



University of Georgia

SYLLABUS
RLST 2000: LEISURE IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY
SPRING 2009

Instructor: Dr. Diane M. Samdahl dsamdahl@uga.edu
349 Ramsey / appointments preferred

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Course Overview

This course is designed to enhance understanding of leisure in a diverse society. Students will examine factors that influence leisure, explore how leisure mirrors broader cultural values, and learn ways to use leisure to expand their own cultural understandings. In addition, students will learn to think critically, understand and respect different perspectives, and appreciate the cultural and contextual nature of their choices and actions.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Explain why leisure is a significant context for understanding diversity;
2. Discuss the complexity of social factors that affect the positionality of people in our society;
3. Discuss the ways that leisure acts to build community, and the special significance of this for people who are marginalized in mainstream culture; and
4. Discuss the ways that leisure can be a site of conflict, power, and social control.

Required Materials

TEXTBOOK: Kottak, P. C. and Kozaitis, K. A. (2008). *On Being Different: Diversity and Multiculturalism in the North American Mainstream [Third Edition]*. NY: McGraw Hill.

Additional materials will be posted on WebCT or assigned in class.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to read, understand, and comply with all aspects of the UGA Academic Honesty Policy available online at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>. Any suspicion that a student has violated that code of honesty will be processed through the policies described on that website. Please comply with this code in your own work and report suspicious activity of other students to the instructor.

Of particular relevance in this course is academic honesty in relation to authorship of work students turn in as their own. Students must be the sole author of any written work submitted in their name (except for acknowledged group projects). Students must correctly cite sources that influence the content of their essays, and avoid language that is identical or similar to anything from another source without using quotation marks or giving proper credit. The instructor is available for guidance and help in avoiding plagiarism *provided that students ask for help before turning in an assignment*, and many useful guidelines are available online.

Class Format

This course will entail active participation in class activities and discussion, as well as individual work outside of class. There will be very few lectures or facts to memorize; instead, students will be encouraged to think about issues from increasingly critical perspectives (*critical*, by the way, means careful and insightful rather than judgmental). Students who simply put in a presence without actively engaging with or thinking about the material will not earn good grades in this class. Hopefully, students will challenge themselves in ways that make this course interesting and relevant to their own lives.

Please read the article on WebCT about “Engaged Learning.”

Instructor’s Comment: I assume that students have an interest in learning and will be responsible participants in this class. You and I share the same expectations of each other: we will be on time, we will be prepared for that day’s discussion by having done the assigned readings or activities, we will share our ideas and reactions in class discussion, we will be respectful of one another, and we will do our best in meeting these expectations. If you commit yourself to that and truthfully try to do your best, I will give the time and assistance to help you get the most out of this class.

Class Culture

As a class that is studying diversity, we must begin by acknowledging and respecting the diversity that exists among ourselves. We want students to share their thoughts and experiences, *especially* if their perspectives are different than the norms, expectations, or experiences of others in the class. In order for that to happen, we need to create a safe space where everyone’s opinion is respected and differences are examined and explored in a non-judgmental fashion. Listen carefully to what others say. Ask questions that will help you understand their experiences and perspectives, and then share ways in which your experiences or opinions differ from theirs. Please speak up if you feel offended, troubled, or confused by something that is said, or if you feel excluded by assumptions that frame any part of our discussions, since your response might open the door to rich discussion. But remember to catch yourself if you’re tempted to judge someone based on your own values. Our goal is to stay focused on the scholarly examination of *issues* rather than *individuals*, and to lace all discussion with respect for one another.

Assignments

Assignments allow students to earn points by showing that they’ve done the required work. Additional points are earned through strength or excellence in the quality of work and the depth of understanding that is displayed. Because most assignments are written essays, stronger writers have a better chance to earn higher grades. This is a great class for those who want to improve their writing. Students are encouraged to work with the UGA Writing Center (<http://www.english.uga.edu/writingcenter/>)-- it’s free! Please note that students do not *lose* points on any assignment; they *earn* points through the quality of what they submit.

Attendance: You might not realize it but your participation makes a significant contribution to class discussion. If you are not present, we’re not able to hear your perspective or learn from stories you share. Therefore, attendance will be taken each class period. The distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences is too arbitrary to enforce; therefore, we will follow the same policy you encounter at a job—you earn credit when you are there and you don’t earn credit when you are not. However, we do care about you. Please let the instructors know when something comes up that prevents you from being in class.

Participation: Participation entails more than just showing up; it means that you are prepared each day for that day's discussion or activities, and that you are actively engaged with the class. You can participate by asking or answering questions, by sharing your experiences and opinions, or by listening to others and responding to what they have to say. Some participation points will also relate to tasks, in-class activities, or response papers that stem from class discussion.

Reading Assignments: We will not spend a lot of class time talking about the material you read in the textbook. This does not mean the textbook is unimportant—just the opposite! The assigned chapters provide important background information that we all share as we enter into discussion about other topics in class. Other reading material will be placed on WebCT to supplement the text. For each chapter of the textbook, and for any supplemental reading you found interesting, write a short summary that captures important points. These should be ½ to 1 page of bulleted points per chapter or article; do not outline the entire chapter. Then add your personal reflections to that summary showing what you thought about what you just read.

Essays: There will be three essays throughout the term, described below. The essays must be grounded in ideas from the readings and class discussion, but stronger essays will also display independent thinking. Many points in this class are easy to earn (e.g. attendance, participation) but the essays will be graded to higher standards for grammar, composition, and depth of discussion. Please read “Characteristics of a Grade” on WebCT for insight into the structure of stronger essays.

1. *Write an essay that explains why leisure is a significant context for understanding cultural diversity. Your essay should illustrate how cultural values are expressed in leisure and show how leisure acts to build community. Approx 6-7 pages.*
2. *Write an essay drawing from class discussion and readings that shows how leisure can be a site of power, conflict, and social control. In your essay, give special attention to the role of leisure for people who are marginalized in mainstream culture. Approx 6-7 pages.*
3. *Discuss how your understandings of leisure and cultural diversity have changed over the course of this semester. Approx 3-4 pages.*

Students who receive low grades on Essays #1 and #2 can rewrite them by a date to be specified by the instructor, typically within one to two weeks. The final recorded grade will be the average of the original essay and the revised essay. Students who submit an essay late are not eligible to revise and resubmit it for a higher grade.

Independent Activities: Students will earn points by attending presentations, films, or other events that address issues of diversity, or doing a special project of their choosing. All independent activities must be approved by the instructor *beforehand*. Other requirements and a more complete explanation are described on WebCT. Some of the independent activities you might do include:

- Attend at least one cultural celebration or similar event aimed at a segment of the population with which you do not typically identify.
- Attend speakers, movies, or discussions that address issues related to diversity.
- Read a novel by or about people whose life characteristics are different than yours.
- Do a special project working alone or in a small group.

Exams: None! But there might be pop quizzes on the readings.

Grading

Students will earn points throughout the semester as shown here. At the end of the semester, grades will be assigned according to the attached chart. *Note:* Adjustments to the course agenda might result in minor changes to the point values shown below.

Basic Engagement (65 pts maximum)		
Attendance	20 pts	43%
Summaries of readings	20 pts	
Participation	25 pts	
Essays (65 pts maximum)		
Essay 1	25 pts	43%
Essay2	25 pts	
Essay3	15 pts	
Other (20 pts maximum)		
Independent activities	20 pts	13%
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	150 pts	100%

Final grade: 93-100% = A 90-92% = A- 87-89% = B+ 83-86% = B 80-82% = B- 77-79% = C+ 70-76% = C 60-69% = D below 60% = F

NOTE: Current campus policy does not accept a C- as a passing grade.

Note: While the objectives and basic format of this class will not change from this syllabus, the instructor might modify the assignments and/or point values if required. Any changes will be announced in class and on WebCT.

Special Accommodations / Other Issues: Students with special needs should speak to the instructor the first week of the semester so that effective accommodation can be made. If emergencies or unforeseen circumstances arise during the semester that significantly affect your performance in this class, let the instructor know. Final grades of “Incomplete” will not be given except for instances of hardship that are documented by the Office of Student Support Services.