# **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Humanities 125**

**Crosscurrents: American Social Values**

1. **Catalog Statement**

Humanities 125 is an interdisciplinary, intercultural, team-taught course designed to enrich students’ knowledge and understanding of American society. Through comparative analyses of readings and materials from literature and various disciplines, students examine the development and current reality of commonly held American ideals, attitudes, and institutions and better comprehend the American balance between freedom and responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills through reading, writing, and discussion.

#### Units – 3.0

Lecture Hours – 3.0

Prerequisite: Eligibility for English 101

1. **Course Entry Expectations**

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Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

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Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. organize and write thesis-based essays
2. use detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support for thesis statements
3. critically analyze selected prose works dealing with important contemporary issues
4. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions
5. gather and organize information through library research
6. demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.
7. **Course Exit Standards**

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. examine many of the bases for important human values that characterize American society,
2. compare and contrast the ideas presented in literature, history, and various other disciplines,
3. analyze, evaluate, synthesize the various currents which have resulted in American values,
4. read critically and write critical, thesis-based essays from rhetorical perspectives,
5. identify and evaluate change and balance as they apply to American values and reach logical conclusions based on these evaluations.

**IV**. **Course Content**

Instruction in each unit of study includes discussion of reading assignments completed independently outside of class and evaluations of writing assignments. Both experiences encourage students to analyze, criticize, synthesize, and propose new ideas about the values presented in literature, history, and various disciplines. Writing assignments emphasize support of theses from rhetorical perspectives, presentation and evaluation of examples, and formulation of logical conclusions.

A. Democracy in America 8 hours

1. Origins and influences
   1. Greece: Solon, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
   2. England: Locke, Wollstonecraft, Mill
2. Major characteristics and movements
   1. Representative government
   2. Separation of church and state
   3. Four freedoms
3. Extension of original concept
   1. Emancipation of blacks
   2. Suffrage for women
   3. Rights of Native Americans
   4. Immigration from Europe and Asia
   5. Civil rights movement of the 1960’s

B. Education in America 8 hours

1. Influences of European models
   1. Greece: Socratic method
   2. England: public school, university, “red brick” university,

trade school

* 1. Continental Europe: university, trade school

1. Changes to accommodate American system
   1. Universal public education
   2. Division of levels
   3. Public and private universities
   4. Academic and vocational

C. Social life and customs in America 8 hours

1. The American heritage
   1. Protestant work ethic
   2. Frontier individualism
   3. Voluntarism and humanitarianism
2. Materialism
   1. Basis for new American class system
   2. Formulas for success: rags to riches; “old boy” system
3. Personal relationships
   1. Challenging authority
   2. Honor vs. face
   3. Confrontation vs avoidance

D. Minorities in the United States 8 hours

1. Definition of a minority
   1. Number and power
   2. Religion; race; ethnic origin; language
2. Specific native and immigrant minorities
   1. Early groups
   2. Late 19th Century groups
   3. Contemporary groups
3. Assimilation vs. insularism
   1. Forced vs. voluntary adaptation
   2. Cultural adjustment problems
   3. Chauvinism

E. Family life in the United States 8 hours

1. Breakdown of the family
   1. Waning of religion
   2. Mobility
   3. Emphasis on individual freedom
   4. Women’s liberation
2. “Publicization” of the American family
   1. Exposure of child abuse; children’s rights
   2. Exposure of spousal abuse; battered spouses’ rights
   3. Loneliness in American society

F. American attitudes toward health 8 hours

1. A sound mind in a sound body; the Puritan ethic
2. The mystique of the doctor
3. The debate over socialized medicine
4. Preventive medicine: the checkup
5. The fitness craze: hypochondria or return to the source?
6. Psychiatry and psychology: respected or distrusted?
7. The psychosis-provoking nature of modern life
8. Awareness and acceptance of mental illness
9. Emphasis on available therapy: clinics; crisis centers; support groups
10. **Methods of Presentation**
11. films, videotapes, audiotapes, slides, and handout materials are used to supplement lectures, discussions, and readings.
12. guest speakers from related disciplines are invited to present special topical material, or the course may be team-taught with several instructors presenting material.
13. students are encouraged to relate what they learn to their own cultures and thus participate in the teaching of the course.
14. **Assignments and Methods of Evaluation**
15. 4-6 essay examinations are administered.
16. written assignments are of sufficient length and complexity to require that students independently select, order, and clearly express their ideas.
17. at least 50% of the grade is based on full-length, thesis-based essay examinations written in class.

**VII**. **Textbooks**

Anaya, Bless Me, Ultima

Boyle, The Tortilla Curtain

Campbell, Bebe Moore, Brothers and Sisters

Cardenas de Dywer, Carlota, Chicano Voices, Houghton Mifflin

Colombo, Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and

Writing,0312447035, Bedford, 2007

Hansburry, Lorraine, A Raisin in the Sun, Penguin

Jen, Typical American, Houghton Mifflin

Kozol, Savage Inequalities

Miller, The Crucible

Naylor, Gloria, The Women of Brewster Place, Viking Penguin

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

1. identify values that characterize American society
2. compare and analyze values expressed in course materials to students own values.