Lincoln at Gettysburg	complete reading assignment 8
Mon. Mar. 5		complete reading assignment 9
Wed. Mar. 7		complete reading assignment 10
Fri. Mar. 9		complete reading assignment 11
Mon. Mar. 12	holiday	
Wed. Mar. 14	holiday	

Fri.	Mar.	16	holiday	
Mon.	Mar.	19		
Wed.	Mar.	21	exam 3	<b>study for exam</b> <b>NB: last day to withdraw is Mar. 21</b>
Fri.	Mar.	23	Things Fall Apart	complete reading assignment 12
Mon.	Mar.	26		
Wed.	Mar.	28		complete reading assignment 13
Fri.	Mar.	30		
Mon.	Apr.	2		complete reading assignment 14
Wed.	Apr.	4		
Fri.	Apr.	6	holiday	
Mon.	Apr.	9	holiday	
Wed.	Apr.	11		complete reading assignment 15
Fri.	Apr.	13		
Mon.	Apr.	16	exam 4	<b>study for exam</b>
Wed.	Apr.	18	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Fri.	Apr.	20	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Mon.	Apr.	23	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Wed.	Apr.	25	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Fri.	Apr.	27	student presentations	<b>prepare for presentation</b>
Mon.	Apr.	30	final review	
Tues.	May	1	final exams	<b>study for exams</b>
Wed.	May	2	final exams	<b>study for exams</b>
Thurs.	May	3	final exams	<b>study for exams</b>

#### D. Method of Evaluating Students

Final marks will be determined by four examinations, a GEN 411 paper proposal (presented in both written and oral formats), and participation in class meetings, each weighted as follows:

examinations (4):	60%
written proposal:	15%
oral proposal:	10%
participation (includes attendance):	15%

Please note that your class participation will determine a significant portion of your final grade. To do well here, you must not only *attend* class, but also arrive *prepared to raise interesting and relevant questions and comments on the day's assignment*. (On the other hand, students who are chronically unprepared or absent will reduce their participation grades to zero.)

As in any Medaille course, the grading of student writing in GEN 410 will reflect standard English usage; thus, in addition to thoroughly addressing the required content, your *papers and essays should be well organized, well written, and properly documented* in MLA or APA style.

Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades with the following table:\*

A ≥ 95 (high distinction)	B 85-88 (above average)	C 75-78 (average)	D 65-68 (below average)
A- 92-94	B- 82-84	C- 72-74	
B+ 89-91	C+ 79-81	D+ 69-71	F ≤ 64 (unsatisfactory)

### E. Attendance Policy

See section (D) above; remember, too, that chronic unexcused absences (four or more) will reduce your participation grade to zero.

### F. Textbooks

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. New York: Anchor, 1994.  
Booth, Wayne C. The Craft of Research. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.  
Postman, Neil. Technopoly. New York: Vintage, 1993.  
Wills, Garry. Lincoln at Gettysburg. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992.  
Wilson, Edward O. Consilience. New York: Knopf, 1998

Copies of these texts are available through the Medaille College Virtual Bookstore.

### G. Suggested Reading List

Brinkley, Alan. The Unfinished Nation. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.  
Cziksztentmihalyi, Mihaly. Flow. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.  
Demos, John. The Unredeemed Captive. New York: Vintage, 1995.  
de Tocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America. Ed. J. P. Mayer. Trans. by George Lawrence. New York: HarperPerennial, 1988.  
Dewey, John. Art As Experience. New York: Perigee, 1988.  
Hacker, Diana. A Pocket Style Manual. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins, 2004.  
Kevles, Daniel. The Code of Codes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.  
Kuhn, Thomas. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.  
Martin, David and Lee Jacobus. The Humanities Through the Arts. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.  
Noonan, Peggy. Simply Speaking: How to Communicate Your Ideas With Style, Substance, and Clarity. New York: Harper Collins, 1999.  
Osborne, Michael and Suzanne Osborne. Public Speaking. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1999.  
Panofsky, Erwin. Meaning In The Visual Arts. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.  
Postman, Neil. Amusing Ourselves to Death. New York: Viking, 1986.

---

\* Grading guidelines appear in the current *Medaille College Academic Undergraduate Catalog*.

Sporre, Dennis. Perceiving the Arts. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997.

Ruggiero, Vincent. The Art of Thinking. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1997.

Weston, Anthony. A Rulebook for Arguments. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

Zinsser, William. On Writing Well. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

#### **H. Other Specifications, Requirements, or Arrangements**

To help create an effective learning environment, we will conduct our class activities in accordance with the following policies.

- You should be in the classroom, seated, and ready to participate at the start of each class meeting.
- Please do not bring food into the classroom; beverages with secure lids are acceptable, though.
- If you must bring a mobile phone to class, kindly turn it off before we begin.
- Try not to talk out of turn; instead, raise your hand to indicate that you have a question or contribution, and you will be recognized as soon as possible.
- We will ordinarily meet for the entire class period. If you need to leave a particular class meeting early, though, please let me know beforehand.
- Medaille's faculty and administration expect students to complete their academic work with honesty and integrity. Students who engage in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, forging signatures or College documents, etc.) face penalties ranging from an F on a given assignment to academic suspension. Policies and procedures for handling formal charges of academic dishonesty are published in the College's Undergraduate Catalog and Student Handbook.
- *Attendance at presentations and other activities sponsored by the Medaille College Scholars Program may be encouraged and/ or required.*

Any student with a disability who believes he/ she needs accommodation(s) in order to complete this course should contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. The staff in the Office of Disability Services will determine what accommodations are appropriate and reasonable under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Main Building, room M031, and can be reached by telephone at (716) 880-2391.