Mercy Experience

Courses designated Mercy Experience (ME) are distinctive offerings within the Reflection and Action Core Curriculum (http://catalog.mtmercy.edu/curriculum/#corecurriculumtext). They provide an introduction and a culmination to the liberal arts core, complementing students' majors while offering a rich grounding in the priorities of a Mercy education. The introductory (100-level) Mercy Experience 'portal' courses engage students in an active learning environment, with course themes derived from critical social justice and global concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. The 400-level Mercy Experience Capstone course is intended as a culminating experience in the liberal studies. Students need to register for this course along with the senior seminar (or another designated course) within their major, typically during the year in which they plan to graduate. During the Mercy Experience Capstone, students will 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. In addition, they will examine one of the Mercy critical concerns identified by the Sisters of Mercy from a disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and global perspective and will actively participate in a related capstone project.

Courses

ME 100 Mercy Concerns Through Film: 3 semester hours
This portal class takes an in-depth look at the Mercy concerns through film. The course will explore different types of violence and immigration patterns as well as issues of racism, women and the Earth and how they are portrayed in national and international films. The Mercy concerns will be analyzed taking into consideration historical, political, economic and social contexts. As part of this course, students will also engage in community service and will reflect on their experiences. They will become acquainted with support services on campus, such as the library and Career Services and will design a plan for their liberal arts studies in the Core Curriculum at Mount Mercy University. The library has the majority of the films we will use in class.

ME 105 Rogues, Rebels, And Accidental Discoveries: The Crooked Path to Creativity: 3 semester hours
Creativity is a powerful force in human begins that has shaped our civilization. In all disciplines from food preparation and actuary science to chemistry and the arts, human race made intentional and accidental discoveries. Even games like chess require a flexible mind in which a creative and strategic thought process leads to problem solving. International capitals have been the center of creativity, like Berlin in the 1920's. Creativity erupts in unlikely places as well, like the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Dreams, nature, and colleagues also inspire creativity. This course examines individuals who have made significant discoveries and the context for those discoveries. As the course focuses on how creativity is revealed in many areas, students make their own discoveries about contributions to our development as a civilized and progressive world.

ME 110 Ethnic Iowans: Diversity Issues in the New Millennium: 3 semester hours
This portal course is a unique sociological journey that enables students to canvass Iowa's colorful and diverse ethnic fabric from its earliest period in it 19th century to the present time. By analyzing various ethnic groups and immigrant population' manner of entry, socio-economic and political status, and contributions to Iowa's globalized economy and culture, students are challenged to search for answers for Iowa's spatial/ethic stratification, state of race relations and periodic outbursts of prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices. Students engage in critical analysis, complete a historical map, and share their skills in service-learning projects that aim to help certain immigrant and refugee populations getting settled in Iowa. Field trips are anticipated in the Greater Cedar Rapids area, with one extending to another Eastern Iowa Community.

ME 115 Cities, Sewers And Shots: Health Protection: 3 semester hours
Awareness of public health issues is important to all students in their roles as educated citizens, regardless of their intended undergraduate majors. This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to explore historical context and current issues related to health protection in the United States. The focus is on the health of an entire community rather than on an individual or family. Students are introduced to national, state, and local health concerns identified in major studies and reports. Field trips to public health sites may be scheduled.

ME 120 Immigrants and Literacy: In Pursuit of the American Dream: 3 semester hours
This course provides students with an interdisciplinary approach to learning about immigrants and their pursuit of literacy. Students encounter the historical, sociological, and political perspectives on U.S. immigration laws and policies, immigrants' countries of origin, and factors promoting immigration to the U.S. Literary works and films and/or documentaries featuring the lives and stories of immigrants help students understand the immigrant experience tutoring immigrant children and/or adults who are learning English. Students have opportunities to work together, become oriented to mount Mercy services, take part in student-led presentation to the Mount Mercy community, and participate in educational field trips.

ME 122 Crises and Disasters: Business, Ethics, and the Environment: 3 semester hours
Exxon Valdez. Pharma Bro. The Ford Pinto. Plenty of examples exist of how businesses have conducted unethical and/or environmentally harmful acts, which have caused widespread damage both in the United States and abroad. This course will introduce students to concept of business ethics, examining the faulty decision making that went into some of history's most famous ethical scandals, and what future businesses and societies can learn from these situations.

ME 125 Avatars Of Good and Evil: Media Stereotypes vs. Reality: 3 semester hours
A lot of research has been done about media representations of stereotypical characters and ideas. This course looks at media "avatars," or personifications, of good and evil, compared to what research and real world service activities reveal to be complex realities. The course will be roughly divided into three parts; Part I examines the role of personalities in politics and the news, Part II examined media stereotypes in popular narrative entertainment and Part III concerns symbolic representations of people in advertising. Immigration and racism are featured in the first part of this course, followed by participation in a service project as the course proceeds.

ME 130 Why A Mercy Education?: 3 semester hours
This course introduces the students to the distinctiveness of a Mercy education. Insights into the values and experiences inspiring the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, are gained from stories of her life and times. Reading Courage and Change, a history of Mount Mercy College through 1978, and interviewing current Sisters of Mercy enrich students' understanding of the special characteristics and opportunities associated with higher education in the Mercy tradition. The course addresses issues of immigration, non-violence and poverty as it prepares students to begin their studies in the liberal arts tradition. A service learning project at one of the Mercy sponsored institutions in Cedar Rapids is another highlight of this journey into a Mercy education.

ME 135 Poor Women, Poor Family, Poor Work: 3 semester hours
This course introduces the problem of poverty as women in the U.S. experience it and seeks to discover its causes and consequences for women, their families, and their communities. Students learn to apply a range of sociological concepts and theories to critically examine attempts to explain why women have an increased risk of poverty. Social institutions such as family, education, work and policy are critically examined as they correlate to the poverty of women as well as to possible solutions. The unique experiences of women of color are included as are those of immigrant women.

ME 150 Talking in "She" and "He": Gender Communication in College and Beyond: 3 semester hours
You've always "known" that women and men talk differently, but you may not have realized that academic research agrees. The aim of this course, however, is to show how studies in gender communication do more than confirm your intuition: they detail differences, explain why they occur and their consequences, and suggest some routes for improving your interactions, both now and throughout your life. Moreover, through means of a final public education project, the course will encourage recognition of how informed gender communication is a key means of maintaining and enhancing relationships among all in the community.

ME 155 Water - A Shared Responsibility: 3 semester hours
In "Water - A Shared Responsibility" students will be introduced to the fundamental chemical and physical properties of water, which make water essential to all life. Because water is vital to human existence, it inextricably links all humanity: through time and space. The use and abuse of water as a natural resource has shaped human culture and history-indeed it continues to do so. Students will be exposed to the issues that surround water, such as equitable treatment of minority groups and their water needs, water access and poverty, the disproportionate effect of water scarcity on women and children, global climate change and increasing water needs in this country and around the world. Students will be required to go on field trips.

ME 160 Law Ungendered: History of the Legal Status of U.S. Women: 3 semester hours
This is a portal course that focuses on the history of the legal status of women in the United States. Particular attention will be paid to the development of laws in the early republic based on the common law concept of coverture, and students will trace the evolution of American women's legal position through the Married Women's Property Acts, the struggle for suffrage, the definition of female citizenship, and equal treatment in realms such as inheritance, jury duty, work, etc. Students will balance their study of these issues with service projects in the community directed toward helping immigrant women learn English and prepare for citizenship exams.

ME 165 Terrorism, Violence and Conflict Resolution: 3 semester hours
This is a portal course that focuses on issues of terrorism, violence, and conflict resolution. The course will explore the spectrum of violence faced in modern society, including examination of historical, political, economic, and social contexts for that violence. The course will also consider various means of nonviolent conflict resolution as alternatives to violence. Students will engage in and reflect on community service as a part of their portal experience. They will become acquainted with support services on campus, such as the library and Career Services, and design a plan for their liberal arts studies in the Core curriculum at Mount Mercy University.

ME 170 Perspectives on Recent Immigration to the United States: 3 semester hours
This portal class takes an in-depth look at various immigration patterns to the United States and why they occurred. This course will explore various perspectives on immigration in modern society, including its historical, political, economic, and social contexts. Students will visit a town in Iowa where the immigrant population represents the majority. They will engage in community service there and reflect on their experience. Students will also become acquainted with support services on campus, such as the library and Career Services, and design a plan for their liberal arts studies in the Core Curriculum at Mount Mercy University.

ME 175 Selfie Living in a Digital Age: 3 semester hours
Digital media, of all types, has revolutionized human life in the 21st century. Social media, interactive websites, gaming, and more have transformed how we interact with each other, and with the outside world. We have changed the communication tools we use, but we seldom stop to think about how those same tools have changed us. The aim of this class is to encourage this sort of self-reflection by surveying current research on social media and the internet and how digital media has impacted everything from relationships to politics, education, and business and beyond.

ME 180 Environmental Responsibility: 3 semester hours
Students will explore personal and societal life style choices as they impact current environmental problems and issues. Topics will include consumerism, natural resources, environmental sustainability, societal pressures, and personal goals. Service projects will reinforce how one person can make a difference to society and the environment.

ME 185 Disability Awareness: 3 semester hours
Students in this course will develop an understanding of the issues facing those identified with a disability. General characteristics of high incidence disabilities will be shared in class. Students will be required to complete a research paper on a related topic as well as a field component, involving observation in either a school or agency setting.

ME 195 Information Literacy in the Information Age: 3 semester hours
This course is designed to satisfy the Portal Course requirement for incoming Mount Mercy University Honors Program students. The goal of this course is to help incoming freshman Honors Students achieve information literacy, gain an understanding of the history and strength of a liberal arts education, and receive an introduction to Mount Mercy University, its facilities, and its educational mission.

ME 450 Mercy Experience Capstone: 1 semester hour
This course is intended as a culminating experience in the liberal studies. It is required of all students in conjunction with a designated senior course within their major. Students will 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. In addition, they will examine one of the Mercy critical concerns identified by the Sisters of Mercy from a disciplinary, interdisciplinary and global perspective and will actively participate in a related capstone project.