



# EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE of PROFESSIONAL  
and CONTINUING STUDIES

## HR 5013-112: Current Problems in Human Relations

### Course Description:

We humans are social animals. How we get along with each other, and how we adapt to change is key to our survival, our health, our success in careers and in family structures, and in all kinds of roles we play in social settings. But the world seems full of conflict and turmoil these days – from terrorism to racial and ethnic hatred to family dysfunction to breakdown of many social structures, systems, and “rules”. Exclusion frequently seems to outweigh inclusion, and we can easily feel disconnected. This sometimes seems to be the state of “current problems” in human relations.

This course is designed to have us explore some of these problems with a critical eye, and to also explore possible solutions. We will look objectively at many of the social and interpersonal conflicts that plague us. We will look at where and how we have attempted to resolve some of the conflicts, and what the results seemed to bring. We will explore areas where we, as HR professionals, might have some leverage in reducing conflict and stress and hatred. We will analyze how social policy is formulated and implemented. We will explore notions of community and of positive social action. In a small group exercise, you will have an opportunity to formulate plans to confront a social problem

### Class Dates, Location and Hours:

Dates: June 7 – 9 & 14 – 16, 2019

Location: Bldg. 201 SE, Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

Hours: Friday 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: May 9, 2019

### Site Director:

This military installation is not open to the general public. In order to take courses at this installation, students must have a current military or Department of Defense identification card which allows them to access the installation.

Email: [aptinker@ou.edu](mailto:aptinker@ou.edu). Phone: 405-739-7365 or DSN 339-7365.

### Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Peter C. Vail, M.Ed

Mailing Address: 1932 Shelby Court  
Norman, OK 73071

Telephone Number: (405) 364-9307 Cell: (405) 305-4352

E-mail Address: [pvail@ou.edu](mailto:pvail@ou.edu)

Professor availability: The professor will be available via email to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

### Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the OU Bookstore Website at <https://ou.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php>. There is no longer a physical bookstore, the store will remain, but textbooks will not be stocked. The website has book selling, renting, buying, returning, and

order tracking capabilities. If you need help with an order, or if you have any questions contact the toll-free phone at 1-(855)-790-6637, agents are available from 9a – 5p (EST) Monday – Friday. For more information or questions about textbooks, feel free to contact [apsyllabi@ou.edu](mailto:apsyllabi@ou.edu). Text prices are available online

1. Select two books from the list below (under **Assignments, Grading and Due Dates**). Make your selections based on your own interests – the topics of the books are listed in bold type.

### **Course Objectives:**

The objectives of this course are for students to:

1. read about, analyze, and discuss several pressing social problems in America today;
2. identify conditions and contexts which underlie some of these societal problems;
3. learn how to analyze current human relations problems using an orderly, systematic, and objective framework;
4. investigate and propose possible solutions or approaches for solving complex social problems; and
5. use the classroom as a scholarly and academic forum for dialogue about human relations problems and solutions.

### **Course Outline:**

My classes are constructed on the premise that students have much to add to the knowledge about the course topic. While I will present some lecture, I will also include some exercises and activities, and will encourage and promote dialogue and discussion during each class. Below I have indicated how I think the topics will be covered.

- I. Friday
  - a. Introductions, overview of course, expectations, grades
  - b. The study of social and human relations problems and issues
  - c. The need for a theoretical framework
  - d. The role of values in social issues – both in problem identification and in solutions
  - e. Form working groups; get group assignment
- II. Saturday:
  - a. Immigration and emigration
  - b. Family
  - c. Gender
  - d. Human trafficking
  - e. Work, poverty, affluence
  - f. Time for group work
- III. Sunday:
  - a. Race and racism
  - b. Time for group work
- IV. Friday:
  - a. Crime and justice
  - b. Health, substance abuse, etc.
  - c. Education
  - d. Time for group work
- V. Saturday:
  - a. Aging, dying, death
  - b. Technology and human relations
  - c. Environment and global issues
  - d. Time for group work
  - e. Begin group reports
- VI. Sunday:
  - a. Finish group reports
  - b. Discussion and wrap up
  - c. Final Exam

## Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

1. Attendance and Participation. Students must attend all classes, be actively involved in the course, and present the results of a small group assignment to the rest of the class. (Each student is required to make part of the team presentation). Time will be given within the class schedule for groups to work on the assignment. Any absence from class should be discussed with the instructor before that class period. Excused absences are acceptable with prior approval and (usually) a make-up assignment. This will constitute 30% of your grade.
2. **Pre-course Assignment:** Read the books (listed below), and develop and write a paper on each – not a book report, but more like an essay stating what your take on the topic as the author has presented it, and to include most if not all of the following:
  - a. How the topic is important in today’s world as you see it.
  - b. How the topic relates to you; what personal experience you might have with the issue.
  - c. Discuss any biases you feel you might have, or that others have, and how these may distort the problem or make it worse.
  - d. Your interpretation of any broader human relations issues the author touches on.
  - e. Ways you think we might manage these issues in the future.
  - f. Ideas on the issue from other readings and courses you have taken (citations would be useful).

Each paper should be approximately 4 to 6 pages, and is due the first day of the second weekend (but can be turned in early). **Be sure to put your name on each paper!**

**Papers are due Friday of the second weekend of class. .**

These are the books from which to choose. I don’t care whether you purchase them as paper texts or use online materials.

- *Nickel and Dimed* (2001). Barbara Ehrenreich. **Work, poverty, and gender**
  - *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (2016), Mathew Desmond, **Poverty, homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence**
  - *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014). Claudia Rankine. **Race, racism,**
  - *The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community* (1996). Mary Pipher. **Immigration, emigration, and mental health**
  - *Hillbilly Elegy* (2016). J. D. Vance. **Poverty, family, emigration, work**
  - *Being Mortal* (2014). Atul Gawande **Aging, health, death and dying**
  - *Just Mercy* (2015). Bryan Stevenson. **Criminal justice, race, redemption, inequality.**
  - *Critical Condition: How Health Care in America Became Big Business – and Bad Medicine* (2005) Donald L. Bartlett and James B. Steele. **Health care.**
  - *A Crime So Monstrous* (2008) E. Benjamin Skinner. **Human trafficking.**
  - *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood up for Education and was shot by the Taliban.* (2013). Malala Yousafzi and Christina Lamb. **Education, Women’s Rights, Freedom.**
3. **Small group presentations.** Learners will be assigned to small groups to do research and develop a presentation on a relevant current issue in human relations (to be discussed and chosen on the first night of class). Depending on class size, groups are usually 3 to 5 people. Time will be allowed for the groups to clearly define the issue or problem, and to gather data about it, and to develop a proposal to deal with it. Each learner is required to take part in the presentation, and a written outline of the presentation is to be turned in to me when the presentation is made. The outlined is to be signed by each member of the group.

**Grading:**

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
Attendance & participation	35%
Pre-course papers	25%
Final exam	15%
Small group participation	25%

**In order to make a C or lower in this class**, students should read the assigned texts (or not), do partial or minimal work on the papers, miss class meetings (without excuse), minimally participate in class discussions and activities, and not participate (no participation or total absence helps one reach D or F level), be late with the pre-course paper, and perform below passing on the final exam.

**In order to make a B in this class**, students should read the texts they select, write substantive papers on each, attend all class meetings (pre-excused absences can be arranged), participate minimally in class discussions and activities, submit all papers on time, and perform at passing level on the final exam.

**In order to make a A in this class**, students should read the selected texts, write substantive and meaningful papers, attend and fully participate in class discussions and activities (with the same “rules” as above for excused absences), and submit all papers on time (or before), and perform at above-passing level on the final exam. An A grade will be earned specifically through outstanding class participation and contribution, and through original and creative thinking and analysis in the written papers. Reading and citing references beyond what is required helps attain an A grade, as does the quality of the references.

Note: it was earlier noted that all papers should follow APA style. In addition, all papers should have been proofed and spell-checked and grammar-checked before being turned in. Grades can be negatively affected by sloppy work.

**Notice:** Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

## **POLICIES AND NOTICES**

### **Attendance/Grade Policy**

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

### **Academic Integrity and Student Conduct**

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at [http://integrity.ou.edu/students\\_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html)

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

### **Accommodation Statement**

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

### **Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

## **Title IX Resources**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at [smo@ou.edu](mailto:smo@ou.edu) or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

## **Course Policies**

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

## INSTRUCTOR VITA

Peter C. Vail, M.Ed.

### Education

- BA in Psychology - Bowling Green State University
- M. Ed. in Education - Bowling Green State University

### Academic Positions

- Advanced Programs Professor since 1996
- Director (Retired), Executive Training and Team Quest, University of Oklahoma
- Adjunct Professor, College of Liberal Studies, University of Oklahoma
- Adjunct Professor, Oklahoma City Community College
- Adjunct Professor, Texas Tech University

### Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- International Training & Development
- Current Problems in Human Relations
- Presentation Skills for the Human Relations Professional

### Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

- Adult learning and training and human development
- Human intelligence studies
- Vocational rehabilitation

### Professional Affiliations

- Past President and Board member, Central Oklahoma ASTD (American Society for Training & Development)
- National Council on Rehabilitation Education
- Sooner Chapter, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

### Representative Publications and Presentations

- With Gaudet, C., Smith, T., & Conerly, D. *A model for trainer certification*. NABTE Review, 34 (1997).
- Has conducted training and consulting throughout the United States, in the Trust Territories, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico
- Has made presentations in several national and regional conferences, including the 1996 American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) International Conference.
- Has been involved in planning and managing several national-scope conferences
-