Mission Statement: The mission of Ottawa University is to provide the highest quality liberal arts and professional education in a caring, Christ-centered community of grace, which integrates faith, learning and life. The University serves students of traditional age, adult learners and organizations through undergraduate and graduate programs.

Prerequisite Advisory: Please be advised that you (the student) are responsible to have completed all course prerequisites necessary for this course prior to participating in the course. Not completing required prerequisites may negatively impact your ability to successfully complete this course.

Ottawa Student Email: Ottawa e-mail is the official account to be used for e-mail communication. It is the responsibility of the student to check his or her e-mail account on a regular basis for the duration of the course. Failure to read one’s email will not be a valid excuse for lacking information communicated via e-mail. In addition, any campus emergencies will be announced via the Ottawa email system. If you are encountering difficulties with your e-mail, please contact the Helpdesk at 855-268-4357 from 8 a.m. to midnight Central Time.

Course Number: LAS 30012
Course Title: Writing and Critical Thinking in the Liberal Arts
Credit Hours: 4
Prerequisites: N/A

Textbooks: No textbook assigned. All readings are provided in weekly content.

Additional Resources: Additional readings are required in each of four breadth areas—Art/Expression, Science/Description, Social/Civic, Value/ Meaning. Links are located in Blackboard.

Course Description: Engages students in exploring and understanding different ways of knowing through activities, readings, and discussion in four breadth areas. Students strengthen skills in reflective and critical thinking, written and oral communication, problem-solving, information literacy, and research writing as they explore knowledge and values in the interdisciplinary context of the liberal arts. Students apply new and experiential knowledge in everyday life as they learn to examine multiple points of view and evaluate sources.

Course Objectives: After successful completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate autobiographical reflection on one’s formal and informal learning experiences and their impact on current learning and growth.
2. Demonstrate different ways of thinking and knowing within each of four breadth areas by applying the skills and knowledge required by each.
3. Discuss each of the four breadth areas, giving examples of the role and impact of each in one’s individual life and the place of each breadth area within the larger society.

4. Demonstrate critical thinking in being able to examine one’s own values, perspectives, and attitudes, and those of others.

5. Analyze the strengths one is bringing to a liberal arts education and the challenges for learning and growth.


7. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills of information literacy by developing a clear and focused research question, conducting a search for relevant scholarly articles by using Ottawa’s online databases and other relevant library and/or online resources, evaluating sources, gathering information, taking notes without plagiarizing, and accurately citing sources.

8. Integrate source material into a cohesive and properly documented research paper.

---

**Grading /Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment/Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Class attendance and participation (20 points per week; see Rubric for allocation of points)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning Autobiography (LAB 1): Formal and Informal Education Experiences</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learning Autobiography (LAB 2): Four Liberal Arts Breadth Areas</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Development of a Research Question</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Learning Autobiography (LAB 3): Philosophy and Goals</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Research Paper References</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Research Paper Outline</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Meaning of Freedom</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Signature Assignment: Final Research Paper</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% - 100%</td>
<td>526-585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
<td>468-525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
<td>409-467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
<td>351-408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤59%</td>
<td>&lt;350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(To access your scores, click on My Grades in the Student Tools area in Blackboard.)

**Online Grade Book:**

Professors may use the Blackboard online grade book (TBA)

**Submissions:**

Professor may advise student on submission of coursework online (TBA)

**Course Outline:**

Assignments At-A-Glance
Week 1
Learning Autobiography (LAB 1): Formal and Informal Education Experiences
The Learning Autobiography (LAB) is one of the most important aspects of your experience in Writing and Critical Thinking in the Liberal Arts. You should have already reviewed the Learning Autobiography presentation contained in week one’s weekly materials. This week’s Learning Autobiography will focus on your past formal and informal educational experiences.

You are expected to include explicit references to this week’s lesson, articles, websites, or videos as they relate to your personal learning experiences. You will also be expected to reflect on your multiple intelligences and typology as they relate to your learning and the journey you have begun at Ottawa University.

Click and download LAB Template.docx for the format of the paper and further guidelines on the content.

The formatting requirements for the paper are as follows:

- Cover Page
- Page numbers in the upper right corner of each page and running headers
- At least 2 references to the content contained in the weekly materials
- APA citations and Reference Page
- 3-5 pages in length, not counting the title or reference pages
- Double-spaced
- 1" margins on all sides
- 12 point Times New Roman font

Paper should be in APA format; grammar, spelling, and quality will influence your grade. The Ottawa library provides a guide to APA writing. Visit the following site for more information on writing an APA paper. You must be logged in for the link to work. http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 50

Week 2
Learning Autobiography (LAB 2): Four Liberal Arts Breadth Areas
This essay will focus on your experiences within each of the four breadth areas of Ottawa University's liberal arts education. Write a solid section on each area. Based on the readings and materials from this week:

- Identify your strengths in each breadth area and how your learning style/intelligences correlate with your strengths.
- Identify areas you could more fully develop and how you plan to develop.
- Refer to specific classes you have taken and important concepts from those classes or refer to classes you intend to take.
- Describe your work or life experiences, talents, and/or interests in each of the breadth areas.
The formatting requirements for the paper are as follows:
- Cover Page
- Page numbers in the upper right corner of each page and running headers
- At least 2 references to the content contained in the weekly materials
- APA citations and Reference Page
- 3-5 pages in length, not counting the title or reference pages
- Double-spaced
- 1" margins on all sides
- 12 point Times New Roman font

This assignment should be in APA format; grammar, spelling, and quality will influence your grade. The Ottawa library provides a guide to APA writing. Visit the following site for more information on writing an APA paper - http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa. OU student Log-in is required.

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 50

Week 3
Development of a Research Question
Work through the steps below to narrow a topic and identify a research question that can be supported by evidence from scholarly journals.

Topic: What is your overall topic of interest? (Topic could relate to work, hobbies, relationships, world events, community issues, etc. What is something that interests you that you would like to know something about - not to convince someone of something you already think or feel, but what would you like more information about?) Note that for the purposes of this paper choose a topic within either Social/Civic or Science/Description breadth areas.

Step 1: Think about your readers. This step helps identify the significance of your research. To whom is your research important and why? Write your responses to the questions identified in the Bedford Research Room about the reader:

- Why will my readers care about this issue?
- What will my readers want or need to know about this issue?
- What do my readers already know about this issue?
- What do I want my readers to learn about the issue?
- If I am trying to persuade my readers of something, how easily will they be persuaded?
- What will my readers use my writing for?

Step 2: Consider the perspective you will take in approaching your topic. For a research paper that examines what scholars are saying about your topic, you will want to focus on the roles of inquirer, reporter, and interpreter. As a review of the literature, you will in some ways touch on each of these as you develop your question as an inquirer, review the literature on that question as a reporter, and analyze the information and
bring it together as an interpreter. Reflect on your topic from each of these three perspectives.

**Step 3:** Develop a list of possible questions on your topic using the suggested words of what, why, when, where, who, and how, and also the words would, should, or could. Use the examples to help guide you and stimulate your thinking.

**Step 4:** Write three possible research questions on your topic.

**Step 5:** Review your questions for their clarity and scope. Will the question point you to specific information on your topic? Will you be able to find enough information on the topic? Is it so broad that you will get hundreds or even thousands of articles on the topic? Could you write approximately six to eight pages of information that scholars are writing about on this question about your topic? Pay attention to the clarity of your words.

**Step 6:** Conduct a preliminary search. You will need to use Ottawa's online library databases for your research. What sources will be most helpful to you in looking for information on your topic? How can you begin to think about evaluating your sources? What keywords will you use to search for information? From your preliminary search, will you need to revise your research question?

**Conclusion:** Reflect on how your topic and research question demonstrate thinking from a scientific perspective. You will not conduct original research of an experiment, but how do you see your research and writing demonstrate the scientific method of acquiring knowledge?

Use the above to guide you in writing 2 - 3 pages that reflect your thinking through the six steps of developing a research question. Note the need to include your reflections on how your research question and your approach to gathering information demonstrate scientific thinking.

**The formatting requirements for the paper are as follows:**
- No formal cover page is required.
- Paper can be informal in style, addressing each of the six steps in developing the research question. Include an introduction to identify your topic and a conclusion to reflect on how your research and writing will demonstrate methods of scientific thinking.
- 2-3 pages in length, not counting the title or reference pages
- Double-spaced
- 1" margins on all sides
- 12 point Times New Roman font

This assignment should be in APA format; grammar, spelling, and quality will influence your grade. The Ottawa library provides a guide to APA writing. Visit the following site for more information on writing an APA paper - [http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa](http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa). OU student Log-in is required.

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.
Week 4
Learning Autobiography (LAB 3): Philosophy and Goals
Write a 3-5 page paper following the assignment guidelines. As you reflect on your personal philosophy, incorporate references from at least two readings or videos from this week’s materials.

In this essay you will be engaged in self-reflection on your mission statement, goals, and challenges and obstacles to achieving your goals.

Divide your essay into five sections, using the following headings in your paper:

• Section 1: Introduction
• Section 2: Mission Statement
• Section 3: Goals Challenges or Obstacles
• Section 4: Conclusion

Section 1: Introduction - Give the reader a general idea of what the essay will cover.

Section 2: Mission Statement
(NOTE: The questions for each section are guidelines. Do not try to answer each one.)

• At this point in your life, what gives your life meaning and purpose?
• What beliefs, values, principles, and criteria guide you?
• How did these values develop?
• How do they relate to your education and learning?

Section 3: Goals
• Describe your future goals in the following areas: educational, professional, and personal.
• Identify your short and long term goals, including career objectives.
• Reflect on the connection between your values and your goals.
• Explain why you chose your particular major and any specialty areas in your major.
• Identify any interest in graduate or professional study.
• Discuss other personal or educational interests you want to develop.
• What legacy do you want to leave behind, both at Ottawa and in your life?

Section 4: Challenges or Obstacles
• Identify challenges or obstacles that may stand in the way of accomplishing your goals.
• How will you deal with these challenges or obstacles?
• What support systems or strategies might help you succeed?
• What attitudes will be important to your success at Ottawa and in life?

Section 5: Conclusion - Your conclusion should be a summary of your personal philosophy, the relationship of your philosophy to your goals, and your strategies to overcome any obstacles to achieving your goals.

The requirements for the paper are as follows:
• Cover Page
• 3-5 pages in length, not counting the cover or reference pages
• Page numbers in the upper right corner of each page and running headers
At least two citations from the weekly readings or videos
- APA citations and Reference Page
- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- 12 point Times New Roman font

This assignment should be in APA format; grammar, spelling, and quality will influence your grade. The Ottawa library provides a guide to APA writing. Visit the following site for more information on writing an APA paper - http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa. OU student Log-in is required.

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 50

Week 5
Research Paper References
Your task this week is to create a reference list for your research paper.
Instructions:
- Include 8 references or more. These sources must be less than 7 years old, including articles from current journals and at least 5 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles.
- Submit your tentative list of references.

Note: For each reference that you find, write out the reference in APA format as shown in the various sources contained on APA Quick Reference and Distinguishing Among Sources

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 30

Research Paper Outline
For this assignment, you are going to submit a tentative outline of your research paper.

Instructions:
- Review the description of Developing an Outline in this lesson.
- Set up your research paper outline in 1-2 pages. You can download and use Research Paper Outline Template if you wish to.

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 25

Week 6
The Meaning of Freedom
For this week, your task is to write an essay on the meaning of freedom.

Instructions:
- Include references of this week’s readings and videos
- Compare and contrast the viewpoints of the sources and reflect on your own responses
- A general question to address is: In looking at this breadth area with its focus on the need for "each educated person to function effectively within relationships and to make a positive contribution to other persons and the social order", what does it mean to be a responsible citizen?

The requirements for the paper are as follows:
- Cover Page
- 2-3 pages in length, not counting the cover or reference pages
- Page numbers in the upper right corner of each page and running headers
- At least 3 citations from the weekly readings or videos
- APA citations and Reference Page
- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- 12 point Times New Roman font

This assignment should be in APA format; grammar, spelling, and quality will influence your grade. The Ottawa library provides a guide to APA writing. Visit the following site for more information on writing an APA paper - http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa. OU student Log-in is required.

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 40

Week 7
Signature Assignment: Final Research Paper
The research paper consists of an objective examination of a topic in your major(s) or a topic in which you are interested. The paper is a literature review of the topic and should be related to one or more of Ottawa's liberal arts breadth areas. Steps included in the research process are:

1. Choose a topic and develop a research question
2. Conduct a preliminary review of available literature
3. Perform a complete review of the literature
4. Create a proposal and outline of the paper
5. Write the paper in APA style

The length of the paper will vary from student to student, but in general, the review of literature should be between 6-8 pages of text. With the introduction and conclusion, as well as a title page and reference page, the total paper will be 10-12 pages. For this paper, an abstract is optional. The sample paper provided for you contains an abstract for you to use as an example if you choose to include one.
The paper must cite at least 8 different references (no more than 7 years old), at least 5 of which need to be peer-reviewed articles from scholarly journals.

The final version must include acceptable spelling and grammar and be written in APA format in Times New Roman 12 point font, and 1" margins, and double-spaced. The paper must include a running header and page numbers in APA format.

Citing Sources
One thing that characterizes academic research papers is the citing of sources of information used within the paper. Failure to cite sources is considered plagiarism, or stealing the intellectual property of a writer. Plagiarism can result in serious consequences, with anything from an "F" on the paper, to an "F" in the course, to expulsion from college. You should cite your source when:

- You are making an important statement or using a unique idea from something you read. The citation should include the author(s) and year of publication.
- You are using a direct quotation, in which case you also cite the page number(s).
- You are citing specific statistics, dates, or numbers (also cite page numbers).

For the OU Writing Style Guide, go to Myers Library Online - http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa and click on APA Sample Papers to find OU APA Sample Paper. This paper will guide you through the format of your paper, citations, APA requirements of headings, and other critical information.

The requirements for the paper are as follows:
- Minimum of 8-10 pages of written text. This does not include the Title page, Abstract page (optional), and References page. When these pages are included, the total length of the paper will be approximately 10-12 pages.
- Margins of 1.0 inch on all four sides - top, bottom, right, and left.
- Double-space entire paper, including reference page. Do not put extra spacing between paragraphs. Indent the first line of each paragraph one tab (.5 inches).
- Size 12 font in Times New Roman. Do not underline or use all capital letters in the text or with headings.
- Title page is required.
- Use the "header" feature for page numbering. Type a short title of the paper in all caps at the left hand margin. Use the words "Running head" in front of the title on the first page only. Insert the page number at the right hand margin, including the first page (do not include the word "page").
- Use headings to organize the paper. Main headings (level one) are centered and boldface. Subheadings (level 2) are bold and at the left-margin. Capitalize main words.

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. The rubric is viewable in the weekly content area where you will submit the assignment.

Possible Points: 150

Participation and Attendance Rubric:
Additional Information:  
Course Assignment Descriptions:  
You will have several opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the principles taught in this course. The primary means of evaluating your work will be through practical application of the material. In the event that you have difficulty completing any of the assignments for this course, please contact your instructor immediately. Please refer to the Weekly Materials section in Blackboard for complete details regarding the activities and assignments for this course. The following is merely a summary. Coursework for accelerated courses requires 12-15 hours of independent work each week. Some students may complete coursework in fewer hours and some students may require additional hours beyond the estimate. Careful consideration should be given to this estimate when planning your personal schedule.

Signature Assignment – Final  
Research Paper Instructions:  
Review these instructions to begin preparing for what you will need to do in working on your Research Paper throughout this course. Also, review the scoring rubric provided.

The research paper will consist of an objective examination of a topic in your major(s) or a topic in which you are interested. The paper will be a literature review of the topic and should be related to one or more of Ottawa's liberal arts breadth areas. Steps included in the research process are:

- **Week 3 (30 points):** Choose a topic and develop a research question
- **Week 5 (30 points):** Create an APA style reference list
- **Week 5 (25 points):** Create a proposal and outline of the paper
- **Week 7 (150 points):** Complete the research paper in APA style (Signature Assignment)

The length of the paper will vary from student to student, but in general, the review of literature should be between 6-8 pages of text. With the introduction and conclusion, as well as a title page and reference page, the total paper will be 10-12 pages. For this paper, an abstract is optional. The sample paper provided for you contains an abstract for you to use as an example if you choose to include one.

The paper must cite at least 8 different references (no more than 7 years old), at least 5 of which need to be peer-reviewed articles from scholarly journals.
The final version must include acceptable spelling and grammar and be written in APA format in Times New Roman 12 point font and 1" margins. The paper must include a running header and page numbers in APA format, as well.

- Click [Guide to using APA style and creating citations](http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa) to download and read.
- Ottawa University Myers Library Online: APA Style - [http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa](http://ottawa.libguides.com/apa)
- Ottawa University Myers Library Online: Writing the Research Paper - [http://ottawa.libguides.com/researchpaper](http://ottawa.libguides.com/researchpaper)

Check your work against the grading rubric before submitting it to your instructor. Each rubric is viewable by clicking the assignment link at the weekly content area that is in Week 3, Week 5, and Week 7. You will use the same assignment link to submit each assignment in Week 3, Week 5, and Week 7.

**Total Possible Points: 235**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Overview of Writing and Critical Thinking in the Liberal Arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to course, instructor, and classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss Tips for Succeeding at Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation for writing Learning Autobiography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments – Due in class Week 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings:</th>
<th>Review the material in Week 1 Lecture Content and Learning Activity in Blackboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read or view the material in Week 2 Lecture Content and Learning Activity in Blackboard as assigned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Assignment: | Learning Autobiography (LAB 1): Formal and Informal Education Experiences (include reflection on strengths identified in assessments; see links in Blackboard) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Critical Thinking and a Liberal Arts Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss meaning of multiple intelligences and Jung’s typology for Ottawa journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss readings and videos related to the meaning of a liberal arts education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss readings, videos, and activities related to critical thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments – Due in class Week 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings:</th>
<th>Read or view the material in Week 3 Lecture Content and Learning Activity in Blackboard as assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Assignment: | Learning Autobiography (LAB 2): Four Liberal Arts Breadth Areas |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>World of Science/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Discuss readings and videos related to science/description breadth area
Explore steps in development of research question
Explore resources and search process in Myers Library Online

**Assignments – Due in class Week 4**

| Readings: | Read or view the material in Week 4 Lecture Content and Learning Activity in Blackboard as assigned |
| Assignment: | Development of a Research Question |

**Week 4  World of Value/Meaning**

Discuss readings and videos related to value/meaning breadth area
Discuss and practice APA formatting for in-text and reference page citations

**Assignments – Due in class Week 5**

| Readings: | Read or view the material in Week 5 Lecture Content and Learning Activity in Blackboard as assigned |
| Assignment: | Learning Autobiography (LAB 3): Philosophy and Goals |

**Week 5  World of Art/Expression**

Discuss readings and videos related to art/expression breadth area
Review databases and process of searching for scholarly peer-reviewed articles

**Assignments – Due in class Week 6**

| Readings: | Read or view the material in Week 6 Lecture Content in Blackboard as assigned |
| Assignments: | Research Paper References
Research Paper Outline |

**Week 6  World of Social/Civic**

Discuss readings and videos related to social/civic breadth area
Discuss the meaning of freedom and the role of being a responsible citizen

**Assignments – Due in class Week 7**

<p>| Readings: | Read or view the material in Week 7 Lecture Content in Blackboard as assigned |
| Assignment: | The Meaning of Freedom |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Research Paper Skills and APA Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review and discussion of research papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of citations and APA questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments – Due in class Week 8**

- **Readings:** Read or view the material in Week 8 Lecture Content in Blackboard as assigned
- **Assignment:** Signature Assignment – Final Research Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Review of Breadth Areas and Course Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentations of research paper as assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of readings/videos and discussion of breadth areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Examination:** N/A

**Policies:**
All course-specific policies for this course are spelled out in the University course policy document available in the Blackboard shell of your course. You are responsible for reading and understanding all of these policies. Failure to understand or abide by these policies could have negative consequences on your experience in this course.

**Copyright:**
This material is protected by copyright and cannot be reused without permission.

**Last Updated:** May 2015
**Lead Faculty:** Karen Bryson

**Disclaimer:** Course content and schedule may vary from this outline to meet the needs of a particular group of students. The instructor will explain the rationale for any variance as it occurs.