Prejudice, Stigma, and Intergroup Relations (IDIS/PS 390)

Spring 2005 – Moral Life Course (U2) for LinC Curriculum

Monday and Wednesday – Period 5B (12:50 – 2pm) – Hurd 235

Description of the course: Race, religion, gender, sexuality, age, social class, and disability are all social and emotional flashpoints in our society. Prejudice affects individuals and groups, and one’s identity within a group can be stigmatizing. Moral issues abound here, beginning with how we perceive and treat others, and how we are perceived and treated by others. Arguably, prejudice is largely a function of ignorance—but is this ignorance motivational (i.e., need-based) or grounded in how we think about others (a by-product of cognition)? Getting along with one another—understanding one another—depends upon being exposed to different perspectives and ways of living. The goal of this class is to promote each student’s awareness and understanding of prejudice and stigma while identifying ways to promote constructive intergroup relations. Students will come to grips with their own moral values and positions where thinking about and interacting with others is concerned.

Required Books


Reserve Readings will be available in Reeves Library.
Course Requirements

Class participation and attendance. This class requires constant attendance, active participation, and critical discussions of the readings. I expect that you will attend each and every class, and that you will come prepared to talk about—and question—which you read. I also assume that you are in this class because you have a serious interest in the topic. As a result, I assume that you are willing to share your opinions with the class and that you are open to the possibility of changing your opinions.

Please note that I will be taking role, thus your absence from class will affect your participation grade (i.e., if you are not in class, you cannot contribute to discussion). If you miss a class, you are responsible for any material covered, notes given, announcements, etc. If you are absent, please see one of your classmates regarding that day's assignments.

Classroom decorum and courtesy. Please arrive to class on time, that is, when class is to begin or before—not once the class is well underway. A late arrival is not only rude, it is disruptive to the flow of discussion. I realize that there are all kinds of reasons for late arrivals, many of them entirely legitimate. I also realize that you will do your best to be in class on time. It is not reasonable to arrive late to class because you were finishing writing a paper (work is technically late once class begins and will be down-graded accordingly, even if you submit it 10 mins after class begins—plan ahead and get your work done on time).

Journal. I would like you to maintain a journal that discusses your reactions to the course readings and class discussions. Specifically, I want you to write three entries per week—two concerning class readings and discussions and the third an “open entry” (labeled as such) where you write about whatever you wish concerning the course and issues raised within it. I want you to keep your journal in a computer file. Several times during the semester, I will ask you to submit a diskette or to send a computer file to me via email containing your up-to-date journal. Your daily journal will provide you with the opportunity (and outlet) for sharing thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the day’s topic that you did not have the opportunity to share, felt uncomfortable doing so, etc. Please date each entry. Late journal submissions will not be accepted—a grade of zero will result.

Community Journal. After I read all students’ daily journal entries, I will extract comments from them and then merge these excerpts into a community journal. All entries will remain anonymous—no one will know who wrote what piece. Copies of the community journal will be made for each member of the class. We will take class time to discuss reactions to the journal.
Exams. There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final. Each exam will be comprised of essay questions based upon class readings, films, and discussions. We will discuss exam formats in some detail during class. The midterm exam date is noted in the course schedule. The final exam date will be announced once it is determined by the Registrar’s Office. A missed exam will be recorded as a zero (0) grade. Make-up exams will be given at my discretion, and valid evidence for the absence will be required (e.g., emergency, documented medical excuse).

Short papers. There are five short paper assignments noted in the course schedule. These are meant to be thought, opinion, or reaction papers—not formal research papers. Each short paper should be somewhere between 3 and 5 pages (more if need be), typed and double-spaced, as well as spell-checked. The goal is to “do something” with the readings and your opinions about them. Be prepared to share your (written) thoughts in class with your peers. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day (the penalty begins once the class in which a paper is due begins). Topics are provided on the last page of this syllabus.

Late Paper Policy. You have five written assignments for this class. Hard copies of all paper assignments are due at the beginning of class or in advance of the dates listed in the syllabus. Papers submitted later than this time—for any reason—will be penalized by 20% (i.e., an paper that would have earned a 95 on time receives a 75) on the first day and 10% each day thereafter (including weekends), up to 50%. Practically speaking, an A paper that is 5 days late receives a grade of 50 once it is turned in—if it is never submitted, then it receives a grade of 0. I will not accept electronic copies of papers sent via email, only hard copies. Plan accordingly by working ahead and consistently on your papers.

Submitting work early. I am happy to accept your papers before they are due.

Final course grade. The final course grade will be based upon the following percentage weights:

- Midterm exam: 15%
- Final exam: 15%
- Class participation: 10%
- Daily/Community Journal: 10%
- Five (5) short papers: 50%

Office Hours.

Monday: 10:15-11:15am
Wednesday: 2-3pm
Friday: 8:30-10:30am

When necessary appointments for other times may be scheduled.
Syllabus. I reserve the right to alter the syllabus if I decide change is necessary.
Course Schedule and Assignments

*Week One* - Jan 10 (M) and Jan 12 (W)

1. Overview and introduction to course
2. Being sensitive, becoming sensitive, and discussing difficult issues
   
   Class exercise

*Week Two* – Jan 17 (M) and Jan 19 (W)

1. No Class – Martin Luther King Day Observed
2. Film: *In Whose Honor?*

*Week Three* – Jan 24 (M) and Jan 26 (W) - The Nature of Prejudice

1. Field Trip to the Payne Gallery on the Hurd Campus to see *The Breck Girl Collection* and the *African Barbershop Signs* on display. Meet on the Hurd Campus by 1pm. We will be discussing this show in Wednesday’s class.
2. Allport Part I and II. Preferential Thinking and Group Differences
   
   *(Paper 1 due)*

*Week Four* – Jan 31 (M) and Feb 2 (W) - The Nature of Prejudice continued

1. Allport Part III. Perceiving and Thinking about Group Differences
2. Allport Part IV and V. Sociocultural Factors, Acquiring Prejudice
   
   *(Journal due)*

*Week Five* – Feb 7(M) and Feb 9 (W) - Personality and Motivational Issues


   *(Paper 2 due)*
Week Six – Feb 14 (M) and Feb 16 (W) - Prejudice and Stereotyping

1. Plous pps. 3 – 62

2. Plous pps. 49 – 62

Week Seven – Feb 21 (M) and Feb 23 (W) - Stereotypes and Stereotype Threat


(Paper 3 due)

2. Midterm Exam

Week Eight – Feb 28 (M) and Mar 2 (W) - Stigma and Disability


(Journal due)


Spring Break – March 5 thru 13

Week Nine – Mar 14 (M) and Mar 16 (W) - Stigma continued (disability, obesity)

1. Plous pps. 84 – 91

2. Plous pps. 93 – 96
Week Ten – Mar 21 (M) and Mar 23 (W) - Racism Then

1. Plous pps. 113 – 143; Allport Part VI. The Dynamics of Prejudice

2. Plous pps. 144 – 164; Allport VII. Character Structure

Easter Recess – Mar 25 (F) to Mar 28 (M)

Week Eleven – Mar 30 (W) - Racism Now

1. Plous pps. 165 – 182

(Paper 4 due)

Week Twelve – Apr 4 (M) and Apr 6 (W) – Racism

1. Plous pps. 183 - 212

2. Plous pps. 213 – 236

(Journal due)

Week Thirteen – Apr 11 (M) – Sexism & (W) Apr 13 Heterosexism

1. Plous pps. 237 - 271

2. Plous pps. 375 – 422; Film: A Question of Gender; Plous pps. 415 - 423

(Paper 5 due)

Week Fourteen – Apr 18 (M) and Apr 20 (W) - Anti-Semitism and Ageism

1. Plous pps. 273 – 303; 319 – 326


(Journal due)
Week Fifteen - Apr 25 (M) and Apr 27 (W) - Reducing Prejudice

1. Plous pps. 481 – 506; Allport Part VIII. Reducing Group Tensions

2. Conclusions

* Date of the Final Exam to be announced
Acceptance of Course Requirements

To:  Dana S. Dunn, Department of Psychology, Moravian College

From: _______________________________  (Print your name)

RE:  Course requirements and syllabus for

Prejudice, Stigma, and Interpersonal Relations (IDIS/PS 390) Spring 2005

My signature below indicates that I have read, understood, and agreed to meet the requirements and to follow the guidelines as presented in the syllabus for Prejudice, Stigma, and Interpersonal Relations (Spring 2005) that I received at the beginning of the semester.

______________________________________     Date: ______________________
(Your Signature)
Paper Topic Assignments

Note: Students are required to write five 3 to 5 page thought papers. Possible topics are noted below. Due dates for the papers are indicated earlier in the course schedule.

**Paper 1** – What is your reaction to the controversy surrounding the issue of team mascots as portrayed in the film *In Whose Honor*? Is this a problem of prejudice? Why or why not? In your opinion, what should be done about it?

**Paper 2** – In your opinion, what is the origin of prejudiced feelings, beliefs, and behaviors in the average person? What are the implications of your answer for people’s everyday lives and experiences?

Or

Examine and critique the way Moravian College, a place you work, or another institution treats minorities. What are the strengths and weaknesses? How can things be improved?

**Paper 3** – What is stereotype threat? Can stereotype threat affect anyone? Do you think you have ever been adversely affected by stereotype threat? Explain.

Or

Develop your own paper topic (consult with me before you begin to write).

**Paper 4** – Have you ever witnessed overt or explicit racism? When and where? What did you do or not do? Why? How do you feel now?

Or

Do something original that reduces prejudice (or could potentially do so), and write about what you did. What were the psychological principles that made it work? Could others do what you did? How could your idea be further improved?

**Paper 5** – Describe your reactions to the individual portrayed in the documentary *A Question of Gender*. Does the fact that this individual is a Moravian College alum have any impact on your opinion? Why or why not?

Or

Discuss how two or more forms of prejudice reinforce and influence each other (e.g., sexism, heterosexism, and ageism; racism, anti-Semitism, and speciesism, etc.).