

Critical Global Issues

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Course Description:

Life is an adventure. Insights into global events, along with calculated responses to them, are the basis of developing a successful career and living an extraordinary life. This course is an investigation of critical world issues. Students will learn about cultural diversity, contemporary economic and social concerns, environmental concepts, international and intercultural relations, humanity, and self-exploration.

The course subjects include the following: adventure, exploration, exchange of technology and ideas, economic development, global trade, immigration, inequality, universal human values, empathy, tolerance, political instability, terrorism, disease epidemic and public health, science and religion, conservation, environmental diversity, climate change, natural disasters, the American character, aesthetics, and ethics.

Materials/Text:

No required textbooks. Suggested readings are:

1. Lansky, D. (2013). The Rough Guide first-time around the world: a trip planner for the ultimate journey, 4th ed. New York: Rough Guides
2. Lonely Planet (2008). Lonely Planet bluelist, 3rd ed. Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

Requirements:

1. Regular attendance and participation in class discussion are required.
2. Exercises, homework and assignments must be submitted on time.
3. Mobile phone and electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom.

Schedule:

Class Topics

A. *Of the physical world and human sphere*

- 1 The five dimensions of being, culture and the humanities—art, music, literature
- 2 Exploration, discovery, adventure, resolution, case study: Rough Guide, Lonely Planet,

Charles Lindbergh, moon landing

- 3 Exchange of technology and ideas, technology, innovation, global trade, case study: Marco Polo, Henry Hudson, Christopher Columbus, Jules Verne

B. Economic, social and political interests

- 4 Migration and immigration, collaboration and unity, liberty, poverty, oppression, exploitation, revolution, case study: the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, Che Guevara
- 5 Political instability, terrorism, personal safety, public health, disease epidemic
- 6 Economic powerhouses of the world, case study: the New Seven Wonders of the World, prominent landmarks

C. Cultural concerns

- 7 Cultural heritage, universal human values, pilgrimage, tolerance, crime against humanity, case study: UNESCO World Heritage
- 8 Architecture as understanding of space, case study: I.M. Pei, Antoni Gaudi
- 9 Inequality, empathy, volunteering, the American character, case study: Alexis de Tocqueville

D. Environmental challenges

- 10 Tension between science and religion, case study: Charles Darwin
- 11 Natural history, biodiversity, climate change, conservation, public land management and transfer, case study: Edwin Way Teals, national parks, ecotourism
- 12 Natural disasters

E. Final reflections

- 13 Aesthetics of the physical world, case study: Ando Hiroshige, Vincent van Gogh
- 14 Mortality and eternity, case study: Mishima Yukio
- 15 Ethics, goodwill, spending money as an act of kindness, case study: Ben E. King *stand by me*, Suntory *One Love*

Important Dates

Thursday, July 19, assignment 1 My Seven Places presentations

Wednesday, August 1, assignment 2 In Search of a Legend presentations

Assignments:

Assignment 1: My Seven Places

Travel is an exploration of one's own identity and affirmation of his/her place in the world. This assignment consists of a personal wish-list of global destinations and a self-reflection. The presentation must include the following sections.

1. List seven places you must visit in your lifetime (what and where—city/country).
2. Give a PowerPoint presentation to connect the places to you, i.e., how the seven places show

who you are. The presentation must demonstrate your personal identity through the places. Explore your life experiences, heritage, personality, interest, passion, world view, value, and social/cultural belief. These are the reasons why you choose to visit the seven places. The goal of this assignment is to express yourself as a special person.

Assignment 2: In Search of a Legend

Global issues are the products of human intervention; thus humanity is critical to understanding our world. The lives of legendary persons highlight contemporary humanity issues. To apply this notion, students will select a famous person in history, research his/her contributions to a field of humanity (art, music, literature or science), and demonstrate his/her influences. The assignment consists of four parts: an introduction to the person and his/her unique contribution, a journey in search of the legend, information resources for further understanding of the subject, and a presentation. A proposal is required.

1. A biography: Introduce the person—who, what happened, where. Describe his/her contribution and the essence of humanity. Discuss the inspiration or legacy of the person to the world, i.e., why this person is significant.
2. A tour program: design a trip to best experience the legacy. Include key attractions to visit, unique events to attend, and important activities to do. Think of the program as an itinerary and as if you were to guide the tour.
3. Resources: identify further learning opportunities to advance understanding or appreciation of the legendary person, the places, and the humanity issue. Suggest books, films, Web sites.
4. PowerPoint presentation: quality of the work will be judged on contents, design, and visual appeal.

Evaluation:

Attendance, class discussion, exercise, homework	60%
My Seven Places	20%
In Search of a Legend	20% 100% total

Final grades will be determined by tallying the scores according to their designated weights.