EDCP420/AAST498: Advanced Topics in Human Diversity and Advocacy  
Section 0101  
Spring 2010

Class times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM  
Location: 2136 Chemical & Nuclear Engineering Building

Instructor: Jill D. Paquin, M.A.  
Email: jpaquin@umd.edu  
Office Address: 3210A Benjamin Building  
Phone Number: (202) 422-2108  
Office Hours: 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM Tuesdays, or by appointment.

Required Course Texts  


Additional Readings  
Any additional readings for this course will be made available for download through the course Blackboard website: http://elms.umd.edu, or will be handed out in class.

Course Description  
This course is organized as a seminar/discussion (i.e., it is not a lecture-based course). Class time will be devoted to the kinds of learning that can only take place cooperatively and as catalyzed interactions with others (e.g., experiential exercises, discussion, group activities, films, and other kinds of shared learning). You are expected to attend class, to be on time, to have completed required readings, and to participate fully in class activities. We will work together to create a safe environment for this kind of shared learning and we will strive together to help all voices be heard and honored.

This course will build upon students’ knowledge of diversity in American society. We will continue students’ examination of various types of oppression in the U.S. (e.g., ableism, classism, heterosexism, racism, religious tolerance, and sexism), and their effects on both privileged and marginalized groups. This course will specifically focus on these issues within social institutions (e.g., education, employment, and family), to explore how these institutions perpetuate inequities in American society. In addition, we will work to develop an understanding of, and commitment to, social justice and advocacy as tools of empowerment.

Course Goals and Objectives  
This course will be a semester-long discussion on issues of diversity, social inequities, and social justice. It is not anticipated that we will find solutions to these issues. Rather, the course is designed to increase our collective understanding of living in a society in which these inequities exist, in order to be able to work toward social justice. This includes increasing students’ awareness of how social identities and affiliations may serve as both resources and barriers in the development of effective professional and personal relationships, and equitable participation in social institutions. It also includes facilitating students’ development as “critically conscious” individuals with the knowledge, self-awareness, and commitment to create social change. As such, the course has the following specific objectives:

- To review major types of oppression (i.e., various “-isms”) and the impact that dominant ideologies have had in mainstream American culture and in current social systems and institutions (e.g., education, families and relationships, work).
- To learn to critically examine and analyze institutional and social practices, pedagogies, policies, and learning environments vis-à-vis representations of oppressive ideologies.
• To identify and formulate strategies for the prevention of oppressive institutions and social systems, learn about advocacy, activism, strategies designed to address privilege, and techniques employed to empower those who are oppressed.

**Course Expectations**

**Learning-Friendly Environment**

The instructor and the students share in the responsibility of creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning. A learning-friendly environment is one that is free of distractions, engages all participants in the learning process, and does not demean or dehumanize any individual or group. Therefore, all individuals in this course will:

• Use appropriate language and behavior that does not demean or dehumanize any individual or group, **whether or not such individuals or groups are present.**
• Respect one another’s diverse experiences and perspectives.
• Respect others by listening and responding with thoughtfulness and sensitivity.
• Refrain from conducting private conversations (verbal or written) during class.
• **Turn off cell phones and pagers, and put away outside work, laptops, and unrelated reading materials.** Failure to do so will result in a loss of some or all participation points for that class period.

**Confidentiality**

Due to the nature of this course, self-disclosure will occur, and sensitive issues may arise. Therefore, confidentiality is expected. Specific details of what is discussed in the class, and by whom should remain in the class. However, the instructor cannot guarantee that all students in the course will maintain confidentiality, so exercise your own discretion. Please note that you will never be required to disclose personal information that you do not wish to disclose.

Most of us (both students and the instructor) will have strong reactions to the material covered in class. If you ever want or need to discuss any of the materials or issues from this class, please feel free to contact the instructor.

**Academic Integrity**

The University of Maryland College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. Students enrolled in EDCP420 are expected to follow this code. The code prohibits students from cheating on exams, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization from **both instructors**, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.

Concerns about academic integrity will be dealt with in a manner consistent with University policy. One aspect of this expectation is that your written work will be referenced and documented appropriately. When in doubt about rules concerning plagiarism, students are urged to consult with the instructor, academic departments, or recognized handbooks in their field.

Students will be expected to include and sign the following statement (the Honor Pledge) on each assignment or examination:

“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.”

For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Student Honor Council at: (301) 314-8450, or visit their website at: [http://www.shc.umd.edu/](http://www.shc.umd.edu/).

**Participation (20% of final grade)**

All students are expected to be active agents in their learning in order to get the most out of this course, and it is imperative that each class member attends and participates in every class session. Participation is defined broadly to allow for a variety of learning and personality styles. It includes coming to class **on time**, being prepared for class (e.g., **having completed all readings and assignments**; coming prepared to discuss the material, etc.), participating in discussions and activities (both whole class and small group activities will be used), and completing in-class assignments. If you have any questions regarding participation, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.
Due to the nature of this course (i.e., it is an exploration of diversity issues) personal perspectives and experiential learning are crucial to the success of this class, so full attendance and participation are crucial. Additionally, it disrupts class dynamics if one or more students attend class on an irregular basis, arrive late, or leave class early. As such, attendance and in-class participation are ongoing requirements and are an integral part of the work of the course. **Unexcused absences and excessive tardiness will negatively affect your grade.** In addition to consistent attendance and participation in class discussions and activities, this includes having all readings completed prior to class, and coming to class with questions or points of interest from the readings for our discussion.

In accordance with University policy, **absences will be considered “excused” for the following reasons:** “illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of University authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the student's control.” Additionally, “Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes” (emphasis added. For more information on the University's attendance policy, please see: [http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/atedasse.html](http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/atedasse.html)).

All excused absences must be cleared with the instructor in advance, except in the case of unexpected emergencies.

Ten points will be awarded for attendance and participation for each class period. Students will receive the full ten points for coming to class on time, being prepared for class (including having done the readings), participating in discussions and activities, and completing any in-class assignments. Tardiness, being unprepared for class, and/or not participating in class discussions, activities, and assignments will result in a loss of part or all of the attendance and participation points for that class period. Students with excused absences will be allowed to make up participation points by completing a one-page reflection paper on the readings for the day of the absence. Reflection papers should be turned in within one week of the absence. **Attendance will be taken during each class, and tardiness will be noted.**

Throughout the semester, short, *unannounced*, in-class writing assignments or quizzes may be given, which will count toward the participation grade. Only students who have an *excused* absence, will be allowed to make up the points for these assignments.

**Accommodations**

If you have a Disability Support Services (DSS) documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the instructor immediately. The instructor will work with the student and DSS to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester that she/he has a documented disability. It is also the student’s responsibility to provide written documentation from DSS indicating appropriate accommodations.

For more information about Disability Support Services, please visit: [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/).

**Religious Observances**

Consistent with the policy of the University System of Maryland, students will not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances (not including travel time). Students will be given the opportunity to make up, within a reasonable amount of time, any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in religious observances. Please contact the instructor immediately to discuss any such conflicts.

**Assignments**

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font. **Margins should be no larger than 1” at the top, bottom, left, and right of the page.** All assignments should include appropriate references from the various materials we utilized in this class. While I prefer APA (American Psychiatric Association) formatting for references and citations, you may use any professional method you are familiar with (e.g., MLA, Chicago)—just stay consistent, and make sure that
ALL references are appropriately cited. If you have questions or concerns about how to cite your references, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

Paper copies (i.e., not electronic versions) of all written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below.

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT APPROVAL FROM THE INSTRUCTOR PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE, EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF A DOCUMENTED EMERGENCY. As such, please make arrangements to assure that your assignments are turned in by the beginning of class on the respective due dates.

Self-Evaluation Papers (20% of final grade-10% for each of two self-evaluations)

At the beginning of the course, you will complete a self-evaluation, and will reflect on this evaluation in a paper. In addition to reflecting on the evaluation, this paper should include a discussion of your prior experience with issues of diversity and advocacy (either formal or informal), your reasons for taking the course, your goals, hopes, and/or fears for the course, and anything else that may come to mind or that you would like me to know.

**Self-Evaluation Paper 1** should be 3-4 pages in length, and is due on Thursday, February 4, 2010.

At the end of the course, you will again complete the same self-evaluation, and will reflect on this evaluation in a paper. You should include a comparison of your evaluation at the end of the semester and your self-evaluation from the beginning of the semester. Things to include in this paper are: What, if anything, changed in your self-evaluation responses over the course of the semester? What do you think accounted for the change (or lack of change) across the semester? Based on your final self-evaluation, what might you still want to learn about? How will you continue to learn about these topics? You may also include general reactions to the class (things you liked, things you didn’t like, things that surprised you, things you learned, things you wish you would have learned, etc.).

**Self-Evaluation Paper 2** should be 3-4 pages in length and is due on Tuesday, May 4, 2010.

Reflection Papers (20% of final grade-10% for each of two reflection papers)

Reflection papers will provide students with a space to continue self-evaluation and self-reflection. In addition, they provide a space to record questions, reactions, and other thoughts regarding the course material. Finally, they provide a way for students to synthesize the course material. As such, these reflection papers will include both subjective and objective components.

Specifically, students are asked to reflect on the course readings, and in-class discussions and activities. Students should highlight the important points from the readings and discussions, as well as give their personal reactions, comments, or unresolved questions. Each reflection paper should include reference to at least two specific readings from the class, and may also reference class discussions and activities, as well as life outside the classroom.

**Reflection Paper 1** should be 2-3 pages in length and is due on Tuesday, February 23, 2010.

**Reflection Paper 2** should be 2-3 pages in length and is due on Thursday, April 15, 2010.

Midterm (20% of final grade)

The midterm will consist of one essay question that will be based on course readings and class discussion. This will be a take-home assignment, however, students are not allowed to work collaboratively on the midterm.

**The midterm question** will be handed out on Thursday, March 11, 2010 and will be due on Tuesday, March 23, 2010.
Final Project (20% of final grade; pick one option)

OPTION 1: Participate in an Intergroup Dialogue on Campus (Participation and Informal Presentation: 20% of your grade)

Intergroup dialogues are a one credit, 7-8 week courses at UMD that bring together individuals from social groups with a history of conflict or tension between them (e.g., people of color and white people; men and women; religious and secular people; people from different socioeconomic classes) with the goals of increasing meaningful cross-cultural interaction, building relationships across differences, and preparing students for social action around these issues. Dialogues typically have 8 to 10 students, and so they present a unique opportunity to look at one of the specific topic areas we will be discussing in EDCP420 in a more personal setting, and in greater depth. At the end of the semester, you will do an informal presentation to the class about your experience in your dialogue (keeping in mind the importance of protecting the confidentiality and privacy of your dialogue members).

If you chose this option, you will need to register for a section of EDHI338 for the second half of the semester. Registration, days/times, and types of dialogues can be found at [http://www.ohrp.umd.edu/WE/registration.html](http://www.ohrp.umd.edu/WE/registration.html). Registration is currently open for dialogues. If you are interested in this option, act quickly before they fill up. If there are no dialogues available to you or if you have a scheduling conflict, you must do option 2 (see below) and meet all relevant deadlines.

OPTION 2: Social Justice and Advocacy Project (Presentation and Paper: 20% of final grade)

For this project, you will pick one of the specific "-isms" addressed in this course (e.g., ableism, sexism, heterosexism, racism, etc.) and explore social justice and advocacy around that issue through academic research and an interview with someone who does social justice work in this area.

This assignment contains three parts: A proposal, a presentation, and a written paper. In the proposal, you will identify the specific system of oppression you have chosen to focus on, the individual person you have chosen to interview, and the specifics of your interview (time, place, specific questions you will ask, etc.). People work toward social justice in many different ways, ranging from leadership positions in large agencies and organizations, to individual people advocating on a much smaller scale. The instructor would be happy to help you brainstorm and pick out a potential interviewee prior to the due date of the proposal.

The proposal will be due on Feb 18, 2010.

The presentation is designed to allow you to share what you have learned about social justice work and advocacy through your research and interview with your classmates. This will allow all of the students to see the range of possibilities for becoming involved in social justice work and advocacy. Your presentation should include information on the system of oppression on which you are focusing (e.g., why is it necessary to do social justice and advocacy work in this area), and highlights from your research and interview.

You will sign up for a presentation date in the first few weeks of class. Presentations will begin during Week 10, and are to be no more than ten minutes in length. You may choose to do a PowerPoint presentation, or use any other audio/visual materials you choose, though this is not a requirement. These presentations will be relatively informal, and are designed to help students learn about different areas of social justice work and advocacy.

Students will sign up for a presentation date in during the first few weeks of class. Presentations will begin during Week 10.

The paper will be the most formal piece of this project. It should include a literature review about the system of oppression on which you are focusing that helps explain why social justice work and advocacy are necessary in this area. You will then discuss your interview, including highlights and quotes, and talking about what you learned in general. Finally, you will write a concluding section in which you address where you might go from here with regards to social justice and advocacy work based on what you learned from your research and interview.
The final, written Social Justice and Advocacy Paper will be due on the last day of class (Thursday, December 10, 2009), in class at 11:00 AM. A detailed description of this assignment will be handed out in class.

Grading

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