

The Prison Education Project



Semester Course Outlines

The Importance of Hobbies

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the importance of Hobbies.

Week 1	Explaining the importance of hobbies; Stress Management; Anger Management
Week 2	Reading, Writing, The Arts, Photography
Week 3	Cooking, Traveling, Yoga/Meditation, The Importance of Exercise
Week 4	The Pros & Cons of Video Games & Social Media
Week 5	Listening to Music, Making Music, Music Appreciation
Week 6	Sports: Basketball, Tennis, Jogging, Golf, Soccer, Bowling, Skateboarding
Week 7	Outdoor Activities: Hiking, Camping, Fishing, Biking

Introduction to College

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the process of applying and succeeding in college.

Week 1	Choosing a College, Choosing a Major, Vocational Education Majors
Week 2	College Application Process, Financial Aid, Scholarships; Applying for the Pell Grant, Enrolling with the Department of Rehabilitation for Financial Assistance for College or Vocational Training e.g. Truck Driving School
Week 3	The Mechanics of Writing Essays, Making Outlines, Personal Statements for College Applications
Week 4	Time Management; Study Strategies; The Challenges of Reading, Writing Essays, and taking Science, and Math Courses
Week 5	Getting Involved in College; Various Organizations on Campus; Organizations for formerly incarcerated students Project Rebound at CSUs, Rising Scholars at Community Colleges, Underground Scholars for the UC system
Week 6	Developing Soft Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Networking, Follow Through
Week 7	Reflections: Overcoming Challenges

Introduction to College Success

(for students who are enrolled in college)

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to strategies for exceling and succeeding in college.

Week 1	Accessing Campus Resources: Academic Advising, EOP, Disability Services, The Library, Tutoring, Student Life, and Leadership
Week 2	The Mechanics of Writing Essays and Making Study Outlines, The Challenges of Reading
Week 3	Time Management; Study Strategies; Stress Management; Exercise
Week 4	Set and Monitor Personal and Academic Goals; Inventory of Academic Strengths and Weaknesses
Week 5	Strategies for Being Effective in Science and Math Courses; Apply Learning Strategies and Study Skills to Enhance Learning
Week 6	Joining Student Organizations, Rising Scholars, Project Rebound, Intramural Sports, Study Abroad Opportunities, Internships
Week 7	Developing Soft Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Networking, Follow Through
Career Development	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the process of career development.	
Week 1	Orientation; Introductions; Ice-Breaker; Discussion of Personality, Interests, Values
Week 2	Acquiring the Essentials: Life Skills/Networking/Soft Skills
Week 3	Community College & Vocational Education Opportunities
Week 4	Financial Aid, Scholarships, Applying for College
Week 5	Developing a Resume
Week 6	Social Networking; Searching for Felon-Friendly Jobs/Careers
Week 7	Interview Skills/Mock Interviews; Overcoming Challenges
Introduction to Soft Skills	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the importance of soft skills.	
Week 1	Communication Skills: Face-to-Face Interaction, Humor, Small Talk, Body Language, Nonverbal Communication, Being Sensitive to Offensive Language
Week 2	Conflict Resolution, Conflict Styles; Escalation v. De-Escalation of Conflicts; Diplomacy
Week 3	Teamwork, Emotional Intelligence, Understanding Different Personalities
Week 4	Adaptability, Transitions, Mundane Tasks and Motivation, Goal-Setting
Week 5	Problem-Solving, Understanding Underlying Causes of Problems, Critical Observation
Week 6	Innovative thinking, Free Thinking, Grey Thinking
Week 7	Leadership Skills, Employee Skills, Taking Initiative, Punctuality
Introduction to Financial Literacy	

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the fundamentals of Money Management & Financial Literacy.	
Week 1	Being Financially Accountable; Budgeting; Balancing a Check Book; Opening a Bank Account; Buying a Car (used v. new); Grocery Shopping
Week 2	Money Management; The Concept of Credit; the FICO Score; The Dangers of Credit Cards; The Importance of Saving; Bad Spending Habits; Debt; Making Money v. Wasting Time
Week 3	Getting an Apartment, Renting, The Benefits of Transitional Housing, the Process of Buying a Home, County Welfare Benefits; Food Stamps
Week 4	Paying for College; Financial Aid, Scholarships; Signing up with Department of Rehabilitation for Financial Support for Education & Training
Week 5	Jobs v. Careers; Certificate & AA Degree Programs, Salaries
Week 6	Opportunity Costs, Investments, Understanding the Stock Market
Week 7	Investing in your Future; Buying a House; Retirement, Social Security Income
Introduction to College Math	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the intricate dynamics of college math.	
Week 1	Introduction; Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Exponential Notation and Order of Operations, Rounding Whole Numbers
Week 2	Fractions: Multiplication of Fractions and Mixed Numbers, Division of Fractions and Mixed Numbers, Least Common Multiple and Greatest Common Factor, Writing Equivalent Fractions
Week 3	Fractions: Addition of Fractions and Mixed Numbers, Subtraction of Fractions and Mixed Numbers Order, Exponents and the Order of Operations Agreement
Week 4	Decimals: Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Rounding Decimals Comparing and Converting Fractions and Decimals
Week 5	Ratio, Rate, Proportion, Percent Equations, Percent Applications
Week 6	English-Metric Measurement Conversions; Mean, Median, Mode
Week 7	Pictographs, Circle Graphs, Bar graphs, Line Graphs, Histograms and Frequency Distribution
Yoga/Meditation	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the fundamentals of meditation and yoga.	
Week 1	The Philosophy of Yoga/Meditation; The Concept of Breathing
Week 2	Inhaling, Exhaling, Head & Neck Exercises

Week 3	Chanting; Diver's Stretch, Simple Side Bend, Straddle Forward Bend
Week 4	Writing, Imagination, Introspection, Reflection
Week 5	Meditation; Reclining Twist, Sitting, Squatting, Double Leg Raises
Week 6	Butterfly, Sitting Forward Bend, Backbending, Half Spinal Twist
Week 7	Overview of Breathing, Meditation, Stretching Exercises
Introduction to Mindfulness	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the fundamentals of Mindfulness.	
Week 1	Introduction to Mindfulness; Benefits of Mindfulness; Neuroscience of Mindfulness
Week 2	Engaging in Compassionate Listening; Awareness Through the Senses
Week 3	Exploring Resistance to Pain; Mindful Eating, Exploring Stress
Week 4	Examining Negative Self-Talk vs. Positive Self-Talk; Reassurances
Week 5	The Conditioned Mind; Neuroplasticity; Reflective Listening
Week 6	Mindful Walking; Survival Strategies; Coping Mechanisms; Uncovering Unmet Needs
Week 7	The Practice of Kindness; Developing Intentions; Practicing Gratitude
Forgiveness & Healing	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the process of forgiveness and healing.	
Week 1	What is forgiveness? Why forgive? How do people forgive?
Week 2	Sharing Stories of Pain
Week 3	The Power of Humility; Accepting Blame; Second Chances
Week 4	The Power of Love; Forgiveness v. Condoning
Week 5	Strategies for Anger & Stress Management (writing essay for homework)
Week 6	Writing as Therapy (discuss homework essay in class)
Week 7	Overcoming Challenges
Building Healthy Relationships	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the dynamics of building healthy relationships.	
Week 1	The Building Process; Communication; Working on One's Self; Patience
Week 2	The Power of Love, Empathy, and Forgiveness
Week 3	The Power of Humility; Accepting Blame; Second Chances
Week 4	Conflict Resolution & Accepting Differences and Different Perspectives
Week 5	The Importance of Safety, Honesty, Trust, and Respect
Week 6	The Importance of Sacrifice, Loyalty, Compromise, and Happiness

Week 7	Overcoming Challenges of the Past and Working Toward the Future
Introduction to Writing	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the fundamentals of writing.	
Week 1	Orientation; Introduction to Basic Grammar (keep a Journal; regular homework)
Week 2	Basic Grammar Continued
Week 3	Creating Outlines; Thesis Statements
Week 4	Sentence Structure; Writing a Paragraph
Week 5	Writing an Essay; Storytelling
Week 6	Essay Writing; Writing Personal Statements for College Applications
Week 7	Reading Personal Statement Essays
Creative Writing	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the fundamentals of creative writing.	
Week 1	The Fundamentals of Writing: Title, Introduction, Body, Conclusion
Week 2	The Art of Storytelling; Brainstorming Words & Ideas
Week 3	Inventing the Story; Using your Imagination
Week 4	Telling the Story; Description, Character Development, Details
Week 5	Metaphors, Simile, Hyperbole, Personification
Week 6	Plot: Foreshadowing, Suspense, Conflict, Crisis, Resolution
Week 7	Introspection & Reflection
Creative Expression	
Objective: To teach in-custody students the dynamics of Self-Expression, Creativity, and the Fundamentals of Artistic Practice.	
Week 1	Self-Expression, Creativity, and the Fundamentals of Artistic Practice
Week 2	Expressing Impulsive Thoughts and Overwhelming Feelings Through Art
Week 3	Brainstorming, Ideas, Imagination; Giving Shape to Ideas
Week 4	Introspection, Reflection, Metaphors; Telling Your Own Story
Week 5	Performance Art, Graphic Art, Graffiti, Tattoos; Create the Cover of Your Music Album
Week 6	Poetry, Musical Lyrics, Songwriting, Rap, Spoken Word
Week 7	Creative Expression Student Presentations
Introduction to STEM Fields	
Objective: To introduce in-custody students to an array of disciplines in the STEM fields.	

Week 1	Students' Background, Academic Interests, Major (classes taken; careers)
Week 2	Introduction to Chemistry and Biology
Week 3	Introduction to Physics and Engineering
Week 4	Introduction to Mathematics
Week 5	Careers in the STEM Fields
Week 6	Current Topics/Events in the STEM Fields
Week 7	Reflections: Overcoming Challenges

Introduction to Law School: Understanding the Law & Legal Theory

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the process of going to law school, understanding legal theory, and the process of becoming a lawyer.

Week 1	What is Law School? How do you get into law school? How do you become a lawyer? What are the different types of lawyers?
Week 2	Understanding Key Terms and Concepts in Law
Week 3	Examining the Ways in which Law Shapes Society and Society Shapes Law
Week 4	How the Law is Influence by People, Interest Groups, Politics, and Social Institutions
Week 5	Understanding Criminal Law v. Civil Law?
Week 6	The Different Ways People Perceive the Law and the Legal System
Week 7	The Ways that Injuries and Disputes are mediated; the goals and purposes of trials; the concept and importance of rights in the U.S.

Introduction to Social Problems

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the causes and consequences of a myriad of social problems.

Week 1	Orientation; What are Social Problems? Seeing Patterns; Sociological Imagination
Week 2	Economic Inequity: The Causes & Consequences of Poverty in the U.S.
Week 3	Analyzing Social Problems; Sociological Theory: Social Policy
Week 4	Patterns of Majority—Minority Interaction; The Politics of Crime
Week 5	Prejudice and Discrimination: The Social Standing of Racial Minorities in the U.S.
Week 6	Politics of Race, Gender, Class: Constructing Solutions
Week 7	Overcoming Challenges; Navigating the System

Introduction to Psychology

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the dynamics of psychology.

Week 1	Orientation; What is Psychology? Sensation & Perception
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Week 2	Variations in Consciousness; Learning & Memory
Week 3	Thinking, Language, and Intelligence
Week 4	Human Development; Personality; Nature, Nurture, and their Interaction
Week 5	The Brain & the Nervous System; Emotion, Stress, and Health
Week 6	Psychological Disorders, Treatment, Therapy
Week 7	Overcoming Challenges of the Past and Working Toward the Future

Women's Empowerment

Objective: To focus on an array of women's issues to educate, inspire, and empower female in-custody students.

Week 1	Orientation; Brief History of Women's Oppression & Societal Constraints
Week 2	Gender Roles, Stereotypes, Gender Biases, and Gender Differences
Week 3	The Plight of Women Globally
Week 4	The Psychological Principles of Building Healthy Relationships
Week 5	Female Leaders and Role Models
Week 6	Mind, Body, and Spiritual Development
Week 7	Overcoming Challenging; Navigating to Success

Introduction to Philosophy

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the philosophy of ethics, morality, right v. wrong, legitimacy, justice, and cultural relativism.

Week 1	Orientation; Introduction to Basic Principles in Ethics
Week 2	What is Philosophy? What is an Argument? Fallacious Reasoning
Week 3	God and Religion; Knowledge and Certainty
Week 4	Being and Reality; The Allegory of the Cave; Locke, Plato, Aristotle, Hume
Week 5	Mind and Body; Freedom
Week 6	Science and Method
Week 7	Morality and the Good Life; Philosophical Reflections

Introduction to Screenwriting Writing

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the fundamentals of screenwriting.

Week 1	The Fundamentals of Screenwriting: Title, Introduction, Body, Conclusion
Week 2	The Art of Storytelling; Brainstorming; Thinking about your favorite movies
Week 3	Inventing the Story; Using your Imagination; Story Setting; Creating a Storyboard
Week 4	Telling the Story; Description, Character Development, Details

Week 5	The Technical Dimensions of Screenwriting
Week 6	Plot: Foreshadowing, Suspense, Conflict, Crisis, Resolution
Week 7	Introspection & Reflection

Introduction to Shakespeare

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the writings of Shakespeare

Week 1	Orientation; Who is Shakespeare? Why is he important? Overview of Writings; Language & Environment
Week 2	Read & Discuss Hamlet: Focus on Language & Character; Act I
Week 3	Hamlet; Focus on Soliloquy; Writing Soliloquy; Homework: Identify a key conflict that is similar to a conflict in your own story "To Be or Not to Be."
Week 4	Discuss Environment in Act III; Homework: Read Act III How does the environment that the characters are in affect their state of mind?
Week 5	Focus on Relationships; Homework: Write a paragraph of how each character affects Hamlet's inner conflict in Act III, Scene 3.
Week 6	Act IV: Focus on Action; Homework: Describe how Hamlet's madness affects two other characters' actions.
Week 7	Hamlet & Tragedy: Act V; Homework: Define tragedy in your own words using personal experiences. How does your own story compare with the tragedy of Hamlet's story?

How the Mind Works

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the anatomy of the brain and how it functions.

Week 1	Introduction to Basic Concepts; Functions of the Brain; The Problems of Dualism
Week 2	Behaviorism: Philosophical and Psychological; The Identity Theory; "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?"
Week 3	Functionalism: The Casual Theory of the Mind; "The Nature of Mental States
Week 4	Variations on Functionalism: The Continuity Levels of Nature; Putting the Function back in Functionalism
Week 5	Privileged Access and the Problem of Other Minds; Mental Representation and Intentionality
Week 6	The Semantics of Mental States; The Intentional Stance; Real Patterns & Intentional Systems
Week 7	Neurophilosophy; Understanding the Phenomenal Mind; What experience teaches.

Introduction to Film Studies

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the intricate dynamics of films.

Week 1	The Fundamentals of Film Studies; Film History & Theory; Approaches to Film Analysis (each student will have film journal for film critique notes)
Week 2	Visual and Narrative Structure, Perspective, and Meaning
Week 3	Film Terminology; Style, Genre, Authorship, Auteurism
Week 4	Cult Cinema; Cinematography; Sequence Analysis
Week 5	Acting and Blocking; Metafilm; Critical Interpretation and Informed Argumentation
Week 6	Examining the Universality of the Human Experience; What makes a film a Blockbuster?
Week 7	Reflections from Film Journals

Introduction to Astronomy

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the intricate dynamics of Astronomy.

Week 1	Introduction; Greek Astronomy
Week 2	Astronomy in the Era of Copernicus, Tycho, Kepler, Galileo, Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion
Week 3	Review of Classical Mechanics; Circular Orbits; Full Kepler Orbit Problem
Week 4	Introduction to Electromagnetic Waves; Doppler Effect
Week 5	Reflection, Refraction, Optics, Optical, Radio, and X-Ray Telescopes
Week 6	Distances and Magnitudes; Binary Systems; Hertzsprung-Russell Diagrams
Week 7	Initial Mass Function; Olbert's Paradox; Galaxy Rotation Curves; Size and Rotation Curve of the Milky Way

Introduction to Autobiography Writing

Objective: To introduce in-custody students and instructors to the fundamentals of writing an autobiography. The instructors will write their own autobiographies along with their students in this class.

Week 1	Writing Your Autobiography; Structure & Clarity; The Importance of an Outline; Examples from popular autobiographies
Week 2	What is Compelling about Your Life's Story? Why is your Story Unique? What are the Lessons Learned from Your Story?
Week 3	Identify 8 pivotal periods or experiences in your life. Write 2-3 sentences on why these periods/experiences were significant.
Week 4	Develop Chapter-by-Chapter Outline of your Autobiography (5 Chapters)

Week 5	An Introduction to Your Autobiography; Include the Highlights of your 5 Chapters
Week 6	Brainstorming about the Book Title and Book Cover Design; What is the significance of your book title and cover design?
Week 7	Write Chapter 1 of your Autobiography (5 pages singled-spaced)

Introduction to Debate

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the craft of public speaking and debate

Week 1	Dealing with the fear of speaking in public through preparation; other strategies; critique of great public speakers; why are they effective? Understanding the fundamental principles of debate
Week 2	Preparing speeches of what you know; Your past, present, & future
Week 3	Preparing for Debate that inform, persuade, and fulfill the need of the occasion
Week 4	Conducting research for your Debates; integrating facts & statistics; how to debate policy propositions; ethics in argumentation
Week 5	Adapting to your audience; body language, stage presence, tone, audible level; debate value proposition and affirmative case construction
Week 6	The use of humor in Debate; connecting with the audience; make it relatable; the cross-examination debate format
Week 7	Two-minute Debate speeches on a Current Affairs Topic

Introduction to American Government & Civics

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the rights and duties of citizenship.

Week 1	Introduction: <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> , American Civic Culture, Media Literacy
Week 2	Institutions: <i>The Constitution</i> , Separation of Powers, Federalism
Week 3	Legislative Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law, Congress, State Legislatures, Local Politics
Week 4	Civil Rights and Liberties: <i>The Bill of Rights</i> , 1st Amendment and its Limits, Procedural Freedoms
Week 5	Voting and Elections: 13th-15th Amendments, the Electoral Process, Political Parties
Week 6	Political Advocacy: How to Turn Ideas into Reality, Issue Campaigns
Week 7	Building Coalitions: Civic Discourse, Social Movements, Public Service Careers

Introduction to Environmental Science

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the dynamic field of Environmental Science.

Week 1	What is Environmental Science? Understanding key terms and concepts in the field; understanding the concept of sustainability and human's relationship within the environment.
Week 2	The Causes & Consequences of Human Activity on land, water, air, and the atmosphere
Week 3	Understanding the Causes & Consequences of Global Warming & Climate Change
Week 4	Understanding the Finiteness of Resources for Humans
Week 5	Examining Case Studies of Societies that have dramatically effective by Climate Change
Week 6	Examining the 'Flooding' Phenomenon and its Impact on Societies
Week 7	Understanding one's Individual Responsibility in regulating the impact of human activity on the Earth

Introduction to Theatre

Objective: To introduce in-custody students to the dynamics of theatre.

Week 1	Distinguish the Characteristics of Theatre from other Art Forms; Describe the Major Components of the Theatrical Event
Week 2	Describe the Functions of the various Theatre Personnel; Define Specific Terms relating to the Study of Theatre
Week 3	List & Describe the Parts of a Play; Describe the Different Forms of Drama; Distinguish Theatre and Drama; Describe the Different Parts of a Plot
Week 4	Read & Write Brief Critiques of Passages from Plays
Week 5	Activities Involving Set Design and Construction, Directing, Acting, and Playwriting
Week 6	Participate in Forum Discussion Activities with Classmates
Week 7	Theatrical Performance in Class