**UNIV 191 – You First at VCU Office: 201 Hibbs Hall**

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**Fall 2020**

Welcome to VCU! Leaving home and going to college can be an intimidating experience for anyone, but when you’re the first person in your family to do so, making the transition from home life to college life can be even more difficult. The basic objective of this course is to help you acclimate to your new life as a college student. Together, we will explore the new adventure that lies ahead for you. Everyone in this course is a first-generation student, but you’re all different. Over the course of the semester, you will start developing your narrative as a VCU student.

Again, welcome! I want you to know that I am grateful for your presence and input in our classroom (whether we’re meeting in person or online). I appreciate and welcome you regardless of your immigration status, country of origin and/or citizenship, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender/sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or dis/ability. Thank you for enriching our world, sharing your vital experience, and contributing to the diversity that makes our intellectual community vibrant and evermore creative. I’m looking forward to an exciting and interesting semester!

**Schedule**

***Please note: This is a tentative class schedule. During the first week of class, we will work together to finalize the class schedule - any changes will be announced in class and on your blackboard site.***

***At least 30% of our sessions will be together in 1164 Temple. The rest of the sessions will be either synchronous sessions on Zoom or independent sessions to be completed online.***

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| **Date** | **Meeting Location** | **Topic** | **Assignment** |
| 08/18 | 1164 Temple | Introductions – The importance of being first | In-class assignment |
| 08/25 | 1164 Temple | First-Gen Student Success: Identifying Contributing Factors | Readings |
| 09/01 | 1164 Temple | What is the Hidden Curriculum? | Readings |
| 09/08 | 1164 Temple | The Importance of Connections: Academic | Readings |
| 09/15 | online | The Importance of Connections: Social | Interview a professor |
| 09/22 | online | “The Well” Health Promotion and Well Being Center | View video presentation  Writing Assignment |
| 09/29 | 1164 Temple | First-Gen Student Identity | Readings |
| 10/06 | 1164 Temple | First Gen and Intersectionality | Word Cloud Exercise |
| 10/13 | online | Mid-terms: Mastery, mystery, or misery? | Self-Assessment |
| 10/20 | TBD | Imposter Syndrome | Reading, writing assignment |
| 10/27 | TBD | Breaking Barriers |  |
| 11/03 | NO CLASS – ELECTION DAY |  |  |
| 11/10 | TBD | The Big Picture: Keeping Your Eyes on the Prize |  |
| 11/17 | 1164 Temple | Reflection |  |
| 11/24 | 1164 Temple | Reflection |  |
| **12/08: Final Project Due** | | | |

**Attendance and Class Participation:**

You attendance is required at all class sessions and may impact the grade which you earn for the course. I feel that active participation in class is one of the most effective learning techniques available to instructor and student. Please feel free to ask questions - I encourage active class discussions. If you are uncomfortable asking questions in class, you may send them via email or leave anonymous questions on the front table in the classroom.

Please refer to the *University Rules and Procedures* for further information on attendance

**Project Description**

Students will develop a personal narrative of their experience as a first-year, first-generation student throughout the course of the semester. You will be asked to discuss this experience and your narrative with your family when you leave campus in November. Your final project will be a piece of writing that reflects on the development of your narrative, how it was received by your friends and/or family, and what you have learned from the experience.

**Course Grade:**

Your grade in this course is based on the following:

* Completion of assignments – 60%
* Final Project grade – 20%
* Class participation – 20%

**Student Responsibilities – Fall 2020**

(source: One VCU: Responsible Together available at: https://together.vcu.edu/students/

When we return, things will look and feel different as we take necessary steps to protect the well-being of our community.

Here is what is expected of you:

1. Monitor your health daily. Testing will occur according to protocols.

2. Wear a face covering or mask in common areas, including class.

3. Apply physical distance guidelines to all settings.

4. Clean and disinfect personal and shared spaces before and after use.

Cleaning supplies will be available in numerous locations.

5. Report symptoms associated with COVID-19 to VCU Student Health

Services. A call center hotline will be available later in the summer.

6. Not sharing is caring during this unique pandemic. Please do not share

calculators, tools, lab supplies, etc.

Following rules regarding face coverings or masks, cleaning and disinfecting, and physical distancing is required. Students will receive reminders for daily health monitoring. Staff in the Dean of Students office will be notified after incidents of non-compliance. Refusal to comply with rules can include progressive disciplinary action up to and including suspension, based on the VCU Student Code of Conduct.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Campus emergency information**  
Sign up to receive at [**alert.vcu.edu/signup/**](https://alert.vcu.edu/signup/). It is essential to keep your information up-to-date within VCU Alert and to keep your permanent address and emergency contact information current in eServices.

VCU uses a variety of communication methods to alert the campus community about emergency situations and safety threats. Learn more about types of alerts at [**alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php**](https://alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php)

Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234), and report suspicious activities and objects.

**Class registration required for attendance**  
Students may attend only those classes for which they have registered. Faculty may not add students to class rosters or Blackboard. If students are attending a class for which they have not registered, they must stop attending.

**Honor System: upholding academic integrity**  
The VCU Honor System policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity. According to this policy, "Members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty, ethics and integrity at all times." Students are expected to read the policy in full and learn about requirements here: [**https://conduct.students.vcu.edu/vcu-honor-system/**](https://conduct.students.vcu.edu/vcu-honor-system/)

**Computer and network use**  
All students are expected to know and comply with VCU's Computer and Network Use policy, which can be reviewed at [**policy.vcu.edu/universitywide-policies/policies/computer-and-network-resources-use.html.**](https://policy.vcu.edu/universitywide-policies/policies/computer-and-network-resources-use.html)

**Important dates**  
Important dates for the semester are listed in the VCU Academic Calendar: [**https://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/**](https://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/)

**We care about your success!**  
Virginia Commonwealth University has launched an Early Alert initiative to support student success. As your professor, if I am concerned about your academic performance in the first few weeks of this class, you and your academic advisor may receive a Progress Report email with links to appropriate academic support resources. You are encouraged to reach out to me after class or during my office hours for additional support. Your academic advisor, the Writing Center, and the Campus Learning Center may also follow up to provide additional layers of support to you.

**Attendance and consequences of poor attendance**  
The instructional programs at VCU are based upon a series of class meetings involving lectures, discussions, field experiences, special readings and reporting assignments. Therefore it is important for each student to be in attendance on a regular basis. A student who misses a class session is responsible for completing all material covered or assignments made during the absence.

Students having attendance problems should contact their instructor to explain the reasons for nonattendance and to discuss the feasibility of continuing in the course. If the student has fallen so far behind that the successful completion of the course is impossible, the student should withdraw from the course before the end of the first 10 weeks of classes.

If the student continues to miss class and does not officially withdraw from the course, the instructor may withdraw the student for nonattendance with a mark of W before the end of the first 10 weeks of classes or may assign an academic grade at the end. Withdrawals are not permitted after the end of the first 10 weeks of classes. For classes that do not conform to the semester calendar, the final withdrawal date occurs when half of the course has been completed.

**Career Services**  
Looking for ways to tie what you are learning in your class to your future career or professional goals? VCU Career Services provides career planning services for all current VCU students and alumni. Career Services can help students with finding a work-study job on/off campus, resume writing, internship development, interviewing, preparing for graduate school, networking, or job searching,. Students are invited to attend career events and workshops, and schedule individualized career advising appointments. Career Services is located on the ground floor of University Commons, in room 143. For more information and to make a career advising appointment, [**visit the VCU Career Services website**](http://www.careers.vcu.edu/).

**Managing stress**  
Students may experience situations or challenges that can interfere with learning and interpersonal functioning including stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol and/or other drug use, concern for a friend or family member, loss, sleep difficulties, feeling hopeless or relationship problems. There are numerous campus resources available to students including University Counseling Services (804-828-6200 MPC Campus, 804-828-3964 MCV Campus) which provides brief therapy treatment, University Student Health Services (MPC 804 828-8828, MCV Campus 804 828-9220) and the Health Promotion and Well-Being Center [The Well] (804-828-9355). 24 hour emergency mental health support is available by calling (804) 828-6200 or utilizing the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-784-2433).

**Mandatory responsibility of faculty members to report incidents of sexual misconduct**  
All employees, including faculty, department chairs and deans, are required to report any incidents of sexual assault, sexual exploitation and partner or relationship violence to the university's Title IX Coordinator.

Confidential offices which can provide support at VCU are: University Counseling Services (804) 828-6200

For more information about Title IX, please visit please visit [**https://equity.vcu.edu/**](https://equity.vcu.edu/).

**Military short-term training or deployment**  
If military students receive orders for short-term training or for deployment/mobilization, they should inform and present their orders to Military Student Services and to their professor(s). For further information on policies and procedures contact Military Student Services at 828-5993 or access the corresponding policies.

**Student email standard**  
Email is considered an official method for communication at VCU. Students are expected to check their official VCU email on a frequent and consistent basis (the university recommends daily) in order to remain informed of university-related communications. Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, in a timely fashion, university-related communications sent to their official VCU student email account. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of university-related actions, including disciplinary action. Students must read this standard in its entirety at [**https://ts.vcu.edu/media/technology-services/content-assets/university-resources/ts-groups/information-security/StudentEmailStandard.pdf**](https://ts.vcu.edu/media/technology-services/content-assets/university-resources/ts-groups/information-security/StudentEmailStandard.pdf)

**Student financial responsibility**  
Students assume the responsibility of full payment of tuition and fees generated from their registration, all charges for housing and dining services and other applicable miscellaneous charges. Students are ultimately responsible for any unpaid balance on their account as a result of the University Financial Aid Office or their third party sponsor canceling or reducing their award(s).

**Students representing the university – excused absences**  
Students who represent the university (athletes and others) do not choose their schedules. All student athletes should provide their schedules to their instructors at the beginning of the semester. The Intercollegiate Athletic Council strongly encourages faculty to treat missed classes or exams (because of a scheduling conflict) as excused absences and urges faculty to work with the students to make up the work or exam.

**Students with disabilities**  
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, require that VCU provide "academic adjustments" or "reasonable accommodations" to any student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. To receive accommodations, students must register with the Office of Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253) or the Division for Academic Success on the MCV campus (828-9782). Please also visit the Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity website via [**https://saeo.vcu.edu/**](https://saeo.vcu.edu/) and/or the Division for Academic Success website via [**https://das.vcu.edu/**](https://das.vcu.edu/) for additional information.

Once students have completed the registration process, they should schedule a meeting with their instructor (s) and provide their instructor (s) with an official accommodation letter. Students should follow this procedure for all courses in the academic semester.

**Withdrawal from classes**  
Before withdrawing from classes, students should consult their instructor as well as other appropriate university offices. Withdrawing from classes may negatively impact a student’s financial aid award and his or her semester charges. To discuss financial aid and the student bill, visit the Student Services Center at 1015 Floyd Avenue (Harris Hall) and/or contact your financial aid counselor regarding the impact on your financial aid.

**Faculty communication about students**  
VCU instructional faculty, administrators and staff maintain confidentiality of student records and disclose information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This means that VCU officials may disclose student record information without the consent of the student in certain situations. To support university operations, for example, VCU officials share information about students with other educational officials as necessary to perform their job duties. FERPA permits this disclosure to school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the student information. In addition, VCU officials have obligations to report information shared by a student depending on the content of that information, for example, in compliance with VCU’s policy on the duty to report. Unless FERPA permits a certain disclosure, VCU generally requires consent from a student to disclose information from their education record to another individual. You may find additional information on the VCU FERPA website: [**http://rar.vcu.edu/records/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/**](http://rar.vcu.edu/records/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/).