

Syllabus for FYS 131 Navigating College and Life

“Life is a journey. You’ll need a map. Stay on course!”

FYS 131 – 79E

Room 106 – Lenawee Campus

Instructor:

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Course Description

Students will develop skills designed to help them promote their success in education and in life. Learners will become better equipped in navigating academic advising and financial aid. Student Education Plans (SEP) and the Life Maps Project will be completed; academic success strategies are introduced and reinforced.

This seminar explores four major journeys in life.

- One is our **inner journey** of learning more about ourselves, our strengths, our learning styles, our dreams, etc. This journey increases self-confidence and a sense of purpose, in school and in life.
- Another is our **learning journey** in courses. This journey includes active learning, effective and efficient study and test-taking strategies, and the use of self-management tools.
- In this course you will consider your **career path**. You will spend time considering career options and develop an educational plan that leads toward your particular career goals.
- Yet another journey involves **navigating college**, using available resources for academic planning, and understanding the systems and processes for achieving your academic goals (such as receiving a college degree).

Course Goals

In FYS 131, you will

1. Assess your career interests and aptitudes and create an academic plan (Student Education Plan—SEP), through completion of the Life Maps Project.
2. Learn principles and apply strategies that improve your ability to succeed in courses, persist in your college career, and achieve your goals.
3. Increase communication, leadership, and interdependence skills through group work and classroom speaking.
4. Access and effectively use college resources.
5. Build critical thinking skills through employing active reading and writing strategies.



“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” -Lao Tzu

Required Materials

- FYS 131 course pack, from the bookstore: “My Life Map: Education, Career, and Life Plan” ISBN-13: 978-1-305-30475-8 & ISBN-10: 1-305-30475-6
- Other supplies, including pens, highlighters, post-it notes, loose-leaf paper, stapler, and a note book for your course packet and papers.

Associate Degree Outcomes

The Jackson College Board of Trustees has determined that all JC graduates should develop or enhance certain essential skills while enrolled in the College. The specific skills, called Associate Degree Outcomes (ADOs), which will be addressed in FYS 131 are:

The ability to think critically and solve problems, ADO #7

- Grasp central ideas and arguments as outlined;
- Analyze and question underlying assumptions and logic of an issue or problem;
- Seek outside information and opinions as plans are weighed and determined;
- Evaluate and synthesize information gained and construct plan to move forward.

The ability to work productively with others, ADO #9

- Develop ability to discuss and question one’s own oral and written communication and that of one’s peers;
- Engage in small and large group work, defining and assigning roles and responsibilities;
- Listen well, attempt to resolve group conflict and work to reach consensus;
- Treat the ideas, gifts and limits of others with respect.

Grading Components

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| • Life Map Project | 40% |
| • <i>On Course</i> Journal and other Class Activities | 40% |
| • Attendance and Participation | 20% |

Life Map Project (40% of grade)

The purpose of the Life Map Project is to help you think through such important questions as, “What are my strengths, values, goals and dreams?” “What career fields would be consistent with my strengths, values and dreams, and what occupations would I enjoy and be good at?” “What college degree and program of study would help me realize the life of my dreams?” “What courses will I need to take to complete my desired program of study and degree?”

Every page of the Life Map Project guides you on a journey of self exploration and life planning. As you give careful thought to completing each section, you are creating a valuable resource that you will refer to and update throughout your college career.

You will receive clear instructions and support for completing the Life Map Project. Past FYS students have reported that the Life Map Project helped them develop a clear vision and plan for their future. We hope this will be your experience as well. You will present your findings to the class at the end of your research and investigation. [(Students will make a class presentation, by using one of the following: power point, creative video, a song, a poem, a short story.)]

On Course Journals, Reflections, and Other Class Activities (40% of grade)

You will be assigned guided journal writings and reflections. Rather than simply “free writing,” you will be given specific tasks and prompts to guide and develop your writing. Read the prompts carefully and follow them step by step. **Don’t skip any parts!** The best writing shows that you have thought deeply about a topic and shared something of yourself, including new understandings and realizations. Dive deep, and use the 4 “Es”: Examples, Experiences, Explanations, and Evidence. Your writing does not have to be “polished,” but it should be real and heartfelt—with attention paid to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting.

Class activities often are solo, with partners, in small groups, and in large groups. Sometimes this array of activities combines both reading and writing, skits, summaries, and report outs. Your active participation and engagement in these activities will help promote your understanding and applications of interdependence, self-awareness, critical thinking, and active learning. These will also help you discover and further develop both your soft and hard skills.

Attendance and Participation (20% of grade)

Attendance is mandatory. A college course is similar to a job in that students are expected to arrive on time, stay until class has finished, and be fully engaged throughout the class. You are expected to be present for and fully engaged in class activities, including active reading of articles, discussions of readings, case studies, quizzes, in-class reflections, etc. What is done in class may not be made up; the grade for a missed activity or quiz is a zero.

Sitting in class is not participation. Participation demands your active presence and your readiness to discuss ideas, to work collaboratively, and to stay on task. If you miss a class due to an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate or the instructors before the next class meeting to find out what you need to do to prepare for the next class. You probably have a busy life and many things that compete for your time. Nevertheless, class attendance and school work must be high priorities if you are to benefit from this course and receive credit. Attendance matters!

Assignments and time management: Daily homework assignments are posted in your course calendar. We strongly suggest that you have a specific place (e.g., small planner, front of your notebook) to record these assignments. You are expected to read the assigned materials and complete journal writings and other homework before class starts. You should spend about 2 hours preparing for each hour of class time.

Late Assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. In the event of an absence, no in-class assignments/activities may be made up. Late homework assignments will be accepted on the next day that the class meets, only, and will be reduced by one full grade. In the event of an absence on a test day, arrangements may be made to make-up the test.

Small Group Work: Often in class, you will be asked to complete assignments working as a team. Your ability to collaborate, communicate, and contribute effectively are critical to your success as a learner who can help foster others’ learning. Employers in our tri-county area continually ask that we help students develop critical thinking and collaborative skills. They know that developing these skills requires practice and application. We will be working on both of these—critical thinking and collaboration—in our small group projects.

Classroom Environment

- You are expected to be respectful of all speakers including instructors, students, guests, etc.
- Be mindful that many students need quiet surroundings during independent work for focus.
- Arrive early if you want to check your text messages. Once class begins, cell phones, computers and other electronic devices need to be in sleep mode. If you need to take an important call, please put your phone on vibrate, take the call outside of class, and return quickly. Facebook, music videos, YouTube videos, and other diversions like these are not appropriate in college classrooms.
- Recording class discussions and taking photos or videos is not allowed unless you have prior instructor permission.
- Take restroom breaks as needed; avoid these breaks during test time. Permission is not necessary.
- I expect you to arrive on time. However, I would rather you arrive late (and safely) than miss class entirely.

Academic Honesty Policy: The JC Catalog states that Academic honesty . . . is the ethical behavior that includes producing students' own work and not representing others' work as their own, either by plagiarism, by cheating, or by helping others to do so. **Faculty members who suspect a student of dishonesty may penalize the student by assigning a failing grade for the paper, project, report, exam or the course itself.** The academic dean will be notified of the situation.

Extra Credit Policy: Extra credit will not be awarded in this course. Faculty are responsible for ensuring that students' learning and advancement take place through completion of the actual work of the course.

Grades: Students must earn a minimum 2.0 grade in all pre-requisites and all courses contributing to an earned certificate or degree.

Grades will be assigned using a percentage or a 4-point scale:

4.0 = superior work (*above and beyond* what is expected)

3.0 = work completed correctly and well

2.0 = mediocre work

1.0 = unsatisfactory work

The percentages for grades can be seen in the chart.

Grading Scale	
Percent	Grade
90-100	4.0
85-89	3.5
80-84	3.0
75-79	2.5
70-74	2.0
65-69	1.5
60-64	1.0
0-59	0.0

Intermediate Grading:

To comply with college policy and federal regulations, we will assign a grade to you after approximately two weeks, five weeks, and eight weeks. The grades assigned are letters with the following meanings:

- **V:** verifies that you are participating and your work so far has been acceptable.
- **H:** means that you are participating, but your work shows that you may require Help in order to complete the class successfully. If you receive an H grade, you will be contacted by the Center for Student Success and offered tutoring services.
- **Q:** means that you have effectively quit participating in the course. If you receive a Q grade, you will automatically be withdrawn from the course.
- ◆ **Special Grading Situations:**
 - Although your instructor may withdraw you for non-participation before midterm, only you, the student, can initiate a withdrawal after midterm.
 - Incomplete grades will be given only in accordance with JC policy.

Getting Help: Success is the Goal!

Education is a self-initiated, goal-directed process. You as the student are expected to be accountable for your own learning. Your instructors are facilitators and resources who will assist in this process.

If you recognize that you need additional help in order to be successful, you have a number of options. The most important thing about getting help is to do so as soon as you feel that you are getting off course. The quicker you seek help, the more likely it is that you will be able to get back on course and be successful. If you need help, contact:

- ◆ **Your Classmates:** Please make use of each other! If you are unclear about a particular assignment, talking it over with a classmate may help you sort out your confusion. Remember that together we are a community of learners—so asking each other for help is a good strategy to adopt for your success.
- ◆ **Your Instructor:** Please make use of your instructors! We are here to help. I am available during posted office hours. You are also welcome to make special appointments to see me. I check email regularly, and this is my preferred means of communicating with you.
- ◆ **The Center for Student Success:** Located in BW 125, the Center provides tutoring and other services. Please call 517-796-8415 or visit for more information. The staff is there to help you succeed in your studies, so please do not hesitate to make use of this free resource for any of your classes.

Students requiring special assistance (including those affected by the Americans with Disabilities Act) should contact the Center for Student Success. This is the first step in acquiring the appropriate accommodations to facilitate your learning.

The First-Year Seminar class is designed to provide you with knowledge, skills, and support that will help you make a smooth transition into the challenging world of college. Please know that as you encounter unfamiliar situations and frustrations (which you absolutely will), your FYS instructor can be a valuable resource to help guide you toward answers to your questions and solutions to problems that arise. You may talk to me in class or in my office, you may email me, and you may call me. The college experience can be exciting, and it can be frightening, too. You are not alone in this journey. As a member of this FYS class, you have a strong support network. Your classmates and I are here for you, and we want you to succeed.