

Department: ENGL

Course No: INTD 241

Title: Introduction to Diversity Studies in American Culture

Credits: 3

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Content Area: CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

Catalog Copy: INTD 2XX, Introduction to Diversity Studies in American Culture. Any semester. 4 credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 110 or 111 or 250. Open to Sophomores or higher.

An interdisciplinary introduction to comparative multicultural studies in the United States . Topics may include: African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and Native American cultures; gender, feminism, religious, and sexual identities; and disability studies. The course includes a service learning component through the campus's multicultural centers and institutes.

Course Information:

This course is an introduction to the field of diversity studies. In order to consider the various topics gathered under the umbrella of “diversity,” we will take a cultural studies approach by examining literary, historical, artistic, and political texts that reflect and help shape cultures' identities. Although the course will introduce students to issues of identity configuration in communities defined by ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, and disability, the class will enable students to consider cultures comparatively, studying the commonalities and differences in the issues that define diverse cultures. Our objectives will include gaining knowledge about the dynamics of single and multiple cultural identities, the causes and effects of racism and ethnic stereotyping, the intersection of class, gender and ethnic identities, and the role of literature and politics to cultural nationalism. The course will include a service learning component which requires students to participate in the activities of the multicultural centers and institutes on campus.

Course Requirements: Daily readings assignments. One-page formal response papers to each week's readings. At least three hours per week of participation in the work of the University of Connecticut 's OMIA centers and institutes (service learning component, approved by the OMIA office). One five to seven page paper, based in part on experience at UConn's OMIA centers and institutes. Quizzes, in-class writing, class participation. Weekly WebCT informal postings to discussion prompts from instructor. Final Exam. Research-based term paper of approximately ten pages.

Major Themes and Issues: The course considers such topics as: 1) the factors that influence the self-definition of diverse cultures within the United States, focusing particularly on historical, sociological, literary, political, and aesthetic influences; 2) the variety of perspectives on self-

definition within diverse cultures; 3) the interaction of diverse cultures with each other; 4) the social and political commonalities between various diverse cultures; 5) the divergences and conflicts emerging from intersections between diverse cultures.

How Meets Goals of Gen Ed.:

1. Become articulate: Introduction to Diversity Studies in American Culture will enable students to refine their oral and written communication skills by requiring them to articulate their ideas to each other in class, and to the instructor through a range of informal and formal writing assignments.

2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility; This interdisciplinary course will require students to consider particular topics across the fields of literature, history, the arts, sociology, and politics. Students will examine cultures comparatively, and as a result will expand their intellectual breadth and versatility.

4. Acquire moral sensitivity; Since Introduction to Diversity Studies in American Culture allows students to consider the range of factors that influence cultural definition and cross-cultural dynamics, the class will engage substantively in issues of morality. By discussing historical and contemporary biases against diverse communities, students will think about the concrete effects of particular systems of thought. Such consideration will expand their sensitivity to moral issues.

5. Acquire awareness of their era and society; Students will acquire a basic understanding of the historical and social pressures that help shape contemporary configurations of diverse cultural identities. They will become better aware of the commonalities and intersections between diverse groups and populations. Such cross-cultural study will offer students a complex understanding of the dynamics of contemporary multiculturalism.

6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience. Introduction to Diversity Studies in American Culture will make its central topic the study of diverse American cultures and experiences. Students will examine the factors that influence the self-definition of particular cultures and communities (such as ethnic cultures and communities that share interests in gender and sexual identities, and disability), and will consider the permeability of boundaries between diverse cultures.

CA 4 Criteria: 1. Emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity; INTD 2XX will introduce students to the history, politics, and artistic expressions of a variety of cultural groups. The course will familiarize students with the particular interests, histories, and ideals of specific groups, such as Asian American culture, African American culture, Native American Culture; Latino/a culture, feminist groups, gay and lesbian movements, and communities defined by disability. It is necessary to introduce students to the particular features of specific communities so that they will be able, ultimately, to explore the cultures' commonalities and divergences.

3. Consider the similarities that may exist among diverse groups; A fundamental element of Introduction to Diversity Studies will be examining points of intersection between diverse

communities in the United States . By exploring topics such as Black Feminism, shared Latino/a and African American economic movements, and the intersection between disability advocacy and the AIDS crisis, students will be able to appreciate the shared historical, political, and aesthetic interests of diverse groups in the United States.

4. Develop an understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights and migration; INTD 2XX will allow students to become aware of the real effects of human rights issues through study of the histories of groups that have typically experienced intense prejudices. Additionally, the course will spend time addressing the particular pressures influencing the composition and concerns of migrant communities, such as Chinese Americans at the turn of the twentieth-century, Japanese Americans during World War II, and Mexican Americans in the late twentieth century.

Role of Grad Students: Only the most senior doctoral students in the humanities would be permitted to lead the course, and then only under close supervision of their advisors. This course will not require teaching assistants.

Supplementary Information: This course is the required course for the newly approved minor in Diversity Studies. The minor proposal and the INTD 2XX proposal passed through CLAS Curriculum and Courses Committee together on 14 March 2006 . The INTD department approved the course on 2 November 2005 .

Vice Provost Ronald Taylor and his faculty and staff at OMIA support development of the course and of the minor. Dean MacKinnon of CLAS has formally endorsed the course and minor.