

Liberal Studies Program

Learning Outcomes and Writing Expectations

SEMINAR ON MULTICULTURALISM IN THE U.S.

Approved by LSC in 2014, FC in 1/2015 and Provost in 3/2015

The Seminar on Multiculturalism in the U.S. seeks to foster social awareness by providing opportunities to identify and go beyond binary thinking and to connect individual experience with that of others. It seeks to make students aware of social conditions in the United States while making connections to global issues. By emphasizing seminar-style learning, this course seeks to cultivate critical thinking, deepen understanding of historical and contemporary inequality, and prioritize important values - including respect for differences, social justice, and recognition of our common humanity.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand the historical debates about and values of multiculturalism. The course will compare at least three different dimensions of multiculturalism, such as ethnicity, race, gender, class, language, and sexuality.
2. Students will develop, through self-reflection and critical analysis, alternative perspectives on the historical roots of inequality along with an understanding of the lasting effects of oppression on marginalized groups.
3. Students will be able to critically analyze multiple sources of information (from, for example, relevant databases and other reference works, primary and secondary sources, community knowledge, etc.) in order to form clear, concise arguments about multicultural issues and to interpret evidence from a variety of points of view.
4. Students will be able to advance collective intellectual understanding —through discussion, group work, active listening and speaking — and use information to address problems and issues related to social inequality, conflict and diversity.

Writing Expectations

Students should develop as critical writers and thinkers, building on skills acquired during their first year. Each course should be writing intensive, with students producing at least 20 pages of writing in total. Assignments should have clear objectives and may include both shorter and more sustained assignments (for example, journals, response papers, field reports, analytical essays, research papers, summaries of articles, creative writing assignments, etc.). Of these, one should be a substantial, thesis-driven piece of writing. In addition, writing intensive courses should include some discussion and attention to the process of writing, whether through revision, peer editing, modeling or other focused attention on the development of writing skills.