The University of Oklahoma
College of Continuing Education
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus

Course Title:
Current Problems in Human Relations

Course Number:
HR 5013-113

Course Description:
We humans are social animals. How we get along with each other, and how we adapt to change is key to our survival, our health, our success in careers and in family structures, and in all kinds of roles we play in social settings. But the world seems full of conflict and turmoil these days – from terrorism to racial and ethnic hatred to family dysfunction to breakdown of many social structures, systems, and “rules”. Exclusion frequently seems to outweigh inclusion, and we can easily feel disconnected. This sometimes seems to be the state of “current problems” in human relations.

This course is designed to have us explore some of these problems with a critical eye, and to also explore possible solutions. We will look objectively at many of the social and interpersonal conflicts that plague us. We will look at where we seem to have resolved some of the conflicts, and how that has happened. We will explore areas where we, as HR professionals, might have some leverage in reducing conflict and stress and hatred. We will analyze how social policy is formulated and implemented. We will explore notions of community and of positive social action. In a small group exercise, you will have an opportunity to formulate plans to confront a social problem.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:

Dates: February 2-8, 2015
Location: Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, Nevada. See Site Director for classroom location.
Hours: Mon-Fri 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sat 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sun 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: January 4, 2015

Site Director:
Tracey Hatter. Phone: 702-643-5354; E-mail: apnellis@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Peter C. Vail, M.Ed
Mailing Address: 1932 Shelby Court
Norman, OK 73072
Telephone Number: (405) 364-9307 (home and office)
E-mail Address: pvail@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

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 Follett textbook manager by phone (405) 325-3511, (800) 522-0772 (toll-free) or email 0831rmgr@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.


2. Other texts as outlined below: see Post Seminar assignment (student choices to be made from the list provided.

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.

**Course Objectives:**

The objectives of this course are for students to:

1. read about, analyze, and discuss several pressing social problems in America today;
2. identify conditions and contexts which underlie some of these societal problems;
3. learn how to analyze current human relations problems using an orderly, systematic, and objective framework;
4. investigate and propose possible solutions or approaches for solving complex social problems; and
5. use the classroom as a scholarly and academic forum for dialogue about human relations problems and solutions.

**Course Outline (generally, what we will cover each day):**

My classes are constructed on the premise that students have much to add to the knowledge of the course topic. While I will present some lecture, I will also include some exercises and activities, and will encourage and promote dialogue and discussion during each class.

**Monday:**

- Overview of course, expectations, grades
- The study of social and human relations problems and issues
- The need for a theoretical base
- Methods to conduct research on social problems
- The role of values in social issues – both in problem identification and in solutions

Form working groups; get group assignment

**Tuesday:**

- Culture and Values
- Immigration
- Family and gender

Time for group work

**Wednesday:**

- Race and ethnicity
- Economics and Inequality, Work, Poverty and Affluence

Time for group work

**Thursday:**

- Crime and Justice
- Health and related issues
- Education
Time for group work

Friday:

- Environment and Global Issues
- Technology/Biotechnology
- Other issues:

Time for group work
Begin group reports

Saturday:

- Aging
- Death and dying
- Isolation
- Intolerance

Finish group reports
Discussion and wrap-up

Sunday:

Final Exam

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Students are expected to have perused the Finsterbusch book prior to the first meeting of class. You don’t have to read all the chapters in depth and remember all the content, but you should be familiar with what has been written. The chosen book for the Post Seminar assignment may be read before class, but it is not necessary. All papers should follow APA guidelines.

Attendance and Participation

Students must attend all classes, be actively involved in the course, and present the results of a small group assignment to the rest of the class before the end of the week. (Each student is required to make part of the team presentation). Time will be given within the class schedule for groups to work on the assignment. Any absence from class should be discussed with the instructor before that class period. Excused absences are acceptable with prior approval and (usually) a make-up assignment. This will constitute 30% of your grade.

Assignment due first day of class:

On the first day of class, bring typed papers relating to four chapters of the Finsterbusch text (approximately two to three pages). The chapters (issues) are to be your choice – issues that are of interest to you, or that you would like to learn more about. At the end of each chapter, there are two or three questions posed by the author/editor, under the heading Critical Thinking. Your papers should address those questions, and should present your argument in reference to the questions. Support your arguments with other research or other articles, and cite your references. Please do not simply write an “opinion” piece – your opinion can and should be included, but should be supported by some sort of data and findings, and if appropriate, your own experience. Be sure to include your name on the paper, as well as the title of the chapters you are covering in the text. This critique constitutes 25% of your grade.

Final exam:

Given on the final day of class. 20% of your grade.

Post Seminar Assignment:

Select one book from the following list of books, choosing a topic that is of some interest to you. A different book may not be substituted without prior approval by the instructor. These books are relatively short, they are not overly “academic” in their style, and each pertains to a relevant area of current
problems in society and in human relations. These books should be available through the Follett/AP bookstore, or at a bookstore on base, or through an internet provider (e.g. Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com or a similar provider).

Write a 5 to 7 page typed review of the book, with your own critical analysis of the content and/or the methodology, and then write your reaction to the book. Relate your own personal experiences in the topic area, and discuss biases and prejudices you might have discovered or perceived. You should also include in your paper a discussion of the most important point(s) you learned from this book. This paper is due no later than 21 days after the last day of class (but can be turned in anytime). This paper constitutes 25% of your grade. (These books are not provided by Advanced Programs.)

- “The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community”, 1996. Mary Pipher. Immigration, emigration, and mental health
- “There are no Children Here”, 1992. Alex Kotlowitz. Poverty, family, education, urban problems
- “I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban”, 2013 Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb. Education, Women's Rights, Freedom

The following gives you a flavor of articles that can be obtained online, and a few other sources.

From http://www.theatlantic.com/
- “Is Facebook Making Us Lonely” May, 2012 Loneliness, Isolation
- “All the Single Ladies” Nov. 2011 Marriage, Family
- “Why Women Can’t Have it All” July/Aug. 2012 Women, Work
- “The Case for Reparations” June, 2014 Race Relations

From http://www.tnr.com/articles (The New Republic)
- “Deal with It” June 2012 Aging and Dying

From http://www.newyorker.com/talk/comment/2010/09/20
- “Intolerance” Sept. 20, 2010 Intolerance

Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>All class sessions</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Paper</td>
<td>First day of class</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Last class session</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post seminar assignment</td>
<td>March 1, 2015</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In order to make a C or lower in this class,** students should read the texts assigned (or not), miss some of the class meetings (without excuse), minimally participate in class discussions and activities, and not
participate (no participation or total absence helps one reach D or F level), be late with the paper due the first night of class (without excuse), and/or do only the minimal requirements of that paper, perform below passing on the final exam, and not do, or do only the minimal assigned work on the post seminar paper.

**In order to make a B in this class,** students should read the texts assigned, attend all class meetings (pre-excused absences can be arranged), participate fully in class discussions and activities, submit all papers on time, and perform at passing level on the final exam.

**In order to make a A in this class,** students should read all the texts assigned, attend and fully participate in class discussions and activities (with the same “rules” as above for excused absences), and submit all papers on time (or before), and perform at above-passing level on the final exam. An A grade will be earned specifically through outstanding class participation and contribution, and through original and creative thinking and analysis in the written papers.

**Note:** it was earlier noted that all papers should follow APA style. In addition, all papers should have been proofed and spell-checked and grammar-checked before being turned in. Grades can be negatively affected by sloppy work.

**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.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

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. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

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

Peter C. Vail, M.Ed.

Education

- BA in Psychology - Bowling Green State University
- M. Ed. in Education - Bowling Green State University
- Additional graduate courses in Public Administration, The University of Oklahoma

Current Positions

- Advanced Programs Professor since 1996
- Director (Retired), Executive Training and Team Quest, University of Oklahoma
- Adjunct Professor, College of Liberal Studies, University of Oklahoma
- Adjunct Professor and Contract Trainer, Oklahoma City Community College

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- International Training & Development
- Current Problems in Human Relations
- Presentation Skills for the Human Relations Professional

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

Current member, Past President and Board Member of the Central Oklahoma Chapter of ASTD
Member, ASTD (American Society for Training and Development)

Representative Publications and Presentations

- Has conducted training and consulting throughout the United States, Trust Territories, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico.
- Has made presentations in several national and regional conferences, including the 1996 American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) International Conference.
- Has been involved in planning and managing several national conferences.
- Conduct ongoing leadership and related training through Oklahoma City Community College.
- Has conducted training for the U.S. Postal Service, the U. S. Army Defense Ammunition Center, the Transportation Security Administration, Diamond Offshore Drilling Corporation, Devon Energy Corporation and many other public and private organizations.