

LAS 141: Diversity in Community
9:30-10:45am TR, Science Building 44
Winter 2016

Professor: Jennifer Kling, PhD

Office Hours: MW 1-3pm, TuTh 11am-1pm; available by appointment (Sacred Heart Hall 312E)

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Course Description:

What do we owe to our family members, our friends, our fellow citizens, our fellow humans, and the world? Should we value our communities, or is it every person for themselves, may the best win? This course is an investigation into how we should think about and act in relation to the communities of which we are a part. We will begin by considering both what makes something a community and what makes someone a member of a community, and then will discuss the local, national, and international communities in which we find ourselves, and to which we are inextricably tied. Along the way, we will explore and evaluate a number of related concepts, including diversity, justice, oppression, patriotism, cosmopolitanism, and activism.

Throughout the class, we will be reading both historical and contemporary texts. However, our efforts will not be merely an academic exercise where we will only study what others have thought. Instead, in this course you will be joining in an active and ongoing effort to better understand a world shot through with individual and community conflict, and how we should act in response to it.

In this course, you will have to struggle with big concepts that you may not have engaged before, and you will have to work hard to succeed. Along the way you will come to better understand what social and political theorists do, how they do it, and why. That will entail using and refining your abilities to effectively think, argue, read, and write. In other words, in this course you are going to learn how to *do* social and political theory, which is both difficult and rewarding.

Course Requirements:

Participation (10%): You will need to both do the readings and come to class in order to be successful in this course. If you don't do the readings, you'll be lost in class; if you don't come to class, you'll be lost in the readings and the assignments. While **excessive** participation is not required, some willingness to engage with both me and your fellow classmates is necessary—without this willingness on your part, we won't be able to have the sort of productive class discussions that will enable you to successfully engage in the course. So, while a lack of participation won't harm your grade very much, participation can significantly *help* your grade.

I appreciate that speaking to a classroom full of your peers can be difficult; so, there are a number of other ways to participate in class. You may speak in class, you may engage in small group work, you may visit my office hours, you may send me emails with questions, comments, and concerns, you may start online discussion threads, you may post relevant outside documents/videos/blogs, etc. to the course eCollege site, you may tweet and/or blog and/or journal about issues raised in class, etc. If you're unsure of whether some action counts as participation, please see me, and we'll discuss it.

Personal Reflection/Response Paper (10%): You must write **one** 2 page paper reflecting on your place in the Siena Heights community. You may wish to bear in mind the Mission and Vision Statements of the Adrian Dominican Sisters, but you should not be limited by those documents. Some questions to get you started: What makes Siena Heights a community? Is it your community? One of your communities? Do

you belong primarily or in part to another community? In what ways do you fit in at Siena Heights? In what ways don't you fit in at Siena Heights? Is this community changing you? Are you striving to change this community?

Papers are due by the start of the class period on the due date. For every 24-hour period that a paper is late, I will take 5 points off. That said, I am aware that life happens; if you feel you need an extension, please ask me as soon as possible. The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension.

Campus Event Paper (10%): During the semester, you must attend one event held on or off campus that is substantially related to the course. After attending, you must submit a 2 page paper describing the event and explaining how it relates to the course. I will provide opportunities and announcements of some possible events; however, it is ultimately your responsibility to find, attend, and submit a paper about a relevant event. I would encourage you to do this early in the semester, as it may help you with your community outreach project. However, I will accept your campus event paper anytime before finals week.

Community Outreach Project (30%): Throughout the second half of the semester, you are expected to participate in a community outreach project. This may be volunteering with an organization, researching a community-oriented issue and then doing something in response, or engaging with your community in some other way. You may volunteer with an organization at Siena Heights University, in Adrian, or in your larger community. For this project, you will need to submit a 2 page proposal detailing your plan for participation after Winter Break, and you will need to present and discuss your experience in a final project at the end of the semester. ***Collaboration is encouraged, but not required.***

Please note, each student must turn in a separate proposal. If you work with a group, the final project must reflect each member of the group, and should not be completed by just one member. Proposals are due by the start of the class period on the due date. For every 24-hour period that the proposal is late, I will take 5 points off. That said, I am aware that life happens; if you feel you need an extension, please ask me as soon as possible. The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension. Failure to turn in either the proposal or the final project will result in failing the course.

Academic Papers (15% each): There are two required academic papers for this course. Each paper should be 2 pages long, and should *critically engage* with some issue brought up in the course readings and class discussions. I will provide a list of topics one week in advance of each paper's due date. If you wish to write on a topic not on the list, please come see me to discuss your proposed topic. If you wish to submit a paper in some other form, please see me, and we'll discuss it.

Papers are due by the start of the class period on the due date. For every 24-hour period that a paper is late, I will take 5 points off. That said, I am aware that life happens; if you feel you need an extension, please ask me as soon as possible. The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension. Failure to turn in any one of the academic papers will result in failing the course.

Final (10%): There is a required final exam for this course. The exam will consist of a series of short answers as well as one longer essay. Failure to take the final exam will result in failing the course.

Grading Scale:

A: An 'A' denotes exceptional skill and ability. An 'A' student demonstrates an excellent grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material enough to explain it succinctly and well), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with both the broad issues and finer points under discussion.

B: A 'B' denotes solid-to-impressive skill and ability. A 'B' student demonstrates a good grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the material well enough to explain it with few mistakes), and also

displays the ability to engage philosophically with most, if not all, of the issues and points under discussion.

C: A ‘C’ denotes adequate skill and ability. A ‘C’ student demonstrates a fair grasp of the material (i.e., the student understands the big picture, but makes some serious errors in presentation), and also displays the ability to engage philosophically with at least some of the issues under discussion.

D: A ‘D’ denotes inadequate skill and ability. A ‘D’ student has serious problems with grasping the material, and fails to engage philosophically with any of the issues under discussion.

E: An ‘E’ denotes catastrophic problems in fulfilling the requirements of the course. An ‘E’ student neither grasps the material nor engages with it critically at any level.

While hard work is correlated with success, it is not sufficient for success. To get a good grade in this course, you need to not only understand and engage with the material, but also communicate your understanding and engagement to me via your participation, outreach project, papers, and exam. If you sense that you are heading towards a grade you do not want, please come see me as soon as possible (if you wait until the end of the semester, it will be too late).

Assignments:

All assignments (or links thereto) can be found on this course's eCollege site.

Date	Topic	Assignment
1/12	Introduction to the Course	
1/14	Introduction to the LAS Core	Robert Harris, “On the Purpose of a Liberal Arts Education”
1/19		Adrian Dominican Sisters, “Mission Statement” and Vision Statements”
1/21		Gabrielle Davis, “Contemplating Justice”
1/26	What is Community?	Hale, “The Man Without a Country”
1/28		Michael Walzer, “Membership”
2/2 Personal Reflection Paper Due		Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> (selections)
2/4		
2/9		Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Inequality</i> (selections)
2/11		
2/16		Chimimanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story,” TED Talk
2/18		“Defining the Value of Diversity” Youtube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSTqU91RsQQ
2/23 Academic Paper #1 Due	What is it to be a member of the American community?	The Declaration of Independence
2/25		Thomas Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> (selections)
3/1		W.E.B. DuBois, “The Souls of Black Folk”

3/3		
3/8 Winter Break – No Class	No Class	
3/10 Winter Break – No Class	No Class	
3/15 Proposal Due		Howard Zinn, “Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress”
3/17		Antonio de Montesinos, “Sermon on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”
3/22		Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854
3/24		Amanda Cagle, “On the Banks of the Bogue Chitto”
3/29		Harry Brighthouse, “Should Schools Teach Patriotism?”
3/31		
4/5 Academic Paper #2 Due		Martha Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism”
4/7		
4/12	What is it to be a member of the global community?	Thomas Pogge, <i>World Poverty and Human Rights</i> (selections)
4/14		
4/19		Simon Caney, “Cosmopolitan Justice, Responsibility, and Global Climate Change”
4/21 Final Project Due		
4/26		E.O. Carson, “Biophilia”
4/28		Leif Wenar, “What We Owe to Distant Others”
Finals Week 5/2-5/6	Final Exam	<i>In-Class Final Exam</i>

Code of Student Conduct:

All students at Siena Heights University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. For more information, please see the [Code of Student Conduct](#). Please obey the spirit as well as the law of SHU's Code of Student Conduct. If you think that something is in violation of the Code, it probably is, so check before doing it. Please remember that unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism, and that **you must cite all of your sources** for papers!

Please note: every assignment turned in for this class must be your own original work, produced specifically *for this class*. You may not turn in an assignment written for a previous and/or different class. To do so would constitute (self) plagiarism, and will be treated as such.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center at Siena Heights University is a free resource available to all CAS students. Students are

encouraged to visit the writing center for writing feedback at any stage in the writing process. For information regarding their tutors, hours, location, or to utilize their online links and resources, please visit writingcenter.sienaheights.edu. **PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning Fall 2015, the Writing Center will be located on the main floor of the library. For more information, please contact Karin Barbee at kbarbee@sienaheights.edu.

Diversity and Disability Statement:

Our institution values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students with disabilities are also welcome to contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (517) 264-7683 or Laura Lyall (coordinator) at llyall@sienaheights.edu to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations. This process is initiated and driven by the student. It is to your advantage to begin the process in a timely manner, since accommodations are not retroactive. Grades earned before verification of a disability by the ODR will not be changed.

Academic Engagement Policy:

In response to federal regulations governing financial aid, faculty will report students who are absent from class for one week without explanation. These students will be contacted to determine their current status. Students who are disengaged from a class for two weeks will be administratively withdrawn from that class and given a withdrawal grade equivalent to an E in grade point calculations. In order to avoid an administrative withdrawal, students can initiate a withdrawal themselves before the deadline (March 21) and avoid negative consequences to their grade points.

Syllabus Changes:

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as appropriate. The odds that I'll do so during the semester are small, but if I do, I will inform you as soon as possible.