Course Description

The Cultural Seminar is an academic course for all freshmen on the study of culture. All sections will ask students to explore their own culture and a culture different than their own and demonstrate understanding of a global issue from multiple perspectives. While all courses are on culture, each section uses a different topic through which students will study culture. Students will work on reading and oral communication skills, on information fluency skills, and they will also be assisted by Orientation Mentors to help with their transition to college. The course will have several common elements: a common reading, common learning outcomes, a common oral exam and culminating assignment, and orientation and convocation experiences. The Cultural Seminar serves as a foundation course for four other cross-cultural courses in the General Education Program.

This particular section will focus on culture and health. The term culture has increasingly been used in the discourse of public health, for example, with respect to issues of health disparities in the U.S., the development and implementation of “culturally competent” or “culturally appropriate” programs, and in many other ways. What exactly is culture, however? The term is easily applied to all kinds of phenomena, without a critical look at the nature of, and role of culture as an aspect of human behavior. In this course we will examine what is meant by culture, the ways in which culture intersects with health issues, how public health efforts (domestic and global) can benefit by understanding and working with cultural processes, and we will take a brief look at research methods that are useful in identifying relationships between culture and health. During the course, we will examine three health issues in more depth regarding their cultural factors and implications: HIV/AIDS, youth violence (now viewed as a public health problem), and obesity.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Upon successful completion of the Cultural Seminar, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of similarities and differences between the student's own culture and a different culture.

   Assessment #1: Oral Exam and Signature Assignment
   Assessments #2: Class Assignments Class Discussions
2. Demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives of a global issue through the common
   reading and the course topic.
   Assessments: In Class Presentations and Class Discussions

3. Be able to express orally and in writing, with supporting materials, an understanding of
   student’s own culture and a different culture.
   Assessment #1: Class Presentation and Class Discussions
   Assessment #2: Oral Exam and Signature Assignment

4. Demonstrate information fluency by gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing information
   using emerging technologies and traditional media

   Students will address the following:
   a. Demonstrate the ability to gather and integrate information from a variety of sources.
   b. Demonstrate the abilities to assess the credibility and to weigh the value of
      information from different sources.
   c. Communicate knowledge using emerging technologies.
   Assessment #1: Writing Assignments, Class Presentations
   Assessment #2: Signature Assignment

5. Demonstrate familiarity with Carroll University policies, procedures and support services
   which help to facilitate academic success through participation in the following required
   course components
   a. Orientation Component: ITS/Library Introduction Session (right before classes start).
   b. Library Sessions (during semester):
      i. Two library sessions conducted by Librarians and Career Counselors
      ii. One on-line library session.
   c. Check-in Meeting will be scheduled during regular faculty office ours.
   d. Short in-class presentation by Director of Student Success.
   Assessment #2: Signature Assignment and Class Presentations, Writing Assignments

Course Specific Learning Outcomes and Evaluation
At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1) Explain the concept of culture as one framework for human behavior, including health behavior.

   This will be assessed in the Midterm.

2) Explain specific domains where culture and health intersect: definitions of health/well-being;
   illness causation and treatment theories (ethnomedical systems); social constructions of illness
   and stigma; the role of social and political ecologies in shaping cultural responses; cross cultural
   ideas about care and treatment; gender and health; different understandings about what is a
   “health risk”; and the issue of “cultural competency.” This will be assessed in the Midterm and in
the Spirit Paper.

3) Over a selection of cases and program examples, across several health issues, analyze the ways in which the highlighted health problems and health interventions were impacted by cultural factors. This will be assessed in the Spirit Paper and Second Exam.

4) Describe research methods that focus on obtaining “cultural data” and how they are used. This will be assessed in the Second Exam and in the Program Paper.

5) Apply the knowledge gained in the course concerning the culture-health relationship to the design of a health promotion intervention (domestic or global). This will be assessed in the Second Exam and in the Program Paper.

Expectations of Students
I expect students to act in a professional and respectful manner in class at all times. The catalog calls upon students, in the Carroll University Compact, to strive to live according to certain values as a member of the Carroll community. This class has these expectations as well. In line with this compact are these specific expectations:

a. We will be discussing ideas that may be controversial and may be challenging to what students value and think. It is important to focus on the discussion of the ideas and not the personal attacks on other people.

b. I expect students to have an opportunity to share their ideas but not to monopolize the conversation.

All electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, etc.) should be turned off and put away during class time. If students are engaging, in any way with any electronic device during class (that includes looking at it or checking messages), this will affect your participation grade. Class time is a time to talk with fellow classmates and the instructor to build and work on a learning community.

Evaluation
Letter grades will be assigned according to these percentages:

- A  93-100%
- B  83-87.9%
- C  70-77.9%
- AB  88-92.9%
- BC  78-82.9%
- D  60-69.9%
- F  0-59.9%

Relative weighting of assignments entering into the final course grade:

- Oral Exam: 100 points
- Signature Assignment: 100 points
- Participation: 60 points
- “Spirit Catches You” Paper: 30 points
Program Paper: 35 points
Writing Assignments: 30 points
Chapter Leader: 100 points
Final Exam: 100 points

Total: 555 points

Grading Scale

A 509 – 555 (93 – 100%)
AB 482 – 508 (88 – 92%)
B 460 – 481 (83 – 87%)
BC 427 – 459 (78 – 82%)
C 383 – 426 (70 – 77%)
D 328 – 382 (60 – 69%)
F <327 (0 – 59%)

Texts and Required Materials

- Essentials of Culture, Health and Diversity: Understanding People, Reducing Disparities. Boston, MA: Jones & Bartlett. [This will be referred to as the course “text.”]

Additional reading to be assigned per session.

Policies

Assignments, Quizzes, and Exams:

Oral Exam: The Oral Exam is a one-on-one ten minute verbal discussion between the instructor and each student about the Monaghan and Just text. It is designed to make sure that you have a solid foundation for the study of culture for the next four years (and hopefully for the rest of your life) and will include four questions. Additional information will be provided, as a handout. This exam is common among all of the sections of this course.

Signature Assignment: The Culminating Assignment is a writing assignment common to all sections of the course. A handout with details on the assignment will be handed out later in the semester.

Participation: Participation grade is determined by several factors. First and foremost is attendance, this will account for half of your participation grade. See the attendance section below for more information. The other half will come from various projects and assignments throughout the course, as well as actual participation in course discussions and lectures (i.e., paying attention in class, answering questions, engaging in discussions).
**Writing Assignments:** Several writing assignments will be handed out and will deal with one or more of the topics discussed in class and will typically be one and two pages long. Handouts will be given for each assignment.

**Chapter Leader:** Each student will select a chapter they would like to become an “expert” on. The goal of this project is to involve the class in an activity to help teach the MAJOR concepts contained within the selected chapter. The activity that the person presents should be interactive (creative game, trivia contest, role plays, etc.) The activity should increase the other class member’s understanding of the topic being discussed. Students should avoid a presentation that utilizes lecture as its main delivery method, though some lecture should be used to TEACH the main concepts prior to playing a game as the activity. DO NOT READ FROM A POWERPOINT HANDOUT.

Each chapter leader SHOULD incorporate a supplemental reference list. This reference list should further explain the concepts contained within the chapter. The references should not be the focus of the presentation, but rather an item contained within the presentation to enhance the overall understanding of the chapter concepts and information. Each chapter leader presentation MUST include ONE major open ended question to conclude the presentation. This question should encompass the entire chapter and get the students to challenge their assumptions about the contents of the chapter.

Examples:
- Creative “engaging” Activity
- Handout (for each student and instructor)
- Supplemental reference list (3 references minimum)- put on handout
- Good, thought provoking open-ended questions to conclude the presentation
- Good teaching methods (eye contact, clear voice, stand/sit where appropriate, introduction, body, conclusion, meaningful content, etc.)
- Enough materials (presentation, activity, game, video) to fill 45-50 minutes

**Final Exam:** There will be a final cumulative exam.

**Policies**
A key component of this course is an introduction to the culture of higher education, which is distinctly different from the culture of high school. As such, please pay close attention to the policies outlined below.

- **Attendance, Late Assignments, Missed Exams, etc.**
  After the equivalent of one week of absence, a student’s grade will be adversely affected. The equivalent of two weeks of absence may result in failure of the course or being asked to withdraw.

  Half of your participation points are assessed by your attendance (i.e., just showing up gets you 10% of the possible points in the class). Attendance is mandatory; each class a great deal of material will be covered, either in the form of lectures, group activities, videos, etc. These things can be difficult to make up so you need to try to be there for each class. There is a positive correlation between attendance and grades.
If you know you are going to miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible. If you must miss class for a family emergency, health issue, or school sponsored event (e.g., sporting event, academic conference, etc.) arrangements can be made. As long as you give me 24 hours email notice before your missed class (for classes missed due to approved reasons, see above) you may have an extra week to turn in the assignment. Otherwise, no late assignments will be accepted. Missed quizzes need to be made within one week, either during my office hours or during the next class period. Missed midterms can only be made up after the final exam. In addition to the 24 hour notice, you must also send me an additional email one week prior to the final exam letting me know you plan to make up a missed midterm. Any exams, quizzes, or assignments not made up will count as 0’s.

- **Academic Integrity.**
  There is a procedure in place at Carroll to deal with academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, impeding the academic work of other students, etc.). See Section V of the Student Handbook, “Academic Policies and Procedures: Policies and Procedures on Student Academic Integrity.” Academic misconduct will be dealt with in this class according to Carroll’s procedure and may result in sanctions such as: a lower or failing grade on an assignment, a lower or failing grade in the class, suspension from the College. Please read the procedure in the student handbook and be informed particularly of plagiarism (i.e. claiming credit for the work of another without proper authorization or citation). Ignorance is no defense for plagiarism. Plagiarism will be reported to the office of Academic Affairs and potential consequences can include, but are not limited to, receiving a 0 for the assignment, a 0 for the course, and even expulsion depending on the severity of the offense. [http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054](http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054)

- **Academic Support.**
  The Learning Commons, located in the bottom floor of the Library, offers tutoring, writing assistance, and study skills assistance as well as group study rooms and places to study. For more information, go to: [http://www.carroll.edu/Learningcommons/](http://www.carroll.edu/Learningcommons/) See also information about the writing center and upcoming workshops: [http://www.carroll.edu/learningcommons/writingcenter.asp?nav=5790](http://www.carroll.edu/learningcommons/writingcenter.asp?nav=5790)

- **Accommodations for Disabilities:** Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations or any student considering obtaining documentation should make an appointment with Ms. Marty Bledsoe, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities, no later than the first week of class. She can be reached by calling 524-7335 or contacting her via e-mail at mbledsoe@carrollu.edu.

The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (e.g., course requirements, grading policy, schedule, etc.) as the curriculum or program requires.
Be Kind
Work Hard
Have Fun