

Experiential Learning Essay Topic List

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Overview of Experiential Essays

Western International University offers a complementary service to students who can demonstrate college-level learning from life and work experience.

- Write a college-level reflective essay in first person based on your work or life experience from the approved essay topics. The essay must contain the correct number of subtopics and real-world experiences with sufficient examples of your own experiences.
- Please write all essays in the experiential essay template on MyWest.
- Support your experiences with theories from scholarly articles. Please use the *West Writing Style Handbook* on MyWest.
- You may choose to write for 1, 2, or 3 credits for essay topics that are non-West course specific.
- Word counts for the essay will not include the title or reference pages.

Documentation for each essay topic is required. The document must substantiate your experience(s) on the topic selected. Examples of documentation may be found for each topic. Documentation is not limited to what is listed for each topic.

You will be scored for each essay subtopic as well as on your academic writing. A score of 70% or better is required to pass the essay topic. Scores will be entered automatically into the academic record and applicable credits applied directly to the degree program upon receipt of the scoring sheet from the Faculty Evaluator.

Unless already stated in the topic information, your essay will be scored according to the following criteria:

- Scope – how well does your work incorporate all aspects of the essay’s elements and the learning outcome(s)?
- Accuracy – how accurately do you use the concepts, vocabulary, and principles learned on the topic?
- Application – how well do you use critical thinking to apply the topic concepts, vocabulary, and principles learned throughout the essay and connect the learning outcomes to current or real-world situations?
- Research and Support – how well are your ideas and opinions supported with the depth and breadth of the required research for thorough understanding?
- Organization and Coherence – how consistently and logically do you present and connect the ideas and concepts throughout the essay?
- Conventions and Writing Style – how well do you apply the rules of Standard Written English and follow the *West Writing Style Handbook* guidelines?

You will submit the following components:

- Experiential Essay in Microsoft Word using the template (by e-mail to pla@west.edu)
- Documentation (PDF, image file, or other unalterable format by e-mail or fax to pla@west.edu or (602) 366-1457)

Essay Subtopics, Word Counts, and Scholarly Sources

Essay Credit Offerings	3-Credit Essay	2-Credit Essay	1-Credit Essay
Subtopic Requirements	All 6 Subtopics	Choose 4 Subtopics	Choose 2 Subtopics
Word Count Specifications	2,500–3,750 Words	2,000–2,500 Words	1,250–2,000 Words
Source Criterion	3–6 Scholarly Sources	1–2 Scholarly Sources	1–2 Scholarly Sources

Administrative Work (Electives)

Emphasis is on the skills of an effective administrative assistant. Course examines office procedures, communication and listening skills, time management, tools for developing communication, documentation and presentation of material, proper etiquette, and workplace behavior.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Identify the skills required to be an effective administrative assistant.
- Subtopic 2: Provide an overview of the operational and management functions of a typical business.
- Subtopic 3: Give examples of the listening and communication skills required in an office setting.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the importance of time management skills in relation to an administrative position.
- Subtopic 5: List tools and resources that assist the development of skills related to communication, documentation, and presentation.
- Subtopic 6: Discuss proper etiquette, appropriate office attire, and workplace behavior.

Call Center Management (Electives)

Examines and discusses theoretical understanding and application of effective methods of call center management and professionalism from all perspectives.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the different components of a call center and the types of consumers served.
- Subtopic 2: Discuss the types of call centers and how each type is managed.
- Subtopic 3: Develop a strategic call center management plan that focuses on professionalism and is consumer focused.
- Subtopic 4: Break down the necessary components of an effective call center and ways to maximize the effectiveness of each component.
- Subtopic 5: Discuss challenges to maintaining a call center and critique solutions implemented by call center management, including helping the institution handle customer service issues professionally.
- Subtopic 6: Create a strategy to set up a new call center, including desired staff qualifications and appropriate training topics geared at maintaining a professional setting that efficiently handles customer service issues.

Grief and Bereavement (Electives or Social Science)

Describe the five phases of grief and factors that impact how individuals process grief and achieve normalcy and improvement after experiencing grief. Reflect on and assess individual beliefs and attitudes on grief (e.g., job loss, relationships, divorce).

Documentation Suggestions:

- Proof of job loss or unemployment
- Proof of human death directly connected to the student (no pets or animals)

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the psychological dimensions when dealing with grief.
- Subtopic 2: Describe the role of cultural and ethnic traditions associated with death and dying.
- Subtopic 3: Examine the legal and political initiatives that protect and provide rights to individuals at the end of life.
- Subtopic 4: Summarize the five phases of grief and the effects of grief on family members.
- Subtopic 5: Illustrate how individuals achieve normalcy and improvement after experiencing grief.
- Subtopic 6: Self-reflect about death and dying to assess your beliefs and attitudes about the subject. How would you go about achieving normalcy and improvement after experiencing grief?

Ethics in the Workplace (Electives)

Explore issues related to ethics in the workplace. Topics covered will include major ethical issues that arise in business and in your personal life. Examine the matters of personal integrity and character and their relationship to business and professional ethics.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Certificates of completion
- Employee training records

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Discuss how the concept of business ethics is viewed in your organization and how it impacts the business.
- Subtopic 2: Explain whether a person should have more than one set of ethics (e.g., one for business and another for personal matters).
- Subtopic 3: Show why respect is a necessary component in professional relationships, including those between employer and employee, employee and employee, and employee and other stakeholders.
- Subtopic 4: Articulate what provisions should be included in a company's code of ethics and code of conduct.
- Subtopic 5: Examine whether an American company doing business in a foreign country should follow its own ethical principles, even if its principles are stricter than the host country's.
- Subtopic 6: Explain why there is often more than one ethical approach to solve a dilemma.

Marriage and Family Relationships (Electives or Social Science)

Examines and discusses the various approaches and techniques to studying marriage and family relationships considering cultural aspects, interventions, and ethical issues that are encountered during the family life cycle (divorce, single parenting, job loss, abuse, etc.).

Documentation Suggestions:

Certificates of marriage or divorce or domestic partnership

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the stages of life and how they affect marriage and family relationships.
- Subtopic 2: Discuss interventions in family life and methods to cope with crisis in relationships when dealing with divorce, family violence, abuse, single parenting, and working parents.
- Subtopic 3: Compare and contrast gender roles in marital relationships and how they may evolve and change throughout the cycle of the relationship.
- Subtopic 4: Analyze the cultural aspects of marriage and family relations and how they may change with each situation.
- Subtopic 5: Critique solutions for ethical dilemmas that are encountered in marriage with family relationships such as parents, children, relatives, and in-laws.
- Subtopic 6: Discuss the stages of human growth and development in relation to family structure.

Military Family Life (Electives or Social Science)

Explores how military families are impacted by the military culture, the stresses of deployment, and the effects of transitions on body, mind, and interpersonal relationships.

Documentation Suggestions:

Military documentation

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Define the roles of those who are active duty, guard/reserve, and veteran.
- Subtopic 2: Identify the stresses of deployment.
- Subtopic 3: Describe the protective factors associated with military communities.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the effects of deployment on the military family, including separation, reunion, marriage, and parenting.
- Subtopic 5: Explain the impact of transitions caused by deployment on body, mind, and spirit.
- Subtopic 6: Demonstrate the need for resilience.

Parenting and Family Life (Electives or Social Science)

This topic explores the amount and quality of involvement of fathers and mothers in different cultural and family configurations in the areas of providing proper role models, communication, discipline, self-sufficiency, and moral values to children.

Documentation Suggestions:

Certificates of child's birth or adoption

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Define the traditional and nontraditional roles of fathers and mothers when raising children.
- Subtopic 2: Assess the amount and quality of parent-child interaction.
- Subtopic 3: Describe varying cultural and family configurations.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the importance of providing a proper role model, communication, and discipline in varying cultures and family configurations.
- Subtopic 5: Summarize cultural and personal expectations of parents, including motivation for parenthood.
- Subtopic 6: Demonstrate the effects of separation, divorce, and parental death on children.

Raising a Child with Special Needs (Electives or Social Science)

Emphasis is on parent education, family communication, and system awareness. Topic examines the child's motor, adaptive, communication, and social and emotional needs. Topic also covers the following subjects: parents as advocates, family relationships, the characteristics of a disability, and available services and support.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Legal documentation of child's diagnosis
- Letter from family members
- Agency letter on official letterhead

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Discuss the needs of a child with a disability and the characteristics of that disability.
- Subtopic 2: Explain the role of the parent as an advocate and the need for partnerships with providers.
- Subtopic 3: Examine how family dynamics and cultural environment impact the parent-child relationship.
- Subtopic 4: Describe how a parent can be an active participant in treatment.
- Subtopic 5: Explore social and educational programs that support children with disabilities.
- Subtopic 6: Identify educational services, legal support, and social networks available for families of children with disabilities.

Volunteer Development (Electives)

Demonstrate theoretical understanding and application of effective methods of volunteerism from all perspectives.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Agency letter on official letterhead
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the benefits of volunteerism to the volunteer, agency, and country.
- Subtopic 2: Discuss the types of agencies that utilize volunteers and how they are managed.
- Subtopic 3: Develop a volunteer management plan that addresses recruitment, maintenance, and appreciation techniques.
- Subtopic 4: Analyze the mentality of a common volunteer and determine motivations for initially volunteering and continuing to volunteer.
- Subtopic 5: Critique strategies developed by agencies that show appreciation, utilize volunteer's personal skill sets, and keep them engaged.
- Subtopic 6: Create a strategy to set up a new volunteer management program for an agency that could utilize volunteers.

ACC 311 Cost Management

Course Description

This course introduces the use of internally generated information for decision making, control, and motivation. Students gain an understanding of cost behavior and responsibility in accounting for proper cost management. Subjects include budgeting, cost control, and product costing.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe cost behavior and proper accounting.
- Subtopic 2: Describe cost management and the responsibility of the accountant.
- Subtopic 3: Discuss budgeting.
- Subtopic 4: Analyze and discuss budgeting.
- Subtopic 5: Analyze and discuss cost control.
- Subtopic 6: Analyze and discuss product costing.

ACC 317 Auditing

Course Description

This course investigates the role of audits in modern business and their importance to good corporate governance. Students learn the process of internal auditing and external auditing while adhering to Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) and with consideration for current convergence of GAAS with International Auditing Standards (IAS). Topics include corporate ethics, legal liability, statistical sampling techniques, and risk assessment.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the steps in the internal auditing process.
- Subtopic 2: Describe the steps in the external auditing process.
- Subtopic 3: Outline the Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS).
- Subtopic 4: Relate the auditing function to broader topics of ethics and law.
- Subtopic 5: Analyze the importance of auditing to effective corporate governance.
- Subtopic 6: Analyze the role of auditing within businesses.

BEH 311 Social Psychology

Course Description

This course surveys theories and methods in social psychology. Students determine the impact of social influences on self-concept and behavior. Subjects include interpersonal attraction, social perception, discrimination, and aggression.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Define common terminology related to social psychology.
- Subtopic 2: Identify characteristics of individual self-concept.
- Subtopic 3: Describe common behaviors that result from individual self-concept.
- Subtopic 4: Analyze how behaviors contribute to or detract from the ability to form healthy relationships.
- Subtopic 5: Identify areas for improvements in social behaviors.
- Subtopic 6: Develop strategy for promoting healthy relationships.

BEH 318 Addictions

Course Description

This course addresses issues that exist due to the ongoing problem of chemical dependency and other addictions. Students discover methods for identifying addictions and gain an understanding of interventions and treatment methods. Themes include addiction models, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR®), 12-step programs, and recovery.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe ongoing issues with chemical dependency and other addictions.
- Subtopic 2: Identify addiction and describe interventions and treatment methods.
- Subtopic 3: Describe the addiction models.
- Subtopic 4: Described how to use the Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) with chemical dependency patients.
- Subtopic 5: Describe the 12-step programs.
- Subtopic 6: Describe the recovery process.

COM 159 Basic Presentation Skills

Course Description

This course introduces the foundational skills crucial for presenting information to diverse audiences. Students learn strategies for dealing with and overcoming presentation anxiety, as well as techniques for designing, developing, and delivering successful presentations to targeted audiences. Themes include listening effectively, analyzing audiences, locating and organizing content, developing appropriate audiovisual aids, delivering the presentation, and building confidence.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Analyze the foundational skills necessary to present to a diverse audience.
- Subtopic 2: Describe presentation anxiety, how to effectively communicate with an audience, and how to overcome anxiety.
- Subtopic 3: Describe listening skills and observation.
- Subtopic 4: Identify techniques for effective speaking.
- Subtopic 5: Describe how public speaking can increase confidence levels.
- Subtopic 6: Describe how to harness the audience in a presentation.

COM 423 Group Dynamics: Teambuilding, Negotiation, and Conflict Management

Course Description

This course explores effective versus ineffective communication in groups and how leaders emerge. Students participate in role-playing activities in order to enhance problem solving skills and encourage trust within team development. Themes include the principles of interpersonal and group dynamics, experiential learning, and conflict resolution.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the difference between effective and ineffective communication in groups.
- Subtopic 2: Describe role-playing activities or other techniques used to enhance problem-solving skills within a team.
- Subtopic 3: Identify how to build trust in a team.
- Subtopic 4: Describe needed interpersonal and group dynamics.
- Subtopic 5: Describe how public speaking can increase confidence levels.
- Subtopic 6: Analyze how to handle conflict resolution with a team and diversity.

HRM 335 Human Resources Management

Course Description

This course provides a general overview of the key employment practices necessary to effectively manage human resources within an organization. Students learn the process of planning, recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating employees. Topics include federal and state regulation compliance, company policies and procedures, and contemporary trends in human resources.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)
- Strategic Management
- Workforce Planning and Employment
- HR Development
- Total Rewards (Compensation/Benefits)
- Employee and Labor Relations
- Risk Management
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Identify the components and functions of a comprehensive human resources management program.
- Subtopic 2: Identify the sequence of functions by which an organization meets human resources requirements.
- Subtopic 3: Identify the key principles of Equal Employment Opportunity law and regulations that impact the employment environment.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the management and motivational strategies and processes necessary to foster a productive work environment.
- Subtopic 5: Explain the significance of cross-cultural differences in the management of multinational business.
- Subtopic 6: Analyze the interrelation among compliance with human resources law and regulations, human resources compatibility with organizational goals, and evaluation of human resources performance.

HRM 460 Labor and Management Relations

Course Description

This course analyzes historical and modern labor relations in the United States, as well as their impact on the strategies of an organization. Students discover the importance of selecting organizational benefits that will attract and maintain a quality labor pool. Subjects include labor unions, contract negotiations, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and arbitration procedures.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)
- Strategic Management
- Workforce Planning and Employment
- HR Development
- Total Rewards (Compensation/Benefits)
- Employee and Labor Relations
- Risk Management
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the purpose, structure, and governance of labor unions.
- Subtopic 2: Discuss the union-organization process and describe various strategies and practices used in a union-organizing campaign.
- Subtopic 3: Illustrate the role of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) as it relates to unions, employees, and employers.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss concepts of good contract administration, and provide examples of impasses in negotiations and possible resolutions.
- Subtopic 5: Describe the characteristics of arbitration procedures.
- Subtopic 6: Discuss the importance of selecting the right organizational benefits to attract and maintain a quality labor pool.

MGT 337 Supervision and Leadership

Course Description

This course demonstrates the difference between being a manager and being a transformational leader. Students engage in self-analysis to identify and implement leadership strengths, as well as overcome weaknesses. Topics include effective management styles, communication strategies, motivation techniques, and labor relations.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- Six Sigma Qualtec (SSQ)
- Team Leader (TL200T)
- Team Leader Instructor (TL210T)
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Discuss the skills and roles necessary to be an effective supervisor.
- Subtopic 2: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of group decision-making.
- Subtopic 3: Describe the fundamental supervisory functions and/or skills of staff and Human Resources.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the various functions and roles for effective management to occur.
- Subtopic 5: Explain the nature of leadership and its role in effective management.
- Subtopic 6: Explain one process to develop and foster an environment conducive to individual motivation.

MGT 340 Organization Theory and Behavior

Course Description

This course introduces the principles, philosophies, and theories of management and organizational behavior as used in both public and private organizations. Students explore these ideas through realistic case studies, group exercises, and self-assessment. Themes include organization theory, individual and group dynamics, conflict resolution, and decision making.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Discuss the forces that are reshaping the nature of management and impacting organizational culture.
- Subtopic 2: List and explain the variables that influence individual behavior, performance, and motivation, including reward systems.
- Subtopic 3: Describe the complexities of organizational structure and design of jobs within that structure.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the roles of formal and informal groups in organizations with special emphasis on work teams.
- Subtopic 5: Articulate the complexities of organizational change and how to deal with conflict.
- Subtopic 6: Explain decision making as a process citing systematic approaches to decision-making.

MGT 370 Operations Management

Course Description

This course provides a thorough investigation of how an organization manages its activities, decisions, and responsibilities. Students learn quantitative methods for achieving success as an operations manager, as well as within an operating department. Topics include corporate and operational strategies, scheduling, forecasting, logistics, and customer satisfaction.

Documentation Suggestions:

Letters from employers
Certificates of completion
Advancing Productivity, Innovation, and Competitive Success: The Association for Operations Management (APICS) Identifying and Creating Demand, Designing Products and Processes, Integrated Product Management, Basics of Supply Chain Management, Master Planning of Resources, Strategic Management of Resources Institute for Supply Management (ISM)
résumé

Required Sub-Topics

Subtopic 1: Describe the role of Operations Management in the firm and how this role can lead to competitive advantage and profitability.
Subtopic 2: Discuss systems to take advantage of capital, location, and labor differences so that profits are maximized.
Subtopic 3: Outline how planning the operations system takes place and how international considerations are integrated into planning.
Subtopic 4: Describe some of the quantitative tools and techniques of Operations Management and how these are applied to formulate solutions to business problems.
Subtopic 5: Discuss business situations for which tools of Operations Management can be effectively applied.
Subtopic 6: Explain how control of operations must respond to changes in the international economy.

MGT 461 Project Management

Course Description

This course focuses on implementing strategies to successfully achieve an objective. Students discover how to efficiently manage projects in order to establish authority, assign responsibility, and allocate resources. Themes include a project's task hierarchy and life cycle, schedule requirements, budget adherence, and performance measurement.

Documentation Suggestions:

Letters from employers
Certificates of completion
Project Management Institute (PMI)
Project Management Application
résumé

Required Sub-Topics

Subtopic 1: Outline the differences between project, general, program, and portfolio management.
Subtopic 2: Characterize the qualities of an effective organization's project management culture.
Subtopic 3: Explain the characteristics of a project.
Subtopic 4: Explain techniques for monitoring and controlling projects.
Subtopic 5: Discuss approaches for project evaluation and termination.
Subtopic 6: Explain how control of operations must respond to changes in the international economy.

MGT 463 Management of Small Business

Course Description

This course enables students to explore topics and issues unique to the small business environment. Activities focus on the business planning process with students completing a formal business plan. Some of the topics include ownership forms, management styles, cash flow/working capital, financing, product/service selection, marketing, accounting/inventory control, technology, and managerial policies and procedures.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Discuss the nature of small business entrepreneurship.
- Subtopic 2: Compare and contrast entrepreneurial opportunities or business models.
- Subtopic 3: Explain the necessity for attention to cash flow and methods of cash management.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss and evaluate sources of financing.
- Subtopic 5: Determine the management requirements for establishing a small business.
- Subtopic 6: Evaluate the increased emphasis on international business opportunities for small business.

MKT 308 Marketing Management

Course Description

This course illustrates the importance of marketing in modern global business and introduces critical strategies for success. Students learn to manage internal resources while fostering external relationships with vendors, partners, and customers. Topics include marketing plan components, product introduction and promotion, market segmentation, pricing, and distribution channels.

Documentation Suggestions:

- Letters from employers
- Certificates of completion
- résumé

Required Sub-Topics

- Subtopic 1: Describe the basic components of a marketing plan and explain the importance of consumer, competitor, and product research when formulating a marketing plan.
- Subtopic 2: Explore the cultural, social, and psychological factors that influence consumer decision making.
- Subtopic 3: Analyze the impact of environmental forces on the development of a strategic marketing plan.
- Subtopic 4: Discuss the concepts of branding, positioning, and perceived value and their importance in the design of effective marketing strategies.
- Subtopic 5: Identify the relationship between marketing and the other functional business areas.
- Subtopic 6: Explain how all elements of the marketing mix are used to implement marketing strategy.