SLS 1501: Honors Introduction to College Life (2 credits)
First semester required course for all students admitted to the
University Honors Program, Florida Atlantic University Boca Raton Campus

Instructor:
Instructor Office Location:
Instructor Phone: 
Email:
Office Hours:
Class Meeting Days/Times: (2 contact hours + a 3rd contact hour via lab on Wednesdays 4-4:50pm)
Class Meeting Locations: (for class and lab component)
Academic Advisor: Hyacinth Wideman (widemanh@fau.edu)
Peer Leader: Name (email)
Research Librarian: Name (email)

Course overview:
The course is designed to help develop academic and personal skills that will assist you in achieving your academic
goals, improving essential academic skills, creating a sense of connectedness to FAU and the University Honors Program
(UHP), exploring analytical and critical thinking skills, and improving written/verbal communication skills. In order to
provide the greatest possible experience, this class includes a "lab component" every Wednesday from 4-4:50pm.
Approximately 1/3 of these "labs" will be meetings of all first-year UHP students with a variety of topics and activities; 1/3
of these "labs" will be led by your peer mentor, as an opportunity for you to connect with students who have demonstrated
success at FAU who can help guide you through a variety of experiences to enhance your first year; and finally, 1/3 of
these "labs" will be an opportunity for our class to further discussions and experiences to enhance your honors
experience. This course is designed to meet the needs of freshman honors students, and your input in shaping the
outcome of this course is always welcome.

Course objectives:
• To assist you in your transition into university life and the UHP
• To assist you in making a “connection” with the university and the many partners within the university
• To assist you in becoming oriented to campus resources and facilities
• To assist you in developing excellence in essential academic skills as well as “life skills”
• To assist you in your goal setting and time management
• To assist you in developing analytical and critical thinking skills
• To assist you in developing research and inquiry skills
• To assist you in improving your written and oral communication skills
• To assist you in developing an appreciation for issues related to diversity, ethics, social justice, and global awareness
  as you learn how to be a “good citizen” of the world
• To assist you in refining your academic and career plan and to increase awareness of curricular and co-curricular
  opportunities available as you explore these areas

SLS 1501 students will demonstrate skills at the honors level in the following areas:
• Goal setting to push yourself to reach new levels
• Reading for comprehension and mastery
• Ability to formulate questions to drive an inquiry based project
• Critical thinking and analysis of a topic from multiple lenses
• Communication skills at a mastery level (in either written or oral presentation of work)
• Ability to apply what you are learning inside of the classroom to a co-curricular experience (through “high impact”
  engagement of undergraduate research, academic service-learning, etc).

Student Learning Outcomes:
• In this course, students will develop the ability to think critically about a topic related to the honors common
  reading program – gaining both depth as well as breadth as we examine the topic through multiple disciplinary
  lenses and communicate new ideas about that topic to others either verbally or in writing.

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STUDENT NEEDS.
• Students will have an increased appreciation for a liberal arts education and be able to describe the benefit of the general education curriculum as they see the relationship between disciplines through participation in the common reading program as well as through interdisciplinary discussions on topics related to their seminars.
• Students will be introduced to the aspects of undergraduate research and inquiry and begin to learn the process for research from obtaining and applying knowledge, to formulating questions, to examining ethical implications of research and communicating research findings. Students will apply these processes through a variety of Distinction through Discovery assignments.
• Students will begin to identify and apply ways in which they learn best and will recognize how this approach to learning is changing as they transition from high school to college.
• Students will develop connections with a variety of constituents on campus through intentional interactions with peers, faculty, research librarians, academic advisors, and others key to student success.
• Students will begin to get a fuller understanding of the daily happenings in a particular career through an Academic Service-Learning project related to a potential major/career. Students will reflect on the experience and how it is helping to shape themselves as individuals and as members of a larger society.
• Students will further develop written and verbal communication skills through multiple writing assignments, reflections, and presentations.
• Students will describe concepts of diversity and recognize diverse/global perspectives.
• Students will describe and demonstrate principles of responsible citizenship within and beyond the campus community.

Course expectations:
✓ Attendance and active participation are mandatory. To receive credit for attendance, you must arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. This is both for our regular class and the Wednesday labs.
✓ Complete reading assignments before class. If an assignment is listed on a particular day on the schedule, you are expected to complete the reading prior to that class period. Preparing for class will ensure an active and participatory learning environment.
✓ When assignments are due, please turn in assignments in the beginning of class.
✓ Turn off your electronic devices. You will not need a laptop to take notes for this class.

Required Texts:
1. Distinction Through Discovery: A Research-Oriented First Year Experience by Jeffrey Buller, Ph.D.
2. Each student will be responsible for reading the selected Honors freshman reading book of the year.
3. Additional materials pertaining to class assignments and selected themes will be used.
4. Students will also find their own learning materials in consultation with the instructor and the research librarian assigned to this class as part of the research and inquiry project.

Grading Policy:
Attendance and participation 15%
Reflection Papers 20%
Presentation 10%
Academic Service Learning Assignment 20%
Distinction through Discovery Assignments 20%
Other Assignments 15%
TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale:
93 – 100 A
90 – 92 A-
87 – 89 B+
84 - 86 B
80 – 83 B-
77 – 79 C+
70- 76 C
60-69 D
Less than 60 F

Class Policies:
Assignments must be turned in during the class period on the date when they are due (or submitted via email or Blackboard before the class begins). Late assignments are accepted up to one week after the due date, but they only

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receive up to 50% of the total score. Assignments submitted more than one week late do not receive any points. Separate
information sheets will be provided for each assignment and will be available for review in Blackboard). All written
assignments must be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman 12 point font (or other font of similar size), with
one-inch margins.

Students will not be penalized for absences due to military obligation, court imposed legal obligations, or participation in
University-approved activities (such as athletic or scholastic team competitions, musical and theatrical performances, and
the like). Similarly, reasonable accommodations will be made for students participating in a religious observance. You
must notify the instructor with appropriate documentation in advance of any of these situations to discuss any make-up
work required. Absences due to illness must be verified with a doctor’s note in order to be excused.

In order to enhance and maintain a productive atmosphere for education, personal communication devices are to be
disabled in class sessions unless specifically requested by the instructor. The use of laptops or other devices for note
taking are not necessary for this course.

ADA Statement
In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodation due to a
disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca
Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, MOD 1 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 117 (561-799-8585); or at the Treasure
Coast, CO 128 (772-873-3305) – and follow all OSD procedures.

Code of Academic Integrity policy statement
Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is
considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high
quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive
of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and
individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University

Distinction Through Discovery:
In order to meet your needs and expectations as freshman students in the University Honors Program, this course has
been designated as part of FAU’s “Distinction through Discovery” program. This course integrates research and
inquiry ideas and activities, by engaging students in the process of discovery. Students will be expected to
demonstrate (At least 3 of the 6 below, TBA by instructor) Student Learning Outcomes of the FAU Distinction through
Discovery Program:

SLO 1: Knowledge. Students will demonstrate content knowledge, core principles, and skills.

SLO 2: Formulate Questions. Students will formulate research questions, scholarly or creative problems with
integration of fundamental principles and knowledge in a manner appropriate to their discipline.

SLO 3: Plan of Action. Students will develop and implement a plan of inquiry to address research and inquiry
questions or scholarly problems.

SLO 4: Critical Thinking. Students will apply critical thinking skills to evaluate information, their own work, and
the work of others.

SLO 5: Ethical Conduct. Students will identify significant ethical issues in research, creative, and scholarly activity and/or address them in practice.

SLO 6: Communication. Students will convey all aspects of their research, creative, or scholarly activity
(processes and/or products) in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes based on the conventions of
their disciplines.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes through Distinction through Discovery
Students will complete the following assignments to demonstrate exposure to research and inquiry methods as part of the
Distinction through Discovery program: (Will vary by instructor – these are sample Distinction through Discovery projects
and how SLOs will be met)

- Journal article analysis (identify the components of a research/inquiry project and formulate questions for future
  consideration)
- Ethical implications of research (students will use critical thinking skills to evaluate 3 related research articles and
  identify potential ethical issues that may have come up in a similar research project. Students will present a case
  study in class on that ethical issue)

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**Academic Service-Learning:**
Due to the nature of the course content, this course is designated as an “Academic Service-Learning” course. The assistance you provide to the agency/organization during your academic service-learning experience is a service to the community and will allow you to apply knowledge from the course to local, national, and/or global social issues. Throughout this course you will be participating in Academic Service-Learning activities while demonstrating civic engagement at campus, local, national, and/or global community levels. You will also reflect on your Academic Service-Learning experience and the impact on the community as well as your professional development.

To receive Academic Service-Learning notation of hours on your transcript, your hours must be logged electronically through NobleHour (www.noblehour.com) while completing your academic service-learning project. Also, pre-assessment and post-assessment surveys through Survey Monkey are required to be taken by academic service-learning students. Please visit the Wepner Center for Civic Engagement & Service website (www.fau.edu/volunteer) for instructions on how to log hours through NobleHour and the links for the surveys. Once your hours have been approved and both surveys have been completed, you will receive an Academic Service-Learning notation on your transcript.

**Description of Academic Service Learning Project**— You will engage in a service project that is relevant to the course. This assignment is designed to enrich the learning experience and meet aforementioned course objectives through hands-on activity, and to teach civic responsibility. This requirement includes a minimum of 10 hours of service, a written reflection paper, and an oral presentation. You will also complete a Volunteer & Academic Service-Learning Log to earn a service learning designation on your transcript. Further details follow at the end of the syllabus.

**Course Topics** (some changes may occur in order to accommodate outside speakers/presenters; some may be part of class, some may be part of the Wednesday Forum):
- Honors experience/undergraduate research discussion
- Identifying high quality research articles/resources (how to go about doing research on a topic)
- Academic integrity/honor code/plagiarism (and ethics in research)
- Student code of conduct/civil behavior
- Academic excellence (as opposed to perfection) and critical thinking
- Time management
- Goal setting
- Stress Management
- Diversity/social justice and civility
- Study abroad
- Academic Service-Learning and major/career development
- Career development/planning for the four years
- Health & Wellness

**WEEKLY COURSE CONTENT**

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**SAMPLE – WEEK–by-WEEK SCHEDULE**

*may be altered by individual instructors to meet the needs of the students and instructors; some topics will be covered in SLS course, some through the Wednesday lab*

**WEEK 1**
Introductions/Ice-breakers
Syllabus Review, Intro to Blackboard; Purpose of the Course
Overview and planning for group/individual assignments
**Honors Experience and Undergraduate Research Components**

**WEEK 2**

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Achieving Excellence in College; College-Level Learning
Academic and Student Code of Conduct – Ethical Decision Making
Undergraduate Research: The importance of ethics and integrity in the academic research/creative process

WEEK 3
Presentation: Center for Civic Engagement and Service (A S-L)
Visit and Presentation – FAU Library (Research Skills)
Undergraduate Research: Identifying high quality research articles/resources

WEEK 4
Goal Setting and Time Management
Excellence vs. Perfection: creating a positive pattern for success (Achieving your best academic self)
What does it mean to be a scholar?

WEEK 5
Learning Styles & Philosophies
Critical and Creative Thinking
Undergraduate research: critically reading/reviewing a research article; formulating questions for study

WEEK 6
Achieving Academic Excellence by Improving How we Learn (as decided by students: reading critically, note taking, test taking strategies, learning to remember, etc.)

WEEK 7
Career Development and Choosing a Major
Graduate & Professional School Preparation
Building your research portfolio and experience (grants, research internships, and more)

WEEK 8
Academic Planning (Academic Advisor Visit); Academic Advising/How will the Honors Program work for you?
Project discussions, catching up - Midterm checkpoint: how are we doing?

WEEK 9
Stress Management
Making the most out of your college experience
University Honors Program – discussion with the Dean
Undergraduate Research – how to get involved from the start

WEEK 10
Diversity
Study Abroad

WEEK 11
Decision Making and Difficult Choices
Money Matters
Health & Wellness

WEEK 12
Leadership Skills & Campus Involvement
Learning through research: Undergraduate Research presentation (guest speakers)
Research and creative discovery across the disciplines

WEEKS 13 – 15:
Effective Presentation and Communication Skills
Final Presentations and Reflection Papers

Last day of class:
Final Reflection Paper
Discussion: Making the most out of our college experiences as we move forward

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Academic Service Learning Project Guidelines (20%)

Students will spend a minimum of 10 hours over the course of the semester on an academic service-learning project. This activity will address a need in our community, involve a connection between the campus and the world around it, challenge students to be civically engaged, and involve structured student reflection. The project will support the following of our course objectives:

- Assist you in your transition to Florida Atlantic University & the Honors Program
- Assist you in making connections with your new community
- Assist you in becoming oriented to campus resources and facilities
- Assist you in your goal setting and short and long-term planning
- Assist you in developing analytical and critical thinking skills
- Assist you in exploring career and academic goals
- Assist you in improving your written and oral communication skills

You will spend time reflecting on your service-learning experience through class discussions, a final reflective and critical essay, and an oral presentation to the class. While there is a 10-hour minimum for service to pass the course, your service-learning efforts will be the core of much of the learning in this course. Therefore, your grade for service-learning will come from the tangible class-related projects (i.e., paper and presentation) that come out of it rather than simply from completion of the hour minimum.

Students will select an FAU partner agency through the Weppner Center for Civic Engagement & Service. (A list of opportunities and options will be provided.) With such a broad range of possible projects and/or partners, the academic service-learning project can work for any schedule or limitation(s) you might have. No student is required to participate in a service placement to which s/he has a religious, moral, or political objection. If such an objection does arise, the student will contact the instructor immediately to arrange an alternative placement site.

Academic Service-Learning Requirement includes:

- Minimum of 10 hours spent on service at one agency over the course of the semester. You’ll be surprised how easy the hour requirement is to meet, especially if you plan early.
- Reflection on your service through:
  - a time log (NobleHour);
  - a 4-5 page final reflection paper that connects your activities to course material and objectives;
  - an oral presentation in class.
- Documentation or "proof" of your work (e.g., photographs, contact information, samples of your work, etc.)

SLS Academic Service-Learning Project Reflection

Critical reflection on experience is an important component of intellectual growth. Take notes as you go on your participation in the academic service-learning project. When the project is complete, write a reflection paper.

Your paper should include:

- **Project Summary**
  - A discussion of your community agency
  - Goals (what you hoped to accomplish or establish a foundation for in the future)
  - What your project entailed
  - The process itself (activities, pitfalls, successes)

- **Connection and Reflection**
  - A discussion of how your work connects to course objectives, discussions, texts, and subject matter
  - A discussion of what you learned from the process and how the project affected you.
  - A discussion of how you think it contributed to the public good.

- **Proof**
  - Include a contact (name and phone number and/or email address)
  - Include documentation to demonstrate the work you completed (e.g., pictures, final product, etc.).
  - Attach the Academic Service-Learning Log.

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• Letter Grade. Grade yourself and explain the grade based on the following criteria:
  o How much effort you put in
  o How much you learned
  o How meaningful the act may be or become for others

Further details:
• Your paper must be well-developed and well-organized, and you should observe the conventions of correct writing (i.e. complete sentences, spell checking, and proofreading, etc.), since these details reflect an author's commitment to and respect for good scholarship. Preparation details can affect your grade.
• The purpose of this paper is to articulate your experience(s) and the actual process of and reflection on your actions, which is probably varied and involves ups, downs, barriers, and successes. Discuss the project process as such, including original plans, changes of plans, and other related issues.
• Offer a clear description of what your project consisted of: purpose, activity or activities, outcome(s), and the role of your project in the future. What brought you to the agency you chose? Why did you choose the particular issue? Do you plan to continue working with/on the issue(s) in the future? In what capacity?
• Keep anything you acquire as a result of your service-learning and attach it to your paper. Take pictures if you can—it's a great way to document your activities
• **Perhaps the most important part of this paper is reflection and connection to course content**—what did you learn from your experience? How do you think you and/or others benefited from your service? How did your service connect to the objectives of the class? Be specific.
• **You must explicitly link your academic service-learning experiences/work to course content, especially course objectives.** You may also wish to draw from specific texts, quotes, passages, reading assignments (which may also include assigned websites). You should develop these connections and spend some time making them clear.

Tips for Good Reflection Papers:

PROOFREAD YOUR PAPER. Mistakes in grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation result in a paper that is difficult to read and understand. These deficiencies in clarity result in lower marks. At a university level, the confusion of they're, their, and there is unacceptable, as are other clumsy typos. Do yourself a favor, and read over your paper before asking me to do so. Any reviews with five or more grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors will be returned to be redone. If writing is not your strongest subject, consider making an appointment with a consultant at the University Center for Excellence in Writing: [http://www.fau.edu/UCEW/](http://www.fau.edu/UCEW/)

ASK FOR HELP - from me or your classmates. I am happy to discuss your reflection paper with you outside of class. Don't hesitate to drop me an e-mail or schedule a meeting if you're not sure where to begin. Also, talk about the assignment with your friends, family, and classmates. Often, useful discussions result in a much better reflection paper, so don't be afraid to have these.

Paper Specifications
• 4-5 pages (not including the “proof” materials)
• double-spaced
• 1-inch margins all around
• size 12 font, Times New Roman
• Number all pages
• Name, Course # should be single-spaced at top left of first page.
• Submit on-line through Blackboard
• Due the last class before final exams