Roanoke College’s Intellectual Inquiry Curriculum and Critical Skill Development

Roanoke College’s Intellectual Inquiry general education curriculum emphasizes the development of critical skills in topically focused courses. We emphasize critical reasoning, writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and disciplinary methodologies in inquiry format courses. Because the topical focus typically appears in the course name on a transcript, it can be difficult to evaluate the content of courses based upon this limited information. The descriptions below provide more detail.

**INQ 110** Intellectual Inquiry is taught in seminar format. Regardless of topic, all sections emphasize critical reading and reasoning. Composition is a major focus. All sections teach writing skills and require a minimum of 30 pages of polished final draft work. All sections require a research paper and teach proper citation format. The average page count in Fall 2011 including informal writing was just over 45 pages.

**INQ 120** Living an Examined Life is taught in seminar format. All topics have an ethical theme, but skill development remains the primary focus. Work on critical reasoning and writing continue from the development begun in INQ 110. The average page count in Spring 2011 was 15 pages of polished final draft writing. This course also teaches oral communication skills. Each student will give two oral presentations.

**INQ 240** Statistical Reasoning has the statistical content of a standard Introduction to Statistics course but places this in the context of societal questions we examine using statistics so that students develop an understanding of when to use each technique and the limits of interpretation, not just the manipulation of equations. All sections require at least one polished paper.

**INQ 241** Mathematical Reasoning introduces students to mathematical methodologies in application to societal questions. Students learn mathematical techniques and concepts. All sections require at least one polished paper.

**INQ 250** Scientific Reasoning I is a laboratory science course taught in inquiry format. In the laboratory, we emphasize experimental design, collection and interpretation of data. In the classroom, emphasis is placed on interpretation of data and application of scientific methodologies to important questions about the natural world. All sections require at least one polished paper. Each section is located within a specific natural science at the introductory non-majors level. INQ 250AS is Astronomy; INQ 250BI is Biology; INQ 240CH is Chemistry; INQ 250PH is Physics.

**INQ 251** Scientific Reasoning II is a natural science course without laboratory. Emphasis is placed on interpretation of data and application of scientific methodologies to important questions about the natural world. All sections require at least one polished paper.

**INQ 260** Social Science Reasoning introduces students to methodologies of the social sciences and requires the students to apply these to a topic of inquiry. Methodologies may be either qualitative on quantitative. All sections require at least one polished paper. Sections using qualitative methodologies also require an oral presentation. Each section is located within a specific social science: INQ 260AN is Anthropology, INQ 260CO is Communications, INQ 260EC is Economics, INQ 260LI is Linguistics, INQ 260PS is Political Science, INQ 260PY is Psychology, and INQ 260SO is Sociology.

**INQ 270** Human Heritage I asks students to inquire into a Humanities topic focused prior to 1500. All sections include some use of primary texts and introduce methodologies. All sections require at least one polished paper and at least one oral presentation.

**INQ 271** Human Heritage II asks students to inquire into a Humanities topic focused after 1500. All sections include some use of primary texts and introduce methodologies. All sections require at least one polished paper and at least one oral presentation.

**INQ 300** Contemporary Issues is our general education capstone. In this course, students apply all of the skills they developed in earlier Intellectual Inquiry courses to research and propose a solution for a contemporary problem. The course is research and writing intensive. The average page count for Spring 2012 was just over 25 pages of polished work and 35 total pages of writing. Quantitative work is required. Students stand for formal oral defenses of their proposals.