

**SAMPLE COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**GEL 120: Reading & Writing for College Success**  
**(A Summer Academy College Success Course)**

**Sample Course Theme: "Social Location"** (each GEL 120 section will examine a single topic as a "theme" for the course. Various readings, exercises, assignments and discussions will address the theme. One example of a theme for GEL 120 is "social location." Other examples of themes include gender, ethics, family, intelligence. Themes will be chosen and developed in consultation with faculty from the humanities, social sciences & natural sciences.)

(This 4 unit course will meet during a 5 week summer session for 12 hours per week.  
Possible schedule: MTWR for 3 hrs. per day)

**WELCOME TO SUMMER ACADEMY!**

You are about to embark on a 5 week journey that will introduce you to college life and all that Cal State San Marcos has to offer. Summer Academy includes classroom instruction and out-of-class activities that will help you strengthen your basic academic skills and learn college survival techniques. You will also get to know our campus and some of our wonderful staff and faculty. The entire experience is designed to empower you and to prepare your mind, body and spirit for your first year of college! As part of your Summer Academy experience you are enrolled in GEL 120. This course is designed to give you an intensive 5 week introduction to reading and writing across our lower-division general education curriculum. Using material from the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, you will learn how the various disciplines examine similar topics. The intent is to illustrate how disciplines interact to create knowledge and to prepare you for the wide array of reading and writing styles that will be required of you as you fulfill your lower-division course work. In the spirit of all first-year college success courses, GEL 120 will teach you college success skills and help you clarify your long-term academic/career plan. GEL 120 fulfills the lower-division Area E requirement in Lifelong Learning.

**Catalog Description for GEL 120:** Introduction to reading and writing skills across the lower-division general education curriculum. Through selected material from the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, students learn how various disciplines examine similar topics. The intent is to illustrate how disciplines interact to create knowledge and to prepare students for the wide array of reading and writing styles that will be required of them as they fulfill lower-division course work. Fundamental college success skills, information literacy, academic and career planning are also covered. *Prerequisite: Freshman standing or consent of instructor.*

**Course Theme:** The theme for our course, social location, was chosen in consultation with expert faculty in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. We are defining "social location" as the intersection of a number of forces that operate to place a person within the structure of a society. These forces include geographic location, historical location and location in terms of the specific categories defined as important by one's social group (Dr. Marisol Clark-Ibanez, personal communication). All of the readings suggested by our faculty address our course theme. By examining how different disciplines address the same topic, we can come to a better understanding of how human knowledge is constructed and understood. (*note: All themes that we develop for GEL 120 will lead students to a deeper understanding of themselves within the context of a diverse society.*)

**Course Objectives:**

- 1) Development of reading and writing skills necessary to master material across the areas of our lower-division GE curriculum (Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences). This includes structured appointments at the Writing Center, [www.csusm.edu/writing\\_center](http://www.csusm.edu/writing_center)
- 2) Library instruction to develop fundamental college level research techniques used in the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. Introduction to electronic data bases and various search techniques used to locate material.
- 3) Development of college success skills in the areas of study skills, time management, academic planning, career exploration and general life goals.
- 4) Introduction to the Cal State San Marcos campus and campus life and campus resources.

**List of potential assignments for grading purposes**

- 1) Free-writing journal (in response to Richard Light's book)
- 2) Annotated bibliography of readings supplied by faculty panel and readings located through library research. These readings will address the theme of the course.
- 3) Term paper that ties the readings from the annotated bibliography to a thesis and development of a position on an issue.
- 4) Written assignments and exercises from a standard first-year experience text (e.g. Robert Feldman's "Power Learning."

**BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SAMPLE READINGS****Student Reading:**

Daniel, E. L. (2006). *Taking sides: Clashing views in health and society* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill Learning Series.

Feldman, R. S. (2005). *Power learning: Strategies for success in college and life*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Light, R. J. (2001). *Making the most of college: Students speak their minds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Maimon, E. P., Peritz, J. H. (2003). *A writer's resource: A handbook for writing and research*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Satris, S. (2006). *Taking sides: Clashing views on moral issues* (10 ed.). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill Learning Series.

**Readings intended for instructor professional development:**

Masiello, L. (1993). *Write at the start: A guide to using writing in freshman seminars*.  
(Monograph No. 9). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource  
Center for the Freshman Year Experience.

**SAMPLE SYLLABUS CALENDAR**

*note: 4 units=60 hrs. class time= 3hrs. per day if meeting 4 days per week for 5 weeks*

DATE	TOPIC	READING
<b>Week 1: GETTING STARTED</b>		
M	Introduction to Summer Academy: Why College? Writing Sample Exercise & Ice Breaker Exercise	Light (2001)
T	College Success Skills & College Level Reading & Writing (standard First-Year student materials to support this)	Feldman (2005)
W	Faculty Panel (panel will include representatives from humanities; social/behavioral & physical/natural sciences) Introduction to term assignment- Term assignment will require reading and writing that connects material from the humanities; social/behavioral & physical/natural sciences to a theme (e.g. Social Location, Gender, Ethics)	Sample of readings that relate to theme & used throughout 5 weeks to develop term paper
R	Library Resources (to support research for term assignment)	
	<b>1st Writing Center session- Understanding the term assignment. Writing as a process &amp; beginning brainstorming</b>	
<b>Week 2: HUMANITIES</b>		
M	Defining the Humanities & finding material related to the course theme (Includes Librarian instruction)	
T	How to read material from the humanities (poetry, fiction)	
W	How to write about material in the humanities	
R	Short written assignment due to instructor/ Light Journal due	
	<b>2nd Writing Center session- Developing a thesis &amp; 1st draft</b>	
<b>Week 3: PHYSICAL &amp; NATURAL SCIENCES SCIENCES</b>		
M	Defining the Physical & Natural Sciences & finding material related to the course theme (Includes Librarian instruction)	
T	How to read material from the physical/natural sciences	
W	How to write about material in the physical/natural sciences	
R	Short Written assignment due to instructor/ Light Journal due	
	<b>3rd Writing Center session- The revising process</b>	
<b>Week 4: SOCIAL &amp; BEHAVIORAL</b>		
M	Defining the Social & Behavioral Sciences & finding material related to the course theme (Includes Librarian instruction)	
T	How to read material from the social & behavioral sciences	
W	How to write about material in the social & behavioral sciences	
R	Short Written Assignment Due to instructor/ Light Journal due	
	<b>4th Writing Center session- The revising process</b>	
<b>Week 5</b>		
M	Career & Academic Planning <b>5th Writing Center session: How to present your term assignment</b>	
T	Career & Academic Planning (Includes resume writing)	
W	Campus Connections (co-curricular activities)	
R	Presentation day -each student does a 10 minute presentation	