

Critical Issues and Strategies in Student Affairs and Higher Education

(CNS 603)

Spring Semester 2021



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Purpose of the Course:

To be highly informed and objective, student affairs (and higher education) professionals need to understand the complexities inherent in higher education in the United States. These complexities often manifest themselves in debates that appear as polarizing issues in academia. The goals of this course revolve around helping students comprehend conflicting perspectives related to relevant issues and develop a critical perspective needed to appropriately analyze them. Finally, the course will emphasize development of professional identities as student affairs (or higher education) advocates.

Course Objectives:

This course is purposefully designed to help students:

- Critically examine and assess their role as student affairs (or higher education) professionals.
- Strengthen their professional knowledge and self-efficacy through enhancing intellectual and practical skills in inquiry and analysis of issues encountered by student affairs (or higher education) professionals.
- Synthesize and apply knowledge gained in graduate programs to the resolution of practical problems they are likely to encounter as student affairs (or higher education) professionals.
- Define their individual philosophy of professional practice and their role as practitioners with regard to salient issues confronting the profession.
- Assess their professional competencies, career goals, and values.
- Develop a better understanding of structured thought, critical thinking, and tacit knowledge as they work to apply theory to practice.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of salient organizational and cultural theories associated with understanding postsecondary institutions.
- Become more familiar and comfortable with critically analyzing the multiple perspectives represented by higher education communities.
- Increase their ease and facility with writing and speaking critically about the subject matter associated with this course.
- Move more freely from theory to practice by establishing a framework for creative problem-solving related to issues that emerge in student affairs (or higher education).
- Focus on specific topics of importance to the success of new professionals in student affairs (or higher education).

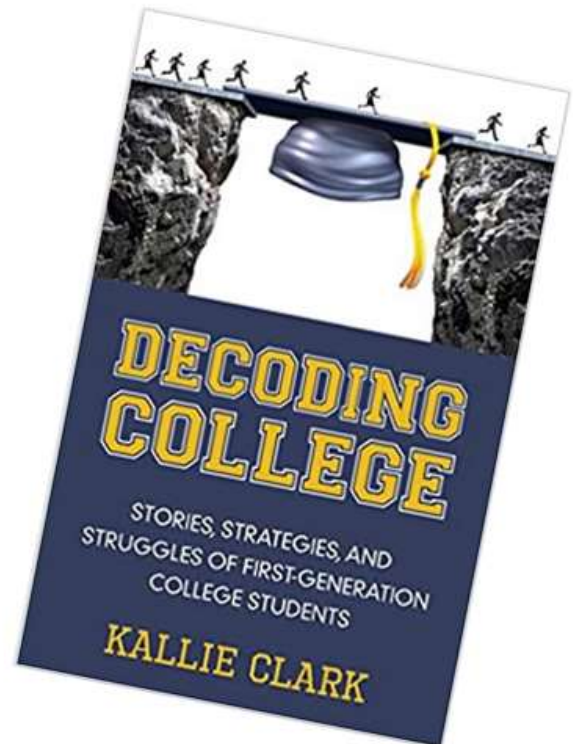
Textbooks:

Decoding College: Stories, Strategies, and Struggles of First-Generation College Students

by Kallie Clark

(Rowe Publishing, 2017)

ISBN-13 : 978-1939054760

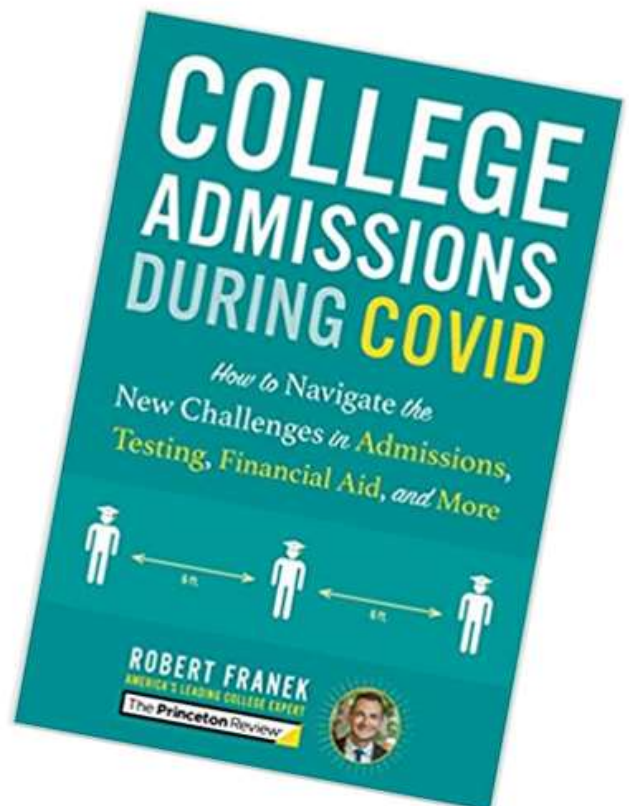


College Admissions During COVID: How to Navigate the New Challenges in Admissions, Testing, Financial Aid, and More (College Admissions Guides)

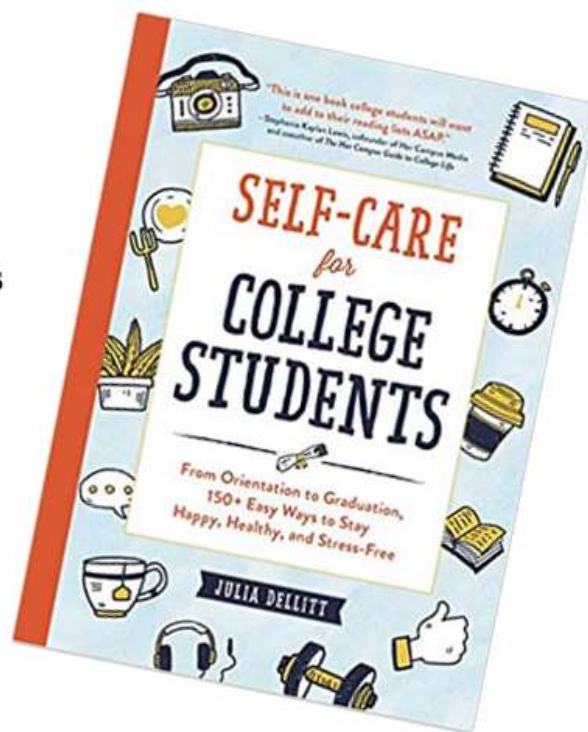
by Robert Franek

(Princeton Review, 2020)

ISBN-13 : 978-0525571810



Self-Care for College Students: From Orientation to Graduation, 150+ Easy Ways to Stay Happy, Healthy, and Stress-Free
by Julia Dellitt
(Adams Media, 2019)
ISBN-13 : 978-1507211151



Policy on Participation and Late Assignments:

Academic Performance - As a graduate student and professional-in-training, your graduate studies should be viewed from the prospective of professional development and graduate students should learn how to apply what they have learned to their respective area of study and social problems. All graduate students are expected to develop standards of professional performance. Students will be expected to participate in discussions, complete reading and turn-in assignments by the due dates, and interact in a professional manner. Course assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus. Assignments will generally not be accepted after the stated due date; cases of *extreme emergency* should be discussed with me.

Graduate Student Handbook:

Students are responsible for understanding the content and procedures contained in the most recent version of the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs Graduate Student Handbook. The handbook is found on the department's web site. Included in that document is the process that requires all students to be routinely evaluated using the **Professional Performance Review** process and rubric. The handbook discusses this and other important information.

Academic Dishonesty Policy (Also see WKU Student Handbook)

An incident of academic dishonesty will lead to a failure on the assignment and possibly the course. Academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism, cheating, or non-participation group work is not tolerated.

Plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in the grade of "F." This represents ideas and interpretations taken from another source as one's own work. Ideas paraphrased from another author must be attributed to that author.

and cited in any written presentation of such information. Refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) for direction on proper citation formatting. Plagiarism will result in grade of “F” for the entire course.

WKU defines plagiarism as the following:

To represent ideas or interpretations take from another source as one’s own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly for a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.

Cheating is not tolerated and will result in the grade of “F.” No student shall receive or give assistance NOT authorized by the instructor. Cheating is discussed in the WKU Faculty Handbooks:

No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment, or other project that is submitted for purposes of grade determination.

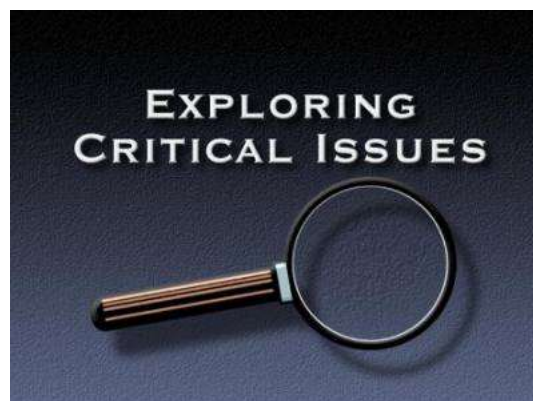
Informed Consent:

Students enrolled in CNS classes and programs are expected to exhibit personal qualities and characteristics consistent with effective functioning as a helping professional. Some classes require learning experiences which focus on self-understanding and growth. The letter grade awarded for a class may not reflect the evaluation of personal qualities needed to function competently in helping professions. Admission to or completion of a CNS class or program of study does not guarantee completion or graduation; assessment of a student’s fitness is an ongoing process and students should be aware that the instructor has a continuous responsibility to make such an assessment.

From the Student Accessibility Resource Center

The purpose of SARC is to coordinate services and accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Our most common activities include reviewing disability documentation, meeting with students to determine appropriate accommodations, and partnering with other areas on campus to implement these accommodations. SARC strives to help students assume responsibility of their own educational experience. We assist students along the way by providing access and opportunity in order for them to reach their full potential.

More information can be found here: <http://www.wku.edu/sarc/>



Specific Course Requirements

Documents must be in MS Word file format (.doc/.docx extension). Presentations must be in MS PowerPoint format. (.ppt/.pptx extension). Other file types will not generally be accepted, as other members of the class may be unable to open them. Also, if you are using the most recent version of Microsoft Office, please save all files in "compatibility mode" so that users of previous versions of Word and PowerPoint will be able to access them. Please contact the instructor if you need additional clarification.

- (1) Autobiography/Critical Issue Presentation.** Develop an autobiographical presentation that introduces you to the rest of the class. Part A: Please include any information you feel is relevant to helping others in the class know who you are; i.e., where you are from, what you are doing, your interests/aspirations, your education/career background; i.e., anything you are comfortable sharing that will help the class understand who you are personally and professionally. Part B: Please share the relevance of this course to your professional/personal goals/objectives. Then identify the issue you consider most pressing with respect to student affairs and/or higher education today and explain 1) why you think it is a high priority issue (giving relevant background information), and 2) what you think should be done to deal appropriately with it. Remember this is an advanced-level graduate class and adjust the quality of what you develop and present to the class accordingly.

The Autobiography/Critical Issue presentation should be uploaded to both the Autobiography/Critical Issue Presentation Assignment Tab and to your designated Autobiography/Critical Issue Discussion Board by Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Students in your designated Discussion Board Group will then have until Monday, February 1, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 10% of your overall course grade.

- (2) Book Reaction/Critique #1.** Read *Decoding College: Stories, Strategies, and Struggles of First-Generation College Students* by Kallie Clark (Rowe Publishing, 2017), and then prepare a section-by-section reaction/critique; i.e., an honest reaction to the material provided by the author – elaborating as appropriate and discussing the implications and relevance of what Clark has to say about higher education. This reaction/critique should be developed into a PowerPoint presentation which should have all the qualities of a face- to-face presentation; i.e., it should be comprehensive in coverage of the topic, exhibit creativity, and include citations and references as appropriate. You are encouraged to include web links, video clips, and other creative means to present information through the PowerPoint presentation. It can also include additional research and reading. Depth, detail and critical thinking are essential for this reaction/critique; a superficial treatment of the material will not be acceptable.

The Book Reaction/Critique #1 presentation should be uploaded to both the Book Reaction/Critique #1 Assignment Tab and to your designated Book Reaction/Critique #1 Discussion Board by Monday, February 8, 2021. Students in your designated Book Reaction/Critique #1 Discussion Board Group will then have until Sunday, February 28, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 25% of your overall course grade.

- (3) Book Reaction/Critique #2.** Read *College Admissions During COVID: How to Navigate the New Challenges in Admissions, Testing, Financial Aid, and More (College Admissions Guides)* by Robert Franek (Princeton Review, 2020), and then prepare a section-by-section reaction/critique; i.e., an honest reaction to the material provided by the author – elaborating as appropriate and discussing the

implications and relevance of what Franek has to say about higher education. This reaction/critique should be developed into a PowerPoint presentation which should have all the qualities of a face- to-face presentation; i.e., it should be comprehensive in coverage of the topic, exhibit creativity, and include citations and references as appropriate. You are encouraged to include web links, video clips, and other creative means to present information through the PowerPoint presentation. It can also include additional research and reading. Depth, detail and critical thinking are essential for this reaction/critique; a superficial treatment of the material will not be acceptable.

The Book Reaction/Critique #2 presentation should be uploaded to both the Book Reaction/Critique #2 Assignment Tab and to your designated Book Reaction/Critique #2 Discussion Board by Monday, March 8, 2021. Students in your designated Book Reaction/Critique #2 Discussion Board Group will then have until Sunday, March 28, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 25% of your overall course grade.

- (4) Book Reaction/Critique #3.** Read *Self-Care for College Students: From Orientation to Graduation, 150+ Easy Ways to Stay Happy, Healthy, and Stress-Free* by Julia Dellitt (Adams Media, 2019), and then prepare a section-by-section reaction/critique; i.e., an honest reaction to the material provided by the author – elaborating as appropriate and discussing the implications and relevance of what Dellitt has to say about higher education. This reaction/critique should be developed into a PowerPoint presentation which should have all the qualities of a face- to-face presentation; i.e., it should be comprehensive in coverage of the topic, exhibit creativity, and include citations and references as appropriate. You are encouraged to include web links, video clips, and other creative means to present information through the PowerPoint presentation. It can also include additional research and reading. Depth, detail and critical thinking are essential for this reaction/critique; a superficial treatment of the material will not be acceptable.

The Book Reaction/Critique #3 presentation should be uploaded to both the Book Reaction/Critique #3 Assignment Tab and to your designated Book Reaction/Critique #3 Discussion Board by Monday, April 5, 2021. Students in your designated Book Reaction/Critique #3 Discussion Board Group will then have until Sunday, April 25, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 25% of your overall course grade.

- (5) Contribution/Participation.** Each student is expected to contribute consistently, conscientiously and meaningfully to the course. As such, students are expected to complete/submit all Assignments by their respective due dates, carefully following the instructions, and participate extensively in their assigned Discussion Board Groups.

Contribution/Participation is worth 15% of your overall course grade.

Grading Scale:

The final course grade will be determined as follows:

(1) Autobiography/Critical Issue Assignment	10%
(2) Book Reaction/Critique #1	25%
(3) Book Reaction/Critique #2	25%
(4) Book Reaction/Critique #3	25%
(5) Contribution/Participation	15%

TOTAL 100%

GRADING SCALE:

A= 90 - 100%; B= 80 - 89%; C= 70 - 79%; D= 60 - 69%; & F= below 60%

EVALUATIVE DIMENSION	"A" GRADE	"B" GRADE	"C" GRADE	"D/F" GRADE
Achievement of Specified Learning Outcomes	The assignment demonstrates strong achievement across designated learning outcomes	The assignment demonstrates evidence of meeting the designated learning outcomes	The assignment meets the majority, but not all of the designated learning outcomes	The assignment is not complete, does not conform to the instructions provided, or does not meet the majority of designated learning outcomes
Demonstrated Understanding of Content	Exceptional ability to both synthesize course content and identify similarities and differences between and among content areas	Demonstrates adequate competence in articulating central points of core content	Demonstrates varying degrees of understanding of content with some accurately explained and others missing key points	Assignment is not complete or does not demonstrate accurate or full understanding of content
Thought & Originality	Demonstrates significant complexity of thought as well as creative approaches in both content and structure	Complexity of thought is of adequate depth and elements of creativity are present in work	Complexity of thought varies significantly between topics with some demonstrating adequate complexity and others inadequate	Assignment is not complete or lacks complexity of thoughts required for graduate-level work
Application to Practice	Application to practice is accurate, creative, reasonable, and takes into account multiple perspectives and considerations	Application to practice is accurate and adequate	Application to practice varies in accuracy and does not take into account varying perspectives and considerations	Assignment is not complete or application to practice fails to take into consideration a helping professional context
Critical Analysis	Depth of analysis is significant offering areas of both strength and limitation, connecting multiple dimensions of content, and/or meaningful interpretations	Depth of analysis is adequate and presents both strengths and limitations as well as general interpretations	Depth of analysis varies greatly and lacks consistent representation of strengths and weaknesses, connections between multiple	Assignment is not completed or depth of critical analysis is not consistent with requirements of graduate-level work
Appropriate Structure, Style, and Grammar	The final product is well organized, structured in way that builds on the argument or central thesis, and is free of errors related to grammar or style	The final product is well organized and clearly structured with only minimal grammatical and style errors	The final product suffers from problems associated with organization and structure and/or grammatical and style errors	Assignment is not completed or final product is poorly organized, structured, and/or possesses significant grammar and/or style errors

SPECIAL NOTE:

The aforementioned requirements, assignments, policies, evaluation procedures, etc., are subject to change. Students' experiences and needs, as well as emerging knowledge, will be considered in modifying this course syllabus. In addition, extenuating circumstances may contribute to modification in course requirements and schedule.

Course Schedule (Due Dates) Summary

(You may want to print this out and post it in a conspicuous place)



- (1) Autobiography/Critical Issue Presentation.** The Autobiography/Critical Issue presentation should be uploaded to both the Autobiography/Critical Issue Presentation Assignment Tab and to your designated Autobiography/Critical Issue Discussion Board by Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Students in your designated Discussion Board Group will then have until Monday, February 1, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 10% of your overall course grade.

- (2) Book Reaction/Critique #1.** The Book Reaction/Critique #1 presentation should be uploaded to both the Book Reaction/Critique #1 Assignment Tab and to your designated Book Reaction/Critique #1 Discussion Board by Monday, February 8, 2021. Students in your designated Book Reaction/Critique #1 Discussion Board Group will then have until Sunday, February 28, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 25% of your overall course grade.

- (3) Book Reaction/Critique #2.** The Book Reaction/Critique #2 presentation should be uploaded to both the Book Reaction/Critique #2 Assignment Tab and to your designated Book Reaction/Critique #2 Discussion Board by Monday, March 8, 2021. Students in your designated Book Reaction/Critique #2 Discussion Board Group will then have until Sunday, March 28, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

This Assignment is worth 25% of your overall course grade.

- (4) Book Reaction/Critique #3.** The Book Reaction/Critique #3 presentation should be uploaded to both the Book Reaction/Critique #3 Assignment Tab and to your designated Book Reaction/Critique #3 Discussion Board by Monday, April 5, 2021. Students in your designated Book Reaction/Critique #3 Discussion Board Group will then have until Sunday, April 25, 2021, to interact with you. Extensive involvement on the Discussion Boards is expected.

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Contribution/Participation is worth 15% of your overall course grade.