Course Title: Special Topics/Seminar: Cultural Diversity

Course Number: HR 5970-431

Course Description:
The necessity for self-awareness and sensitivity when working with diverse populations is critical to
effective human relations practice. In this course students will focus on how diversity issues pertaining
to race, gender, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation impact various people in society and influence daily
events, finances, family, community, the state, and their world. By learning more about the heritage,
tradition, experience and relationships of diverse groups, students will develop a deeper understanding of
various population groups and strategies for crafting a more empowered, relational community.

Course Dates: March 14 - April 30, 2012

Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: March 14, 2012

Site Director:
Please see your local Site Director or e-mail Carolyn Taylor at cataylor@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Dorscine Spigner Littles, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma
Department of Human Relations
601 Elm, PHSC 704
Norman, OK 73019

Telephone Number: (405) 325-1756
FAX Number: (405) 325-4402
E-mail Address: dslittles@ou.edu

Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students during the above
listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900
Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion.bkstr.com or by telephone
at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to
oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through
Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may
be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-1557 (outside the U.S.).

Columbus, OH: McGraw Hill. ISBN 9780078050046. (Text prices are available online.)

(Text prices are available online.)
Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore 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 the Follett/AP Bookstore.

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/ or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

Course Objectives:
• To understand why diversity and multiculturalism are such critical issues in contemporary society.
• To understand how diversity concepts operate at the individual, familial, and societal levels.
• To contrast cultural and historical perspectives of various groups to increase knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to work and live in a multicultural and pluralistic society.
• To apply critical thinking to the political/historical/geographical manifestations of diversity issues within and between groups.
• To make a distinction between individual change and social change as it relates to diversity.

Course Outline:
1. Read the two books listed above.
2. Complete the written assignments described below.
3. Integrate new knowledge and skills into the current life-world.

Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:
The bulk of the learning experience in this course is derived directly to the reading and study of the assigned texts. However, to be useful, new knowledge must be beneficial to self and others. The following assignments are designed with that idea in mind:
1. Read each assigned textbook.
2. Write a four to five page (minimum) critique of the Kottak and Kozaitis textbook (not a book report). The critique should be a professional account of the value the book has for HR as a discipline and as an area of practice. In the critique, discuss what you believe are the important ideas in the book, why these ideas might be useful in Human Relations, and how they might specifically be applied in a particular setting. Also, identify ways in which these ideas (or methods) might be taught to others.
3. Select four issues from the Taking Sides textbook and using the Analysis Report Form critically analyze each of the four issues. (This should be four separate reports.)
4. Write a paper from personal experience on what it means to be "female," "Chinese," "Black," “White”, “male”, “able-bodied” or other identification descriptors and relate that back to the course materials. Paper should be 5-7 pages in length and in APA format.

Student Evaluation: Student performance is evaluated based on the quality of the written assignments as they reflect how well the student read the material and how well he or she is able to describe the “lessons learned” in a timely manner. Written assignments received after the due date will not be considered in the grading.
Grading: This course is graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (S/U). A grade of S is equivalent to B or better.

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.
Using Taking Sides:

Questions to Ask When Examining a Position:

It is vital to learn how to evaluate an argument calmly and objectively. Discussing the following questions will help. These questions will enable you to break down an argument into its component parts, thereby avoiding the common tendency to be swayed by a presenter’s delivery techniques or by one’s own set of biases and opinions.

Question: How Empirical Is the Presentation?

The most persuasive argument is the one that supports its thesis by referring to relevant, accurate, and up-to-date data from the best sources possible. One should investigate the credibility of the author, how recent the material is, the type of research (if any) that supports the position outlined, and the degree of documentation behind any argument. Empiricism implies going to the best source for material. Original research material is preferable to secondary sources, which in turn are preferable to hearsay.


A fact is a statement that can be proven. In contrast, an opinion is a statement that expresses how a person feels about an issue or what someone thinks is true. Many authors blend fact and opinion; it is the responsibility of the critical thinker to discriminate successfully between the two.

This process of discrimination often ties in with the concept of empiricism. Facts are generally empirically determined from research. They are documented and can be known or observed by other people. Facts can be verified in other sources or can be replicated by other research. Good facts should be most convincing in any issue.

Opinions should carry less weight in evaluating an argument. While the writer may believe them to be true, opinions are a product of the writer’s biases and personal system of beliefs. While many opinions make good sense and may win a reader’s approval, they must still be classified as mere opinions if there is no factual evidence supporting them. Opinion may, in fact, be entirely correct, but generally it still should be viewed with less trust than facts.

Some statements contain both fact and opinion. For example, research has demonstrated that animals living in crowded cages show more aggressive behavior than those living in less crowded cages. A statement such as "Overcrowding of people in slum areas will foster high levels of aggression, rape, and child abuse in the same way that one sees in caged animals" contains elements of both opinion and fact.

Question: Is Propaganda Being Used?

Propaganda is information presented in order to influence a reader. It is not necessarily "good" or "bad." Many authors consciously use propaganda techniques in order to convince their readers of their special point of view. A close look at the author’s background or some of the motivations and editorial policies of the source of the publication may provide clues about what types of propaganda techniques might be used.

Question: What Cause/Effect Relationships Are Proposed?

Much material is written to establish or advance a hypothesis that some circumstances "cause" specific things to happen. Experiments often consist of searching for cause/effect relationships. Scientists seem to be linking more and more observations with their antecedent causes. Students should note when an issue has at its heart a disputed cause/effect relationship; isolating the claim and examining the relationship is the readers' responsibility.
Question: Are These Cause/Effect Relationships Merely Correlations?

Many cause/effect statements are flawed because no appropriate research or evidence has isolated a single cause. There may be other hidden factors underlying the relationship. A good example is this statement: "Birds fly south in winter because it gets cold in northern areas." This statement is plausible, and many readers would accept it because it "makes sense." Data exist to show a relationship between temperature and bird population density: population decreases as temperature decreases. However, no experiment has conclusively established that temperature is a causative factor of bird migration. Alternative hypotheses may very well also explain the behavior. Food supplies may become scarce during low-temperature periods, breeding instincts may precipitate migration, or the birds may simply want a change of scenery! If sufficiently controlled experiments could rule out these alternative hypotheses, the cause/effect statement could be made. As it is, a simple correlation (statement of coincidence) is all that remains: "Birds fly south at the same time that the weather turns cold." It would even be possible (although not very plausible) with the observed data to infer the opposite causation: "It turns cold in the northern latitudes because the body heat from migrating birds is no longer present!"

Students should be made aware that faulty cause/effect statements may be a major source of confusion and misdirection used by authors to defend their points of view. In some cases, the faulty cause/effect proposition is the only rationale used by an author. A good technique for analyzing this sort of error is to have the students try to generate alternative plausible hypotheses for any proposed cause/effect relationship.

Question: Is Information Distorted?

Many authors, in an attempt to produce facts to substantiate their positions, quote statistics and research that support their viewpoints. All of these statements of facts may be biased. "Statistics don't lie--statisticians do" is a truism. Students should always question the bias involved in obtaining and presenting data. If averages are given, ranges and standard deviations should be evaluated critically. One interesting question that can be raised is: What statistics or data are missing? If a simple survey could be done (in lieu of a statement such as "Most Americans believe that . . ."), why was such an easily supportable piece of data not produced?

Students should learn not to be too easily impressed by statistical data. Tabulated numbers or graphs may only reflect opinions.

Question: Are Analogies Faulty?

Many authors make much of analogies as they attempt to prove their theses. An analogy is a comparison of a hypothesis (which is unproven) to a known set of causal events. For example, a statement such as "The United States should not be getting involved in Central American politics; we will have another fiasco as we did in Vietnam" uses an analogy. However true the second part of the sentence may or may not be; it should not necessarily be accepted as a demonstration of the truth of the first part of the sentence. Analogies usually ignore many differences (in this example, differences in military position, geographic location, political motivation, and other factors) that make the current situation unsuitable for comparison and render the analogy worthless.

Question: Is the Author Oversimplifying the Issue?

Authors generally try to show their theses in the best possible light and to discredit opposing viewpoints. When authors are so single-minded as to completely ignore opposite viewpoints, they probably are guilty of oversimplification.

It may be argued, for example, that bilingual education has been shown to be beneficial for students. However, if data are presented without a discussion of the many social ramifications of bilingual education programs, the argument has not answered all of the important questions.
**Question: Is the Author Stereotyping?**

This sort of logical flaw is similar to the cause/effect flaw. The authors may have observed some general behavior; they then may attempt to apply this general behavior (which may or may not be true) to a specific individual or situation. For example, if an author asserts that American cars are inferior to foreign cars (which may or may not be true), he or she might not establish that any particular American car is truly inferior. Each point should be analyzed as it is empirically observed, not as it is grouped with other observations.

**Question: Are There Faulty Generalizations?**

In the case of a faulty generalization, a judgment is based on inaccurate or incomplete information. For example: "Ducks and geese migrate south for the winter; therefore, all birds migrate south for the winter."

In presentations, many subtle forms of inappropriate generalizations may occur. The most common form concerns research in one area being applied to other areas (as in a faulty analogy). For example: "The brain deals in electric potentials. Computers deal with electric potentials. We can thus say that the brain is a computer."

Another example of a faulty generalization is when an author observes only one event or cites only one case study and infers that this applies to many other phenomena. Sigmund Freud could be considered guilty of this--his theories of behavior are derived from only a few published observations of individual case studies.
TAKing Sides AnalySIS report

Name: _______________________________________________________________________________
Course: _______________________________________________________________________________
Book: _______________________________________________________________________________
Issue: ___________________________ Title of Issue: _________________________________________

1. Author and major thesis of the yes side. _________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

2. Author and major thesis of the no side. ________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

3. What fallacies of question-framing are made by the authors of the text? _______________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

4. Briefly state in your own words two facts presented by each side. ____________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Briefly state in your own words two opinions presented by each side. _______________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

7
6. Briefly identify as many fallacies on the **Yes** side as you can. ______________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

7. Briefly identify as many fallacies on the **No** side as you can. ______________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

8. All in all, which author impressed you as being the most empirical in presenting his or her thesis? Why?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

9. Are there any reasons to believe the writers are biased? If so, why do they have these biases?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

10. Which side (Yes or No) do you personally feel is most correct now that you have reviewed the material in these articles? Why?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________
Writing Book Critiques

The ability to read critically is a skill that serves those in many different fields and occupations. One way to develop this skill is to write critiques of scholarly works. A book critique is not simply a synopsis of the content of the book. It is rather a critical appraisal or assessment of the author's viewpoint, argument, use of sources, style, and presentation. Below are some tips to help you with the critique.

- Your book critique should begin with a full bibliographic citation at the top of the first page, letting your reader know exactly what book you are reviewing. This includes author's name, title, city, publisher, edition (if it is not the first one), translator (if any), year.

- Identify the author's thesis or main theme. What critical question does the author address? What is his or her motive for writing the book and what is the author trying to accomplish? What exactly is the author trying to say in this book? This information is often expressed in the preface or introduction of the book, which you should always read first.

- What is the author's background and perspective? What kinds of source materials does the author rely on? When was the book written? This information, which is also often found in the introduction, helps give context to the work under review.

- Summarize, briefly, the evidence the author presents. How does the author support his or her thesis? This may require a brief discussion of the contents of the book. You should not spend too much time on the summary, as the bulk of the critique should deal with your own appraisal of the work.

- Do you feel the author succeeded in making his or her argument? Do you agree with the author's thesis? Why? Do you disagree? Why? What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the book? Are there any glaring errors or omissions? Is the book useful?

Here are some things to avoid in writing book critiques:

- **Do not waste time on needless or extravagant claims about the book or the author.** For example, it is a cliché to write that an author is "well qualified" to write a book. Avoid lengthy comments about the style of the book and generalizations such as "this book is very interesting" or "very boring." It is fine to say that the style is good or bad, interesting or tedious, however, if you do comment on the style, be specific.

- **Do not feel compelled to say something negative about the book.** If you disagree with the author's argument or find it weak, say so, but do not feel that you are obliged to say something bad about the book. Do not waste time on petty complaints, which only make the reviewer look foolish or unfair.

- **Quote selectively from the book you are reviewing.** Quotations give some tone of the original and may express author's thoughts or ideas in an efficient way. Do not over-quote, however, which deducts from the value of the review. When you do quote from the book, be sure to cite the appropriate pages in parentheses (33-34).
Practical Tips for Critical Reading:

- Always read the acknowledgements, preface, foreword, introduction, etc. These first elements of a book tell you many important things—the scholarly influences on an author's work, his/her purpose, questions, thesis, and method. You will most often find these essential "signposts" to a book's contents in the preface, introduction, or first chapter, so read these sections especially closely. When highlighting or taking notes from a book, train yourself to underline or take note of claims or arguments the author makes, not bits of information. It is much more important to be able to trace the argument when writing a review than to look through your copy of a book and see only highlighted facts and examples. It's how the author uses the sources, not how interesting they are that counts!

- Introduction - Try to capture the reader’s attention with your opening sentence. The introduction should state your central thesis, and set the tone of the review.

Outline your answers to the following questions:

1. What is the author’s purpose and thesis?
2. What is the author’s method? Sources? Theory?
3. What does the author do well? What points are strongest?
4. What are some of the book's weaknesses? How do these weaknesses detract from the book’s overall goals?
5. How does the book contribute to the field?
6. What are the potential audiences for this book, or, who would most benefit from reading it?

Questions to ask yourself:

- Does my introduction clearly set out who the author is, what the book is about and what I think about the value of the book?
- Have I clearly presented all the facts about the book: title, author, publication details, and content summary?
- Is my review well organized with an easily identifiable structure?
- Have I represented the book's organizational structure and argument fairly and accurately?
- Have I presented evidence from the book to back up statements I have made about the author, his/her purpose and about the structure, research and argument of the book?
- Have I presented a balanced argument about the value of the book for its audience? (Harsh judgments are difficult to prove and show academic intolerance.)

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).

Important information you should know about online courses:

- To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), go to www.learn.ou.edu and log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look on the right-hand side for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

- Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire2Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm

- If the course is using a course website, you will find a link for the website on the first page of this syllabus. Please click on this link to start your course.

- Course Materials are available at Follett/AP Bookstore. On this syllabus you will find a link to the Follett Bookstore.

- If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, please contact your Site Director. You can drop a course without a penalty up to the add/drop date. Courses dropped after the add/drop date may result in a penalty.

- After the class has started, you can only withdraw from the course with the professor’s permission; you will not receive a refund for your tuition. You can only drop without a penalty after the add/drop date by providing proper documentation and receiving approval from the Advanced Programs Theater Director. Provide this documentation to your Site Director.
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.

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. 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 Honesty**

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at [http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity)

**Accommodation Statement**

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your 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.

**Copyright**

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/](http://www.goou.ou.edu/)
INSTRUCTOR VITA

Dorscine Spigner-Littles, Ph.D.

Education

1985 Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, University of Oklahoma

Current Positions

- Advanced Programs Professor since 1994
- Associate Professor, Department of Human Relations, University of Oklahoma

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- HR 5033 Leadership in Organizations
- HR 5083 Seminar In Group Dynamics
- HR 5093 Introduction to Graduate Studies in Human Relations
- HR 5113 Racial Diversity In Organizations

Representative Publications and Presentations


Representative Honors and Awards Received

- Appreciation Award, Minority Graduate Student Association, 1993
- Outstanding Young Woman of America Award, 1982
- Minority High Academic Achievement Award, 1977-80

Major Professional Affiliations

- National Research Conference on African and African American Studies
- Strategic Planning Committee Research and Graduate Programs
- Quarterly Forum on Issues Facing the African American Community
- General Education Committee
- African American Studies Committee