

Created and Called for Community

The Created and Called for Community course applies the intellectual skills learned in First Year Seminar to content directly related to Messiah College's Mission, Identity, and Foundational Values. This is done in the context of a medium-sized discussion-oriented course designed around the themes of creation, community, and vocation. Students learn that because they are created in the divine image, they are God's agents for service, leadership, and reconciliation in the broader community. The course is designed to ask questions of life and learning, those questions which students engage in order to participate fully in their academic pursuits. The central question to be considered is: "What is my vocation as a faithful steward of God's creation?" Through examining literary, historical, artistic, philosophical and theological works, students engage in the biblical themes of forgiveness, compassion, non-violence, peacemaking, justice, and racial and gender reconciliation through the lens of the College's unique religious identity and foundational values, with a particular focus on the importance of community. In this context students work toward enhancing their ability in the basic intellectual skills: how to read critically, think logically, and communicate effectively. In addition, students focus on how the Christian faith can and should be related to the intellectual life. In short, Created and Called for Community is designed to encourage positive attitudes toward the Messiah College academic experience. The specific objectives for this course include the following:

By the completion of the course the students will demonstrate the ability to

- a. explain the Mission and Confession of Faith and Foundational Values of Messiah College.
- b. describe biblical and theological implications of the Old Testament emphasis on being created in the image of God and the New Testament emphasis on becoming a new creation.
- c. articulate defining characteristics of different kinds of communities, including those that are faith-based, academic, national, international, ethnic, inter-ethnic, and professional.
- d. develop a working definition of Christian Vocation as it relates to reconciliation, service, and leadership.

The Created and Called for Community course has no prerequisites except for the First Year Seminar, although the two courses may be taken concurrently. The thematic content of the course provides a basis that can be built on by faculty in later interdisciplinary and major courses. Since reading and interpreting texts is an important component of the objectives, the course includes a substantial amount of common reading.

The course is required of all students in the spring of their first year at Messiah College. Faculty for the Created and Called for Community course are individuals with interdisciplinary interests and who are interested in the reading/thinking process. Course faculty members are required to attend yearly workshops and bi-monthly meetings designed to enhance teaching in this context.