This course is designed to evaluate students who are completing their Bachelor’s Degrees in Liberal Arts. The course content is centered upon the four Liberal Arts degree outcomes: critical thinking, communication, diversity, and ethics. In this course students will broaden their understanding of these concepts, apply them in assignments, and reflect on how these concepts have shaped students’ college learning. This is an intense, 8-week course requiring significant research and writing from the student.

Note: Military students who are completing a Bachelor’s degree in Liberal Arts may take either LA*498 or LA*498M Liberal Arts Capstone, Military Focus (formerly LA*498MIL Military Studies Capstone) to fulfill the capstone requirement for the Bachelor’s Degrees in Liberal Arts, but they may only apply credit for one of these capstone courses towards the degree.

Prerequisite(s)
Completion of Written English, Ethics, and Information Literacy required. Students must be within 15 credits of degree completion and obtain advisor approval.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critical Thinking: Students will be able to engage in advanced critical thinking skills, including:
   a. Demonstrating the ability to remember information
   b. Understanding key concepts
   c. Applying these concepts appropriately
   d. Analyzing phenomena
   e. Evaluating and justifying positions
   f. Creating coherent arguments in the student’s chosen field of study

2. Communication: Students will demonstrate:
   a. Advanced written communication skills
   b. Advanced oral communication skills
   c. The ability to express complex ideas with clarity and precision

3. Diversity: Identify and characterize their own cultural background and experiences in comparison to those of others and evaluate pathways to equitable solutions that recognize the strengths inherent in a diverse and multicultural understanding of world issues.

4. Ethics: Students will be able to apply concepts of:
   a. Ethical conduct in decision making
   b. Ethical conduct in action
   c. Social responsibility in decision making
   d. Social responsibility in action

Click [here](https://my.excelsior.edu/web/syllabus-library/8-week-term-schedule) to view the 8 week Term Schedules.

Click [here](https://my.excelsior.edu/web/syllabus-library/15-week-term-schedule) to view the 15 week Term Schedules.
## Course Schedule

Weeks start on Monday, 12:01 AM ET and end on Sunday, 11:59 PM ET, US.

Unless otherwise noted, all assigned items are due at the end of the module (by 11:59PM, Sunday).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Module &amp; Title</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Online Discussions</th>
<th>Course Outcomes Related to this Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Videos as assigned and linked through module. | Begin work on M2A1: Essay 1 Thinking Critically about Global Issues (due in Module 2) | Start Here: Personal Introduction Discussion (ungraded) | Outcome 1: Critical Thinking |
Videos as assigned and linked through module. | M2A1: Essay 1 Thinking Critically about Global Issues due | M2D1: Reflecting on My Thinking  
M2D2: Thinking with Benjamin Franklin | Outcome 1: Critical Thinking |
M3D2: Up for Debate  
M3D3: Final Capstone PowerPoint Presentation Topic | Outcome 4: Ethics |
| | | Videos as assigned and linked through module. |
| Week 5 | Module 5: The Interplay of Diversity and Ethics | Videos as assigned and linked through module. Rent or borrow a movie for the M5D2 assignment. |
| Week 6 | Module 6: Communication | No new readings |
| | | M7A1: Capstone Final PowerPoint Presentation due M7D1: Expressing the World Around You M7D2: Getting Ready to Speak |
| Week 8 | Module 8: Putting It All Together | No new readings |
| | | M8D1: Reflecting on Learning M8D2: Sharing Your Presentation |


**Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Ranges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A=90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B=80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C=70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D=60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F=below 60%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2A1</td>
<td>Thinking Critically about Global Issues</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3A1</td>
<td>Essay on Ethics</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4A1</td>
<td>Essay on Diversity</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5A1</td>
<td>Final PPT Outline</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>M7A1</td>
<td>Final PPT</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Criteria**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Course Activities:

Before beginning your course work, be sure to review the [Excelsior College Guidelines for Online Interaction](http://www.excelsior.edu/netiquette) (a.k.a. Online Etiquette or "Netiquette"). If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please feel free to direct them to your instructor. All student work in this course may be submitted to plagiarism detection software.

**M2A1 : Thinking Critically about Global Issues - 10%**

This essay is the foundational start to your writing in this course. In this essay, you will write about a global issue in your area of interest. For example, if you have studied environmental studies, you might want to write this paper about global pollution. (This example is being used because it is what Elder and Paul use in their article, *Analytical Thinking*. Remember, you cannot use pollution as your topic.) See page 6 in Elder and Paul’s article, *Analytical Thinking*, as an example.

In M1D2, you selected a topic for this paper. This was your first step. Here are the remaining steps to follow:

1. Research your chosen topic in the EC Library. You can easily get to the library through the left-hand purple toolbar. The [Liberal Arts Research Guide for Undergraduate Capstones](http://libguides.excelsior.edu/vlib.excelsior.edu/liberal-arts-capstones) is a useful place to start. You can use web sources that are scholarly. If you are not sure, please ask your instructor. Do not use Wikipedia.
2. Select three to five scholarly research pieces about your topic. To learn more about how to tell if the research you found is scholarly, please visit the [EC Library’s Scholarly vs. Popular Video](http://my.excelsior.edu/group/library/scholarly-vs-popular-video).
3. Using the article by Elder and Paul, *Analytical Thinking*, refer to pages 5 and 6. On pages 5 and 6 are examples of how to apply the "8 Elements of Reasoning."
4. You cannot use "pollution" as a topic, since that is the Elder and Paul example.
5. Write your responses to the list that Elder and Paul provide in narrative form; bulleted lists will not be accepted.
6. Use your references to support your answers.

This paper is to demonstrate your critical thinking skills. As such, you are to take what you have researched and analyze and synthesize what is written. You are to form educated responses to the Elder and Paul list, which means you need to include evidence from experts in your field.

Some remaining guidelines:

1. Write 5 pages in length, or 1250, words minimum
2. Double space
3. Include a title page
4. Refer to the SLA Writing Grading Rubric for details on the grading expectations
5. Include a "References" page using APA
6. Do not include an "Abstract"
7. Use the APA style guide (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/) for your citations
8. Do not plagiarize – to learn more about plagiarism, please see Excelsior’s OWL (http://www.mydistancecourses.org/owl/course/view.php?id=29)
9. Check for grammar – all of the essays in this course must be grammatically correct. Consider using Grammarly (https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/free-grammar-check) or Smarthinking (https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/smarthinking), which is a tutoring service.
10. Refer to Excelsior’s Online Writing Lab (http://www.excelsior.edu/web/learning/home) to assist you with your writing process.

This essay is graded according to the SLA Writing Rubric and is worth 10% of your final grade.

M3A1: Essay 3 Self-Evaluation of Ethics Outcome - 10%

In this essay, you will write about ethics. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate how you have met the ethics outcome through your past coursework or work experiences. The outcome states: Students will be able to apply concepts of: ethical conduct in decision making, ethical conduct in action, social responsibility in decision making, and social responsibility in action.

Here are your instructions for this essay:

1. Define an ethical issue that you either encountered or studied in a previous course (you cannot use prior papers to fulfill this assignment)
2. Write down what "ethical conduct in decision making, ethical conduct in action, social responsibility in decision making, and social responsibility in action" you used when working through this ethical issue. Be prepared to be very specific with your examples.
3. Write a 1250-1500-word essay that exhibits the issue and how you used ethical conduct.
4. Be as specific as possible.
5. Proofread your paper before submitting.

Here is assistance for your writing:

2. Smarthinking (https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/smarthinking) (writing tutors are available)
4. Here are library tips (http://libguides.excelsior.edu.vlib.excelsior.edu/tutorials-and-tip-sheets).
5. Click here (http://libguides.excelsior.edu.vlib.excelsior.edu/liberal-arts-capstones) to access the library databases to assist you

This essay is graded according to the SLA Writing Rubric and is worth 10% of your final grade.

M4A1: Reflective Essay on Diversity - 10%

5 of 10
In this essay, you will write about diversity. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate how you have met the diversity outcome through your past coursework or work experiences. The outcome states: Students will be able to articulate the significance of diversity as a fundamental principle of understanding life.

Here are your instructions for this essay:

1. Identify how you learned what diversity means from other courses or experiences (you cannot use prior papers to fulfill this assignment)
2. Analyze your definition and explain its significance to understanding the world around you
3. Write a 1250-1500-word essay that exhibits the issue and how you used ethical conduct.
4. Be as specific as possible.
5. Proofread your paper before submitting.
6. Use scholarly resources

Here is assistance for your writing:

1. APA Citations Style Tip Sheet (https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/36236/92106/APA_Style_Citations_Tip_Sheet.pdf/1e20a6-5138-4c01-9b6a-5b8b1e5212b9)
2. Smarthinking (https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/smarthinking) (writing tutors are available)
4. Here are library tips (http://libguides.excelsior.edu.vlib.excelsior.edu/tutorials-and-tip-sheets).
5. Click here (http://libguides.excelsior.edu.vlib.excelsior.edu/liberal-arts-capstones) to access the library databases to assist you

This essay is graded according to the SLA Writing Rubric and is worth 10% of your final grade.

Capstone Final PowerPoint Presentation

Introduction:

The purpose of a capstone course is to measure how well you have fulfilled Excelsior College's outcomes for the Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts.

You chose to be a liberal arts student because you want to pursue a field, area of focus or depth that will help further your career, begin you career, or expand your personal interests. Therefore, this capstone strives to ensure that you walk away with a degree that accomplishes your goals. This Final PowerPoint Presentation is a chance to show what you have learned and expand upon your knowledge.

PowerPoint Instructions:

For this final PowerPoint, you are to expand upon what you started in M2A1: Thinking Critically about Global Issues. In that first paper, you identified a theme that comes from an area of interest, your area of focus or depth. It is this theme that you are going to use as your focus in this PowerPoint.

You will work on the Final PowerPoint Project from Module 3 through Module 7. You will complete the assignment in three parts, due in Module 3, Module 5 and Module 7, as described in detail below.

M3D3: Final PowerPoint Topic Discussion (part of the discussion grade worth 30%)

This discussion is designed to help you flesh out your final PowerPoint topic. Here is what you should do:

1. Review your M2A1 paper. Identify your theme on a large scale, for example, poverty and education. (You cannot use this theme now.)
2. Take the theme you have identified and narrow it down to a more specific topic (For example: How does poverty in urban centers effect preschool-age children's learning, if at all?)
3. Once you have defined this topic, you should brainstorm about how you can show that you have learned about diversity, ethics, critical thinking, and communication with regard to this topic. (For example: Urban centers may encompass diverse demographics. Therefore, should educational funds be distributed equally across urban centers, or alternately in a way that
redresses existing inequality? What does each side say about the topic? Can you communicate these ideas well?)

4. You will finish this topic exploration by constructing your discussion thread.

5. Here are the instructions for your discussion thread (M3D3):
   a. Write a 250-300 word post
   b. Write your theme and topic in the subject line
   c. Identify the larger theme
   d. Write a unique topic (no one in the course can have the same topic)
   e. Identify your topic and write about how it evolved from your original theme
   f. Write about how your topic will address diversity and ethics
   g. Explain how you will use critical thinking
   h. Explain how you will improve/master oral and written communication

6. Here is assistance for your writing:
   a. [APA Citations Style Tip Sheet](https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/36236/92106/APA_Style_Citations_Tip_Sheet.pdf/777eebf8-1232-4545-9114-260fd3b135dd)
   b. [Smarthinking](https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/smarthinking) (writing tutors are available)
   c. [Grammarly](https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/free-grammar-check) (to assist with your grammar electronically)

The discussions are worth 30% of the final grade and are assessed according to the Discussion Rubric.

**M5A1: Capstone Final PowerPoint Presentation Outline (10%)**

An outline is essential to creating a clear and organized PowerPoint that fulfills the assignment requirements. Students who use outlines tend to do much better in their assignments than students who do not. Thus, this part of the Final PowerPoint Presentation outline is intended to assist you in writing a thesis statement, organizing the presentation, and demonstrating how the research and your claims connect.

Here are your instructions:

1. Construct a title
2. Write your thesis statement
3. Place your thesis statement as the first sentence at the top of your outline
4. Write an introductory statement that includes:
   a. A preview of what you will cover in your PowerPoint
   b. A segue into the PowerPoint body
5. Write what claims you are espousing from your thesis statement
   a. This requires breaking the thesis statement down and defining what it means and what the points are. These points are called your claims.
6. Support each claim with research
7. Write a few words on how this research connects to the claims and PowerPoint thesis
8. Write a conclusion statement, which includes a short summary
9. Outlines are written using either incomplete sentences or complete sentences (you can choose)
10. Use correct grammar
11. Do include citations, so you can refer back to your research
12. The outline should be 3-5 pages in length
13. Use the APA style wherever you include citations
14. It is not necessary to include a reference page
15. HINT: Remember you need to show that you have learned about diversity, ethics, critical thinking, and communication with regard to this topic. You can expound on what you wrote about your topic in Module 3.
16. Here are some tips to assist you from:
   a. [eHow](http://www.ehow.com/how_4808278_write-research-paper-outline.html)
   b. [Purdue Writing Center](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/1/)
17. Here is assistance for your writing:
   a. [Smarthinking](https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/smarthinking) (writing tutors are available)
   b. [Grammarly](https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/free-grammar-check) (to assist with your grammar electronically)
The PowerPoint Outline is worth 10% of your grade and will be evaluated using the Outline Rubric.

**M7A1: Capstone Final PowerPoint Presentation (30%)**

You have been working on your final PowerPoint for four modules. The PowerPoint presentation is your opportunity to show off what you have created to the class. For this assignment, you will do two things. You will submit the PPT through a drop box for your instructor to assess. You will also submit your PPT via a discussion board link in Module 8 to share with your peers.

Here are your instructions:

Using your assignments completed to date (essays, topic selection discussion and PowerPoint outline), you are to showcase what you researched.

Here are the guidelines:

1. Create a title slide – research title, your name, date, course, professor
2. Create 15 to 20 slides (not including title slide or reference slide)
3. Include a reference page
   a. 10 scholarly references are required
4. Use correct grammar
5. Let your slides tell your PowerPoint’s story
   a. Include animation and images to illustrate your story, not overwhelm it
6. Create well organized slides (use your outline to assist you with this)
7. Include an introduction and conclusion, as well as a body
8. Use citations on your slides (it is essential to use your research)
   a. Use the APA style guide
9. Create a voice-over for the PPT

Here are some tips to assist you:

1. [12 Tips for Creating better Power Point Presentations](http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/skills/presentations.aspx#fbid=86vE27jjJiU)
2. [How to Create a Great PowerPoint Presentation](http://www.inc.com/guides/201102/how-to-create-a-great-powerpoint-presentation.html)
3. [Design Shack](http://designshack.net/articles/graphics/10-tips-for-designing-presentations-that-dont-suck-pt-1/)

Here are some voice-over PPT tips:

1. [Atomic Learning](https://mycourses.excelsior.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/course_info_toc_pages/video_tutorials_instructions.htm) has videos on how to create the voice-over

Here is assistance for your writing:

1. [APA Citations Style Tip Sheet](https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/36236/92106/APA_Style_Citations_Tip_Sheet.pdf/777eefb8-1232-4545-9114-260fd3b135dd)
2. [Smarthinking](https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/smarthinking) (writing tutors are available)
3. [Grammarly](https://my.excelsior.edu/group/current-student-myexcelsior/free-grammar-check) (to assist with your grammar electronically)

The Final Paper PowerPoint Presentation will be graded according to the Voice-Over PowerPoint Rubric and is worth 30% of your overall grade.

When Final PowerPoint Assignments are due: A quick view for you to print out!

**Module 3 M3A1: Capstone Final PowerPoint Topic**

**Module 5 M5A1: Final PowerPoint Outline**
Module 7 M7A1: Final PowerPoint Presentation

**Discussions - 30%**
Every module will have two discussion questions. Please read and follow the directions carefully.

The discussions are worth 30% of the final grade and are assessed according to the Discussion Rubric.

*By registering for a web-based course, you have made a commitment to participate regularly with your instructor and other students in online discussions. You will be expected to use online course tools (Discussions and Chat rooms) to interact with your peers and work collaboratively to improve your understanding of underlying course ideas and issues.*

*To lessen the risk of losing your work, do not write major discussions directly into a discussion posting. Instead, compose and check your work in other software (such as Microsoft Word) and then use the Create Message button and copy and paste your text into the new posting.*

**FORMATTING AND STYLE FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**
All assignments are to be written using the APA style guide.

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**Course Policies**

**School of Liberal Arts Late Policy:**
- No exams or quizzes will be accepted after the due date.
- Discussion posts must be completed within the module where they appear. Late discussion posts will not receive credit.
- Instructors may impose additional due dates for initial posts or responses and assess late penalties accordingly.
- All graded assignments (e.g., projects, papers, homework, lab reports) submitted after the designated due date/time will be assessed a late penalty of five percent per day for the first 5 days (for example, -5 points each day on a 100 point assignment, or -2.5 points each day on a 50 point assignment). Any assignment submitted after the fifth day will receive a grade of zero.
- No work will be accepted after the final day of the term unless an official course extension has been granted.
- Situations involving extenuating circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the instructor.

**Turnitin.com:**
Excelsior College subscribes to Turnitin.com, the world's largest plagiarism-detection service, and reserves the right to check all student work to verify that it meets the guidelines of this policy.

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**Institutional Policies**

**COURSE PARTICIPATION:**
Weekly course participation is required. Please see the Student Participation Policy (https://info.excelsior.edu/student-policies/student-participation-policy-for-online-courses/) for more details.

**Instructor Participation**
Your instructor will:
- Post a welcome message during the first 24 hours of the course.
- Schedule real time office hours through the chat room and/or by individual appointment.
- Communicate with you through the Blackboard communication tools, including internal course messaging.
- Respond to student communications within two business days.
- Log into the course to review and participate at least three different days a week in 15-week courses, or four different days a week in 8-week courses.
- Provide you with formative feedback midway through the course based on work submitted to that point.
- Grade all formative assignments within 7 business days in 15-week courses and 4 business days in 8-week courses, and will grade final summative work within 5 business days after the end of the term.
POLICIES

You are responsible for being familiar with all the policies that are related to your activity in this course. Complete information on Excelsior College policies can be found in the Course Information area or by visiting www.excelsior.edu/policies.

All student work in this course may be submitted to plagiarism detection software. The reports from this software may be used as evidence in support of disciplinary actions. Please see the policy on Academic Honesty (https://info.excelsior.edu/student-policies/academic-honesty/) for more details.