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

Course Title:
Current Problems in Human Relations

Course Number:
HR 5013-101

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 and how we have attempted to resolve some of the conflicts, and what the results seemed to bring. 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: January 4-6 & 11-13, 2013
Location: 3281 Sheridan Road, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
Hours: Fri 5:30-9:00 p.m., Sat 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Sun 12:00-4:00 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: December 6, 2012

Site Director:
Anita Bailey. Assistant: Nasaussja Thomas. Phone: 580-355-1974; Fax: 580-442-2741; E-mail: apftsill@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: Peter C. Vail, M.Ed
Mailing Address: 1932 Shelby Court
Norman, OK 73071
Telephone Number: (405) 364-9307
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 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 405-325-7140 (outside the U.S.). (Text prices are available online.)

2. Other texts and sources as outlined below: see post-course assignment (student choices to be made from a list provided).

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.

**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:**
My classes are constructed on the premise that students have much to add to the knowledge about 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.

I. Friday
   a. Overview of course, expectations, grades
   b. The study of social and human relations problems and issues
   c. The need for a theoretical base
   d. The role of values in social issues – both in problem identification and in solutions
   e. Form working groups; get group assignment

II. Saturday:
   a. Culture and Values
   b. Immigration and Human Trafficking
   c. Family
   d. Time for group work

III. Sunday:
   a. Gender
   b. Race and Ethnicity
   c. Economics and Inequality, Work, Poverty and Affluence
   d. Time for group work

IV. Friday:
   a. Crime and Justice
   b. Health and related issues
   c. Education
   d. Time for group work

V. Saturday:
   a. Environment and Global Issues
   b. Technology/Biotechnology
   c. Other issues:
      i. Aging
      ii. Death and dying
      iii. Isolation
      iv. Intolerance
   d. Time for group work
   e. Begin group reports
VI. Sunday:
   a. Finish group reports
   b. Discussion and wrap up
   c. Final Exam

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Students are expected to have read the Finsterbusch book prior to the first meeting of class. The chosen book or article for the post-course assignment may be read before class, but it is not necessary. All papers should follow APA guidelines.

1. 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. (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.

2. Pre-course assignment: On the FIRST DAY of class, bring a typewritten paper relating to two chapters of the Finsterbusch text (approximately four to six pages). Note: You may also choose one or two of the additional issues mentioned above to be discussed on the second Saturday of the course. The chapters (issues) are to be your choice – issues that are of interest to you, or that you would like to learn more about. You should include both “Yes” and “No” views in your paper, but you may present your own informed opinion. In order to do this paper, you should have read the Introduction and the appropriate chapters carefully. In your paper, address the following: 1) in your own words, describe the issue and the two approaches taken by the authors in discussing both sides. State which perspective might be your bias, and why it might be, and present your argument for your position (as if you were preparing for a debate). If you can enhance your argument by referencing any other books, articles, or evidence, all the better. If you select issues not in the text, be sure to include references from other books, articles, or research sources. Your paper should be titled, and be sure to include your name on the paper. This critique constitutes 20% of your grade.

3. Final exam: - given on the final day of class. 25% of your grade.

4. Post-course Assignment: Select one book or article from the following list; choosing a topic that is of some interest to you (topics are listed in bold). A different book may not be substituted without prior approval by the instructor. These books and articles are relatively short, they are not overly “academic” in their style, and each pertains to a relevant area of current problems in society and human relations. The books should be available through an internet provider (e.g. Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com or a similar provider). I have given you the websites for the online articles.

Write a 5 to 7 page typed review of the book and the issue, 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 any time before). This paper constitutes 25% of your grade.

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

- “Is Facebook Making Us Lonely” May 2012. Loneliness, Isolation
- “All the Single Ladies” Nov. 2011. Marriage, Family
- “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All” July/Aug. 2012. Women, Work
- “Can the Middle Class be Saved” Sept. 2011. Stratification

- “Deal With It” June, 2012. Aging and Dying

From [www.newyorker.com/talk/comment/2010/09/20](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.

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-course paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-course assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**In order to make a C or lower in this class,** students should read the texts assigned (or not), miss 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 pre-course paper due the first night of class, 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-course 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 minimally 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. Reading and citing references beyond what is required helps attain an A grade, as does the quality of the references.

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. 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

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

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/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Peter C. Vail, M.Ed.

Education

• BA in Psychology - Bowling Green State University
• M. Ed. in Education - Bowling Green State University

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, 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

• Past President and Board Member of the Central Oklahoma Chapter of ASTD
• Member, ASTD (national)
• National Council on Rehabilitation Education

Representative Publications and Presentations

• Has conducted training and consulting throughout the United States, in the 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-scope conferences.