

Proposal Information

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General Education Goals

Cultural - World Perspectives

These courses are meant to help students understand the perspectives and ways of life of people in societies located primarily outside the United States. Courses in this designation provide students with a basis for understanding and interpreting the variety of world cultures, institutions, societies, and issues.

All courses in the World Perspectives category include the following content:

1. Examine how culture affects people's efforts to understand, use, and survive in their environments, and how these efforts, in turn, affect culture.
2. Examine within a cultural context the world views, language, or ways of life of societies, nations, regions, or peoples located outside of the United States.

Content Goals

Explain how you will teach and measure the following student learning outcomes.

1. Examine within a cultural context the world views, language, or ways of life of societies, nations, regions, or peoples located outside of the United States.

A. Teach

B. Measure

2. Examine how culture affects people's efforts to understand, use, and survive in their environments, and how these efforts, in turn, affect culture.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Critical and Creative Thinking uses systematic reasoning to examine and evaluate ideas, leading to new ways of thinking or doing.

People with a general education think logically and creatively. Expressiveness, imagination, and originality are needed for innovation. Innovative ideas must be subject to critical evaluation, which involves distinguishing information, judgment, and assumption; evaluating evidence and the logic of arguments; identifying and assessing differing perspectives and assumptions; and reasoning systematically in support of arguments.

Students who have critical and creative thinking skills can:

- assess differing perspectives and assumptions
- evaluate evidence and the logic of arguments
- formulate novel approaches or create alternative interpretations

Assess differing perspectives and assumptions.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Evaluate evidence and the logic of arguments.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Formulate novel approaches or create alternative interpretation.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Oral Communication is the practice of effectively communicating verbally with a public audience across a variety of contexts.

People with a general education are able to synthesize their knowledge of a subject with their speaking and listening skills to effectively craft a verbal presentation appropriate for a specific situation, purpose, and audience. They understand that effective verbal communication involves a dialogue between speaker and audience and use this knowledge for decision-making about the organization, development, and presentation of appropriate material. They understand that oral communication skills are essential for a knowledgeable speaker to inform, persuade, and inspire audiences.

Students who have oral communication skills can:

- develop content appropriate to the presentation goals
- organize the content in a logical manner appropriate for the intended audience
- demonstrate a range of effective formal and informal presentation skills
- demonstrate evidence of rehearsal through the verbal presentation

Demonstrate a range of effective formal and informal presentation skill.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Demonstrate evidence of rehearsal through the verbal presentation.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Develop content appropriate to the presentation goals.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Organize the content in a logical manner appropriate for the intended audience.

A. Teach

B. Measure

Issues course have a maximum capacity of 40 students.

Issues Course Goals - Sustainability

Explain how you will teach and measure the following student learning outcomes.

1. How the course relates to issues and questions regarding the Issue category.

A. Teach

Sustainability has been defined as a theme within ANT 340 for many years. To begin our examination of sustainability we must first examine what it means. The instructor will present the class with many definitions of sustainability from a variety of perspectives and through class discussion we will examine several critically within the classroom (even Walmart has a definition of sustainability).

One possible definition of sustainability is that it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and humane. Most often, our attention is focused on the first two components of this definition, but in order to truly work towards sustainability, we must also consider the latter two elements. In this course, we will focus on the the social and cultural components of sustainability from differing cultural perspectives.

B. Measure

All students will keep a reflexive journal throughout the semester that requires they consistently reflect on major class topics. Students are asked in the first week of class to examine their relationship with the environment by answering the following question: How do you feel your culture impacts your perception of environmental issues? Students will be asked to add to their consideration of this question, both from a personal perspective, a community and a global perspective through their journal writings.

Students are expected to research and choose two definitions of sustainability that work for them. They must articulate why that definition fits with their personal perspective on the environment (and their culture). When they choose two definitions of sustainability that work for them, they must articulate why that definition fits with their personal perspective on the environment (and their culture) through their journal writing.

We will keep returning to the key ideas of culture, environment and sustainability through various questions that students will consider and reflect on through their journals throughout the semester.

In addition, we will discuss students' definitions with class discussion and it may be integrated as a quiz/midterm exam question.

2. How complementary and competing perspectives covered in the course contribute to the ongoing discussion about the Issue category you selected above.

A. Teach

Attention is focused on how humans have relied on cultural mechanisms in the past and present to adapt and change to their physical and natural environment. We will also confront other "Big Ideas" in ecological studies, such as: Do cultures really evolve by changing their adaptation to environment? Do cultural adaptations become more energy-efficient as they evolve? What is the role of population pressure? What impacts do humans have on their environments? Does the environment shape culture, and if so, how?

I will present various cultural perspectives on these issues. As we define sustainability as ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and humane, we will look not only at the key scientific facts and data but also the social and cultural components, including the humanistic side of the equation. As discussed above, one possible definition of sustainability is that it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and humane. In order to truly work towards sustainability, we must also consider the latter two elements. In this course, we

will focus on the the social and cultural components of sustainability from differing cultural perspectives. Multiple cultural perspectives on major environmental issues will be compared and contrasted through lecture material, textbook and other readings, films and guest speakers.

I will introduce them to regional and global environmental crises, natural resource management and consumption, food and energy production patterns, and the role of particular social strategies (i.e., ideology and religion) from a variety of cultural perspectives. The North American cultural perception of these global issues will be discussed with the students during class and several self reflexive assignments will ask students to consider the influence of their culture on these issues.

B. Measure

Multiple measures will be used to assess student understanding including reading quizzes, exams, reflexive journal writing, class discussion and group presentations.

The first assignment in this class is a consideration of the question: How do you feel your culture impacts your perception of environmental issues? Students are asked to tackle the question through their reflexive journal writing. Consideration of this same question will arise throughout the class through group discussions, further reflections and quizzes or exams.

Students are assigned to groups (4-5) reflecting different academic interests and perspectives (accomplished by in-class survey). Each group will outline the roles (division of labor) and responsibilities for each member and write up a contract that they will all sign and submit to the instructor. This group will work together throughout the semester for two key projects. First, each group will lead a class discussion on the differing cultural perspectives that might impact the issue we are examining, such as population growth. Some researchers call for an all-out effort to lower fertility, particularly in the high fertility countries while others highlight the different ideas on reproduction, fertility and family size that are held by some of these high fertility, non-Western countries. How can we reconcile looming environmental issues such as population pressures while being sensitive to cultural differences? Each student will be expected to bring their own disciplinary perspective to the group consideration of the issue. Groups must consider how these cultural issues impact implementation of solutions.

Second, the group will consider this issue in more depth with a focus on local examples of this environmental issue and will propose possible solutions that consider the cultural context of the issue. The group will do an oral presentation of their issue. A key component of the final project will be a contact/connection with a local environmental/sustainability group, company, organization and/or interest group that relates to the issue. For example, we could consider Planned Parenthood relevant to our local discussion on world population growth (or control). There will be a peer evaluation and class discussion of effectiveness of solutions. In addition, the proposed solutions will be communicated to the local group/organization and feedback/evaluation will be asked from this group as well.

Each of these three student learning outcomes has four related objectives, all of which need to be taught and assessed in your course. Although it is possible that you may teach more than one objective at a time, or assess more than one objective with one measure, please fill in each of the boxes below. (In other words, it is acceptable to use the same language in multiple boxes.)

Collaboration

Collaboration is two or more students working together and sharing the workload equitably as they progress toward shared learning objectives.

Collaboration Objective 1: Students contribute to the development of shared goals within the group.

A. Teach

Collaboration is a key skill that employers in today's working environment recognize and desire. Before and during each activity involving collaboration (small group debates, case studies and final project/presentation) the instructor will explain the value of collaborative work, that is, the sharing of diverse knowledge and expertise. Within the general education program, there is a recognition that students come into the Issues courses from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and there must be a recognition and a valuing of the different viewpoints.

The first assignment for the group is to write a collaborative contract among themselves as to what the expectations and responsibilities are within that group for this class for both of the group assignments. Each student must agree and sign the contract.

B. Measure

Each group must submit their collaborative contract with all group members signatures. This will be graded as complete/incomplete by the instructor.

Collaboration Objective 2: Students contribute their own knowledge and expertise to the group.

A. Teach

Within the general education program, there is a recognition that students come into the Issues courses from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and there must be a recognition and a valuing of the different viewpoints.

Groups will be created by the instructor through a consideration of the background of students (obtained from a quick written survey distributed to the class) so that each group will contain a variety of disciplines, genders, ages and other variables that make up our student body at GVSU. The instructor will discuss the value of including a variety of perspectives in consideration of the issues.

B. Measure

Students are assigned to groups (4-5) reflecting different academic interests and perspectives (accomplished by in-class survey). Each group will outline the roles (division of labor) and responsibilities for each member and write up a contract that they will all sign and submit to the instructor. This group will work together throughout the semester for two key projects. First, each group will lead a class discussion on the differing cultural perspectives that might impact the issue we are examining, such as population growth. Each student will be expected to bring their own disciplinary perspective to the group consideration of the issue and this may be evaluated by what material is being shared on the wikis as students develop their projects and presentations.

Wikis will be created on BB by the instructor for groups to collaborate electronically. These will be set up first privately, with only the group and the instructor having access. As the instructor will have access to the wiki that students are creating and there is a log of contributions from each student, this is a means for the instructor to fairly evaluate students' active and responsible contributions to the group activity.

Collaboration Objective 3: Students participate actively and responsibly in all group activities.

A. Teach

One key way to promote student collaboration and allow students to participate actively and responsibly in all group activities is to enable collaboration from any place and at any time.

Wikis will be created on BB by the instructor for groups to collaborate electronically. These will be set up first privately, with only the group and the instructor having access. The group may decide over the semester if they will make their wiki public to share with the entire class as part of their presentation/discussion of material.

B. Measure

As the instructor will have access to the wiki that students are creating and there is a log of contributions from each student, this is a means for the instructor to fairly evaluate students' active and responsible contributions to the group activity.

Collaboration Objective 4: Students honestly assess their own contributions and the contributions of others.

A. Teach

The instructor will explain the value of collaborative work, that is, the sharing of diverse knowledge and expertise. Within the general education program, there is a recognition that students come into the Issues courses from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and there must be a recognition and a valuing of the different viewpoints.

B. Measure

A large component of the grade (~50%) assigned for group work will be an assessment by the group on each individual's contributions, fulfillment of the original student collaboration contract and how the group worked together.

Students will assess their own contributions and their peers in group projects through written feedback to the instructor that will require students to grade not only on their own contribution to group goals but also on their peer's contributions to the research of the group.

Problem Solving

Problem Solving is the process of designing and evaluating strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve desired goals.

Problem Solving Objective 1: Students construct clear and insightful problem statements that prioritize relevant contextual factors.

A. Teach

Students may feel overwhelmed at the thought of problem solving in this class. It should be recognized that it is not possible to solve global environmental problems and implement global solutions from our classroom. However, this is not the goal. Case studies will be used to consider the whole context of various environmental issues to enable students to prioritize relevant contextual factors. So often our focus on environmental problems is on the economic and ecological aspects that we forget the social and the cultural components that will be so necessary to include in our move towards sustainability.

Multiple cultural perspectives on major environmental issues will be compared and contrasted through lecture material, case study evaluations, textbook and other readings, films and guest speakers.

In addition, we will focus on the identification of local consequences of these issues and discuss local solutions from a variety of disciplinary and cultural perspectives. These solutions may be small scale in relation to the large problems that we are discussing but will emphasize that even small steps are good solutions. Students will be more able to construct clear and insightful problem

statements for these issues on a smaller scale in a context that is closer to their daily experiences. For example, students will calculate their ecological footprint as an assignment in class. Students will be asked to consider what changes are reasonable to make within their current lifestyle.

B. Measure

The group project and its integration of the local perspective will provide students with a more personal and relevant means to construct and respond to the contexts of problem statements and hypotheses about local / global environmental issues. In addition, the reflexive journal will allow students to explore their own perceptions of the integration of these local examples with the global problem as well as what solutions may be more feasible in their own lifestyle.

Problem Solving Objective 2: Students identify multiple approaches for solving the problem within the given context.

A. Teach

Anthropology is a broad discipline that draws on many perspectives from other social sciences, the humanities and the natural sciences. Case studies will first be presented by the instructor that demonstrate multiple approaches for solving environmental issues. The strengths and weakness of the various strategies will be critiqued by the class through class activities and discussion, both in class and on the online discussion boards on Blackboard. In addition, students are encouraged to problem solve incorporating the perspective of their major but also respond to and assess the perspectives of other majors.

B. Measure

The ability of a student to use multiple approaches to solve a problem will be assessed through both components of the group project, active participation in discussions as well as through journaling and a quiz/exam questions.

Problem Solving Objective 3: Students design and fully explain proposed solutions that demonstrate deep comprehension of the problem.

A. Teach

Students may feel overwhelmed at the thought of problem solving in this class. It should be recognized that it is not possible to solve global environmental problems and implement global solutions from our classroom. Deep

comprehension of the problem may result in the initial conclusion that nothing can be done. However, our focus on the identification of local consequences of these issues and the discussion of local solutions from a variety of disciplinary and cultural perspectives will provide a deep consideration of the problem. These solutions may be small scale in relation to the large problems that we are discussing but will emphasize that even small steps are good solutions. The integration of a local community group/organization will provide students with a venue to design and fully explain proposed solution as well as have real-world feedback and assessment of those solutions.

B. Measure

Student groups must prepare their final presentation material to clearly integrate a local perspective into their final research topic. This will require active participation within the local identified group as well as communication of the final product to this group. Feedback and evaluation of the proposed solutions in the final project will be gathered from the local organization.

Problem Solving Objective 4: Students evaluate the feasibility of solutions considering aspects such as the historical context and ethical, legal, or practical impact of potential solutions.

A. Teach

Students may feel overwhelmed at the thought of problem solving in this class. It should be recognized that it is not possible to solve global environmental problems and implement global solutions from our classroom. However, this is not the goal. Case studies will be used to consider the context of various environmental issues including historical context, ethical, legal and certainly practical impact of potential solutions. Anthropology as a discipline considers the social and cultural elements of these aspects. Multiple cultural perspectives on major environmental issues will be compared and contrasted through lecture material, case study evaluations, textbook and other readings, films and guest speakers.

B. Measure

It is expected that both components of the group project will address the feasibility of solutions considering aspects such as the historical context and ethical, legal, or practical impact of potential solutions. In addition, there will be peer evaluation and class discussion of effectiveness of solutions.

Integration

Integration is the process of synthesizing and applying existing knowledge, past experiences, and other perspectives to new, complex situations.

Integration Objective 1: Students draw conclusions from examples, facts, and/or

theories from more than one field of study of perspective.

A. Teach

It is not possible to solve global environmental problems within the context of our classroom. It is possible to identify local consequences of these issues and discuss solutions from a variety of perspectives. Students bring their own disciplinary knowledge and we will examine alternative cultural perspectives of these issues through class readings, films, guest speakers and discussions.

B. Measure

The multidisciplinary nature of the group will present several possible solutions to be integrated both in the leading of in-class discussion and the presentation of the final project. In addition to instructor evaluation of effectiveness of presentation there will be a peer evaluation and class discussion of effectiveness of solutions.

Integration Objective 2: Students must adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methods to explore complex issues in original ways.

A. Teach

Through the identification of local consequences of major environmental issues, the connection with a local organization and a search for local solutions from a variety of disciplinary and cultural perspectives students are being asked to explore complex issues in original ways. The requirement of a link to a local organization is a key component that requires students to get out of the classroom, connect and communicate to a more diverse audience and makes the search for feasible solutions more "real". This is not simply an academic exercise that students are being asked to perform, a real world assessment of solutions will occur as results must be communicated to the local group.

B. Measure

Student groups must prepare their final presentation material to clearly integrate a local perspective into their final research topic. This will require active participation within the local identified group as well as communication of the final product to this group. In addition to instructor evaluation of effectiveness of presentation feedback and evaluation of the proposed solutions in the final project will be gathered from the local organization.

Students will be required to document their involvement/participation in the local organization in their reflexive journals.

Integration Objective 3: Students effectively communicate synthesized knowledge in ways that are inclusive of diverse audiences and perspectives.

A. Teach

A key component of the final project will be a contact/connection with a local

environmental/sustainability group, company, organization and/or interest group that relates to the issue. The instructor provide guidelines for appropriate organizations for this outreach, how to approach these groups effectively and how to integrate the group effectively into the project. Solutions must be presented that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the diverse nature of the community. The instructor will provide feedback and assessment of the final product prior to its dissemination outside the classroom.

B. Measure

Students are assigned two key projects that require oral communication not only to their classmates in the context of the classroom but also to a wider, diverse audience that is identified and integrated during the project. Students are required to take their knowledge outside the classroom as part of their final project. Student groups must prepare their final presentation material to clearly integrate a local perspective into their final research topic. This will require active participation within the local identified group as well as communication of the final product to this group. Feedback and evaluation of the proposed solutions in the final project will be gathered from the local organization.

Integration Objective 4: Students demonstrate self-reflection, building on prior experiences and responding to new and challenging contexts presented in the course.

A. Teach

In asking students to be self reflective, instructors must lead by example. In asking students to calculate and discuss their ecological footprint, I do so as well and discuss my self reflection of that exercise with them. In asking them to consider how to use their consumer voice with power, I discuss with them my personal reasons for boycotting certain companies.

Instructors must provide the challenging contexts to students but also relate the material to student s own lives. Class discussions will provide these challenges. In our discussion of population we might consider: If population growth does indeed have a direct correlation with environmental deterioration, does the government have the right to limit the fertility of a family to benefit the world as a whole? Consider the reaction in the US if the government imposed the one-child policy as was implemented in China in 1979.

B. Measure

All students will keep a reflexive journal throughout the semester that requires they consistently reflect on major class topics. Students will be expected to contribute not only to in class discussions but also to online discussion on the class Blackboard site. As the latter has been used for several years in the class, it is noted that often moving the discussion to this online (and less personal) venue encourages more fruitful discussion and reflection.