General Studies 1181: American Culture and Academic Life
K. Jones
Fall 2018, MW 12:00-12:50

Office: Academic Building 001D
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Office Hours: Tuesday / Thursday 1:00-3:00; other times by appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to increase skills and knowledge of American culture among international students and enhance their integration into the university community. Throughout the course, students will gain an understanding of both national and local culture. In addition, students will be introduced to campus resources and strategies that will help them to be academically successful and to enhance their study abroad experience. The course will provide opportunities in and out of class for students to navigate a variety of social scenarios and participate in conversation practice activities.

Core Student Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to
• Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication
• Locate campus resources to solve problems/answer questions
• Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to American culture and academic life

Course Objectives
• Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
• Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems
• Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

Grading Policy
• 4 Journal Assignments (5% each) 20%
• 2 summaries (15% each) 30%
• Cultural Presentation 15%
• Service Learning Activity 20%
• Class Participation 15%

Grading Scale
90 – 100 A
80 – 89 B
70 – 79 C
60 – 69 D
59 and Below F

Late Work Policy
• Ten points will be deducted for each class day that a written assignment is late
• Class activities and quizzes cannot be made up in the event of an absence
Absence Policy
Excessive absences, (more than FOUR absences FOR ANY REASON) will automatically result in a failing grade in the course.

- Students are expected to attend all classes, conferences, and required Writing Center activities unless prevented from doing so by illness, bona fide emergencies, or circumstances beyond their control.
- **Should a serious illness, emergency, or other crisis occur, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the Student Life Office immediately so that professors may be informed.** It is also the student’s responsibility to stay in touch with instructors in order to keep up with the work.
- If a student misses class for any reason, it is that student’s responsibility to check with a classmate and Blackboard for the class assignment and handouts for that day.
- If a student is absent, it is the student’s responsibility to make up the work missed **BEFORE** the next class meeting so that the completed homework can be brought to the next class meeting.
- If a student is aware of an absence that will occur, it is that student’s responsibility to contact the professors **in advance** and to complete assigned work **in advance of the absence.**

Course Activities
- Summaries – Students will write TWO summaries of assigned articles throughout the course. The first summary will consist of multiple drafts and a required visit to the Writing Center. The second summary will be an in-class timed writing assignment.
- Reflections – Students will write four brief reflection pieces in which they describe and respond to the experience of FOUR required off-campus outings. These off-campus outings include eating at a sit-down restaurant, going to a large grocery store, going to a cultural event, and attending an ASU football game. Prior to each of these outings, the instructor will discuss with students appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.
- Service Learning Activity – Students will be required to participate in ONE service project on campus that lasts at least three hours. Students must provide documentation that they attended the project.

Required Materials
- Access to Ramport, Blackboard, and Microsoft Word
- In addition, you will be required to attend outings which may necessitate transportation off campus.

Course Readings
- “25 Foods Texas Does Better Than Anywhere Else” from Buzzfeed.com
- “101 Characteristics of Americans / American Culture”
- “Adjusting to College Life” from the International Student Guide to the USA website
- “American Culture: Traditions and Customs of the United States” by Kim Ann Zimmermann
- “Cultural Immersion: Getting Involved in Your New Community” from the International Student Guide to the USA website
- “Learning About U.S. American Culture and Values” by John Dickson
- “Preserving the Mohair Trade” by Caitlin Richards

Videos
- “American Culture Shock”
- “The First Lady on the Importance of Studying Abroad” (Michelle Obama)
- “Restaurant Etiquette – Glove and Boots”
Academic Integrity
Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook.

American Disability Act
Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request and implement academic accommodations.

Religious Holy Day
A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

Syllabus
DAY 1: Introduction to course
Campus scavenger hunt activity (map provided)

DAY 2: PowerPoint tour of San Angelo
Community service project discussion
Assign service learning project (due at end of course)

DAY 3: Discuss steps for critical reading (handout)
Practice critical reading as a class (“Adjusting to College Life”)
Homework: Watch Video 6 of the Information Literacy module in Blackboard and answer the 5 quiz questions that follow the video; watch Video 7 and answer the 5 quiz questions that follow the video

DAY 4: Reading quiz
Due – first journal (grocery store)
Guest speakers – tutors, multicultural center
Homework: Critically read “Adventures in US Culture and Values” (handout)

DAY 5: Group conversation about reading assignment
Report to class on your group’s discussion
Video – “American Culture Shock” (YouTube)
Homework: Critically read “Study in Texas”

DAY 6: Reading quiz
Discuss restaurant etiquette
Video – “Restaurant Etiquette – Glove and Boots”
MEXICAN FOOD DAY!

DAY 7: Due – second journal (restaurant)
Guest speaker: UCPC (discuss campus activities, programs, and service projects)
Read “Cultural Immersion: Getting Involved in Your New Community” in class
DAY 8:  In class, critically read “American Culture: Traditions and Customs of the United States”
Discuss steps for writing an effective summary (handout)
Homework: Compose first draft of summary

DAY 9:  No class – conference with me or Writing Center tutor about summary draft

DAY 10:  Due – final draft of summary
Assign American culture presentation
Homework: Meet with partners to plan presentation

DAY 11:  Due – third journal (cultural event)
Homework: Critically read “Preserving the Mohair Trade”

DAY 12:  Compose first draft of summary #2

DAY 13:  American Culture Presentations

DAY 14:  American Culture Presentations
Video – “The First Lady on the Importance of Studying Abroad”

DAY 15:  Due – fourth journal (football game); service learning project documentation
Course evaluation
CLASS BAR-B-Q