Marlee Carroll

FILA 450 Portfolio

Bridgewater College

FILA-450-02 Per Dev Portfolio

Dr. Jost

January 25, 2021

1. **Introduction**

I am grateful for the opportunity that Bridgewater College has given me to become a well-rounded individual through their liberal arts education and by being a part of the BC community. I have spent the past four years as a student-athlete and member of the Flory honors program as I worked to complete my degree as a Business Administration major with minors in leadership and philosophy. This past year I was chosen to be a Soar Mentor, which allowed me to work with other student leaders and help first-year students adjust to life in college.

1. **Integration, Experiential Learning, and Personalized Educational Program**

The best part of the liberal arts education I received at Bridgewater is that it opened so many paths for me that I could not have foreseen when I chose to attend this institution. When I started here as a first-year student, my sole intention was to get my business degree and continue on in my life. I was excited that I would be able to play softball at the same time. But each semester I found myself in classes that inspired me to adjust and adapt my education plan as to customize it to my needs and interests. For example, my advisor suggested I enroll in the intro to leadership class my first year when I could not find any other classes to fit my schedule. And for that I am so thankful because I went on to pursue a minor in the new leadership program. And for this minor I decided to take classes I would not have chosen before that changed my way of thinking and helped me develop into the critical thinker and leader I am today. For one thing, I became inspired by the class I took to meet the ethics and leadership requirement of the leadership minor to take on a philosophy minor as well. Which has allowed me to learn about so many interesting topics that I think about every day and apply to my real-life decisions. Another factor that influenced me to take classes out of the scope of my business major was my involvement as a Flory honors fellow. As a fellow, we are required to take 7 courses marked as honors and they are not many that are business classes. So, I was forced to expand my horizons and take part in classes that were interesting to me. But I would not have chosen them before because I could not have foreseen the value they would add to my education before completing them. The honors program gave me to opportunity to take courses outside my major and learn about various topics. Of course, it was also very valuable for me to take part in my business and general education classes as they helped me develop skills that I will use in my career.

One class within the realm of my business major that aided me in developing intellectually was my course in the Principles of marketing. In this course we learned about the basics of marketing and how to apply them in the world. Most interesting to me was when we discussed the trends in marketing and how when they are understood by a company can be used to help them gain a competitive advantage over their competitors. One project we did as a part of the class was when we were able to pick a topic related to marketing from a long list. We then did research on the topic and used the information to write a comprehensive essay and create an interactive presentation for the class. ([Supporting Item #1: Topic Paper](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/assignment-1/)). The summer before I was enrolled in this class, I had the opportunity to be an intern at a social media marketing company. So, when we were able to choose our topics this stood out to me. I was able to use a lot of the hands-on skill and knowledge from my internship, combined with the research I did for the project, to develop a well-written paper. Social media is becoming more popular as technology continues to develop in our world today. And understanding how to market using social media allows companies to stay relevant and build better relations with their customers. This will help them to continue to profit and create a better image for their brand.

I took my nonprofit class to meet the requirement as one of three breadth classes necessary for my leadership minor. I found the class to be a nice intersection between my major and two minors. It firstly related well to concepts I had learned in my business classes because in many ways’ nonprofits run similarly. Though they are not working to make a profit for themselves, they must know how to use marketing, finance, management, and economics in their favor in order to raise money for their cause. And in many cases, nonprofits and for-profit organizations partner up so that they can both gain something from working together. For a couple of class sessions, we had leaders from nonprofit organizations in the Bridgewater area come and speak with us. They explained what their daily schedule entailed and how they got into working with nonprofits as well. Learning firsthand how these people worked inspired me to consider this as a possible future career. I have never really known what I wanted to do with my business degree exactly. But, after taking this course I was able to see that I could apply the business concepts I learned over the past four years and be able to help people through my work. I have always wanted a career that felt fulfilling, like the work I do everyday matters and makes a difference and nonprofit work could help me achieve this. In terms of relating to my leadership minor, it relates because we spent a lot of time studying how leadership in nonprofit organizations works. In one assignment, we were asked to interview someone we knew who worked as a leader in a nonprofit that we were passionate about. I chose to interview the Senior Director of Partnerships and Special Events at Special Olympics Maryland, Sharon Perfetti because I had previously worked with her when my family did some fundraising for a nonprofit she used to work in when I was a kid. ([Supporting Item #2: Leader Interview](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/data-analysis/)). Through the interview, I learned that she had been working in nonprofits for the past 15 years and I was able to get a lot of insight into what it might be like for me if I have the opportunity to work in one. I asked questions regarding what a normal day in her work is like and what her leadership style is and how it helps her in her job. Lastly, it relates to my philosophy minor because ethics is a branch of philosophy. In a couple of my philosophy classes, we have learned that ethics investigates the nature of morality and the best sort of life to live. And the purpose of nonprofits is to raise money to help others. And I think this is the best way to live, to help others in need and do the right thing when you can. This is the biggest way that businesses and nonprofits differ, business try to convince their consumers to pay them in exchange for some product or service. Meanwhile, nonprofits try to convince people to donate or volunteer for their organization for nothing in return, besides the good they feel when helping others. They need to trust that the nonprofit will do good things with their money. By understanding ethics and morality, a leader in a nonprofit can better understand why people make the decision to contribute to their organization and take action to convince more people to help out as well.

As a soar mentor, I was able use people skills to relate to first-year students and help them adjust to the college experience. But I was surprised to find that I was able to develop many other leadership skills, as well as skills that will lend well towards my future career in business. For example, I learned how to work with the other soar mentors and develop plans on how to best accomplish tasks. It was helpful to be able to lean on them for support when I had questions and I was able to help the other student leaders whenever necessary. Another example is how I had to use planning and time management skills to arrange meetings with each of my mentees at the beginning of each month. The purpose of these meetings was to check in with them and see if they needed extra attention or to be set up with the correct resources on campus. But I enjoyed talking with them and getting to know them with each meeting. Many of them also stated that the meetings helped them feel more at ease since they had someone, they could trust to ask questions but to also vent to. Another function of the meeting was to allow the students to reflect on their experiences as well as see what changes they could make to have a better chance of succeeding in the future. For example, the first meeting was about reflecting on moving to school and starting classes and looked forward into how they would manage their time and study for classes. But the third meeting was about reflecting on the semester and looked forward to how they would handle finals and the next semester based on what they learned about themselves this past semester.

1. **Engaging Diverse Perspectives**

As previously mentioned, I took a number of classes as to fulfill my Flory honors program requirements. One of which being Sociological Imagination. I learned a lot about people and how society works. This will be useful to me in my future as a businesswoman but also a productive citizen of our country and world. In this class we developed our “sociological imagination”, which C. Wright Mills describes as a tool that aids sociologists in their work of studying human behaviors. Though I am not a sociologist, developing this tool was helpful for me to gain a better understanding of other people’s perspectives. It challenged the way that I think of not only other people within society, but myself. One specific topic that achieved this for me was the concept of the invisible box. The invisible box was introduced by Allan G. Johnson and he uses it to describe ethnocentrism. Basically, the phenomenon is that we all live in a box created by our culture, daily experiences, and how we grew up. We cannot see the box but, it filters the way we see information that we receive from others. By expanding on concepts and theories of sociology I was able to recognize my invisible box and take conscious steps to understand my own culture and other cultures better. When we learned this in class it reminded me of my experience in my FILA 150 course. In this course, we would analyze newspaper articles about relevant topics and discuss them as a class, as well as write reflections and papers on them. As a first-year student, at first, I did not recognize the bias and assumptions that I carried around with me, or in other words my invisible box. But, in this class when we would share our views and opinions on the different news articles, I was surprised find that so many of these people who I considered peers who felt the same way I did, had other ways of viewing things. I quickly came to realize that because they had been raised in different environments and grew up in cultures much different than my own, their perspective was different. I remember being so excited to learn about why people think differently than I do and how we could still come together as parts of the class and in a larger sense as parts of the Bridgewater community to have civil and productive conversations about issues that face the world.

One specific way that I came to understand new perspectives was our stratification project in my sociological imagination course ([Supporting Item #3: Stratification Paper and appendices](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/assignment-3/)). In which we took part in a simulated experience, where we were assigned a class level and asked to work through a budget for a member of that class. We were given an annual income and asked to buy a new house and allocate the rest of our money toward things such as transportation, taxes, savings, insurance, and groceries. I had to place myself in the shoes of a mother in the upper middle class with a family of 4 and make decisions that made the most sense for her and her family to live a comfortable life. This was a little easier for me because I was assigned a higher-class level and had more money to work with than my classmates who were assigned the lower-class levels. A large part of the project was comparing the experiences we had while creating the budgets to those of our classmates. I was able to work with someone at the highest level and someone at the lowest level. This helped me gain a better understanding of what people in each class level go through on a daily basis and how their experience with budgeting could affect the way they act and the decisions they make. I gained more respect for other people who have different than me and the struggles they go through.

Another course in which diverse perspectives were exposed to me was my honors contemporary philosophy course. In this course I was challenged to think differently because we read books on philosophical topics such as phenomenology, feminism, and race. Each class we spent time discussing the chapter we had just read and relating it to our own experiences as well as things other experience in society. Since the class was small, we all had the opportunity to feel heard and it was one of the best classroom experiences I have had at Bridgewater. It was enlightening to be able to hear what my fellow classmates had to say and take the time to consider their perspectives on issues in society. For the final paper in the class, we were given the choice to expand upon any ideas we may have formulated throughout the semester by adding research to them and citing the specific books we read. I chose to combine the concepts of phenomenology from Zahavi’s “Phenomenology: the basics” with Yancy’s writing about race in his book “Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America” ([Supporting Item #4: Phenomenology in “Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America”](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/our-thoughts/)). In the essay, I spent time reflecting on how the two writings related to each other but also related them to experiences from my life. I wrote about how the time I spent in college has lined up with many events in society that are surrounding racial equality. I started college following the events of Charlottesville and Colin Kaepernick kneeling to protest police brutality my freshmen year. The beginning of my senior year followed this past summer where the deaths of many black Americans lead to BLM protests and a larger discussion about race in society. Taking this class and writing this paper helped me to realize how classes I have taken here gave me the opportunity to better understand my white privilege and inspired me to do my own research to be more educated about the topic. One topic that stands out to me from this essay is the idea of historicity. Historicity is the phenomenological idea that we are born into a world that is already filled with meaning, and this historical context affects us directly as we move and act within the world. This relates to ideas that Yancy presents about race because he agrees that we cannot escape the context we live in, even though we had no say in creating it, but we need to work every day to understand and change our ways to be better.

1. **Public Discourse: Citizenship and Community Responsibility**

During my time at Bridgewater College, I have become more in tone with how I fit into the community in an academic sense and also in the community at a larger sense. Academically, as I previously mentioned, I was able to help first-year students adjust and succeed in their studies as well as become a part of the BC community in a social sense. When we met and planned how they could study better and when I helped them create their schedules for the spring semester. And I lead them through welcome week where they were able to get to know each other and the Bridgewater campus better through a variety of activities. And in my oral communications class we were assigned to write persuasive speeches that brings attention to an issue that we saw within our community. I chose to write my speech about how Bridgewater is a suitcase-campus and what could be done to make students want to spend time here on the weekends ([Supporting Item #5: Persuasive Speech (outline and video)](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/assignment-4/)). I asked the questions “We can all recognize this as a problem, but what is being done about it? Is anyone listening to the students of BC and attempting to make things better for us? Giving us a reason to stay?” Throughput the rest of the speech, I touched upon the benefits of college students staying on campus, such as gaining a sense of independence and making connections with other students. As a solution I proposed that we work with local business and leaders on campus to create a more welcoming atmosphere in which there is more stuff to do and therefore, students have greater reason to stay. This helped me to understand how certain issues affect the Bridgewater community and I was able to do research and see how it compares to those of other college campuses.

In terms of the larger community that I live in, I am reminded of the field trip I took in my Sustainable Business course during May term of my freshmen year. We participated as a class alongside some other volunteers in a poverty simulation at United Way as a part of the Day of Caring 2018. We were each assigned into a certain family with a different situation. Within the families we were each given a fake name as a part of our role. My assignment was the older brother in a family of five where the father had just been laid and stopped receiving unemployment compensation as well. The mother was employed as a receptionist making $9 an hour and working 40 hours a week. My role was simple since I only had to go to school but watching the people assigned as parents who had to make decisions regarding bills and obligations made me realize how much stress went into working and taking care of a family. This also made me realize that beyond the simulation, real people struggle to do things like pay bills and feed their families every day while living in poverty. Through the simulation I was able to learn, first-hand, about issues that face those less fortunate than me. I had some awareness of the struggles facing people in such circumstances, but this experience really opened my eyes toward what it is really like. It inspired me to be a more active and influential part of the community by helping those in need through donation or possible future work in a nonprofit organization.

1. **Global Citizenship and Intercultural Competencies**

In almost every business course I have taken at Bridgewater we spend at least a chapter or two on how the specific topic of the class applies to global business trends. By understanding how to address global business trends, I will be better equipped in the future to work with people from other places around the world. The most specific instance of this was in my Principle of Organization Management class where we were assigned a group assignment in which we would take a closer look into the business etiquette of another country ([Supporting Item #6: International Business Etiquette Paper](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/assignment-5/)). Through the development of my group’s project, as well as observing the presentations of my fellow classmates in their groups I was able to better understand the customs and trends of business in other multiple other countries. As a global citizen in the business world, it is vital for me to understand how to best go about business deals with people from around the world, as to not offend others who have different practices that I am not used to. But to also be able to build a larger network through an improved ability to relate to other people. My group decided to do our project on Cambodia. We researched general information about Cambodia and the different aspects of business etiquette such as business appearance, behavior, and communication. Most interestingly, we found that the “Sampeah” is used as a common greeting and it involves placing one’s hands together in a prayer-like position and bowing. Although the handshake is becoming more popular as Cambodian businesspeople adapt to western culture, the Sampeah is still the traditional greeting. So, when doing business there, it is best to respond to the greeting you are given. Learning about this fact and other important aspects of their culture allowed me to gain cultural knowledge of other countries and be able to show work with them by respecting their traditions.

1. **Ethical Reasoning**

Philosophical ethics was the first philosophy class I took at Bridgewater. I decided to take it as the ethics class that was a part of my leadership minor and to count towards my ethical reasonings credit for my general education requirements. But, in this class I became excited to learn more about the different philosophical branches and theories. So, I decided to take more classes in the philosophy minor. In this class we learned about the ethical theories of famous philosophers Aristotle, Emmanuel Kant, John Stuart Mills, and Baruch Spinoza. We studied the ways in which they outlined to live the best life, from a moral standpoint. In one assignment, we were asked to identify an issue we saw in society or our community and apply ethical reasoning to them based on what we had learned throughout the semester. I decided to apply Kant’s categorical imperative to the issue of standardized testing. ([Supporting Item #7: The Standardization of Education](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/supporting-item-6/)). Kant’s categorical imperative has three formulas that we learned in class. In this essay I focused on Kant’s formula of the end in itself. Which states that one should always act in such a way that they treat others never merely as a means but always at the same time as an end in themselves. In the paper, I argued that the way that the standardized tests are used in the curriculum of American education today uses students as merely a means to decide things such as which teachers will be paid and how much. When teachers are forced to teach to a test so that more students will pass and the school will look better, and therefore receive more funding from the government, students suffer because they cannot receive the level of education they are entitled to.

This course, as a whole, related closely to what I learned in my professional ethics class. Here we went over similar ethical and moral theories and then focused on applying them in a professional sense. Which will be very useful for me in my future career in business. We used many examples from different professional fields, but I enjoyed when we used corporate and business examples the most since they were most relatable to me. Again, I could apply concepts such as Kant’s categorical imperative but to issue that I may face in the business world. We took time in class to go over and read about different ethical theories and concepts and then we applied them to cases from professional fields. It was nice to see how the things I learned in my ethics courses directly related to decisions I could be making in my future career in business.

In my philosophical questions course, we spent a section of the semester on each branch of philosophy. I recall being excited when we began the lectures on ethics because I knew about them from my previous philosophy courses. For each branch, we were assigned a couple readings and we would discuss them at length and then have a test, followed by a reflection on each topic. For the ethics section, I wrote about how after learning about the teachings of Aristotle my sophomore year, I apply them to my life when I feel lost or confused ([Supporting Item #8: How Virtue Ethics Affect My Life](https://wp.bridgewater.edu/mcarroll/supporting-item-8/)). In older teachings of ethics, minds like Aristotle focused on what aspects made up a good life, while more modern takes on ethics seem to focus on right or wrong actions. I have always been one to focus on the bigger picture so Aristotle’s ideas of what made a right or wrong life spoke to me the most. His concept of Eudaimonia, which is defined as activity of the soul exhibiting virtue in a complete life helps me to put things into perspective and decide what to do when I am faced with tough decisions or feel overwhelmed with what I am meant to be accomplishing. I now know what things go into leading an ethical life and the things I learned in these courses influence my everyday life and actions.

1. **Conclusion**

In my intro to leadership class, I recall that we spent some time studying the past presidents of Bridgewater College. One quote that always stood out to me was of the eighth president of our college, George Cornelius, who in his inauguration speech states "...the college's attention to developing the 'whole person'- that is, the mind, body, heart, and soul; to exploring what it means to be human and to live a thoughtful and purposeful life...". And within this sphere of “developing” a well-rounded individual is all the different ways in which Bridgewater’s liberal arts education allows us to grow by taking the wide variety of courses they offer. This is something that made my experience at Bridgewater so monumental in my development into the critical thinker, hard worker, and person that I am today. In conclusion, my time was well spent at Bridgewater because I am now more prepared to go into the workforce and to be a valuable member of society.