

Liberal and Civic Studies 121-02 – Fall 2012
Culture and Civic Responsibility: “Rereading America”

Classroom: Sichel 102

Class meetings: TuTh 9:40 – 11:10 am

Instructor: Deepak Sawhney

Office: Sichel 108; ext. 8155; email: dsawhney@stmarys-ca.edu

Office Hours: Tu: 1:00-2:30; Th 1:00–2:30; and by appointment

Lab: Sichel 102 (Tuesday, 2:50-4:20 pm)

6 additional Lab classes, see schedule

Course Description

Welcome to L&CS 121, the first of five Liberal and Civic Studies courses that together comprise the core experience for students pursuing this program of studies. Within the broad framework of culture and civic responsibility, this course introduces you to the seven central emphases and themes of the Liberal and Civic Studies Program: 1) Service-Learning, 2) the Arts, 3) Diversity, 4) Ideas from the Great Conversation, 5) Critical Thinking, 6) Integrative Thinking and 7) Self-Assessment. (NOTE: These themes and emphases are explained in the introductory pages of your Guide to the Liberal and Civic Studies Program.) In addition, the course gives special emphasis to the theme of American society and culture—its roots, development, nature and impact. Throughout the course, we will explore possible answers to the question: Can we create here in America the kind of “Beloved Community” envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King?

You will probably find this course different from other courses you have taken. Not only does it offer a highly diverse content—from philosophy to government, from social commentary to art history, from moral tracts to anthropology and sociology—but it asks you to be involved beyond the classroom in community service and the arts. The course introduces you to important skills associated with integrative writing, self-assessment, and service-learning, skills you will continue to develop in subsequent semesters and beyond graduation as well. You will learn to make connections between diverse disciplines and to integrate ideas and experiences through this semester and the remainder of your Liberal and Civic Studies core courses.

L&CS 121 lies at the very core of the Liberal and Civic Studies Program. Because it seeks to accomplish much, it demands a heavy workload from you. Besides reading, reflection and writing, you are required to participate in activities beyond regular class hours. We believe, however, that the rewards for you in understanding and personal growth will be worth the effort.

Requirements and Evaluation

Prepared attendance is required for all class sessions. Students must inform the instructor of her or his absence in advance. Your grade is based upon your leadership of class discussions, formal writing and your attendance at extra-curricular events. Participation in class activities and extracurricular events counts for 30% of your grade. Participation grades are based upon the following criteria:

- **Excellence [A]** requires that you attend all classes, workshops, and events, participate actively and take a leadership role in discussions, demonstrate your careful and

thoughtful reading of the text, discuss points articulately, listen respectfully and respond seriously to others' views, ask insightful questions, and take responsibility for the overall quality of the discussion.

- **Above average [B]** requires that you are rarely absent from class/workshops/events, participate actively in discussions, demonstrate a good knowledge of the text, work to achieve understanding, listen respectfully to other viewpoints, and ask sound questions.
- **Average [C]** requires that you attend class/workshops/events regularly, participate in the discussions with occasional contributions, demonstrate a basic knowledge of the text, listen respectfully to others and sometimes ask questions. Missing more than 3 hours of classes may also result in a C in participation.
- **Below average [D]** results when you follow the conversation respectfully and occasionally participate, or miss more than 5 hours of classes/workshops/events.
- **Failure [F]** results when you occupy a seat but show no signs of life, or when you miss more than 9 hours of classes/workshops/events.

Assignments:

1. **Reading Responses:** You are required to maintain ongoing Reading Responses in which you describe, analyze, reflect on, and respond to your experiences in this course—**readings, class discussions and activities, service-learning, outside events, etc.**—and in which you integrate ideas from this and other courses and relate them to your own ideas and personal values. You will integrate ideas from various sources, including this course, the arts, service work and life experiences on and off campus. In particular, you will make connections between: 1) ideas developed in this course and other courses; 2) ideas from academic coursework and service experiences; 3) experiences in the arts and their application to society; and 4) principles and theories from readings and their application in the world beyond the campus. At times you will be asked to make intellectual entries on particular subjects, such as your response to our visit to Glide Memorial Church, or a speaker. Your Reading Responses will also provide the raw material for your semester self-assessment and formal essays. You should consider your Reading Responses an important repository of your ideas, a kind of intellectual autobiography revealing the synthesis of academic texts and experiences with your mind and spirit at work, always evolving and growing. The Reading Responses are worth 15% of your class grade. You will need to devote a special section of your log to your **service-learning experience**. You are expected to write at least one service-learning entry a month, describing your work, reactions, analysis, relationship to readings, and class/lab discussions. On a separate paper you will also need to keep a list of your service-learning hours, the date performed, and a brief comment on the type of work performed. Hours will be totaled on this log at the end of the semester and signed by your service supervisor. **Special Note:** Over the semester, you are expected to produce 10 Reading Responses (one almost each week). Hand in your Reading Responses each Thursday.
2. **Service Learning** You are expected to write at least one service-learning entry a month in your **Reading Responses**, describing your work, reactions, analysis, relationship to

readings, and class/lab discussions. You will also be required to turn in the **Community Engagement Agreement**, the initial agreement with your community partner; a **log** of your total hours, and an **interview** with your community partner.

- 3. Cultural Events:** You are required to attend **two** cultural events, although you may include more if you wish. This will be part of your participation grade. Submit a minimum of **250-word analysis** of each experience. Be sure to integrate and analyze one quote and specific idea from our assigned reading.
- 4. Self-Assessment:** Your Self-Assessment includes your 4-page evaluation (details below) with a cover page, which will be handed out in class. Please note that if the self-assessment is not completed satisfactorily, you will not pass the class. You will use this self-assessment in your senior portfolio.

Service-Learning: Service-learning is a central feature of L&CS 121 and of the Liberal and Civic Studies Program. We do not consider classroom knowledge and community service as separate entities, but as an integrated whole. In Liberal and Civic Studies, classroom knowledge (gained by reading, reflection, discussion) informs community service, and knowledge gained through service informs classroom learning. Service-learning also provides you with the opportunity to respond with your heart as well as your mind, and to learn in a powerful, first-hand way that all persons are of unique worth and have gifts to share with others, that democracy depends on the involvement of each member of the community, and that our mutual survival on the planet depends on the more able and the less able working together. Service-learning requirements are as follows:

1. Obtain a meaningful service-learning project by the end of the first week of class. There are suggestions in your Guide. CILSA will try to help you with this process during the first week.
2. Perform at least 2 hours of service each week for 10 weeks beginning in the third week of the semester, for a total of at least **20 hours**. You may do more hours if you wish. You must complete your service by week 14.
3. Maintain an accurate service-learning log, and regular reflective responses to your service project. Work to relate insights that you have gained in your service with ideas from our readings.
4. Fill out the “Community Engagement Agreement” with your service-learning supervisor, delineating expectations that each of you have.
5. Interview a staff person in your organization, write up the responses, and turn them in when they are due. Group interviews are strongly recommended.

Your service project is worth 15% of your course grade.

Self-Assessment: As explained in the Guide, Self-Assessment is a major emphasis in the Liberal and Civic Studies Program. Throughout the semester in L&CS 121 you will be asked to reflect on the meaning of the experiences you are having in terms of your values and your evolving perspectives and synthesize these experiences in relation to the course texts by integrating and analyzing quotes and specific ideas from the assigned readings. At the end of the course you will be asked to write a four-page self-assessment in which you thoughtfully recount, reflect on,

analyze and evaluate your experiences through the semester and their effect upon your own growth and development. This assessment will become an important permanent part of your portfolio in your Assessment & Portfolio class, and will affect your senior interview. (You will do another one in L&CS 122, followed by a major self-assessment in Assessment & Portfolio.)

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will engage in sustained, student-centered discussion based on ideas that emerge from readings, other college coursework, service work, and life experiences.
2. Students will demonstrate an interest in local, national, and international trends and events that affect the world we live in.
3. Students will understand important aspects of ethnic, racial, social-class, and gender inequality as they exist in the United States and beyond.
4. Students will be able to articulate their thoughtful beliefs and attitudes about ethnic, racial, social-class, and gender inequalities manifested in our society.
5. Students will write in a variety of rhetorical modes, including personal reflection, analysis, comparison and contrast, and research-supported argument.

Midterm Exam and Essay: Strong writing is highly valued in this course. In addition to your Reading Responses, you will be writing two formal essays worth 40% of the course grade. High standards in terms 1) a strong and persuasive voice that can substantiate all claims with evidence; 2) a well-defined argument that uses a balance of critical analysis of the text while synthesizing your own introspective thoughts and opinions with the text; 3) proper and effective use of direct quotes, summary and paraphrasing of the texts of your choice. Specific topics will be distributed later. See Writing Guide and Grading Rubric.

Final Grades will be based upon the following percentile ranges:

90—100% = A, 80—89% = B, 70—79% = C, 60—69% = D

You are reminded that you must earn at least a C- in L&CS 121 to be admitted to L&CS 122.

Breakdown of course grade: Participation (30%), Reading Responses (15%), Service Project (15%), Midterm Exam (20%) & Essay (20%) = 100%.

Late Assignments: Assignments submitted late will lose half a letter grade for each day past the deadline. If you are having difficulty with an assignment, please ask for help.

Required Texts: The texts for this course are: 1) *Rereading America* (8th edition); 2) *The Shame of the Nation* by Jonathan Kozol; and 3) *The Working Poor* by David K. Shipler.

Academic Honor Code: Saint Mary's College has established an academic honor code that asks students to pledge to do their own work in their own words, without seeking inappropriate aid in preparing for exams or assignments. The pledge reads as follows: "As a student member of an academic community based in mutual trust and responsibility, I pledge: to do my own work at all times, without giving or receiving inappropriate aid; to avoid behaviors that unfairly impede the academic progress of other members of my community; and to take reasonable

and responsible action in order to uphold my community's academic integrity." This course operates under the premises of the academic honor code, including the expectation that you will work to uphold high standards of integrity. I am available to discuss issues of academic integrity and any questions you might have about the relationship between policy and this course. To understand the academic honor code in full, please see the most recent Student Handbook. **Invitation and reminder:** Please feel free to conference with me during office hours, or by appointment, for help with any aspect of the course.

The Center for Writing Across the Curriculum (Dante 202) provides drop-in service as well as appointments where students receive help from peers who have been trained to listen, ask questions, and give constructive feedback on papers from across academic disciplines. Tutors aim to help students write their essays, not to write essays for them. The writer, not the tutor, remains responsible for the completed essay. The Center is open to all Saint Mary's College students, whether they are having difficulty with their writing or just want to get a second opinion. It's a good idea to visit the Writing Center early before you feel overwhelmed with your class load.

Student Disability Services: Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements, for individuals with qualifying disabilities, are extended through the office of Student Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Coordinator at (925) 631-4164 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary's website: <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html>

Assignment Schedule

Theme 1: "Harmony at Home"

Tu 8/28 Introductions: each other, the syllabus, the texts, and service-learning.
"The World House," Dr. Martin Luther King

Lab #1 Tu 8/28 2:50-4:20 Service Learning w/ Engaged Learning Facilitator Ruby Palmer-Ghose

Th 8/30 "The World House," Dr. Martin Luther King;
"Introduction: Thinking Critically, Challenging Cultural Myths"
+ Service-learning

Tu 9/4 The Myth of the Model Family

"Introduction: The Myth of the Model Family"
"A Family Tree," Rockwell
"Looking for Work," Soto
"What We Really Miss about the 1950s," Coontz

Th 9/6 The Myth of the Model Family

“Aunt Ida Pieces a Quilt,” Dixon
“The Color of Family Ties,” Gerstel & Sarkisian
“What is Marriage?” Wolfson
“My Big Fat Straight Wedding,” Sullivan

RR #1 Due

Tu 9/11 The Myth of the Model Family

“Visual Portfolio Reading Images of American Families”
“Proposition 8: The California Marriage Protection Act.”
“8 is Not Hate: The meaning of a Proposition,” Morse
“Prop 8 Hurt My family,” Marriage Equality USA

Theme 2: “Learning Power”

Th 9/13 The Myth of Education and Empowerment

“Introduction”
“Idiot Nation,” Moore
“Against School,” Gatto
From *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work*, Anyon
“I Just Wanna Be Average,” Rose

RR #2 Due

Tu 9/18 The Myth of Education and Empowerment

Visual Portfolio
“The Achievement of Desire,” Rodriguez
“Para Teresa,” Hernández-Ávila
“Learning to Read,” Malcolm X
“In the Basement of the Ivory Tower,” Professor X

Th 9/20 The Inequality of Education

The Shame of the Nation, Kozol, Introduction and chapters 1, 2 & 3

RR #3 Due

Tu 9/25 The Inequality of Education – DUE: Community Engagement Agreement

The Shame of the Nation, Kozol, chapters 4 & 5

Th 9/27 The Inequality of Education

The Shame of the Nation, Kozol, chapters 6 & 7

RR #4 Due

Tu 10/2 The Inequality of Education

The Shame of the Nation, Kozol, chapters 8, 9 & 10

Th 10/4 The Inequality of Education

The Shame of the Nation, Kozol, chapters 11, 12 & Epilogue

RR #5 Due

Theme 3: “Created Equal”

Tu 10/9 The Myth of the Melting Pot

“Introduction”

From *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson
"Causes of Prejudice," Parrillo
"C.P. Ellis," Terkel
"The Boy in the Mirror," McBride

Th 10/11 Midterm Exam: (Midterm exam period: October 11-17)

Tu 10/16 The Myth of the Melting Pot

Visual Portfolio

"Loot or Find: Fact or Frame?" Harris & Carbado
"Models of American Ethnic Relations," Fredrickson
"Deconstructing America," Buchanan

Th 10/18 Midterm Holiday

Lab # 2 Glide Memorial Church: Sunday, October 21, 9am – 1pm. Depart: 8am
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Tu 10/23 The Myth of the Melting Pot

"The Crossing," Martínez
"Assimilation," Alexie
"The End of White America?" Hua Hsu
"Child of the Americas," Morales

Theme 4: "True Women and Real Men"

Th 10/25 Myths of Gender

"Introduction"
"How Americans Understand Equality of the Sexes," Toqueville
"Girl," Kincade
"Becoming Members of Society," Devor
"The Story of my Body," Cofer
"A Boys Life," Rosin

RR #6 Due

Tu 10/30 Myths of Gender

Visual Portfolio
"From Fly-Girls to Bitches and Hos," Morgan
"Bros Before Hos," Kimmel
"The Descent of Men," Kindlon
"The Death of Macho," Salam
"Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt," Kilbourne

Lab # 3 10/30 2:50-4:20 Film: <i>Killing us softly</i> (DVD S925)
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Theme 5: "The Working Poor"

Th 11/1 Invisible in America

The Working Poor: Invisible in America, introduction and chapters 1 & 2
Economic Justice for All, National Conference of Bishops (1986), 196-205

RR #7 Due

Tu 11/6 Invisible in America

The Working Poor: Invisible in America, chapters 3 & 4

Th 11/8 Invisible in America

The Working Poor: Invisible in America, chapters 5 & 6

RR #8 Due

Tu 11/13 Invisible in America

The Working Poor: Invisible in America, chapters 7 & 8

Lab #4 11/12 4:30-6:00 Prof. Bill Domhoff's "Power and Politics in the USA," SODA
Lab # 5 11/13 2:50-4:20 Meet with Librarian for Research: Wildenradt Theatre

Th 11/15 Invisible in America

The Working Poor: Invisible in America, chapters 9, 10 & 11

RR #9 Due

Theme 6: "Money and Success"

Tu 11/20 The Myth of Individual Opportunity

"Introduction"

"From Ragged Dick," Alger

"The Lesson," Bambara

"Horatio Alger," Dalton

"Living It," Frank

Thanksgiving Recess: November 21-25

Tu 11/27 The Myth of Individual Opportunity

Visual Portfolio

"Serving in Florida," Ehrenreich

"Class in America," Mantsios

"From The Missing Class," Newman & Chen

"Tent City, USA," La Ganga

"From America's New Working Class," Arnold

Theme 7: "Ah Wilderness!"

Th 11/29 The Myths of Nature and the Environment

Introduction

"From Walking," Thoreau

"From An American Childhood," Dillard

"A Life of the Senses," Louv

RR #10 Due

Tu 12/4 The Myths of Nature and the Environment

Visual Portfolio

“The Artifice of the Natural,” Seibert

“Talking to the Owls and Butterflies,” Deer & Erdoes

“Save the Whales, Screw the Shrimp,” Williams

“From As the World Burns,” Jensen & McMillan

Lab # 6 12/4 2:50-4:20 Peer review session for final papers

Th 12/6 The Myths of Nature and the Environment – DUE: Self-Assessment

“From The End of Nature,” McKibbe

“Moving Heaven & Earth,” Wood

“In Search of Justice,” Velazquez

“Our Unhealthy Future,” Berlau

Final Exam Period December 10-13

DUE: 1) Essay, 2) Service Learning log & interview & 3) Cultural Events