

INTEGRATED STUDIES

Designed as a logical sequence of learning experiences taken throughout a four-year program, the **Integrated Studies** component is comprised of four courses. Meeting students at their postsecondary levels of scholarship and maturity, *Introduction to the Liberal Arts* welcomes students to Monmouth College and introduces them to the liberal arts experience. This course concentrates upon building students' intellectual and practical skills as they develop an understanding of their own place within academia. This concentration on a college-located self is then expanded so that students can place themselves in the world: *Global Perspectives* emphasizes the global context of their education. Having considered the academic world during their first year and their material world during their sophomore year, students are prepared to address more abstract questions of human values, philosophies, and religions in their third year, within a *Reflection* course. Finally, the capstone experience and the final course in this sequence, *Citizenship: Responsible Action*, encourages students to use their reflections upon the abstract to return again to the concrete, taking their place in this world as active, mature, and educated citizens.

All of the courses in the **Integrated Studies** component will address the Critical Thinking, Ethical Inquiry, and Varieties of Human Experience elements of the Monmouth College academic program.

N.B. All of the specific details for the four courses enumerated below will be settled in subsequent faculty workshops.

- During their first year, students will take *Introduction to the Liberal Arts* (4 hours), an introduction to the liberal arts and higher education. As in that course, all sections of *Introduction to the Liberal Arts* will share a common theme and common objectives, as well as a yet-undetermined number of common readings, convocations, and bi-weekly orientation presentations. Instructors will have freedom to focus part of the course as they see fit, though they will be expected to address their topic from a variety of liberal arts perspectives. In addition to presenting rigorous and varied academic content, *Introduction to the Liberal Arts* will continue to deliver college orientation information, now via bi-weekly presentations given by campus staff. The CRTF believes that through regular and scheduled presentations, library, leadership, and student life staff can ensure uniform delivery of orientation information.
- During their Sophomore year, students will take *Global Perspectives* (3 hours), an introduction to the world and its cultures. In form, *Global Perspectives* is like *Introduction to the Liberal Arts*: sections will share core texts and course objectives, while allowing instructors autonomy within the rest of the course. (Individual foci will be encapsulated in section subtitles.) In content, *Global Perspectives* builds upon the intellectual base of *Introduction to the Liberal Arts* by examining “micro” and “macro” social organizations. Simultaneously, it fosters critical thinking about an individual's sense of world citizenship as well as consideration of the positions of other selves, other nations, and other geopolitical realities.

With these broad goals in mind, course content will be determined by the faculty and designed by those departments responsible for offering sections of the course. As with *Introduction to the Liberal Arts* and the other **Integrated Studies** courses, a variety of departments will collectively offer sections of the course.

- During their Junior year, students will take a *Reflection* course (3 hours) designed to encourage diverse and critical thinking about spiritual questions of faith, reason, and knowledge. Unlike the previous **Integrated Studies** courses, *Reflection* will not be offered as a single class sharing elements across sections. Instead, the *Reflection* rubric will emphasize multiple perspectives via a limited menu of courses taught by faculty from various disciplines and areas of interest. For instance, psychology, literature, and the fine arts may be represented, in addition to philosophy and religion.

As opportunities for abstract contemplation, *Reflection* courses recognize that it is imperative that students be allowed to engage in significant questions, and questioning, without answers being provided by instructors. The goal of such questioning is to explore in critical and comparative terms the beliefs one holds, and to understand the relationships between values and knowledge.

- During their Senior year, students will take the capstone of the **Integrated Studies** program, *Citizenship* (3 hours). This component invites examination of a worldly issue or problem from more than one disciplinary perspective; it engages the critical thinking skills acquired in both general education and major coursework so that students may examine their possible roles and responsibilities as local, national, and global citizens. As an opportunity to move from abstraction and contemplation toward assignments and projects focused on responsible action in the world, the hallmark of the course should involve a senior capstone project. This might take the form of a term research or position paper (linking belief and action, proposing policy), an individual or group service project, or an experiential learning project linked to goals of citizenship and responsible action.

Like the *Reflection* component, *Citizenship* will be offered as a limited menu of courses, such as: Environmental Ethics; Economy, Community, and Ethics; Feminist Approaches to Literature and Society; Liberty; War and Peace; Poetics of the Self; The New Individual; Biotechnology and Human Values; Economic Policy Alternatives and Citizen Welfare; and, Ethics in an Information Society.

The **Integrated Studies** courses provide an evolutionary learning experience as students generate knowledge in one course then build upon it in subsequent courses. The fundamental skills introduced and reinforced in the **Across the Curriculum** initiatives will supplement and bolster the intellectual processes of **Integrated Studies** and major courses alike.