

Core Curriculum 2017-2018 Assessment Report

Core Curriculum- *The Mercy Portal Experience*

In 2017-18, 15 Portal courses were offered with a total enrollment of 312 students. A survey of student perceptions and experiences in the Portal course was distributed to students enrolled in a portal course. Survey responses were obtained from 204 (65.4%) students in portal sections.

The objectives of the Portal course are:

- Analyze a contemporary social issue from an interdisciplinary point of view.
- Apply critical thinking skills to at least one of six Mercy critical concerns
- Identify ways in which Mount Mercy University services can support college success.
- Reflect on role as a community member through a service learning experience.
- Demonstrate teamwork as a contributor to the class community.
- Design an individualized plan of liberal study.

2017-18 PORTAL STUDENT SURVEY RESPONSES

<u>This portal course...</u>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Helped me learn about campus services for students.	33%	49%	12%	3%	3%
Gave me opportunities to get to know classmates better.	31%	40%	20%	5.8%	3.2%
Clarified what the 'domains of liberal studies' include.	22%	37%	25%	12%	4%
Helped me think about what other core courses to take.	20%	34%	23%	17%	6%
Taught me about Mercy Critical Concerns.	38%	37%	17%	4%	4%
Taught me about an important social issue.	49%	35%	11%	3%	2%
Taught me about the value of serving others.	42%	38%	13%	3%	4%
Taught me about Mount Mercy's values and heritage.	30%	35%	21%	7%	7%
Gave me an opportunity to participate in a service activity.	53%	34%	10%	1%	2%

The survey results summarized above indicate that the vast majority of students felt that they met all key learning objectives. According to this year's survey, at least 80% of students "strongly agree" or "agree" that the portal course "Taught me about an important social issue", "Taught me about the value of serving

others". However, this percentage is lower than last year's "over 70%." This year, more students chose either "neutral" or "disagree" or "strongly disagree" (highlighted in yellow).

Core Curriculum- *Domains of Liberal Study*

Mount Mercy's core curriculum includes seven domains of liberal studies. MMU students in all majors are also required to take Mount Mercy Domains of Liberal Studies courses. These courses give all students in all majors a sense of breadth and connection among traditional liberal arts disciplines. These courses are grouped according to the overall concepts covered by courses in that domain: Expressive Arts, Global Awareness, Historical Roots, Holistic Health, The Natural World, Self and Society and Ultimate Questions. Each class in a domain utilized a common domain assignment. Faculty from each domain collaborated to develop a common assignment addressing the agreed upon outcomes for that area. Performance criteria were also specified and scoring rubrics created.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, 2715 students were enrolled in 114 domain courses. Each faculty member teaching a domain course was asked to randomly select **five** students from the class and rate those students' common domain assignments using the domain assessment rubric. The domain assessment rubrics were posted on MyCampus and instructors were able to electronically submit the rubric scores for each of the students selected for assessment. Since only five student papers are selected for assessment the % of paper evaluated varies depending upon the size of the domain course. A few domains do not offer courses during the winter term. **Overall, about % of student papers were assessed during the 2017-2018 academic year.** A description of the sample, along with the comparative statistics for previous years is given in the table below.

Academic Year 2017-2018

Sample

Domain	# of classes offered	Total # of Students	# of papers Evaluated	Sample
Expressive Arts	21	384	78	20.3%
Global Awareness	14	270	35	13%
Historical Roots	16	394	30	7.6%
Self & Society	19	465	65	14%
Natural World	12	496	30	6%
Ultimate Questions	24	536	100	19%
Holistic Health	8	170	45	26.5%
Totals 2017-2018	114	2715	383	14.1%
Totals 2016-2017	107	2499	380	15.2%
Totals 2015-2016	99	2417	325	13.4%
Totals 2014-2015	94	1847	366	20%
Totals 2013-2014	100	2111	335	16%

Domain Results 2017-2018

Expressive Arts

Objectives	Criterion	Good/ Excellent	Adequate/ meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Explore the relevance of text/work of fine art to themselves	Specific references to the expressive work (addresses parts and not just the whole)	37%	51%	12%	0%
Explore the relevance of a text/work of fine art to their culture	Explores text/artwork through a social issue/problem, cultural conflict and/or one aspect of culture. Reveals a clear and nuanced understanding of the comparison/contrast issues and text/artwork/and their relationship/s; consistently supports ideas with specific detail and logical thinking	44%	44%	12%	0%
Interpret a text/work of fine art from two divergent perspectives	Balance the two approaches in terms of length and depth. Entire paper reflects a process of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation	42%	45%	10%	3%

Historical Roots

Objectives	Criterion	Good/ Excellent	Adequate/ meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Analysis of a major historical issue or event	The review clearly answers questions: 1.What is the author’s thesis or main argument? What is h/her purpose in writing? 2.How has the author’s experience shaped h/her attitude or worldview? 3.Does the author use any historical evidence (besides personal experience) to make her/his arguments?	57%	43%	0%	0%
Makes connection between a major historical event	The review clearly answers questions: 1.How do the specific events related in the memoir impact our current society?	53%	47%	0%	0%

and the contemporary world	2.What is the long-term impact of these events?				
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The Natural World

Objectives	Criterion	Good/Excellent	Adequate/meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Utilizes the process of scientific inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hypothesis is clearly stated •Method includes description of the experiment, design and data analysis strategy •Results organized, objective, and include statistical analysis •Discussion includes interpretation of results in light of what is already known about the subject, similarities/differences with literature and conclusions that can be drawn 	17%	20%	13%	50%
Explains implications of scientific knowledge for human or natural challenges by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discusses implications of results for a human or natural challenge/phenomena and/or •Implications follow logically from the data and/or •Shows understanding of the human or natural challenge/phenomena 	17%	23%	17%	43%

Ultimate Questions

Objectives	Criterion	Good/Excellent	Adequate/meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Understand similarities and differences between two philosophical or religious concepts about the nature or activity of God, at least one of them consistent with the Catholic tradition of philosophical or theological inquiry.	•Makes insightful statements about how two treatments of a chosen religious or philosophical issue are similar to each other and differ from each other.	35%	57%	5%	3%
Explain two religious or philosophical concepts relating to the dignity and value of the human person, at least one of them consistent with Catholic social	•Identifies and discusses a religious theme or philosophical view and a social justice issue, showing how the social justice issue is related to that theme.	43%	47%	2%	8%

teaching, and apply these concepts to a social justice issue.					
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Self & Society

Objectives	Criterion	Good/Excellent	Adequate/meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Identify and critically apply concepts or theories OR identify and critically apply methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the key disciplinary concept or theory for the topic. Uses that theory or concept to understand the topic. OR Discusses the strengths and weakness of the disciplinary method. Uses the disciplinary method to understand the topic. 	37%	33%	18%	12%
Examine at least two factors (social, psychological, economic or political) that shape individual behavior or social institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately examines the topic from two different perspectives (social, psychological, economic, or political). Analysis looks at the inter-relationships between the two different perspectives. 	42%	26%	22%	10%

Global Awareness

Objectives	Criterion	Good/Excellent	Adequate/meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Explore the diversity of human culture in a global context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the topic from more than one cultural perspective. Addresses the topic beyond the state and national level 	60%	11%	0%	29%
Examine the interconnectedness of current global issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a clear understanding of a current global issue by providing sufficient and accurate descriptive detail. Discusses how the issue is connected with other global issues. 	57%	14%	3%	26%

Holistic Health

Objectives	Criterion	Good/Excellent	Adequate/meet the criteria	Poor/does not meet the criteria	No basis for judgment
Identify relationships among several dimensions of wellness (physical, occupational, emotional, social, environmental, financial, intellectual or spiritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identifies the relationship between two or more dimensions of wellness. •Describes how they are personally affected by this relationship •Gives concrete examples of what learned 	17%	20%	13%	50%
Engage in an activity to promote well-being in one dimension of wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Writes a SMART goal to promote well-being. •Documents progress toward meeting that goal. •Develops a plan to continue to improve well-being. 	17%	23%	17%	43%

The domain assessment results provide evidence that the majority of students are meeting domain objectives in the good/excellent range. However, a higher percentage of student papers fall in “no basis for judgment” category in some domains this year when compared to the past years.

Core Curriculum - Mercy Experience Capstone

MMU seniors are required to take a Mercy Experience Capstone course that is intended as a culminating experience in the liberal studies. Students integrate knowledge they have acquired from each of the core domains and will reflect on their Mercy education in the context of their major discipline. One key component of this one-credit course, in which students enroll concurrently with their major’s senior seminar, is a capstone project focused on a social justice issue. The project is designed to engage students in considering disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and global perspectives, while fostering teamwork and communication.

A second capstone component used for assessment purposes is a Reflection Paper in which students begin to synthesize and reflect on their work at Mount Mercy as they approach graduation. The paper addresses the institution’s mission and goals, with a focus on ways in which studies and experiences in the core curriculum have helped shape their Mercy education.

In 2017-18, 11 capstone courses were offered with a total enrollment of 235 students. Capstone instructors were asked to fill out a project rubric for each group project and a reflection paper rubric for each student enrolled in their capstone course.

Capstone Assessment Results 2017-2018

125 reflection papers were assessed. The results indicated that the majority of the students were rated strong. For instance, 75% of students were rated strong and when “Leadership and Participation” this year. This compares to 67.5% being rated as strong in 2016-2017. This year, 75.5% of students were rated strong when doing “Reflection on role of service”. This compares to 68.8% being rated as strong in 2016-2017.

Assignment: Reflection Paper	Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Limited	No basis for judgment
In what ways has your Mercy education helped you think critically, communicate effectively, serve the common good, and be a responsible leader or participate?	Integration of Knowledge	75%	20%	4.7%	0.3%
	Leadership and Participation	75%	22%	2.4%	0.6%
	Reflection on role of service	75.5%	20%	3.9%	0.6%
	Written Communication	76%	22%	1.7%	0.3%

88 group projects were assessed. The results indicated that the majority of students were rated “strong”. However, all objectives were rated higher when compared to last year’s results. 85% of students were rated “strong” when “working with others to address global challenges” this year. This compares to 80% being rated as “strong” in 2016-2017. Furthermore, 84% of students were rated “strong” when “Examines Social Justice Issues” this year. This compares to 81% being rated as “strong” in 2016-2017. This year, 82% of students were rated “strong” when “communicating effectively for various audiences”. This compares to 7% being rated as “strong” in 2016-2017.

Assignment: Group project	Objectives	Strong	Moderate	Limited	No basis for judgment
The capstone project was based on a social justice issue and required students to consider disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and global perspectives associated with a chose Mercy critical concern. The project also was designed to allow for some type of group work to foster teamwork and communication.	Evaluation of multiple perspectives	81%	14%	4.5%	0.5%
	Communicates effectively for various audiences	82%	15%	2.5%	0.5%
	Communicates respectfully	82%	14%	3.5%	0.5%
	Work with others to address global challenges	85%	11%	3.5%	0.5%
	Examines Social Justice Issues	84%	14%	1%	1%

2017-2018 CAPSTONE STUDENT SURVEY RESPONSES

A survey was distributed to students who enrolled in the Capstone course via MyCampus. Their Capstone experience was assessed. This year, survey responses were from 112 out of 235 (48%) students in capstone sections.

<u>This capstone course...</u>	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
Helped me evaluate diverse perspectives on a topic	48.5%	39.5%	12%	0%	0%
Gave me opportunities to work with others	55%	40%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Pulled together ideas from several disciplines	50%	32%	10%	6%	2%
Helped me relate the core curriculum to my major	42%	29%	25%	4%	0%
Taught me about an important social issue	64%	34%	2%	0%	0%
Taught me about Mount Mercy critical concerns	52%	33%	12%	3%	0%
Made me think about the value of serving others	48%	35%	12.5%	4.5%	0%
Encouraged me to take a leadership role in class or school activities	36%	33%	21%	9%	1%
Taught me about Mount Mercy's values and heritage	38%	31%	18%	12%	1%

	Less than 5	6-10	11-15	15 +
How many hours/week did you spend on assignments outside this class?	71.5%	22%	4.5%	2%
	Less than 5	6-10	11-15	More than 20
About how many core curriculum courses have you taken at Mount Mercy	35%	46.5%	12.5%	6%

The survey results indicate that the capstone courses are meeting all key learning objectives. For instance, 88% of students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the capstone course “Helped me evaluate diverse perspectives on a topic”. This compares to 90.5% being rated as “agreed” or “strongly agreed” in 2016-2017. This year, 98% of students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the capstone course “taught me about an important social issue”. This compares to 88.5% being rated as “agreed” or “strongly agreed” in 2016-2017.