

WR100 Messina Learning Outcomes, Questions, and Enrichment Hour Overview, Dr. Allen Brizee

Introduction

The Loyola University Maryland Messina program is built around four learning outcomes that I've listed below. These outcomes are the goals of the program, and in an overarching way, guide this class as we explore the theme of Self and Other. The Self and Other theme will form a lens for the reading, writing, and researching we will do in this class. My hope is that this class will help you explore the relationship between writing, identity, and community, and my goals for us are as follows:

- Learn more about the writing, critical thinking, and effective research skills that you will need in all aspects of your life, regardless of discipline
- Develop skills in writing, critical thinking, and effective research that will help you better understand yourself, others, and the world around you
- Apply these skills to bring about positive change in yourself, in others, and in the world around you

Messina Learning Outcomes

We will focus some of our Enrichment Hour discussions on these following outcomes and answering their key questions as they relate to the Self and Other theme:

1. *Jesuit Mission and Values*

- Develop habits of discernment and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.
 - Key questions:
 - How are we defining discernment?
 - How are we defining reflection?
 - What is the Ignatian tradition?
- Explore and articulate values and principles involved in their personal decision-making.
 - Key questions:
 - What are our values and principles?
 - How does our personal decision-making process work?

2. *Critical Understanding*

- Develop habits of reading, writing and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.
- Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.
 - Key questions:
 - What is “critical understanding”

- How, why, what do we read?
- How, why, what do we write?
- How, why, what do we discuss and then *do* to support academic excellence and engagement?

3. *Connections to Loyola Community*

- Establish healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with others including faculty, administrators, staff and peers.
- Demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community at Loyola University both in and out of the classroom.
 - Key questions:
 - How are we defining “healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationship” with others?
 - How do we go about *fostering* this?
 - How are we defining “belonging” and “community”?
 - How do we define/do this in and out of the classroom?

4. *Integrated Learning*

- Integrate multiple sources of knowledge gained through various disciplinary lenses, texts, instruction, out of class experiences and personal reflection to offer a perspective on the interdisciplinary theme of the community.
 - Key questions:
 - What is knowledge?
 - What are our options for multiple sources of knowledge?
 - What is a discipline?
 - What is interdisciplinary?
 - What is interdisciplinary about Messina? About a Jesuit education?
 - Why is an interdisciplinary approach to thinking, problem-solving, living beneficial (if it is)?

Final question: How do we achieve these learning outcomes and answer these questions in the Self and Other theme in this Effective Writing class?

The Self and Other Theme

From the website:

How do our relationships with others shape us? What circles of belonging do we draw around ourselves (self, family, school, parish, race or ethnicity, nation), and how do these influence who we are? Where do the circles end and why, and what is our connection and obligation to those outside of them? How do our encounters with others, both near and far, historical and fictional, help us better to understand not just what is different from us, but who we are and might become? Students enrolled in Self and Other course pairings will explore how we imagine the other, and how those imaginings shape our willingness to learn from, sympathize with, and open ourselves to the other.

From my Messina course description:

This writing course will help you explore the relationship between writing, identity, and community. To accomplish this, we will study how people define themselves through

communities, families, socio-economic class, sexual identity, music, race, and religion. Then we will explore how we define others, handling the tricky process of developing (mis)perceptions, stereotypes, categories, and cliques. Building on our work from the self and other sections of the class, we will then study how people sometimes separate themselves from others, so that we can figure out ways of overcoming these spaces. Overcoming these spaces requires strategies, and to build these strategies, we will follow a social justice model to conduct research on local problems regarding socio-economic and racial issues in Baltimore City. The ultimate goal for the course is to help you explore your emerging identity as young adults and then connect you in meaningful ways to your new Baltimore home.

I thought we'd work in the following way:

- Use the Enrichment Hours as a way to explore, discuss, and write about the issues we're covering in class and as a way to form a closer community
- Use the Enrichment Hours as settings to discuss issues *not* related to class
- Use the Enrichment Hours time and Messina resources to burst the Loyola bubble and explore your new home—some of this exploration will be related to class and some won't:
 - Experiential research at GEDCO/CARES: folks interested in literacy and digital divide issues will find this interesting
 - A trip to the American Visionary Arts Museum (AVAM): simply the coolest museum in the world. Period. And it's here in Baltimore. Lucky you.

To interweave our Messina experience with WR100, I will provide Messina-specific information and links on the course website to readings and there will be Messina-related ideas on assignment sheets. If you have any questions, please let me know.