Liberal Arts Education

Manchester College is a small, self-contained liberal arts institution located in the beautiful Victorian village of North Manchester, Indiana. The college has nearly 1150 students, and a myriad of majors offered to students from all over the world.

Manchester College offers diversity in its student population, as it contains students from nearly every continent, except for Antarctica. The nice thing about being a student at Manchester is that you get so many opportunities to interact and work with students of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. This allows a student to learn first-hand about different cultures as well as religions.

Manchester College is an extremely open-minded institution, which prides itself as a pluralistic religious institution. The once bible-based institution is now a very open and liberal, all-embracing institution that supports all religions and belief systems. The campus is very open to differing lifestyles and sexual preferences. The college also seeks to be a balanced place of learning and challenged growth in the areas of social issues and political leanings. The students have the opportunity to learn about both the liberal and conservative side of politics, although the leaning seems to be more liberal than conservative.

The education curriculum for Manchester students is one that encompasses many different areas of learning. A typical liberal arts student will study courses in the humanities, such as religion and philosophy; sciences, such as biology, chemistry, physics or environmental studies; social sciences, which include history, sociology, psychology, political science and economics; mathematics; general arts and world
Students will also be required to either take foreign language courses, or cultural connections courses, which are basically courses designed for studying another culture in some area such as history, society, arts, etc. Students must take a first year colloquium designed to study a particular area of interest as well as to learn and practice basic college study and writing skills. Students are required to take courses in written and oral communication, as well as critical connections courses which connect their education to practical modern life in today’s world.

Manchester students are required to attend convocation each Monday which consists of speakers who address a myriad of topics. The convocation program revolves around political debates, music technology, social and peace issues, as well as a multitude of other dynamic topics that often apply to life and education. The convocations are given in order to broaden student perspectives and often can give insight into an area of learning that might catch student interest in ways that typical classes may not allow. Every other year, “discussion day” is offered where students can attend workshops that address political and social issues around the world. These workshops are offered to open the students’ minds to new ideas.

The amazing thing about a Manchester College liberal arts education is that you learn so much in the classroom and outside of it. Not only have I learned a lot in the classrooms, but I’ve received so much from personal friendships with students of very different backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures than myself.

Manchester has offered a very challenging environment to stretch my mind and my ideas about what I believe and why, as well as how I conduct myself in regards to others. I’ve learned the difference between tolerance and compromise, as well as how to
I respectfully stand up for my beliefs in an environment that seems to often be in opposition to them.

By having a liberal arts education I will be able to work with students of various backgrounds and home lives in a respectful and understanding way. I will be able to incorporate many different subject areas into my teaching as well. Although I will be teaching U.S. history and government, I will be able to incorporate art, music, science, math, English, and many other fields of study into my curriculum. The goal is to teach students in a variety of methods because they have many different learning styles; but there is also the goal of teaching them history by incorporating other subject areas too. This way the students are learning as a whole and can be better prepared for life in the world around them. This will enable them to think more critically and interact more wholly with the society in which they are a part.

Overall, I believe that I have received a well-rounded education that encompassed many different cultures, religions, people, places, situations, styles of learning, and subject areas. As I leave Manchester, I reflect on my time here and realize that it has helped me to become more open-minded and well-rounded individual as I’ve learned snippets about several different subject areas, beliefs and cultures will influence my life as a person and a teacher.