

# Prelude Syllabus 2011

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Instructor:  
Instructor's Email:

Prelude Assistant:  
Prelude Assistant Email:

**Required Text:** First-Year Prelude Course Pack 2011

## ***Course Description***

The First Year Prelude Program introduces students to the mission and community of Calvin College. This six-week course is a gateway and integral component of IDIS W50 (Developing a Christian Mind) and serves as a prerequisite to the Cross-Cultural Engagement (CCE) core requirement.

Prelude is a one-credit course that all first year students take during their first semester. Prelude provides students with a common intellectual experience and a rudimentary introduction to several important aspects of Calvin's community: responsible freedom, cultural discernment, justice, and vocation.

## ***Course Objectives***

In addition to the particular objectives of each class session, the course has the following over-arching goals. Prelude will:

1. Introduce students to the mission of Calvin College by:
  - Examining the Expanded Statement of Mission of Calvin College with emphasis on our response to Christ's redemptive work.
  - Highlighting some of the characteristics of the Calvin community which support students in this endeavor.
  - Exploring some of the hidden worldviews which may inhibit us from responding more fully to Christ and his creation.
2. Engage students in the Calvin academic community by:
  - Outlining the expectations for students regarding academic faithfulness.
  - Introducing a common vocabulary of valued concepts.
  - Encouraging active participation, reasoned reflection, and critical thinking skills regarding the course topics through written assignments, group discussions, and engagement in specified learning opportunities outside of the classroom.
3. Provide students with a community and peer connection by:
  - Facilitating deeper relationships with and among first year students who have experienced orientation together.
  - Serving as a point of involvement and connection to the broader Calvin community.

## ***Overall Course Outcomes***

1. Students will be able to identify several themes (a Reformed Christian worldview, responsible freedom, justice, vocation, cultural discernment) related to Calvin's mission in higher education.
2. Students will demonstrate active participation in a learning community.

## Weekly Course Outcomes

Students will be able to:

Week 1:	Week 2:	Week 3:	Week 4:	Week 5:	Week 6:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate some of their own expectations for college.</li> <li>Describe the values of Calvin expressed in the statement of mission.</li> <li>Plan to complete all course requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wonder aloud (respectfully &amp; provisionally) about the worldview commitments that motivate others' speech and actions.</li> <li>State Wolters' definition of "worldview"</li> <li>Describe the biblical story of CFRC, and articulate ways in which their own worldviews cohere or clash with this Reformed view.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define discernment and identify some resources to help in the discernment process.</li> <li>Describe sacred and secular dualism, and why at Calvin we reject it.</li> <li>Identify their own inherited approaches to culture, and explain some Reformed Christian approaches to culture.</li> <li>Recognize that beliefs and love for God and neighbor shape engagement with culture; and that sincere Christians may differ in their understandings of "holy worldliness."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define responsible freedom and Christian freedom and begin articulating their implications for life as an individual within a community.</li> <li>Debate whether or not having more rules is helpful for the life of the Christian college student.</li> <li>Articulate ways in which transformation requires discernment and is hard work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how the pursuit of justice fits into the biblical story.</li> <li>Begin framing their own concerns about justice in the world in light of their faith commitments</li> <li>Become aware of the FEN document and its themes, one of Calvin College's responses to injustice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the idea of vocation as a daily response to God—even now.</li> <li>Identify and discuss some of their God-given gifts that may suit them for a particular kind of service</li> <li>See being called as an opportunity to humbly join God in the work he is doing as "agents of renewal"</li> </ul>

## Course Requirements

### I: In-Class:

#### A. Attendance and Participation (6 x 4% = 24%)

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be noted for plenary and discussion portions of class; you must attend both the in-class session and plenary to receive full attendance credit.

Your active participation in class discussions and group work is fundamental to your learning process. Full participation may include note taking, sharing your thoughts and reflections, turning in assignments, etc. It is essential that you participate fully in these activities for full attendance and participation credit.

**About Absences:** Students may be excused from class **ONLY** for approved Calvin-sponsored activities (e.g. sports or music department-related travel). **Please contact Janice Phaneuf ([jphaneuf@calvin.edu](mailto:jphaneuf@calvin.edu)) well in advance** of your Calvin-sponsored activity to make arrangements to attend an alternate class section. Excused absences will also be granted in the event of family emergencies or illness with the appropriate documentation (i.e., a note from Health Services or private physician or verification from your Resident Director).

## **B. Weekly reading assessments (5 x 5% = 25%)**

Complete all readings and assignments *before* class each week. These readings are the foundation of class discussions and group work.

Use each week's reading questions (posted on Moodle) to guide your reading. It is recommended that you write out responses to these questions. You *may* work on this in groups, if you wish.

Then, each week at the beginning of class (weeks 2-6), you will have the opportunity to report on your learning from one or more of the readings. Your instructor will ask you to complete an in-class write about the articles that demonstrates your thoughtful engagement with what you read. Each reading response will constitute 5% of your final grade.

## **II: Outside of Class:**

### **A. CSI Completion (6%)**

As part of your transition to Calvin, we are asking that you complete an online assessment called the College Student Inventory. You will receive login information through your Calvin e-mail account. **Complete the survey anytime during the first two weeks of school. You have until Friday, September 16, at 5 p.m. to receive credit for this assignment.**

The assessment usually takes about 20 minutes to complete and helps identify how you learn best and what campus services may be most useful for you. This is not a test; please answer the questions honestly. Your answers will be kept confidential. With your permission (given when you take the assessment), your results may be used to help approved staff and faculty members at Calvin suggest useful campus resources for you. Discussions about your results will occur in a one-on-one appointment with a resident director and/or CSI advisor at Calvin.

### **B. ETCs (Experience Teaches @ Calvin) (3 x 5% = 15%)**

**Due dates: One post is due by Saturday noon on weeks 2, 4, and 6 (Sept. 24; Oct.8; and Oct. 22).**

Under the premise that learning occurs inside and outside the classroom at Calvin, you are required to **attend three campus events** as outlined during the first class session. Choose your events from among the options listed on the Prelude calendar (<http://www.calvin.edu/student-life/prelude/schedule.html>). Your instructor may assign a specific opportunity for your section.

**Write a review paragraph** in response to the following questions and statements. Post your paragraph on the Moodle forum within 24 hours of attending each of the three events. While grading the postings, instructors will be looking for thorough responses to each of the points below:

- Imagine you are reviewing the event for a classmate who wasn't able to attend. Give details about the event (title, who presented, when, where), a summary of the content, and your reactions to what you experienced.
- Why do you think the event you attended is considered an important part of life at Calvin College?
- Discuss one new thing you noticed while attending or following this event—about yourself, about Calvin, about the topic(s) addressed. What connections might you be able to make between what you experienced and what you are learning in Prelude?

Although the posts are made online and the forum may seem informal, please extend courtesy to your readers (fellow students and your instructor): use the same good grammar and writing skills you would for other writing assignments.

**Late Posting Policy:**

Both for the sake of accurate memories of the event and to help keep us honest in the completion of the assignment, reports must be posted within 24 hours of attendance. Any ETC report posted more than 24 hours after the event end time will not be accepted.

**III: Two Formal Writing Assignments:**

As instructors evaluate your written work, they will be reading for development of thought and clarity of expression as you discuss Prelude topics and integrate them with life outside the classroom.

In addition, they will be looking for good writing mechanics: a guiding statement/thesis that unifies your paper, topic sentences, paragraph development. Relevant use and appropriate citation of class readings and/or discussions is also encouraged.

Papers should be prepared in Microsoft Word document format, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins and double-spaced. Points will be deducted for late papers, spelling/grammatical errors, and deviating from the formatting guidelines.

**Late Paper Policy:**

Any papers turned in after class time on the due date are automatically deducted one point per day.

**A. 3-4-page Autobiography (10%) Due at class time, Week Two (September 19-21)**

In 750-1000 words, reflect on your life to this point, including the people, events, and beliefs that have shaped you. To bring focus to your autobiography, **choose one** of the following options. *Your instructor may also provide specific guidelines for your section.*

- Make one or two influential events or people your focus points as you tell your story.
- Tell your story by framing it with a Bible verse or story that has had an impact on you.
- Develop a theme that characterizes your life as you see it (perseverance, love, suffering, forgiveness, joy, conflict).
- Moments of epiphany: Tell your story by highlighting a couple of things you have observed about yourself recently (aha! moments). (Your realizations may have been occasioned by meeting your roommate; leaving home; taking your first college class; or taking a college assessment like the StrengthsFinder or the College Student Inventory).

**B. Integrative Paper, 5 pages (~1250 words) (20%)**

**Due: 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 26**, submitted electronically or in hard copy.

**You may choose from among the options below. *Your instructor may also give specific guidelines regarding your final integrative assignment.***

**Option 1: Letter to a Friend**

Imagine the following scenario:

*Partway through your first semester of college, you meet a high school friend (who attends another college) for lunch. In the course of your conversation, you start talking about your future goals and plans. Your friend says to you,*

*“It doesn’t really matter to me what I do for a living. I think I could do a lot of different things and be happy. But I do want to make enough money to live on. I’ve always wanted to drive a really nice car, live in a big house in a good school system, have a couple of kids who can play comfortably with neighbor kids, travel with my family.”*

*Your conversation goes on, and you and your friend start talking about the role faith plays in your daily lives and future plans. He/she says,*

*“Yeah, going to church is important to me. We should certainly worship on Sunday. But I don’t really think God cares that much about the decisions I make during the rest of the week. He gave us brains to figure out our vocations and pursue ‘life, liberty, and happiness,’ right?”*

**Write a 4-5 page paper in the format of a letter. Responding to your friend, state your own perspective about your discussion. Some guidelines:**

- You may agree or disagree with your friend on one or more points. You may also agree or disagree with Prelude readings and presentations on these topics.
- In your letter, be sure to:
  - Define the idea of vocation as presented in Prelude, and quote or paraphrase class readings on the topic.
  - Tie in at least one other Prelude theme (worldview, discernment, responsible freedom, or justice) to your discussion, again referencing class readings and/or discussions.

**Option 2: Open-ended Essay OR Instructor-Provided Prompt**

*\*If you choose this option, submit your ideas to your instructor for approval by the fifth week of class (Oct. 10-12).*

Write a 5-page essay addressing one of the Prelude themes (worldview, discernment, responsible freedom, justice, or vocation). In your introduction, raise a significant current issue (news or world event, or a campus happening) that you would like to consider in relation to your chosen theme. Make the case for why the issue is troubling and/or important, and how applying the theme to the issue affects your analysis of the issue itself.

Be sure to clearly define the Prelude theme you are addressing, and quote or paraphrase class readings in support of your argument. Refer to additional Prelude themes as is useful to your paper. You may also refer to books, articles, news reports, movies, etc. not addressed in class.

*Calvin will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, located in the Student Academic Services Office in Hiemenga Hall. Student should notify their instructors during the first two weeks of class.*

**Calvin College regards acts of academic dishonesty as wholly improper for a Calvin student. Plagiarism, taking or receiving the efforts of another person on any test or paper, giving or selling to another student papers or assignments that are not authorized by the instructor, or using unauthorized resources on tests or examinations are strictly prohibited. Any student found**

**responsible for academic dishonesty will be sanctioned according the Calvin College Student Handbook.**

## ***ETC Information: Ongoing Opportunities***

- Many ETC opportunities (one-time lectures, discussions, and concerts) are listed on the Prelude Calendar, <http://www.calvin.edu/student-life/prelude/schedule.html>.
- *Note that for concerts, you need to attend any conversations scheduled with the artists in addition to the concerts themselves.*
- **Ongoing opportunities may not appear on the web calendar and so are listed below.**

### **Career Development Counseling Appointments**

**Various Times: Contact the Career Development Office at 526-6485 or [career@calvin.edu](mailto:career@calvin.edu)**

During Prelude, we will talk about your uniqueness as a created individual. What gifts has God given you? What particular strengths and resources do you have? How can you apply those toward helping a hurting world? Career Development offers personalized sessions with a career counselor to help you discover or reinforce your strengths.

Call Career Development to set up two appointments for this particular ETC option. The first appointment is a 30-minute “get to know you” conversation about where you are in your thinking about a major course of study and about a career. The second appointment will focus on a review of any career assessments recommended by the career counselor.

Remember that you will need to complete the two appointments for this assignment before the end of Prelude, so plan ahead. You’ll need to complete any assessments or activities the career counselor assigns you in your first appointment, and then write your review paragraph in response to the career counseling experience no later than 24 hours after your second appointment.

### **Career Development StrengthsFinder Assessment**

*What is StrengthsFinder?*

The Clifton StrengthsFinder is an online assessment that helps individuals discover their areas of natural talent. Students who complete the Clifton StrengthsFinder will receive a customized report that lists their top five talent themes, along with action items for development and suggestions about how to use talents to achieve academic, career, and personal success.

*If you are interested in taking the StrengthsFinder for ETC credit, you will need to do the following:*

1. Pick up a Web access code and instructions for taking the assessment from the Career Development office, located at 372 Hekman Library (just off the fireplace lobby, in the hallway leading to Hiemenga Hall)
2. Sign up to attend a group test interpretation from the dates offered
3. Complete the assessment and prepare for group test interpretation as instructed per handout from Career Development office
4. Sign-in at the group test interpretation, indicating name, e-mail, and Prelude instructor’s name, in order to receive credit for the assignment

*Notes about the group test interpretations:*

- 5-6 group sessions will be available (specific dates and times will be posted on the Prelude Calendar in Moodle); if a student is unable to attend any of the group sessions, he/she must meet one-on-one with a career counselor to discuss the results before the end of Prelude

- Sessions will be led by Glenn Triezenberg, Bonnie Speyers, or Meredith Segur
- Students will need to come prepared with print-outs/paragraph descriptions of their top 5 strengths (as instructed in a handout that will be provided by Career Development)
- Upon conclusion of the group sessions, Career Development will inform Prelude instructors of students who completed the requirements of the assignment

## **Chapels**

### **Every day at 10:00 a.m., M-F at the Chapel**

Chapels with various themes are offered throughout the school year. To complete an ETC requirement, you may attend *three* Chapels (they must be on three different days of the week). You may use attending Chapel as only *one* of your three ETC requirements.

### **LOFT: Living Our Faith Together**

#### **Every Sunday night at 8:00 p.m. in the Chapel**

L.O.F.T. (Living Our Faith Together) is a God-Centered, Christ-led, Spirit-empowered service bringing together the best of Christian worship through a variety of music, art, dance and drama. You may attend and report on one L.O.F.T. service as an ETC requirement.

### **Campus-Wide Bible Study: Psalms**

<http://www.calvin.edu/faith/bible-study/psalms/>

Join us for our all-campus study of Psalms! Students, staff, faculty, alumni, CALL members, and even some church congregations are joining together in small groups to read and study scripture together. We believe this all-campus Bible study can transform our lives and our community in many ways. Let's see what God will do when over 4,000 people gather together to study his word, pray and love each other! For more information and to sign up, see the link above.

You may report on one meeting of a Bible study group to which you belong for an ETC.

### **Art Prize**

#### **Multiple Grand Rapids venues; runs 9.21.11-10.9.11**

<http://www.artprize.org/>

Get to know your college's city while interacting with friends and considering pieces by artists from West Michigan and around the world. Attend the Student Activities Office's Art Prize Kickoff Concert, or stop by Calvin's 106 Division Gallery as you check out the Art Prize entries downtown.

## Reading and Assignment Schedule

Week	Date	Readings	Page #	Assignment Due	Meet
1	Sept. 12-14 Welcome	1. Colossians 1:1-23 2. "Sacred Thinking,," from <i>A Mind for God</i> (J.E. White) 3. Calvin College Statement of Identity and Mission	4-15	Readings; College Student Inventory completion	Classroom
2	Sept. 19-21 Worldview	1. Genesis 1 and 3, Matthew 28, Revelation 21 2. Chapter 1, <i>Creation Regained</i> (A. Wolters) 3. Chapter 3, <i>The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness</i> (Optiz & Melleby)	17-32	Readings + Autobiography; ETC post due Sat. Sept. 24	Classroom
3	Sept. 26-28 Cultural Discernment	1. 1 Kings 3:4-15; Proverbs 8; Philippians 1 2. "A Christian Theory of Popular Culture" (Ken Heffner) 3. "Engaging the World: A Few Words of Warning" (Calvin VanReken) 4. "Making a Living" (Jon Foreman, <i>optional</i> )	35-49	Readings	Chapel
4	Oct. 3-5 Responsible Freedom	1. Romans 12:1-2, 1 Cor. 8:1-13 2. Memo to the President (L. Hardy) 3. What is Responsible Freedom? (D. Crump) 4. Chapter 12, <i>The Screwtape Letters</i> (C.S. Lewis)	55-66	Readings; ETC post due Sat. Oct. 8	Classroom
5	Oct. 10-12 Justice and Righteousness	1. Micah 6:8, Isaiah 58 2. For Justice in Shalom (N. Wolterstorff) 3. Doing Justice in the Public Square (T. Keller) 4. A More Perfect Union (B. Obama)	68-86	Readings	Chapel
6	Oct. 17-19 Vocation	1. Psalm 90 1-17, I Timothy 6:17-19 2. The Work of Our Hands, from <i>So Much More</i> (D. Rienstra). 3. Learn to be Still: Thoughts on Calling, Vocation, and Career (G. Triezenberg) 4. Excerpt from Calvin's <i>Institutes</i>	88-102	Readings + ETC post due Sat. Oct. 22.	Chapel
7	Oct. 26 Integration	Optional reading: You Need Two Eyes (N. Wolterstorff)	103	Integrative Paper due by 5 p.m. on Wed., Oct. 26.	Class does not meet

