

## Modes of Inquiry Common Syllabus

FALL 2014

**Section Title:** The Tiniest History Makers

**Section Meeting Times/Location:** Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30pm – 1:50pm, Keane Hall 008

Common time: Monday, 11:00 am – 12:20 pm, Specific Dates & Locations TBA

**Course Website:** [www.moserlab.com/teaching/courses/lib100/](http://www.moserlab.com/teaching/courses/lib100/)

### Teaching Team

Instructor: Dr. Adam Moser ([adam.moser@loras.edu](mailto:adam.moser@loras.edu)) Office Hours: Tue/Thu 10am-11:30am, 2:00pm-3:30pm

Peer Assistant: Kaitlin Philipsen ([Kaitlin.Philipsen@loras.edu](mailto:Kaitlin.Philipsen@loras.edu)) Office Hours: TBA

### Section Description

Would Napoleon have conquered Russia if only his army's jackets had different buttons? Could Europe have explored and colonized the world if vitamin C hadn't been discovered? How did olive oil shape the ancient world? Empires have risen and crumbled based on the discovery of a few molecules. We don't often appreciate the role molecules play in our lives, even though they make up everything in the universe. Adding an atom here, subtracted an atom there, is all it takes to make the difference between male and female sex traits, between a harmless molecule and an explosive one, between food and clothes. This class, we will explore the importance of these molecular discoveries and how history might have come out differently if those discoveries had not taken place. No science background is required, just an active interest in how science and history collide.

### Modes of Inquiry Objectives

As a critical part of a student's First Year Experience at Loras College, the Modes of Inquiry Course seeks:

- To introduce students to liberal arts learning and the Loras general education curriculum.
- To regularly engage students in active learning experiences and provide the skills and resources needed to promote active learning outside of the classroom.
- To enable confident questioning and critique in a variety of contexts by enhancing students' critical thinking and reading skills.
- To provide information and resources on a variety of academic and social transition issues and engage students in critical discussion of these issues.
- To strengthen the academic skills necessary for students to pursue a liberal arts education and become life-long learners, particularly critical thinking and reading, and information literacy.
- To introduce students to, and have them be an active part of, quality advising and educational planning.
- To engage students in collaborative activities that allow them to work with other first year peers and recognize the benefits and challenges associated with group collaboration.

### Modes of Inquiry Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Modes of Inquiry course, students will:

- Be able to articulate an understanding of the meaning and purpose of a liberal arts education and identify examples of how their Loras education is grounded in the liberal arts.
- Be able to evaluate multiple perspectives, recognize bias and assess the quality and appropriateness of sources of information in the context of college level research, writing, and discussion about a specific topic.
- Be able to describe how individual and shared experiences influence decisions, interpretations, analysis, and evaluations made by themselves and others.
- Be able to formulate and justify a position on a topic using quality reasons and evidence and acknowledging alternate perspectives.

- Be able to recognize and articulate the benefits and challenges associated with group collaboration and thoughtfully reflect on their own experiences.

### Required Texts & Materials

- *An Introduction to the Liberal Arts & Critical Thinking at Loras College*. First-Year Summer Reading Packet
- Lammer-Heindel, C. (2013). *A Brief Introduction to Critical Reasoning & Effective Argumentation*. Loras College Course Packet (purchased at bookstore only)
- Patel, E. (2010). *Acts of Faith: The story of an American Muslim, in the struggle for the soul of a generation*. Beacon Press.
- Le Couteur & Bureson (2003). *Napoleon's Buttons: 17 Molecules That Changed History*. Penguin Group.
- Swamped Packet (purchased at bookstore only)

### Modes of Inquiry Attendance Policy

The Loras College dispositions of active learning and responsible contributing are at the core of the attendance policy in the Modes of Inquiry course. The Modes of Inquiry course strives to foster student curiosity and develop the skills necessary to seek answers and explore new ideas. Developing these skills requires student engagement and active participation. In addition, as members of a learning community we each have a responsibility to contribute our ideas and insights to support the learning of others. Active participation and responsible contributing cannot occur if a student fails to be present.

If a student has the equivalent of two weeks of absences, he/she will automatically receive a failing grade for the Modes of Inquiry course. Thus, a student in an MOI section that regularly meets two days per week will fail the course upon accumulating 4 absences.

A student will accumulate an absence any time he/she fails to attend a scheduled course event. This includes Launch into Loras activities, class meetings, and required common time events.

### College sponsored events

In accordance with the policies outlined in the Loras College bulletin, absences for college sponsored events will not be included in the accumulated absence total only when the student has met all of the responsibilities of the student as outlined in the Loras College Bulletin. For MOI students these responsibilities include the following:

1. Submit a copy of team/organization's schedule to instructors no later than the first week of class with all specific course conflicts highlighted.
2. Through oral and email notification, communicate with instructor(s) at least one week prior to each class scheduled to miss to coordinate how work will be made up and turned in. Students are expected to make up coursework missed (or an appropriate equivalent) by the original due date.
3. Forward all relevant changes to the schedule to instructors as soon as possible.
4. Submit all course syllabi and schedule of course commitments to coach/moderator as soon as possible.
5. It is a privilege to participate in college sponsored events. Students found to be intentionally abusing this policy will lose the opportunity to participate in college sponsored events.

### Required Common Time Events

All MOI students are required to attend the following common time events:

Campus Fest – September 8<sup>th</sup>

Keynote Speaker, Eboo Patel – September 15<sup>th</sup>

Majors fair – September 29<sup>th</sup>  
Cultural Fiesta – November 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Registration – November 10<sup>th</sup>

## Course Evaluation & Grading

Student evaluation will be based upon the following:

- **Liberal arts (summer reading/writing assignment) paper**

Students will turn in a first draft of this paper during Launch into Loras and will receive extensive feedback during the first few weeks of class. Students will be asked to revise, expand, and edit the paper based on comments from the instructor and in class discussions. You are required to take your paper to the Writing Center before FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10<sup>th</sup> for review. The final draft of this paper will be due on THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30<sup>th</sup> by MIDNIGHT.

- **Essay exam**

All MOI students will response to several common essay prompts for the first exam. This exam will require students to demonstrate an understanding of key concepts and themes from the first few weeks of class (including the *Acts of Faith* text, the Introduction to *Critical Thinking and Effective Argumentation* course packet, and class discussions on related topics). In addition to the common questions, each MOI section will have additional questions that reflect section specific discussions. This exam will be given out in class on THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25<sup>th</sup> must be submitted to eLearn before class starts (2:00 PM) on TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>.

- **Information Literacy Activities**

All MOI students will participate in several activities related to information literacy: an initial information literacy assessment, a virtual tour, a quiz, and a library information session. Participation and completion of all information literacy tasks is required.

- **Loras Information Literacy Test (LILT)**

In the first weeks of class, all students are required to complete the LILT assessment test. This test is used for college wide assessment and the individual student's score on the test is not factored into the final MOI grade. The LILT test must be completed no later than Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>.

- **Virtual Tour & Online Tutorial Quiz**

Prior to the Library Information Session students will participate in an online tour and tutorial to introduce them to library resources. Students will be required to complete a short quiz to demonstrate their understanding of the information included in the tour and tutorial. You must complete the tour, tutorial, and quiz no later than 5:00 pm on SEPTEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>.

- **Library Information Session**

All students must attend an information literacy session in the library with their MOI class. The library information session is scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>.

- **Argumentative Essay**

All MOI students will write an argumentative essay on a topic relevant to the course topic. The essay must be a minimum of 6 full, type-written pages, follow the Toulmin model of argumentation, and include appropriate

references. A more specific/detailed assignment sheet will be provided in a separate document. The final essay must be submitted to e-learn **by MIDNIGHT OCTOBER 23<sup>rd</sup>** and will be evaluated for originality via turnitin.com.

- **Group Process Reflection**

All MOI students will engage in, and be asked to reflect upon their experiences in group work. For these assignments, students will be asked to focus primarily on the process of group collaboration, rather than the outcome or product. Students will be required to complete a minimum of three reflective narratives about their own experiences as part of a group. Specific requirements will be provided in separate documents)

- **Launch Into Loras Reflection:** During Launch our class will be working as a team in a variety of activities. You will receive a prompt question after Launch to respond to about cooperative nature of the activities. Upload to eLearn due TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup> before class (12:30 PM).
- **Individual vs. Group Choices (Swamped):** Making decisions is a critical part of any team activity. During this assignment you will compare how individual and group choices meet a challenge. Afterward you will explain your observations and discuss how the best choices are made and how groups can achieve synergy. The time for this activity and reflection will be determined during the first day of class and will occur off campus on a weekend.
- **Molecules Project Team Reflection:** Your Molecules Project is a large, multipart assignment that includes research, writing, and presentations. How well did your team function? How effective was your team at achieving your goal? Upload to eLearn due TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> before class (12:30 PM).

- **Critical Thought Reflections**

Students will complete a number of short reflective writing assignments to demonstrate their understanding of multiple perspectives on a subject/issue, to communicate thoughts, feelings, and/or problems, to identify personal dispositions and biases, and to integrate knowledge gained within and outside of the classroom. These will be assigned based on class discussion.

- **Discussion Leadership**

Most class periods will be spent discussing topics and ideas drawn from the readings. All students must have read the material and be ready to discuss the material. Students will be randomly chosen at the beginning of each period to lead that day's discussion. Grading will be based on preparation and ability to develop a substantive discussion amongst the class.

- **Molecules Project**

The topic of the course is how molecules have changed history, with the Napoleon's Button book giving many good examples. Students in groups of 3 will choose a molecule and learn how its particular properties affected the past, present, or future. Each project will be presented in two formats.

- **Presentation**

Teams will give a 25-30min presentation based on their based on their paper. This will be a complete presentation over the history and science of your molecule. Grading will be based on audience engagement, quality of content, and ability to clearly explain the science and historical significance; a rubric will be provided. Presentations will occur before Thanksgiving break.
- **Chapter**

Teams will write a new chapter for the Napoleon's Buttons book. Similar to the book, historical impact will be explored and the basic science that explains the important properties of the molecule. The chapter will be written in an informative and story-like style that engages the reader. This paper will be due during Finals Week.

Student grades will be based upon the following tentative criteria:

Liberal Arts Paper	10%
Essay Exam	10%
Critical Thought Reflections	10%
Argumentative Essay	20%
3 Group Process Reflections (5% each)	15%
Information Literacy (1% each)	3%
Discussion Leadership	7%
Molecule Chapter	15%
Molecule Presentation	10%

The grading standards for the class will be as follows:

A	93-100%	B-	80-82.9%	D+	67-69.9%
A-	90-92.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D	63-66.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C	73-76.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B	83-86.9%	C-	70-72.9%	F	59.9% and below

### ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

#### Academic Honesty Policy

Loras College strives to nurture active learners, reflective thinkers, ethical decision makers and responsible contributors. Students are required to take pride in and protect personal intellectual property, by not engaging in acts of academic dishonesty. The institution will hold students accountable for academic dishonesty.

All Loras college students have the responsibility to:

1. Familiarize themselves with Loras's academic honesty policy as stated in the bulletin. The policy can be accessed using the following link: <http://inside.loras.edu/Academics/IQ/Documents/Academic%20Honesty%20Policy.doc>
2. Utilize available resources on the Loras College Campus to learn how to comply with the Academic Honesty Policy.
3. Be proactive with a faculty or support services member in addressing questions and clarifications regarding academic dishonesty.

#### Class Expectations/Decorum

##### Active, positive participation

This course is based on you reading and listening, having a thought, then sharing it. Read the material beforehand, pay attention, speak up in class, share ideas, argue, etc. "I don't know" is not an answer; it's a copout. A spirited discussion about the material is a very good thing, and we can certainly agree to disagree about certain matters.

- Be on time, participate actively in whatever we are doing, and use time efficiently in all activities.

- Listen and show understanding of others' ideas. Agree or disagree in constructive ways!
- Keep your personal electronics in your pocket.
- Be teachable, follow instructions.
- Have a good attitude. Show enthusiasm, even when the work is hard and you are tired.
- Meet goals and objectives of the course on time. Do quality work.
- Be a team player. Show and model respect for others at all times.

### **Make-up/Late Assignment Policy**

Late assignments and make-up assignments will not be accepted in this course. Failure to complete an assignment by the due date will result in a grade of ZERO. I will accept assignments from unforeseen events (medical/family emergency) ONLY with the appropriate documentation (i.e. doctor's note).

If a hard copy of an assignment is required in class and the student does not bring a hard copy on the specific day, the assignment will count as a ZERO.

Students who are aware of an upcoming excused absence must make arrangements with me in advance and must arrange to complete missed work prior to the absence. Failure to do so will result in a ZERO for the assignment/exam.

### **Laptop Policy**

We will often use laptops in class to research topics within our discussions. It is expected that there will be one laptop between each group of students. Laptops should be used for classwork only during class time.

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

In accordance with federal law, if you have a diagnosed disability or believe that you have a disability that might require reasonable accommodations, please discuss your needs with me at your earliest convenience. Documentation of your disability must be on file with the Lynch Office of Disability Services (LODS), 120 Academic Resource Center (563-588-7134) for you to receive accommodations.

### **Disclaimer/Subject-to-Change Statement**

This syllabus is the most up to date information on the policies and requirements for the course, but things change as a class progresses. The instructor reserves the right to change any portion of the course syllabus at any time without prior notice.

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

A detailed day-by-day schedule is available online at the course website (<http://www.moserlab.com/teaching/courses/lib100/syllabus/>).