Core 300, Values and Critical Thinking

(This is an example syllabus, some items may change. The books will not.)

Term: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer
Instructor: Dr. Suzanne Beaumaster
Phone: (909) 593-3511, x-4817
Email: beaumast@ulv.edu
Class Dates: Varies

Course Synopsis

Core 300, Values and Critical Thinking, will take you on a journey of self-discovery. In this course you will critically evaluate your values as well as the value systems of other individuals, groups, and nations. Through an array of readings, films, discussions, and essays—you will increase your understanding of the myriad of values, cultures, beliefs, ethics, and philosophies which exist within yourself and the world around you.

Course Goals

The goals of this course are:

1. Increase the students’ awareness of their social context, nurture their appreciation for the pluralism’s of that context, and develop skills to enable them to think and express themselves clearly about value choices.

2. Increase the students’ awareness:
   - Of the diversity of world-views which have formed our history and current world.
   - That value judgments are embedded in these larger views about how the world is.
   - Of one’s own world-view and value judgments.
   - Of the various pressures exerted on one to adopt beliefs and attitudes into one’s own world-view.

3. To nurture the students’ appreciation for pluralism itself, as well as for the necessity to make appropriate distinctions and value judgments within this context as a matter of everyday life.

4. To enable students to reflect on their own world-view and value system, to think critically about their own assumptions and biases, and to clearly express their views about the value judgments they are faced with daily.
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Course Outline

Part 1 of this course is designed to give students a sense of the role this course plays in the history and mission of the University of La Verne as well as the strategic importance it has for the overall curriculum.

Part 2 of this course involves exercises in Intercultural Awareness: becoming aware that others have/do experience a very different world on many levels.

Part 3 leads students through a process of reflecting upon their own perspectives and the processes by which they gain those perspectives.

Part 4 helps students to develop their critical thinking skills with regard to the kinds of information they are surrounded with each day through the media and a multitude of special interest groups.

Part 5 offers students a method for thinking about moral decision making and leads them through some critical reflection on that method.

Part 6 introduces students to key issues in the dialogue over moral perspectives and prepares students for their final integrative project.

Course Activities

This course will make use of a variety of activities to achieve learning objectives. Students will log on to the University Blackboard system* [http://blackboard.ulv.edu) and from there is lead through the six sections of this course via a number of WWW resources. In addition to the resources found on the course blackboard site, students will be reading articles and textbooks, viewing videos, listening to online lectures as well as participating in course discussion forums and virtual chats.

The majority of the assignments for the class are small essays in which the student responds to specific questions regarding the readings, videos or exercises. These essays will be emailed to the professor and in some cases posted on the class discussion forum. In addition to the short essays the student will also complete an integrative project/paper. The final portion of the student’s grade will be determined by participation in the discussion forums and chat.

*Please Note: Students will be given a user account with which to log on to the blackboard system. Students who have an existing account are asked to continue using that one. Every effort will be made to make your account name your last name first initial. (ie. John Smith=Smith) If that is not available you will be issued a similar user name. Accounts are created once you are registered. Every effort will be made to
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get you your account 1 week before class begins. It is very important that you pick your email account for the course and give the correct one when you register. Otherwise you may not receive course information in a timely manner.

**Course Text and Materials—Required**

This course requires a variety of reading and viewing materials. Required materials are not limited to the course textbook. Throughout the course additional readings, videos, etc. will be indicated by the instructor.

- Additional reading material and videos will be assigned by the professor throughout the course.

**Course Assignments and Assessment Criteria**

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<th>Assignment Name</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Personal World View Essay</td>
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<td>Assignment 3</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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**Detailed Explanation of Assignments**

(Late Assignments receive a 5% reduction automatically.)
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Assignment(s) 1-5

These assignments are all short essays in which you will explore a particular topic area. The specific topics are listed in the titles of each essay on the table above. Each essay should be 3-5 pages in length, double spaced, times font, one inch margins, must be readable in Microsoft word. You will be given one week to complete each essay, make sure you proofread and spell check. Then send the essay to me as an attachment via email. I am most concerned with content but if your grammar is really bad I'll let you know.

Assignment 6

Directions for the integrative project will be given to you about halfway through the course.

Assignment 7

Participation in the form of online discussion and interaction is required. You will be asked to comment on certain discussion topics throughout the course. In addition you will be asked specific questions dealing with values and moral conduct. It is understood that you may have more to say on one particular topic than another but interaction on a variety of areas is required for a good participation grade. The best grade you can receive in the course with no participation is a B-.