Contemporary Social Issues

DeSilva

*Course Description*

This is an interdisciplinary semester course that will examine the changing demographics and values of American society. Students will grapple with questions of identity and membership in the United States.

* What shaped individual identity formation?
* What institutional and individual factors contribute to the construction of American identity?
* What rights are given to citizens?
* Is equity and justice granted to all living in America?
* What factors affect socialization and social mobility in America?
* What rights and privileges are given to members of American society?

These questions will be explored through an interdisciplinary approach which will incorporate perspectives of history, literature, science, sociology, anthropology, art, and politics. Areas of study will include the topics of gender, race, immigration, sexual orientation, and physical abilities. Students will consider how these characteristics shape the identities of individuals as well as influence the community dynamics and decision-making.

Due to the nature of the topics we will be discussing, it is imperative that students come to class with an open mind and a willingness to listen to divergent viewpoints. Please feel free to contact me if you have a question about class content.

Text

The instructor will provide handouts for each unit. Students are to keep an organized binder with all of the readings for the class.

Course Outline and Standards

Introduction to Sociology

Inequality, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Gender

Race

Religion

Immigration

Sexual Orientation

Physical Disabilities

Biculturalism and biracialism

Diversity

Course Outcomes

1. Analyze the media to deconstruct stereotypes and popular images.

2. Construct a solid a thesis and argument which is supported with logical thought, primary and secondary sources, and present it in an oral or written presentation.

3. Understand historical events, movements, and policies and how they have shaped current conditions.

4. Make connections between art and literature and contemporary social issues.

5. Understand basic concepts and vocabulary in sociology.

6. Differentiate between gender and sex

7. Analyze how gender is constructed and influences individual identity and community relations.

8. Critically examine relationships and interaction between females

9. Differentiate between race and ethnicity.

10. Examine the construction of race and its consequences on an individual identity as well as community building and relationships.

11. Define eugenics and trace its evolution from its beginnings to current day.

12. Identify historical and contemporary forms of racism.

13. Understand historical and current causes for immigration to the United States.

14. Analyze the treatment of immigrants historically and today.

15. Evaluate the causes and effects of undocumented immigrations.

16. Examine the evolution of a multicultural society and the impact of diversity on individuals and societies.

17. Trace the Americans with Disabilities movement, its progress and its current obstacles.

18. Analyze the role of science and scientific reasoning in the formation of identity, law making, and community relations.

19. Implement ethical inquiry when examining scientific innovations.

20. Examine the historical and current issues faced by the LGBT community.

21. Understand the policy making institutions in American and factors that shape the institutions and their decisions.

General Class Procedure

To succeed in this class, regular attendance and full attention are crucial. In order to fully comprehend course material, students are encouraged and required to participate in class discussions and activities. Each day students are to bring assigned text, notebooks, a black or blue pen, a #2 pencil, and the required assignment to class. Homework will be checked and graded on a regular basis.

Grading Policy

Grades from tests, projects, homework assignments, journals, quizzes, and class participation are averaged to form quarter and semester grades. The following is an estimated scale of how each grade is weighted:

 Quizzes 5-15 points

 Homework 3-15 points

 Chapter tests 25-45 points

 Projects 25-50 points

 Class Participation 15-20 points

Homework is assigned on a regular basis. Quizzes, tests, and projects are assigned every 1-2 weeks. Written assignments and projects will be graded according to content, correct usage of grammar, punctuation and citation format, and sentence structure. In order to prepare for the format of the AP exam, tests will take the form of both multiple choice and in class essays. Projects are designed to enhance learning and cover information that is not covered in depth in either the text or class time.

Semester grades are determined by dividing the total number of points by the amount achieved. Students are encouraged to keep a personal record of grades received so as to be aware of class grade. The following scale determines semester grades:

 18 weeks grades 90%

 Final project 10%

Teacher Expectations

Students come to class with all necessary materials.

All written work, with the exception of tests or quizzes, must be typed (double-spaced) or written legibly on white college-ruled paper in blue or black ink. Proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar are expected. Failure to comply will result in a reduced grade.

Late homework assignments will not be accepted unless there is an excused absence.

If student has an excused absence, she is responsible for finding out what work was missed and has until the next academic day to submit work. In the event of a prolonged absence, special arrangements can be made. Upon missing a test due to an excused absence, students are responsible for contacting the teacher to schedule a make-up exam. Failure to do this will result in receiving a 0% on the missed exam. If there is an unexcused absence on the day of an exam, there is no eligibility for a make-up exam and the grade is automatically 0%. If student has been attending class regularly up to the day of the exam, she will be asked to take the test immediately upon her return to school.

Projects must be submitted to teacher on time. Even if student is not in class, the project must be turned into the teacher’s box, via email, or on Moodle no later than the scheduled class period. No credit is given for late assignments.

Plagiarized work will receive a zero and is considered cheating.

No extra credit is offered or accepted.

Please feel free to make an appointment to me with me if you need extra help with this course. To make an appointment, see me after class, leave a message on my voice mail at (408) 294-1113 x 2151, or contact me via email at edesilva@ndsj.org.

I look forward to working with you this semester.