Core Course Information

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Students will enhance their intellectual skills and develop a deeper sense of personal and social responsibility, through exploration of diversity in US society and culture; creative reflection on their own identities and relationships; cross-cultural awareness of equality, justice, progress, and freedom; and the study of ethical issues from proficient perspectives. The course will focus on diversity and expose students to some of the multicultural factors that contribute to the life-course: the socialization differences and the "life-chance" differences that may follow ethnic, racial and/or minority status, including gender.

Please note: This course is an environment where all identities are respected.

In this course, you will:

1. Be able to define/ distinguish: prejudice, discrimination, multiculturalism, ageism, sexism, and ethnocentricity

2. Discover and explore diversity in society including demographic trends toward the future. Ask deeper questions about cultural issues and seek out answers to these questions

3. Become aware of/ creatively reflect on students’ own identities and relationships with others

4. Develop cross-cultural perspectives of social justice, equality, and progress

5. Pursue self-directed and intentional multicultural learning by identifying and illustrating/ examining and supporting the cultural values of at least one population group that, due to this class, the student newly experienced

The course has, as its central focus, the culture and current circumstances of non-dominant groups in the United States. We examine diversity within the complex system of U.S. society; issues of ageism, prejudice, ethnocentricity, minority status, and discrimination are explored and subsequently evaluated. This subject matter requires students to investigate and reconstruct their observations about identities, and the structure of the assignments encourages and challenges students to synthesize and integrate these concepts together with their classmates and ultimately for themselves.

TOPICAL OUTLINE:

Orientation and The Danger of a Single Story
Attitudes about Aging
Aging Issues
Gender Issues
Sexuality
Racial and Ethnic Inequities
Cognitive Changes
Demographics and Education
Health Outcomes and Disparities
Socioeconomic Status and its Influences
Urban and Rural Issues
Work and Retirement

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN COURSE:

Teaching allows me to fulfill what I believe to be a fundamental responsibility of gerontologists: to communicate information to individuals so they can better understand and make informed decisions regarding our aging society. Students should (and I hardly ever use that word) understand the relevance of gerontology to their lives. I also want students to leave this class with an increased appreciation for, and sensing the inherent value in, diversity – biological and otherwise. I am a proponent of active learning and use a variety of methods to encourage discussion and interaction on the issues the course presents. Students are also empowered to take responsibility for their own learning and growth instead of regurgitating information on exams. Allowing students to express themselves informally through journal writing and other forms affords me the opportunity for a more complete assessment of a student’s ability than would be possible by relying only on a combination of formal examinations.

EXAMS/MAJOR ASSIGNMENT PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE:

All assignments are due per week. The course is asynchronous and online so you do not need to plan on specific dates for classes. It is expected that you log in several times a week. All modules are unlocked from the beginning of the course, and all assignments are due on Fridays at 11 am. The final assignment, as well as any late work, will be due on Friday Dec 8th by 11 am.
REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED COURSE MATERIALS:

A collection of readings specifically chosen for this course consisting of open electronic record books, selected journal articles, book chapters, and reports are all available through Canvas.