Course Title:
Current Problems in Human Relations

Course Number:
HR 5013-494

Course Description:
Over the course of the semester, we will review and discuss numerous current problems relevant to human relations (including both a domestic as well as an international focus). We will examine each topic in order to illuminate the complexity and contradictions inherent in each issue. In addition, we will jointly review a book, Nickel & Dimed, which is intended to provide you with applied insight into some of the topics that we will be covering.

Course Dates:
January 2 – April 30, 2015
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: December 4, 2014

Site Director:
This is a three-credit hour online course. Please see your local Site Director or e-mail our online site coordinator at aponline@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: Shannon Bert, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: Department of Human Relations
601 Elm Ave
PHSC 706
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone Number: (405) 325-1766
Fax Number: (405) 209-2555
E-mail Address: bert@ou.edu
Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 – 12:30 PM CST

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:
Student materials are available at the OU Follett Bookstore located at 1185 Asp Avenue; Norman, OK, and can be ordered online, by phone, by email, or by fax. Ordering online at www.oklahoma.bkstr.com is strongly recommended – students can track the status of their order within 48 hours. If an order has not been shipped within three days, students can contact the Follet textbook manager by phone (405) 325-3511, (800) 522-0772 (toll-free) or email 0831mgr@fheg.follett.com. Phone orders (ask for the textbook manager and identify yourself as an Advanced Programs student) can be placed 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday (CST). Summer hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (CST). Fax orders can be placed 24 hours a day at (405) 325-7770. Text prices are available online.


4. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Access D2L at [http://learn.ou.edu](http://learn.ou.edu); enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

You can find an excellent resource on APA style and general academic writing at Purdue University’s Owl website located at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

Note: Follett is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through Follett.

**OU E-Mail:**

All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.

**Online Learning Resource Center:**

The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/) or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

**Course Objectives:**

The goal of this course will be to familiarize you with some of the complex social issues that impact the human experience and that have implications for human relations. We will be examining the ways in which the larger social context impacts individuals’ experiences, and visa versa. Finally, we will be analyzing the multiple dimensions that are of significance to individuals’ and communities’ experiences of these current problems. These include the importance of factors such as race, gender, class, culture, nation of origin, popular culture, etc. It is expected that by the end of the course you will not only be familiar with some of the issues impacting individual and social health and wellbeing, but that you will also be able to provide a thoughtful analysis of these issues.

**Course Outline:**

Over the course of the semester you will be expected to complete all assigned reading in a timely fashion. You will additionally be expected to participate in class discussions using the discussion forum on D2L, and you will complete reflection papers, a book review, and a final paper. The course will be divided into modules, each with its own participation assignments. In addition, you will be expected to complete two major assignments – a two-part book review and a final paper.

**Checking D2L:**

Regular updates and relevant information regarding the course will be posted to the “headlines” page on D2L (that is the main page you access when you first log on). This will include module-specific information and updates. In order to ensure that you do not miss any new information of relevance to the course, you will be responsible for checking the “headlines” page at least once each week. Additional information, links, and documentation will be posted on the “contents” page. Please also see the “links” page for websites that may be of interest to you and that are relevant to the course. Finally, all assignments are due in the relevant “dropbox”.

**Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:**

**Participation assignments:**

Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to complete numerous participation assignments. These assignments will ensure that you are staying up-to-date on your reading and will allow you interact with the material. Given that this is an online course, these participation assignments are an essential aspect of the class and will provide you with an opportunity to communicate both with the instructor as
well as with your classmates. Participation assignments will consist of discussion forum posts and reflection papers.

During weeks that discussion forum posts are due, you will be expected to make a posting to the relevant forum on D2L. A framing question related to the material to be covered will be posted. You will be expected to respond to this question as well as to at least one of your classmates. Thus, your first post should be a response to the posed question, while your second post should be a respectful and insightful response to one of your classmates. The discussion forum will remain open for one week. Please see below for the relevant due dates. You will receive a grade out of 10 for each discussion post you make. You will receive a 0 for any unmade postings, and all late postings will be subject to a 50% grade reduction.

During weeks that reaction papers are due, you will be expected to prepare a brief paper in response to the assigned material. Your reaction papers should be typed using 12-pt font and standard margins and should be two to three pages long. Your paper should be written as you would any other academic paper and should be proofread and spell and grammar checked. You should consider the goal of the chapter author(s) and your reactions to their statements (do you agree or disagree and why?). You should also consider whether the author(s) changed the way you think about the topic, whether you learned something new from the article, how it fits with the rest of what we are learning, etc. The more thorough and thoughtful your paper is, the higher your grade will be. Reaction papers will receive a grade out of 10. Late papers will be subject to a 50% grade reduction.

At the end of the semester, your two lowest participation grades will be dropped.

Book review:

In addition to the weekly readings, you are expected to complete a book review of Nickel and Dimed. This review will have two components. First, you are expected to participate in a class discussion regarding the book. The relevant discussion forum on D2L will remain open for one week. During this time, you will be responsible for posting your reactions to the assigned text (in response to a provided framing question). In addition, you are expected to respond to at least two postings made by your classmates. Accordingly, you are expected to make a minimum of three postings. Please see below for the relevant due dates.

Your first posting should reflect your reactions to the assigned text. You should comment on the text, including your thoughts on how it fits in with what we are learning in class. You should also provide your own reactions to the author’s experiences and comments. Finally, your responses to your classmates should include respectful agreement or disagreement with them or comments on their reflections. You will receive a score out of 10 for each posting you make, giving you a total final score out of 30 for each discussion topic. Thoughtful postings that reflect independent and critical thought will receive the highest scores. You will receive a 0 for any unmade postings, and all late postings will be subject to a 50% grade reduction.

You will additionally be expected to complete a written review of the text. Your book review should be at least five double-spaced pages in length, should conform to conventional formatting instructions, and should follow correct APA formatting guidelines. You are not required to use outside sources in your review. Rather, I am interested in your perspective. However, if you do include outside sources, these should be cited appropriately.

In preparing your review I would like for you to provide a critical analysis of the assigned text. I would like you to evaluate the ways in which it relates to the concepts that we have covered in class while providing your personal reflections on the author and her experiences. This will be your opportunity to respond to the author. Your book review papers will receive a grade out of 100, with the most thorough and thoughtful reviews receiving the highest grades. Late reviews will receive an automatic 10-point deduction for each day that the paper is late.

Additional instructions will be posted on D2L closer to the time that the review is due.
Final papers:

You will need to hand in a final paper discussing a current problem of your choice (you are responsible for identifying an issue that you consider to be a current problem for human relations). You may select an issue we covered in class or you may select an entirely new topic (e.g., teenage drug use, urban homelessness, women’s mental health, the school experience of immigrant children, etc.). It is highly recommended that you select an aspect of a problem to discuss; this will make your paper more manageable (e.g., rather than looking just at drug use in general, look at teenage drug use or discuss urban homelessness, etc.) You will need to submit your topic to me for approval by the designated date and time. **If you do not submit a topic on time, 10 points will automatically be deducted from your final paper grade.**

Your paper should include an overview of the problem that you have selected. You should explain the various dimensions of the problem (e.g., the ways that race, class, gender, culture, etc. interact when considering this problem) and the reasons why you have selected it as a current problem for human relations. In addition, you should provide an analysis of some of the ways in which the problem can be addressed (what has already been done, why has this worked or not worked, what do you think should be done to address the problem and why, etc.?). You need to use at least **seven sources** for your paper, of which no more than **two** may be reports published by governmental, non-governmental, and/or non-profit organizations. The remainder of your sources needs to be scholarly books and/or journal articles. Only **one** of these may be a chapter we covered in class. Your paper should be approximately seven to ten pages long and should be typed, double-spaced, and should use conventional margins. Finally, your paper needs to conform to APA formatting guidelines.

Your paper will receive a grade out of 100. **Late papers will receive an automatic 10-point deduction for each day the paper is late.** Final grades will be assessed in the following manner: 10 points for stylistic considerations (correct use of APA format, font, margins, page length, etc.); 60 points for content (the thoroughness of your discussion of the problem you selected, the completeness of your analysis of potential solutions to the problem, etc.); 30 points for critical thinking (the degree to which you provide a thoughtful analysis of the dimensions of the problem, the thoughtfulness of your discussion of potential solutions to the problem, etc.)

If you would like to receive feedback on an early draft of your paper, please contact me earlier rather than later in order to arrange a date by which you need to submit a draft. **I will not accept early drafts the week before your papers are due.**

More details regarding your final papers will be posted to D2L closer to the due date.

Specific instructions for each participation assignment, including formatting instructions, can be found on the “contents” page of D2L. **Please note that all deadlines are 5PM CST.**

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**HR 5013: Current Problems - Spring 2015 Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Course Begins – Familiarize yourself with the D2L site for the course</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 5th – 9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Getting to Know One Another</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Introduction Post</td>
<td>Friday, Jan. 9th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Jan. 5th – 9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Gender, Race, Class and</td>
<td>Zinn et al. (2011) Chapters 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Jan. 12th – 16th</td>
<td>Difference</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assigned Reading</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Gender, Race, Class and Difference</td>
<td>Zinn et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Reaction Paper #1 (over any chapter(s) assigned thus far)</td>
<td>Friday, Jan. 23rd by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Jan. 19th – 23rd</td>
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<td>Chapters 11, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Gender, Race, Class and Difference</td>
<td>Zinn et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Discussion Forum: Race and Gender</td>
<td>Post #1 (Original Post): Wednesday, Jan. 28th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Jan. 26th – 30th</td>
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<td>Chapters 27, 29, 31, 33, 34, 38, and 41</td>
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<td>Post #2 (Response to a classmate): Friday, Jan. 30th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Women’s Rights</td>
<td>CQ Researcher (2010) Chapter 3</td>
<td>Reaction Paper #2</td>
<td>Friday, Feb. 6th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Feb. 2nd – 6th</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Women’s Rights</td>
<td>Begin Reading Ehrenreich (2008) ~ pages 1 - 78</td>
<td>Discussion Forum: Women’s Rights</td>
<td>Post #1 (Original Post): Wednesday, Feb. 11th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Feb. 9th – 13th</td>
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<td>Post #2 (Response to a classmate): Friday, Feb. 13th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Living Wage</td>
<td>Read Ehrenreich (2008) ~ pages 79 - 157</td>
<td>Discussion Forum – Book Review: Nickel and Dimed</td>
<td>Post #1 (Original Post): Wednesday, Feb. 18th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Feb. 16th – 20th</td>
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<td>Post #2 and #3 (Response to 2 classmates): Friday, Feb. 20th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Living Wage</td>
<td>Finish Reading Ehrenreich (2008) ~ pages 158 - 235</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Feb. 23rd – 27th</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Different Forms of Violence</td>
<td>Zinn et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Reaction Paper #3</td>
<td>Friday, Mar. 6th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Mar. 2nd – 6th</td>
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<td>Chapters 12 and 14</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assigned Reading</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Different Forms of Violence</td>
<td>CQ Researcher (2010) Chapters 1, 2, 7 and 8</td>
<td>Discussion Forum: Terror</td>
<td>Post #1 (Original Post): Wednesday, Mar. 11th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 9th –</td>
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<td>Research Final Paper Topics</td>
<td>Post #2 (Response to a classmate): Friday, Mar. 13th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Mar. 13th</td>
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<td>Final Paper Topic: Friday, Mar. 13th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Enjoy time with family and friends</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Mar. 16th –</td>
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<td>20th</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Different Forms of Violence</td>
<td>CQ Researcher (2010) Chapter 9</td>
<td>Reaction Paper # 4</td>
<td>Friday, Mar. 27th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Mar. 23rd  –</td>
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<td>27th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Nickel and Dimed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Book Review Paper: <em>Nickel and Dimed</em></td>
<td>Friday, Apr. 3rd by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Mar. 30th –</td>
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<td>Apr. 3rd</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Disaster as a Current Problem</td>
<td>Zinn et al. (2011) Chapter 13; CQ Researcher Chapter 4</td>
<td>Reaction Paper #5</td>
<td>Friday, Apr. 10th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Apr. 6th –</td>
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<td>10th</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Disaster as a Current Problem</td>
<td>CQ Researcher Chapter 6, 10, and 11</td>
<td>Discussion Forum: Disaster Preparedness</td>
<td>Post #1 (Original Post): Wednesday, Apr. 15th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 13th  –</td>
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<td>Post #2 (Response to a classmate): Friday, Apr. 17th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>17th</td>
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<td>Week 16</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Work on Final Papers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Apr. 23rd  –</td>
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<td>27th</td>
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<td>Week 17</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Final Papers Due</td>
<td>Thurs, Apr. 30th by 5:00 PM CST</td>
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<td>Apr. 27th  –</td>
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<td>30th</td>
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Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F. A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = 60%>. Grades will be weighted in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Course Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation assignments</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book review discussion</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

Policy for Late Work:

Please contact the professor regarding his/her policy for late work

Attendance Policy:

In addition to interaction via Desire2Learn and E-mail contact, students are required to contact the instructor via E-mail or telephone before the beginning of the course term for an initial briefing. Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive, learning activities is required.

Student assignments and student/instructor communications will be conducted via Desire2Learn, although students may contact the instructor via telephone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax as needed

Incomplete Grade Policy:

A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

Technical Support Information:

If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: http://webapps.ou.edu/it/ or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).

Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluation:

Upon completion of the course students should go to the Advanced Programs Online Learning Information webpage and click on the applicable semester link under “Online Course Evaluation” which will direct them to the evaluation. The evaluation will take approximately five minutes to complete. Completion of the online evaluation is an important tool allowing Advanced Programs to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses.

Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be reviewed by the department and only supplied to the professor once grades for the course have been submitted.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Note: Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc…in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc…; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at http://studentconduct.ou.edu/

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Shannon S.C. Bert, Ph.D.

Education
• 2001  BA in Psychology, University of Oklahoma
• 2004  MA in Developmental Psychology, University of Notre Dame
• 2006  Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, University of Notre Dame
• 2005 – 2007  Doctoral Fellowship, Georgetown University

Current Positions
• 2007 – Present  Associate Professor, Department of Human Relations, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
• 2008 – Present  Graduate Program Instructor, Advanced Programs – Department of Human Relations, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
• 2008 – Present  Adjunct Assistant Professor, Women’s and Gender Studies Program, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
• 2010 – Present  Adjunct Assistant Professor, Liberal Studies Program, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
• HR 5403  Psycho-Social Development
• HR 5743  Violence Against Women and Children
• HR 5013  Current Problems in Human Relations
• HR 5110  Family Assessment and Intervention
• HR 5970  Special Topics/Seminar: The Prevention /Intervention of Critical Social Issues

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
• Developmental Theory
• Applied Research Methods and Advanced Research Methods
• Research for Human Relations
• Protective Factors and Resilience
• Biracial/Multiracial Identity Development
• Prevention and Intervention Programs for Disadvantaged Populations
• Emergent Adulthood
• Current Problems
• Violence Against Women and Children
• Women, Work, and the Family

Representative Publications and Presentations

Refereed Publications


Book Publications


Chapter Publications


Presentations


Carothers, S.S. (2004, August). Social support as a coping resource for at-risk children exposed to negative life events. Poster session presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI.


**Symposia Presentations**


**Representative Major Professional Affiliations**

• American Psychological Association (APA)
• Society for Research in Child Development
• Society for Research on Adolescence
• APA, Division 35 – The Society for the Psychology of Women
• APA, Division 35 – Section 1, Psychology of Black Women

**Representative Honors and Awards Received**

• Received University of Notre Dame KANEB Teaching Certificate
• Listed in Cambridge Who’s Who Among Executive and Professional Women Psychologists
• Received University of Oklahoma New Faculty Seminar Certificate for “High Attendance”
• Received University of Oklahoma, Research Council Junior Faculty Award in 2008
• Received University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences Junior Faculty Award in 2009 and 2010
• Selected to participate as a protégé in the University of Oklahoma, Office of the Vice President of Research, Excellence in Proposals Pilot Project.