General Studies 1181: American Culture and Academic Life

K. Jones

Fall 2020

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Office Hours: By appointment only; Face coverings are required during all office visits.

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 learn about American culture and values, participate in conversation practice activities, apply critical reading skills, and practice written communication.

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 Movie Assignments (15% each) 60%
- 2 Critical Readings (10% each) 20%
- Campus Resource Presentation 10%
- Conversation Activity 10%

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 unless you have made arrangements with Dr. Jones ahead of time.

Absence Policy
*Excessive absences, (more than FOUR absences) will automatically result in a failing grade in the course.*

- You are expected to attend all classes 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 your 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.
- In the case that you contract COVID-19 or that you are required to quarantine, you must electronically send notification from a physician or the University indicating so in order for these absences to be excused. IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL, DO NOT COME TO CLASS AND IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE CAMPUS HEALTH CLINIC.
- If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to check with a classmate and the syllabus to see what you missed. All handouts and assignments are posted in Blackboard, so can access them anytime from anywhere.
- 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.

Classroom Policies
The Department of English and Modern Languages has established the following rules for the computer classroom:

- Food, drinks, and tobacco products are prohibited. Please leave all food and drink outside the room.
- You will have assigned seats in this class. When you enter the classroom, go directly to your seat and stay there for the remainder of class. Please do not get up to visit with other students, and do not share or touch one another’s supplies such as pens, phones, etc. You may leave the classroom to make or receive an emergency phone call or to use the restroom. You do not need to ask permission to leave the classroom.
- Unless you have a documented medical reason, you are required to wear a face covering during class per the Angelo State University regulations and guidelines from Texas state education officials.
- Upon entering and leaving the classroom, you will sanitize your work station and your hands.

Course Activities
- Critical Readings – You will critically read 2 assigned articles.
- Movie Reflections – You will watch 4 movies, all of which address different aspects of American culture. You will then complete the reflection assignments and post them in Blackboard.
- Conversation Activity – You will hold a 15-20 minute conversation with a student from Texas during which you will gather information about Texan culture.
• Campus Resource Presentation – You will research an assigned campus resource and present your research to the class during a 5-10 minute oral / PowerPoint presentation.

Required Materials
• Access to Ramport, Blackboard, and Microsoft Word
• Access to streaming service

Course Readings
• “Education Abroad in a Post-COVID-19 World” by Brian Whalen
• “What are American Values? What is Important to Americans?” USAHello Website
• News article from San Angelo Standard-Times (TBD)

Movies
• Forrest Gump (1994)
• Hidden Figures (2016)
• Love, Simon (2018)
• Spanglish (2004)

Face Covering Policy
As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory **Facial Covering Policy** to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.

ASU Academic Honor Code
Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. **Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers.**

Students must understand the principles of academic integrity and abide by them in all classes and/or course work at the University. **Academic Misconduct violations are outlined in Part I, section B.1 of the Code of Student Conduct.** If there are questions of interpretation of academic integrity policies or about what might constitute an academic integrity violation, students are responsible for seeking guidance from the faculty member teaching the course in question.
Disabilities
Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 in the Houston Harte University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any being implemented. Students are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Absence for 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. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Policies and Procedures Pursuant to Title IX
The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:

Michelle Boone, J.D.
Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
325-942-2022
michelle.boone@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345. For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.
Syllabus

Aug 18  Introduction to course
         Assign Conversation Activity

Aug 20  Read “What are American Values? What is Important to Americans?” USAHello Website
         Assign Campus Resource Presentation

Due Sunday, August 23 at 11:59 – Submit Conversation Activity to Blackboard

Aug 25  Explain historical background of Forrest Gump
         Assign Forrest Gump Movie Assignment

Aug 27  NO CLASS – Work on Forrest Gump Movie Assignment

Due Sunday, August 30 at 11:59 P.M. – Submit Forrest Gump Assignment to Blackboard

Sept 1   Discuss American culture and values in Forrest Gump
         Campus Resource Presentations

Sept 3   Campus Resource Presentations

Sept 8   Explain historical background of Hidden Figures
         Assign Hidden Figures Movie Assignment

Sept 10  NO CLASS – Work on Hidden Figures Movie Assignment

Due Sunday, September 13 at 11:59 P.M. – Submit Hidden Figures Assignment to Blackboard

Sept 15  Discuss American culture and values in Hidden Figures
         Explain Critical Reading Process
         Discuss Critical Reading Example
         Assign Critical Reading of “Education Abroad in a Post-COVID-19 World”

Sept 17  NO CLASS – Work on critical reading assignment

Due Sunday, September 20 at 11:59 P.M. – Submit Critical Reading Assignment to Blackboard

Sept 22  Explain background to Spanglish
         Assign Spanglish Movie Assignment

Sept 24  NO CLASS – Work on Spanglish Movie Assignment

Due Sunday, September 27 at 11:59 P.M. – Submit Spanglish Assignment to Blackboard

Sept 29  Review Critical Reading Strategies
         Assign critical reading of local news article

Oct 1    NO CLASS – Work on Critical Reading Assignment
Due Sunday, October 4 at 11:59 P.M. – Submit Critical Reading Assignment to Blackboard

Oct 6
   Explain background to Love, Simon
   Assign Love, Simon Movie Assignment

Oct 8
   Course Evaluation

Due Friday, October 9 at 11:59 P.M. – Submit Love, Simon Assignment to Blackboard