**COM 272: Communication, Culture, and Difference in American Society**

**Spring, 2024**

**MWF, 11:00-11:50 AM, Fell Hall 123**

*“The price of apathy toward public affairs is to be ruled by evil men”* -- Plato

*“There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there has always been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge”* -- Isaac Asimov

*“In a republican nation, whose citizens are to be led by reason and persuasion and not by force, the art of reasoning becomes of first importance*” – Thomas Jefferson

**Professor:** Dr. Stephen E. Rahko, Ph.D.

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**Campus Office:** Fell Hall, 462

**Office Hours:** MW, 3:00-3:45 PM

**Course Description**

Where some people may once have thought of a homogenous “America,” of America as a Melting Pot of people from all cultures and races, it is becoming increasingly evident as we trundle through the 21st Century that America is, in fact, made up with people from many cultures, races, expressions of gender or sexual identity, ideological beliefs, and so on, rubbing elbows as we share the same classrooms, workspaces, or neighborhoods. Often this interaction is peaceful and filled with trust. But as current events demonstrate, our interactions are often filled with conflict. Recent years have seen struggles in the U.S. over immigration rights, pipelines on Indigenous American soil, increasing hate crimes (especially against people perceived to be Asian, Muslim or “Arab” American), racial justice for African Americans (and other People of Color), women’s rights, LGBTQAI+ rights, and calls to “occupy Wallstreet” as people have challenged wealth discrepancy in the United States. We cannot tune into any broadcast or online newscast without seeing evidence of sometimes divisive cultural and diversity politics.

In a way, the tensions and struggles of living side-by-side within a single nation reflect issues that are both similar and different as we interact internationally as tourists, international students, or cross-cultural business travelers and we consider the impacts of globalization on communication. Thus, the goal of this is course is for us to become more informed and active citizens—to contribute “the best that we have, and all that we are” and to allow others to do the same—at both the local level, within the cultural spaces where we live, and as we interact as global citizens.

**Course Catalog Description**

Basic concepts related to living within an equitable, inclusive, and diverse America, including aspects of communication as it relates to specific identities (racial, sex/gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, age, and intersectional identities); issues of tolerance and appreciation (prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination, implicit bias); and considerations of different types of privilege, with a focus on dialogue and civic and political engagement. COM 111 or consent of instructor.

**Course Philosophy**

Any course on “culture” is a combination of things, including course objectives and structure, the instructor’s philosophy of teaching, and the unique experiences and perspectives that the students bring to the class.

* ***Course focus:***As a 200-level “foundations” course in the SOC, this course has primary objectives of introducing you to basic concepts and ideas as these pertain to understanding and practicing intercultural and intergroup communication. The class will then include basic terminology that you should know as a local/global citizen. At the same time, the coverage will be practical, and we will make use of discussion, in-course exercises and simulations, and video analyses, with a focus on how we can take our learning outside of the classroom through civic and political engagement. Finally, unlike our upper-level course (372), which is focused strongly on theory and research, this course seeks to provide an “affective” aspect of learning, learning to understand the perspective of (and celebrate) the other, a key aspect of cultural competence.
* ***Instructor philosophy:*** My goal in the class is to be a facilitator of mutual learning, including learning new things from my students each year. I believe that the greatest things we learn are not things repeatable on an exam, but what we learn from each other, as we discuss the material. Also, I believe that college students are able to think critically and are not simply passive recipients. As such, we will not simply present the concepts, but will engage definitions, frameworks, and perspectives to see their strengths and limitations, as well as their applications to everyday life and dialogue.
* ***Student experiences and effort:*** This sort of learning occurs best if we are prepared to discuss the material when we walk in the door, with knowledge of terms and definitions; thoughts about personal experiences, outside reading, and Internet and social media experiences, and any questions you might have about the material. You may challenge the text (or me!), as long as you do so respectfully! Your experiences and character are important in shaping class culture. Also, you are responsible for your attendance and learning in the course. I am here to help you make the most of what you put into the course.

## Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces you to communication among people from different cultures. The content focuses on the application of theory ***and*** practice in intercultural settings. Specifically, after this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain the concepts of “standpoints” and the goal and limitations of understanding standpoints of other groups.
2. Describe globalization, its strengths and limitations, and its impact on our culture and that of others.
3. Summarize effective concepts for dialogue on difficult subjects, especially relating to identity.
4. Differentiate between perspectives of cultural assimilation and pluralism.
5. Define and give examples of different types of intergroup intolerance.
6. Explain links between capital (e.g., marketing, production, commerce), politics, and culture.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of aspects and issues related to diverse identities (and intersection of identities), with a focused understanding of a specific identity group.
8. Explain both the importance and limitations of seeking to understand standpoints of other groups.
9. Propose specific ideas for social action (civic or political) for better relations between people.

**Course Activities and Approach to Learning**

You will earn your grade through a series of assignments, as described below.

* **Exams:** There will be no exams in this class. In lieu of exam, the class places more weight on your ability to process your ideas through essays.
* **Major project:** The major project will be a civic engagement case study, in which you choose an organization, movement, or group that engages with people of an identity that you don’t share, specifically. You will seek to understand the organization in terms of class concepts, writing a final analysis of the organization and the civic or political engagement opportunities it could offer to you or others.
* **Class Activities and Participation**: A key element to enhancing the course material and expanding your worldview—as well as contributing to the experience of other class members—is participating in class discussions. Course assignments and discussions apply to your everyday intercultural encounters. Try to be an active participant. If you do not understand an idea, theory, or assignment, please ask for clarification. If you are reserved about asking questions in class, please come to my office or send me an e-mail. *Participation consists of asking questions, offering opinions, sharing relevant experiences, being on time to class, engaging in discussions, and demonstrating respect for others.* In other words, ***you must add value to the overall learning environment.***
* **Demonstrations of Knowledge**: Over the course of the semester, you will have opportunities to demonstrate engagement and knowledge in the area of intercultural communication and American diversity. The content of these demonstrations will be connected to the unit within which the demonstration is due. The form of the demonstration will vary throughout the course.

**Demonstration of Knowledge (Assignments):**

*Responses*

Throughout the semester, you will complete several written responses to the readings, documentaries, and discussions you will be involved in from class. Each of these assignments will be found on Canvas after I introduce them in class (see the Class Schedule below).

*Team Project and Final Team Report*

Your ongoing project this semester will require you to research with a team, an organization, group, movement, etc. that is not one you identify with. In this project, you will observe the way(s) in which the organization, group, movement, etc. interacts and engages with 1) their membership and 2) outside of their own membership. With your team, you will attend programs, meetings and make note of their discussions.

Similarly, you should pay attention to how they communicate with each other, how they communicate differently than you might be accustomed to, how they treat you as an outsider, how you feel as you are inside the group, what information they offer and how it is communicated, how the group or organization accomplishes its’ goals through its own communication practices, etc.

At the end of the semester, you and your team will compile a final report that engages with the readings and terms discussed and learned in class. Along with the team report, you will present your final to the entire class in some format of a team presentation.

*Final Essay*

For your final essay, you will come up with an original thesis/argument to discuss in your paper. Your essay must engage with the readings, documentaries, team project and other resources you have used over the semester. You will write a 4–5-page essay that supports the argument you will make about communication, culture, and cultural difference in American society.

# **Continued Enrollment**

Your enrollment in this class constitutes agreement with all aspects of this syllabus and any additions or alterations that may be made to it during the course of the semester. Additions and alterations include announcements I post for the class on Canvas, and additions and alternations include e-mail sent to class members. Such additions and alterations include information about the course, assignments, and so on. These announcements and e-mail are equally important when it comes to evaluating your work, because announcements may contain clarifications or other help that fit within assignments’ requirements.

**Outside Preparation**

Plan on spending between six to nine hours (or more, depending on how you learn) each week outside of class on your work for this course as this course is reading and writing intensive. (See ISU’s [Credit Hour Policy 4.1.19](http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-19.shtml). Also see [“Time Management/Credit Hour Policy”](http://ctlt.illinoisstate.edu/pedagogy/onlinecourses/skills/) for weekly and daily breakdown.) You will need this time to complete assigned readings, listen to lectures, complete discussions, and the final project. You should be prepared to pace yourself in a way that allows you to successfully complete viewing the lectures, completing the readings, and completing all assignments in a timely and professional manner.

**Special Needs**

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit [Student Access and Accommodation Services](http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/faculty_staff/academic/) (http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/faculty\_staff/academic/).

**Instructional Strategies:**

Instructional strategies include: (1) readings, (2) discussions, and (3) assessment in the form of several short position papers and several short writings. Our emphasis is on 1) active, engaged learning, 2) personal assessment and development, 3) informed critical thinking, and 4) practice grounded in theory and research.

**Getting Started with Canvas:**

Canvas is an online course management system used by faculty and students at Illinois State University. Classes offered through Illinois State University use Canvas to deliver course materials, assignments, quizzes and tests to students.

* + For an overview of learning with technology or learning on-line, please check out Red Birds Keep Learning at CTLT. This is a one-stop resource with lots of great information. For specifically how to join a ZOOM meeting, check out this video at “how to join a ZOOM meeting.”

For this course, any web browser should work. You can use Internet Explorer. You can install and use Firefox as your web browser. Firefox is a free program that is very similar to Internet Explorer: It can be downloaded at http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/upgrade.html. In the experience of the support people at Illinois State University, students using Firefox might experience fewer technology issues when using Canvas than those who use Internet Explorer. Mac users should use Safari rather than Firefox. Safari is also a free download and can be acquired at http://www.apple.com/safari/download/. If you are having difficulty with getting your computer set up correctly, you can call the University Computer HelpDesk at 438-HELP. If you need assistance with using Canvas (or Microsoft Word or other software program), it is your responsibility to seek it out in a timely manner! You have a variety of resources available to you including the University Computer HelpDesk (http://helpdesk.illinoisstate.edu/contact/). If you need help with more “academic” issues, such as writing support or study skills, please talk with me or visit the Julia N. Visor Academic Center.

**Course Materials:**

All course material is available in Canvas (that includes media, ZOOM, and additional readings). On-line material will be available free to you, although you will likely spend some money on printing supplies if you prefer to read from paper than on a screen. Most course content will be in PDF, Word, and PPT, which should work for either PC or Mac. To view or print some of the documents, you will need either Microsoft PowerPoint or PowerPoint Viewer software installed on your computer. If you don't have either, the "Viewer" product is available for downloading free from the Microsoft Download Center website. You will also MS Word. I will use the older version, so it will be more universally available. There will also be some audio and video files which means you need to consider what kind of media player is on your computer as well as the speed of your home DSL provider. Technically, all of the audio and video files will play on Quick Time. Go to http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/ for a free download of iTunes7 that should work on either platform. Windows Media player also has a free download at http://windows.microsoft.com/en- us/windows/download-windows-media-player.

**Course Readings:**

There are no required books to purchase for this class. All readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas or online as specified on the Class Schedule section below.

**Note about the Assigned Readings**

The goal of this course is to, as much as possible, tolerate wide differences of opinion. I stress “as much as possible” since opinions that articulate hostility or discrimination on the basis of racial, gender, class, religious or sexual difference will not be tolerated. It is possible to engage in rigorous analysis and argument on controversial topics while maintaining a learning environment that is welcoming of diverse views and opinion, but opinions and attitudes that disrupt such a learning environment will not be tolerated. Readings assigned in this course and posted on Canvas are not meant to represent any consensus of beliefs; instead, the readings are curated in the spirit of Classical Era’s taste for agonism and meant to, as much as possible, reflect a spectrum of ideological and philosophical perspectives that are competent, well informed, and convincingly expressed.

Each week students are encouraged to identify at least a quote from the assigned readings that they find provocative in some way. Students are encouraged to use these quotes as a way of formulating the arguments they wish to pose in class discussions and written assignments.

**COVID-19:**

To be socially responsible, I urge you not to attend class if you feel your safety and the safety of your classmates and faculty may be compromised by your attendance. When you need to miss class, you must be swift and proactive in working with your instructors to take advantage of learning opportunities, develop mastery of course materials, meet the learning objectives as outlined in the course, and prepare for more advanced learning.

Having said that, you are responsible for reading the assigned material prior to class. You are expected to discuss the readings and your ideas informally each session. Because this course is a seminar, not a lecture class, your own involvement is imperative. In order for our discussions to be productive you will need to (1) show knowledge of readings and have given thought to what you have read, (2) articulate your ideas clearly and argue effectively for your positions, (3) contribute to a lively interchange of ideas, and (4) respond thoughtfully to the comments of others.

To keep up to date regarding the latest about coronavirus information, support, and policies at ISU, please refer to the university’s official page at https://coronavirus.illinoisstate.edu/ as well as Redbirds Keep Learning.

**Email:**

My expectation is that when you correspond with me via email that your tone will be professional and that your diction and grammar will be precise. Email is an important forum for distinguishing yourself in the professional world that your college education is, in part, helping you prepare for. When you send me and your other professors an email, I expect that you will be courteous and respectful. Please address me (and your other professors) as either Dr. Rahko or Professor Rahko in email correspondences. Below is an example of the kind of email I hope to not see from any of you:

Hi there I just wanted to let you know that I am super sick and was at the ER all day yesterday. I texted positive for influenza A.  I have a doctors note so I can forward you that. I will not be in class Monday nor Wednesday. This Friday I have a funeral to attend. Early this morning my boyfriends grandpa passed. Sorry for all of this, I just thought I should let u know. I will send proof for everything. If anything changes and I am able to make it I will let you know.

**Academic Development:**

There is a great place on campus if you need some assistance with study skills and writing. For workshops, tutoring, or coaching, check out http://ucollege.illinoisstate.edu.

**Mental Health Resources:**

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at counseling.illinoisstate.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

**Student Access and Accommodation Services:**

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Students must be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All ideas are to be appropriately cited when borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Inadequate citation, unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration, and/or the presentation of someone else’s work constitutes plagiarism. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty (including falsifying evidence or plagiarizing a written assignment) will receive a failing grade in the course and be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Community Rights and Responsibilities. I view reporting academic dishonesty as my professional responsibility and do not hesitate to enforce consequences.

**Attendance Policy:**

Please be prepared to discuss the daily readings. Be engaged. Perfect attendance is expected, because by enrolling in this course you have made a commitment to being present during all class meetings. Being absent deprives you of valuable discussions and information. Historically, there has been a strong correlation between absences and grades; the more class time that students miss, the lower the grades they tend to earn. Attendance is calculated as part of your final grade, and there is a point penalty for the accumulation of unexcused absences. ***At the beginning of each class, I will pass out a sign-in sheet for you to sign. Signing this sheet will be used as evidence for your attendance. I will then keep track of your attendance on Canvas. If I mark you absent mistakenly or if you attended class and forgot to sign the sign-in sheet, you have 72 hours from the end of that class period to inform me of this to change your attendance for that day. Any time after that 72-hour period will not be considered.*** Your attendance grade will be calculated as follows:

* 2 or fewer unexcused absences: 100 points
* 3 unexcused absences: 75 points
* 4 unexcused absences: 50 points
* 5 unexcused absences: 25 points
* 6 or more unexcused absences: 0 points

**Late Work and Incomplete Grade Policy:**

All assignments are expected to be uploaded to Canvas on the Assignments tab on the assigned due date as stipulated on the class schedule (see the end of this syllabus). An automatic 10% of the points possible will be deducted from late assignments, with an additional 10% deducted for each 24 hours the assignment is late. I will accept late work for partial credit, but keep in mind that the grade you receive will be at the instructor’s discretion and will be final. In the case of documented university excused absences, assignments should be completed *prior* to the absence. As a rule, incomplete grades will not be given.

**Teamwork**

**Your role as a team member** -Working as a team is an important part of your education in this class. ***You must make time available to work with your team, regardless of your schedule or other commitments***.It is your job to inform your team of your schedule and keep them informed in the case of emergencies.

*Firing a Teammate:*

Each team is required to create a team contract as part of this course. One of the required elements of that contract is a detailed explanation of how the team will address absent or non-contributing team members. Unproductive or disengaged team members should first be counseled by the team in accordance with the team contract. If the counseling does not produce the desired results, the team should contact their instructor and explain the problem and the steps taken to try to correct it. **If the team and instructor agree,** the team member will be fired. A fired team member will be responsible for completing team-based assignments individually. Teams who remove a teammate are still required to cover the same assigned material. Removing a teammate does not reduce or alter the total workload.

**Preparation & Participation:**

You are obligated to be prepared for intelligent class discussion. The quality of this seminar depends ultimately upon the willingness of each participant to engage the materials, issues, and discussions constructively and creatively. Do the assigned readings. Take time prior to class to reflect upon your assignments and your participation. If something is unclear, particularly interesting, or you have some insight, contact me or make a note of it and you’re your question during class.

**Professional Courtesy:**

I feel it is unnecessary to emphasize issues such as respect for the class (attendance, turning assignments in on time, etc.) and the members of the class (respecting others' opinions, being respectful to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition). I do, however, want to be clear about my expectations. I believe a college class is an experience designed to bring individuals together to increase and expand knowledge. This is a place of synergy. Thus, I will expect your behaviors and attitudes towards this course to reflect professional courtesy. If I believe a student is not meeting my expectations (e.g., excessive absences, inadequate work, disrespect for others, etc.), I will notify you immediately and a decision will be made concerning your need to drop the course.

**Course Requirements:**

Your grade for this course will depend on how many points you earn from each of the following:

* Responses (12 total – 9 for 30 points, and 3 for 60 points) – Throughout the semester you will be required to write a series of 1.5–2-page (minimum 375 words) responses tailored to the specific topic of cultural difference we happen to be addressing in the class. (450 points)
* Attendance (100 points)
* Civic/Political Engagement and Cultural Identity Team Report (200 points)
* Civic/Political Engagement and Cultural Identity Team Presentation (50 points)
* Final Paper Proposal (25 points)
* Final Paper (175 points)
* **TOTAL POINTS: 1000**

Detailed instructions for each of these assignments will be available on Canvas. Do not submit a Google doc and do not submit a PDF file. My preference is for you to submit all your assignments as Microsoft Word documents. As students at ISU, you can download Microsoft software for your Mac or PC computer.

**Draft Review**

I am thrilled to review a draft of your assignment and offer suggestions for revision before you submit it

for a grade. I encourage you to seek out assistance early and often. The most successful students in this

course typically work on their assignments well in advance and revise several times before submission. Should you choose to take advantage of the opportunity to have your draft reviewed, please keep the following rules in mind:

* Assignment drafts must be submitted to me in person or via email at least 72 hours before the assignment deadline.
* I will offer feedback on 1 draft of an assignment. Given the many requests I receive for draft reviews, it is not possible to review revised drafts after the initial draft review, though I am always happy to answer specific questions you have as you complete your revisions.

**Class Participation**

Regular attendance and class participation is very important. Class sessions will incorporate discussions and some structured activities. Class sessions will often move beyond the assigned readings to issue analysis, theory application, and communication skill development. You are responsible for reading the assigned material prior to class. You are expected to discuss the readings and your ideas informally each session. Your active involvement and engagement are imperative. In order for our discussions to be productive you will need to (1) show knowledge of readings and have given thought to what you have read, (2) provide discussion points from each of the readings, (3) articulate your ideas clearly and argue effectively for your position, (4) contribute to a lively interchange of ideas, (5) synthesize ideas across various readings, (6) respond thoughtfully to the comments of others. Failure to contribute to class discussion, in a meaningful way, will negatively affect your participation. Physical presence is necessary, but not sufficient for participation.

**Technology**

Personal electronic devices may only be used for academic purposes in class. If you choose to use

a permitted personal electronic device in class, you are volunteering to be called on first during

class discussion.

**Recording Devices**

Unless a prior arrangement has been made with me, you may not make any audio or visual recordings of class sessions.

**Classroom Conduct**

Disruptive or disrespectful behavior—such as wearing headphones, nonacademic cell phone use

in class, late arrival to class, or distractions caused by personal electronic use—will not be

tolerated, nor will any activity that potentially puts other students at risk. Students disturbing the

class through their misconduct will be asked to leave immediately.

**Final Grade Ranges**

Letter grades for the semester are calculated based on the following point ranges. The final letter grade for the course (and grades for the other assignments) will be based on a standard scale:

(90-100%=A; 80-89%=B; 70-79%=C; 60-69%=D; 0-59%=F)

**NOTE: Failure to turn in any of the course requirements may result in failure of the course.**

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

\*Note: this is subject to change at Dr. Rahko’s discretion\*

**WEEK 1: Introduction to the class, setting the stage for our intellectual voyage**

1/17 Overview of course assignments, policies, and expectations.

1/19 Mapping identity and difference in ourselves

***UNIT I: Establishing Foundations and Key Concepts***

**WEEK 2: What is cultural difference and communication in American Society?**

1/22 Preparing for our intellectual voyage: Meet your team for the semester and establishing key preliminary questions we want to pose as we explore the question of cultural difference in our current moment.

Readings: None

1/24 What does it mean to analyze cultural difference? Establishing key concepts we will explore this semester.

Readings: None

1/26 Visit from María Tudela, School of Communication subject librarian. Rationale for studying interculturality. Locating and Defining terms related to cultural difference.

Readings: None

**WEEK 3: What is cultural difference and communication in American Society?**

1/29 Putting our concepts to work for us with *Buckjumping* (Amazon, 2018)

Readings: Bryant Keith Alexander, et al., “Defining and Communicating What ‘Intercultural’ and ‘Intercultural Communication’ Means to Us” and Baldwin & Means-Coleman “A Rationale for Studying Intercultural Communication: Why Should We Know About Other Cultures?” Anna Carastathis, “Identity Categories as Potential Coalitions”

1/31 Putting our concepts to work for us with *Buckjumping* (Amazon, 2018), continued. Introduce Civic/Political Engagement and Cultural Identity team assignment.

Readings: Flanagan and Wray-Lake, “Civic and Political Engagement”; Shome & Hegde “Culture, Communication, and the challenge of globalization”; Baldwin & Means-Coleman “Global Media, global cultures: How do culture and globalization influence each other?”

2/2 Class discussion: How do we see the key concepts at play in *Buckjumping?*

Readings: Flanagan and Wray-Lake, “Civic and Political Engagement”; Shome & Hegde “Culture, Communication, and the challenge of globalization”; Baldwin & Means-Coleman “Global Media, global cultures: How do culture and globalization influence each other?”

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 1 DUE ON 2/2 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

***UNIT II: Cultural & Identity Differences + Intersectionality***

**WEEK 4: Ability, Cultural Difference, and Marginalization**

2/5 Disability and Performative Representations

Readings: Moeschen “A Crippling Deceit: Mendicancy and the Performance of Disability in Progressive America”; Sandahl, “Why Disability Identity Matters”; watch *Crip Camp* (Netflix, 2020)

2/7 Disability and ablism, continued.

Readings: Moeschen “A Crippling Deceit: Mendicancy and the Performance of Disability in Progressive America”; Sandahl, “Why Disability Identity Matters”; finish watch *Crip Camp* (Netflix, 2020)

2/9 Class debate and discussion about ability and cultural difference

Readings: Moeschen “A Crippling Deceit: Mendicancy and the Performance of Disability in Progressive America”; Sandahl, “Why Disability Identity Matters”

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 2 DUE ON 2/9 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 5:** **Cultural Difference, Masculinity, and American Professional Sports Culture**

2/12 Team meetings with Dr. Rahko to discuss your team’s ideas for your research project

Readings: Thomas P. Oates, “The Erotic Gaze in the NFL Draft,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies,* *4*(1) (2007): 74-90.

2/14 Team meetings with Dr. Rahko to discuss your team’s ideas for your research project

Readings: Thomas P. Oates, “The Erotic Gaze in the NFL Draft,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies,* *4*(1) (2007): 74-90.

2/16 Class debate and discussion about cultural difference, sports culture, and the NFL

Readings: Thomas P. Oates, “The Erotic Gaze in the NFL Draft,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies,* *4*(1) (2007): 74-90.

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 3 DUE ON 2/16 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 6: Gender, Gender Identity and Queerness**

2/19 Drag Queens, Drag Kings, and queer performances in anti-LGBTQAI2+ spaces

Readings: Lengel and Martin “Situating Gender in Critical Intercultural Communication Studies” and Whitney “Capitalizing on Camp: Greed in the Queer Marketplace”; watch *We’re Here*

2/21 Theorizing Gender and Gender Identity

Readings: Lengel and Martin “Situating Gender in Critical Intercultural Communication Studies” and Whitney “Capitalizing on Camp: Greed in the Queer Marketplace”; watch finish watching *We’re Here*

2/23 **(ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS SESSION – WE DO NOT MEET AS A CLASS. THIS IS A DAY FOR YOUR TEAM TO SCHEDULE FIELDWORK AND/OR INTERVIEWS FOR YOUR TEAM PROJECTS)**

Watch: VICE News Tonight Special Report, “#MeToo: Women, Men, and Work,” *VICE News Tonight*, February 22, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ob-bHRwqPsY&app=desktop>;

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 4 DUE ON 2/23 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 7:** **Race, trauma, and the legacies of European settler colonialism and structural racism in**

**the United States**

2/26 Race and Identity

Readings: Jackson & Moshin “Identity and Difference: Race and the Necessity of the Discriminating Subject” and Baldwin and Means-Coleman “African American Tradition: Rooted in Resistance”; do “what is your race” activity.

2/28 Indigenous peoples and the cultural politics of food

Readings: Baldwin and Means-Coleman “Native American Tradition: Rooted in Nature”; watch *Gather* (Netflix)

3/1 Class discussion and debate on the cultural politics of food and the legacy of European settler colonialism

and structural racism in the United States

Readings: Baldwin and Means-Coleman “Native American Tradition: Rooted in Nature”

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 5 DUE ON 3/1 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 8: The Complexities of Whiteness, Social Class, Power, and Status Distinction in America**

3/4 Team meetings with Dr. Rahko to discuss your team’s progress on your research project

Readings: Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Laura T. Hamilton, *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013): chapter 1

3/6 Team meetings with Dr. Rahko to discuss your team’s progress on your research project

Readings: Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Laura T. Hamilton, *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013): chapter 5

3/8 **(ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS SESSION – WE DO NOT MEET AS A CLASS. THIS IS A DAY FOR YOUR TEAM TO SCHEDULE FIELDWORK AND/OR INTERVIEWS FOR YOUR TEAM PROJECTS)**

Watch: *Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class* (on Kanopy)

**WEEK 9: NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK**

3/11 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

3/13 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

3/15 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

**WEEK 10: The Complexities of Whiteness, Social Class, Power, and Status Distinction in America**

3/18 Watch in class *Bama Rush* (HBO Max)

Readings: Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Laura T. Hamilton, *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013): chapter 5

3/20 Watch in class *Bama Rush* (HBO Max)

Readings: Alice E. Marwick, “Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy,” *Public Culture*, *27* (1) (2015): 137-160.

3/22 Paul Fussell’s theory of social class and the American status system

Readings: Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide Through America’s Status System* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), chapter 2.

**WEEK 11: The Complexities of Whiteness, Social Class, Power, and Status Distinction in America**

3/25 Whiteness as an identity strategy for mainstream American culture

Readings: Warren, “It Really Isn’t About You: Whiteness and the Dangers of Thinking You Got It”; and Thomas K. Nakayama & Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,”

3/27 Whiteness as a form of power

Readings: Watch: *The Man Card: White Identity Politics from Nixon to Trump* (Media Education Foundation, watch on Kanopy); Warren, “It Really Isn’t About You: Whiteness and the Dangers of Thinking You Got It”; and Thomas K. Nakayama & Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,”

3/29 Class debate and discussion: Dissecting and deconstructing “Whiteness” and social class in America

Readings: Warren, “It Really Isn’t About You: Whiteness and the Dangers of Thinking You Got It”; and Thomas K. Nakayama & Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric”

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 6 DUE ON 3/29 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 7 DUE ON 3/29 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 12: Globalization and the Economy: Power, Cultural Difference, and American Capitalism. How to Write a Professional Report**

4/1 What is the “economy” and how does it contribute to cultural difference in America? Overview of how to write a professional report.

Readings: Stephen E. Rahko, “Negotiating Economic Judgement,” and Rahko & Craig, “Uprooting Uber: From Data Fracking to Data Commons”

4/3 **(ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS SESSION – WE DO NOT MEET AS A CLASS. THIS IS A**

**DAY FOR YOUR TEAM TO SCHEDULE FIELDWORK AND/OR INTERVIEWS FOR YOUR TEAM PROJECTS)**

Watch: *Digital Disconnect* (on Kanopy) and *Inequality for All*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvAFPHLFMa0>

4/5 **(ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS SESSION – WE DO NOT MEET AS A CLASS. THIS IS A DAY FOR**

**YOUR TEAM TO SCHEDULE FIELDWORK AND/OR INTERVIEWS FOR YOUR TEAM PROJECTS)**

Watch*: Digital Disconnect* (on Kanopy) and *Inside Job* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2IaJwkqgPk>

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 8 DUE ON 4/5 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 13: Aging, Religion, and Cultural Difference**

4/8 Aging as Cultural Difference in American society

Readings: Anderson “Exploring the role of communication in the aging in place experience: A quasi-ethnographic account of a local community”; watch *The Bubble*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp0nqJ1yrrg>

4/10 Religion, cultural plurality, and gender

Readings: Lengel and Holdsworth “Enacting Social Change Along the Cultural Identity Spectrum: Intercultural Identity Construction in Faith-Based Community Organizations”; watch ***Acting on Faith*** (Pluralism Project, on YouTube, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gc2tbimL_AY>

4/12 Class discussion and debate over the question of religious and generational difference in American society

Readings: None

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 9 DUE ON 4/12 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 10 DUE ON 4/12 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 14: Cultural Difference Between Artificial Intelligence and the Human**

4/15 Power, human technology, and cultural difference and bias

Readings: Woods “Asking more of Siri and Alexa feminine persona in service of surveillance capitalism” and Anderson “The corporeal turn at the intersection of rhetoric bodies and video games”; watch *Coded Bias* (Netflix, 2020)

4/17 Class debate over artificial intelligence and cultural difference

Readings: Woods “Asking more of Siri and Alexa feminine persona in service of surveillance capitalism” and Anderson “The corporeal turn at the intersection of rhetoric bodies and video games”; watch *Coded Bias* (Netflix, 2020)

4/19 Introduce Final Paper assignment and Final Paper Proposal assignment. Workday in-class for team reports.

Readings: None

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 11 DUE ON 4/19 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**\*\*\*CIVIC/POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL IDENTITY TEAM REPORT DUE ON SUNDAY 4/21 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**WEEK 15:** **Polarization and Enemyship in the United States since 2008. Workshop on Delivering Team Presentations.**

4/22 Workshop on delivering a team presentation, Part I

Readings: Jeremy Engels, *Enemyship: Democracy and Counter-Revolution in the Early Republic* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State Press, 2010), 1-32. Watch *America’s Great Divide: From Obama to Trump, Parts I II;* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnMBYMOTwEs>

4/24 Workshop on delivering a team presentation, Part II

Readings: Jeremy Engels, *Enemyship: Democracy and Counter-Revolution in the Early Republic* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State Press, 2010), 1-32. Watch *America’s Great Divide: From Obama to Trump, Parts I II;* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnMBYMOTwEs>

4/26 Class debate and discussion of how cultural difference can inflame social division and political polarization. In-class workday for presentation preparation.

Readings: Jeremy Engels, *Enemyship: Democracy and Counter-Revolution in the Early Republic* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State Press, 2010), 1-32. Watch *America’s Great Divide: From Obama to Trump, Parts I II;* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnMBYMOTwEs>

**\*\*\*FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE ON FRIDAY 4/26 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

**\*\*\*RESPONSE 12 DUE ON 4/26 BY 11:59 PM\*\*\***

***UNIT III: Reporting your Findings from your Field Work***

**WEEK 16:** **In-Class** **Student Presentations of Field Work and Team Research Projects**

4/29 Civic and Political Engagement Presentations, Part I

5/1 Civic and Political Engagement Presentations, Part II

5/3 Final Paper writing workshop in class

**FINAL PAPERS DUE FRIDAY, MAY 10TH BY 11:59 PM**