COURSE SYLLABUS

SOCIAL CONTROVERSIES

SOC/IDIS 256

DR. DEBRA WETCHER-HENDRICKS

FALL 2007

Office: PPHAC 314

MORAVIAN COLLEGE

Office Hours: Monday 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Tuesday 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Office Phone: 610-861-1415

e-mail: medwh02@moravian.edu
This course will provide students with

1. familiarity with various controversial issues related to the formation of social identity and the management of society.

2. the ability to approach controversial issues objectively, recognizing the importance of acknowledging differing attitudes regarding these issues.

3. well-developed sociological imaginations, allowing for the consideration of relationships between personal circumstances and large-scale conditions related to the topics raised.

4. strong critical thinking skills, enhanced by evaluating particular controversial issues through the combination of scholarly documented evidence and logical thought.

5. skills for formulating and and justifying strong, cohesive arguments for chosen positions on controversial issues.

6. appreciation for the interdisciplinary natures of the topics discussed in the course.
Two non-cumulative exams assess student understanding of the basic concepts discussed in class and in assigned readings. Exam questions, which require written answers ranging from a sentence to a paragraph in length, vary in point value.

During the semester, students, in groups of three or four must assume responsibility for organizing and presenting lessons on chosen topics. The "Guidelines for Presentations" contains specific instructions and suggested topics for these presentations.

In addition to the topic addressed by each student with his or her presentation group, he or she must select three issues considered worthy of further attention than given in class. For each of these topics, a one to two-page written responses should provide a subjective analysis of and any questions related to the topic. A description of the requirements for responses can be found in the "Guidelines for Written Assignments."

From the issues discussed in class, students must choose a single topic (It is suggested that they select from these that served as bases for their responses.) to examine in depth, resulting in a position paper. A description of the requirements for the position paper can be found in the "Guidelines for Written Assignments."

Each student also receives a class participation/class activities grade. The participation portion of the grade reflects students' interaction in class. Providing substantive class discussion and contributing to groupwork increases this grade. Conversely, disruption (including consistently arriving to class late), a lack of effort, and obvious inactivity (including sleeping) lowers the grade. The class activities portion of the grade reflects a student's efforts toward and completion of in-class assignments and exercises.

The preceding factors will be combined in the following manner to determine students' course grades:

- **EXAMS**: 36% (18% each)
- **PRESENTATION**: 18%
- **RESPONSES**: 18% (6% each)
- **POSITION PAPER**: 18%
- **CLASS PARTICIPATION/ACTIVITIES**: 10%

Course grades follow the letter-grade system. Please consult the Moravian College Student Handbook for a description of the level of work characteristic of each grade. The numerical ranges used in assigning each letter grade in this course are as follows:

- **A**: 92%-100%
- **A-**: 90%-91.9%
- **B+**: 88%-89.9%
- **B**: 82%-87.9%
- **B-**: 80%-81.9%
- **C+**: 78%-79.9%
- **C**: 72%-77.9%
- **C-**: 70%-71.9%
- **D+**: 68%-69.9%
- **D**: 62%-67.9%
- **D-**: 60%-61.9%
- **F**: 0%-59.9%
Policies

All standards listed in the college catalog that deal with attendance, withdrawal, cheating, plagiarism, and any other pertinent policies apply to this class.

Please make every possible effort to take exams on the scheduled dates (see course schedule). All missed examinations are given at the end of the semester. A student who does not attend class on the day of his or her scheduled presentation receives a grade of 0 on the presentation. (It is unrealistic to state that NO excuses will be accepted. But, very few excuses will be considered legitimate. A valid excuse must be accompanied by proper documentation as well as approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.)

Responses must be submitted in the class directly following that in which the topic of the response was discussed. Late responses will be accepted with a five-point penalty for each day they are late, beginning with the due date. Position papers that are submitted after the due date will be penalized fifteen points for each day that they are late.

Attendance, itself, does not directly affect students’ grades in this course. However, attendance is indirectly reflected in the class participation/activities grade. Class participation grades rely, in part, upon presence in class. Also, students may not make up class activities that take place during classes for which they are absent.

PLEASE NOTE: The Course Schedule on the following page provides an anticipated calendar of topics and assignments. Please be aware that this schedule is subject to change based upon the progression of the term.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Copies of reading assignments followed by an asterisk (*) are on reserve in Reeves Library. Copies of reading assignments followed by two asterisks (**) are available through Academic Search Elite. All other assignments can be found in the Crossroads reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC(S)</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Introductions, Nature vs. Nurture</td>
<td>Read: Pinker*; Colt, and Hollister** (in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>LABOR DAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation, Public Perceptions of Homosexuals and Bisexuals</td>
<td>Read: Kinsey* (pgs 636-666); Walters and Hayes; Lacayo; Weston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>Public Perceptions of Homosexuals and Bisexuals</td>
<td>Read: Parker*; The New Republic; Ruether; The Christian Century Choose favored presentation topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 24</td>
<td>Addiction as a Disease</td>
<td>Read: DSM-IV* (pgs 199-209 and 214-222); Becker, Legrand, Iacono, and McGue**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Addiction as a Disease</td>
<td>Read: DeZolt; Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>FALL BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>Exam 1, Poverty</td>
<td>STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Read student-assigned articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>Poverty and Welfare</td>
<td>Read: Mergenbagan; Cox, Edin and Lein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Roles of and Concerns about Welfare</td>
<td>Read: Eichenreich and Piven; Cohen Hoffertsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>Racial and Ethnic Stratification</td>
<td>Read: Platt; Feagin and Sikes; Eddings; Ogbu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 19</td>
<td>Role of and Concerns about Affirmative Action</td>
<td>Read: Kennedy**, Intellectual and Winkler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Read student-assigned documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Read student-assigned documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.B.A. (Exam week)</td>
<td>Position Paper due</td>
<td>Write position paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>