HR 5013-111: Current Problems in Human Relations

Course Description:
The United States as well as the global community that we are part of is replete with ever-changing social problems. In this class, we will grapple with some of these issues in order to examine the role of HR professionals in addressing concerns such as racial discrimination, refugees, gender-based violence, and many other pressing and current problems.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:
Dates: April 29 – May 5, 2019
Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: March 31, 2019

Site Director:
Email: apwashington@ou.edu, Phone: 703-418-4800.

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: Zermarie Deacon, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: Department of Human Relations
601 Elm Ave
PHSC 709
Norman, OK 73069
Telephone Number: 405-325-2749
E-mail Address: Zermarie@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail 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. Text prices are available online.

2. Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at https://canvas.ou.edu, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas
Course Objectives:
The goal of this course is to familiarize you with some of the major current problems facing our global population. We will approach our discussion from the perspective of intersectionality, allowing you to develop the skills necessary to analyze these problems taking into consideration the interplay amongst factors such as race, class, gender, nation of origin, etc. Finally, we will begin to grapple with solutions to these concerns. Ideally, you will leave the class better prepared to identify and analyze significant social problems.

Course Outline:
The course will be conducted in a series of lectures, interactive group discussion, and media presentations, as well as individual presentations of selected chapter topics. **Before the class, students should have read all the assigned readings.**

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

**Attendance and Participation:**
Attendance and participation in class discussions and activities are valuable aspects of any course because much of 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. 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.

**Individual Topic/Chapter Presentation:**
A 15-20-minute class presentation on a specific sub-chapter from the Zinn and colleagues text will be required. Assignments of individual presentations will be made the first-class meeting. Please take the time to review the textbook and come prepared on the first day of class with your top three choices. Every effort will be made to accommodate everyone’s preferences.

Students will be asked to briefly summarize the content, critically analyze it and conclude their own reaction to the sub-chapter (e.g., agree/disagree with the author, have had a similar or different experience in the same area, learned something or changed your views after reading the chapter). Within the reaction portion of the presentation, please minimize prejudices, biases, unfounded beliefs, and reliance on emotional reactions, which can sidetrack good sound judgment and opinions rooted in your learning and in the human relations’ perspective. Presentations will receive a grade out of 100 points. We will discuss the format for the presentation and related grading criteria in more detail during our first-class session.

**Book Review Presentation and Reaction Paper:**
You are required to read one additional book (chosen from the list below) before the first day of class. These books are readily available from the OU bookstore, from vendors such as Amazon.com or BN.com, or from the OU library. You may also select a book of your own choosing, as long as you clear the selection with the instructor in advance (ensuring that it is relevant to the class). A class discussion will be led by those students who read each book (it is not necessary for all the books to be represented). We will use the first day of class to ascertain which students read which books and to schedule book review discussion days accordingly. If you read the book under discussion, you are required to provide your thoughts and analysis on the day of the discussion. Even if you agree with others, you will need to build upon what they said.

You will additionally be required to submit (to Canvas and by midnight local time on the due date) a three to five-page, double-spaced reaction paper detailing your thoughts on and reactions to the book you read (i.e., your substantive and substantiated reflections and thoughts on the material presented, the author’s
perspective, and your reactions to the book). This paper should be informal, yet scholarly, and will provide you with a forum to link the book to the material we are covering in class. You may also provide your personal perspective as the book relates to your experiences or other classes you have taken. Papers showing the most depth of thought and analysis will receive the highest grades. Your paper will receive a grade out of 100.

**Book List:**
1. Sex object: A memoir, J. Valenti, 2017
2. Blood and earth: Modern slavery, ecocide, and the secret to saving the world, K. Bales, 2016
3. $2.00 a day: Living on almost nothing in America, K. J. Edin & L. Shaefer, 2015

**Due Date: Sunday, May 19, 2019, Midnight**

**Final Paper:**

You will need to complete a final paper discussing a current problem of your choice. It is highly recommended that you select an aspect of the problem to discuss; this will make your paper more manageable (e.g., rather than looking just at drug use in general, look at teenage drug use or discuss urban homelessness rather than homelessness in general, etc.)

Your paper should include an overview of the problem that you have selected. You should explain the various dimensions of the problem (e.g., the ways that race, class, gender, culture, etc. interact when considering this problem) and the reasons why you have selected it as a current problem for human relations. In addition, you should provide an analysis of some of the ways in which the problem can be addressed (what has already been done, why has this worked or not worked, what do *you* think should be done to address the problem and *why*, etc.?). You need to use at least seven to ten sources for your paper, of which no more than two may be reports published by governmental, non-governmental, and/or non-profit organizations. The remainder of your sources needs to be scholarly books and/or journal articles. Only one of these may be a chapter we covered in class. Your paper should be approximately ten to fifteen pages long and should be typed, double-spaced, and should use conventional margins. Finally, your paper needs to conform to APA formatting guidelines.

Your paper will receive a grade out of 100. **Late papers will receive an automatic 10-point deduction for each day the paper is late.** Final grades will be assessed in the following manner: 10 points for stylistic considerations (correct use of APA format, font, margins, page length, etc.); 60 points for content (the thoroughness of your discussion of the problem you selected, the completeness of your analysis of potential solutions to the problem, etc.); 30 points for critical thinking (the degree to which you provide a thoughtful analysis of the dimensions of the problem, the thoughtfulness of your discussion of potential solutions to the problem, etc.)

We will discuss the final papers and the selection of topics during the first day of class. Please give thought to the issue that you would like to address in order to participate fully in this discussion. Draw upon your textbooks and the book review books for examples of the kinds of problems you may want to consider. You may also email the instructor with any questions. On the third day of class, you will be asked to briefly present your chosen topic to the class, including your reasons for selecting this topic (this does not necessarily have to be based on a complete literature review, but should consist of your current understanding of the issue and the reason you have selected it). This presentation will be brief and informal (five to ten minutes). This presentation will provide you with an opportunity to brainstorm with your colleagues and the professor about the ways in which intersectionality may be significant to your topic, and will serve to as an opportunity to expose others to the issues you are interested in. **If you do not come prepared for this discussion, 10 points will be deducted from your final paper.**

**Due date: Sunday, May 26, 2019, Midnight**

**Canvas:**

Regular updates and relevant information regarding the course will be posted to Canvas. In order to ensure that you do not miss any new information of relevance to the course, you will be responsible for checking the announcements posted on Canvas for the duration of the class and while assignments are
due. Also see the “links” page (under “modules” for websites that may be of interest to you and that are relevant to the course. Finally, all assignments are due in the relevant “assignment” tab on.

**Grading:**

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F. A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = 60%>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation (5 points per day)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review Discussions</td>
<td>Beginning of 2\textsuperscript{nd} day of class</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Topic/Chapter Presentation</td>
<td>Beginning of 3\textsuperscript{rd} day of class</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Topics</td>
<td>Beginning of 3\textsuperscript{rd} day of class</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review Reflection Paper</td>
<td>May 19, Midnight</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>May 26, Midnight</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**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 make 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

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 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/eeo.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

Zermarie Deacon

Education

- 1997 B.A. (Honours) Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, Department of Politics; Major: Political Philosophy
- 1996 B.A., Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, Major: Politics; Major: Philosophy

Current Positions

- 2007 - 2013 Department of Human Relations, University of Oklahoma, Assistant Professor
- 2007 – Present Affiliate Faculty, School of International and Area Studies
- 2008 - Present Women’s Studies Program, University of Oklahoma, Adjunct Professor
- 2012 – Present Women’s and Gender Studies Program Center for Social Justice, University of Oklahoma, Affiliate Faculty
- 2013 – Present Department of Human Relations, University of Oklahoma, Associate Professor

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- HR  5703 International Human Relations
- HR  5013 Current Problems in Human Relations
- HR  5970 The Role of Gender in Warfare

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

- In addition to Current Problems in Human Relations I also teach International Human Relations and Strategies for Social Change at the graduate level. At the undergraduate level I teach a class entitled Gender and War as well as International Human Relations and Social Change Processes.
- My primary research interests are in cross-cultural definitions of health and wellbeing and factors that facilitate individuals’ attainment of wellbeing across different ecological contexts.

Representative Publications and Presentations

Publications:


• Deacon, Z., Foster-Fishman, P., Mahaffey, M., & Archer, G. (In press). Moving from pre-conditions for action to developing a cycle of continued social change: Tapping the potential of migrant programs. *Journal of Community Psychology.*


Presentations:


**Representative Honors and Awards Received**

- 2011 PI: Deacon; Co-PI: Pendley (Center for Applied Social Research, OU); Co-PI: Jervis (Center for Applied Social Research, OU) – CHRs as facilitators of health for Chickasaw elders. *OU Center for Research Program Development and Enrichment, Faculty Research Challenge Grant Program;* $44,225
- 2011 University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences, *Junior Faculty Summer Fellowship*
- 2011 University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences, *Faculty Enrichment Grant*
- 2011 PI: Miller; Co-PI: Deacon; Co-PI: Wedel; Co-PI: Fitzgerald – Norman Center for Children and Families Photovoice Project/Girl Power Photovoice. *Seed grant awarded by the OU-TULSA Program in Community Health Research;* $38,477
- 2010 University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences, *Faculty Enrichment Grant*
- 2009 University of Oklahoma, Research Council, *Junior Faculty Research Program Grant*
- 2009 University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences, *Faculty Enrichment Grant*
- 2008 University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences, *Faculty Enrichment Grant*
- 2008 University of Oklahoma, Office of the President, *Presidential International Travel Fellowship*
- 2007 University of Oklahoma, College of Arts and Sciences, *Faculty Enrichment Grant*
- 2007 Michigan State University Graduate School, *Dissertation Completion Fellowship*
- 2005 United States of America Department of State, *Fulbright Student Fellowship*
- 2004 Michigan State University International Studies and Programs, *Walker-Hill International Pre-Dissertation Scholarship*
• 2001  PI: Deacon - The well-being of Muslim refugee women in resettlement: A needs assessment. *Student Award Program Grant awarded by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation*