**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number: HS 354: History of Prejudice**

**Home Department: History**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Keith Kendall (x-1648; kkendall@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): within 6 semester

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? yes

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content: The course focuses on the historical development of prejudice and the ideas which underpin prejudice. The course examines the phenomena of prejudice in multiple contexts, exploring both the similarities and differences in the development of prejudices against different peoples.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes: The fundamental goal of the course is to bring students to a greater of the nature and prevalence of prejudice. It involves both the critical examination of the history of prejudice and their experience of prejudice in their everyday lives, as well as the prevalence of prejudice in modern media. Students are required to analyze both historical documents and current media information and determine its quality, to integrate that information into arguments, to apply material from their daily lives and from multiple disciplines (history, sociology, anthropology, among others) with the intent of interweaving these two domains. Within their forum posts they may choose the most appropriate format in which to present certain information (and this may change over the course of the semester with different forum posts).

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.): This is a 300-level course; it is open only to students who have taken (and passed) a lower division history course.

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.): It contributes to the major.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC: the course may be taught by any faculty member and the specific prejudices under consideration may vary accordingly.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | Type: papers and forum posts, monitored class discussions  Projected submission: selected end-of-semester papers, selected forum posts  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course; it is part of ever graded item in the course (70% of total grade) it is also essential to the quality of their participation (thus is a factor in the other 30% of their grade)  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Type: papers and forum posts  Frequency: forum posts are intended to be done frequently and students are expected respond to each other’s forum posts; papers develop over the course of a specific section.  Projected submission: end-of-semester papers, selected forums  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course; it is part of ever graded item in the course (70% of total grade) it is also essential to the quality of their participation (thus is a factor in the other 30% of their grade)  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | Type: papers and forum posts  Frequency: forum posts are intended to be done frequently and students are expected respond to each other’s forum posts; papers develop over the course of a specific section  Projected submission: final paper or project of the semester  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course; this is part of every graded assignment in the course (70% of total grade)  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*Attainment of the INTEGRATIVE THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Connections to Experience**  *OR* | Connects academic knowledge to experiences | Type: forum posts in which students explore the prejudices evident in the world around them.  Projected submission: selected forum posts  Frequency: forum posts are intended to be done frequently and students are expected respond to each other’s forum posts  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course; the forum posts are 20% of the grade; this would also be a factor in the quality of their participation, thus it is a part of an additional 30% of their grade  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic |
| **Connections to Discipline** | Makes connections across disciplines | Type: papers and projects which not only consider the historical developments of prejudice but also the current political, moral, raised by prejudices; this will draw on ethics/philosophy, conomics, sociology, and anthropology.  Projected submission: last paper of the semester  Frequency: three or four papers developing topic explored over four or five weeks  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course; the papers are 50% of the grade  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic |
| **Transfer** | Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations | Type: Forum posts in which students address the relationship between course materials and the world around them  Projected submission: selected forum posts  Frequency: forum posts are intended to be done frequently and students are expected respond to each other’s forum posts  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course; forum posts are 20% of the grade; however, this would clearly be part of the class discussions on a regular bases, which account for an additional 30% of the grade.  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic |
| **Integrated Communication** | Communicates complex concepts by choosing appropriate content and form | Type: Forum posts which give students considerable latitude in what they post (i.e., links to articles, jpeg images, music or videos, and—of course—their own commentary)  Projected submission: selected forum posts; forum posts are 20% of the grade  Frequency: forum posts are intended to be done frequently and students are expected respond to each other’s forum posts  Importance: this is a core purpose of the course  Projected success rate: based on prior experience, success should be around 90-95% as students generally only take the course if they are substantially interested in the topic |

*History: Studying the Past, Preparing for the Future*

HS 354

History of Prejudice

Professor:

Alan Scot Willis

awillis@nmu.edu

# Prerequisite:

Sophomore standing, and completion of three to four credits of lower division History.[[1]](#footnote-1)

# Bulletin Description:

The course focuses on the historical development of prejudice and the ideas which underpin prejudice. The course examines the phenomena of prejudice in multiple contexts, exploring both the similarities and differences in the development of prejudices against different peoples.

# Course Description:

The History Department intentionally left the bulletin description fairly vague. When I teach the History of Prejudice, I do so almost exclusively within the Western context, examining the phenomena in European and American societies. I do so because most of us, in our daily lives, encounter prejudice in its Western manifestation. If I have narrowed the geographic scope of the course, I have not particularly narrowed the chronological scope; the course covers the origins of prejudices among the Ancient Greeks and the manifestations of prejudice in modern societies.

I realize that there are many different kinds of prejudices. However, I have chosen to examine the origins and development of four in particular: religious prejudices (mainly anti-Semitism and Islamophobia), racism, sexism, and homophobia.

# Required Books:

Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*

Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History*

Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia*

Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex*

D’ Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*

Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*

Jay, *Tales of the Lavender Menace*

De Leon, *They Called them Greasers*

Breines*,Young, White, and Miserable*

# A Liberal Education:

Since this course fulfills requirements within the Liberal Studies program, it is worth reflecting on the nature of a liberal education. A lot has been written on liberal education over the past couple of centuries, but the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ “Statement on Liberal Learning” is concise distillation of the best thoughts on the matter. You may read the entire statement online at <http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/liberal_learning.cfm> (it is not long) but I offer you this excerpt here:

We experience the benefits of liberal learning by pursuing intellectual work that is honest, challenging, and significant, and by preparing ourselves to use knowledge and power in responsible ways. Liberal learning is not confined to particular fields of study. What matters in liberal education is substantial content, rigorous methodology and active engagement with the societal, ethical, and practical implications of our learning. The spirit and value of liberal learning are equally relevant to all forms of higher education and to all students.

# Course Objectives:

History of Prejudice is tied to both the History Department and the Liberal Studies Program; as a result, it has several pre-determined goals.

*The History Department Goals for 300-level courses:*

Critical Thinking and Argumentation

Ability to develop a creative and original thesis

Ability to analyze and evaluate historical arguments

Critical Writing

Ability to write a clear, sustained, source-based, thesis-driven paper

Command of Historical citation conventions (Chicago/Turabian style)

Oral Competency

Ability to participate in Historical discussion

Field of history

Understanding of historiographic and methodological concerns

*Liberal Studies Program Goals for Humanities:*

Ability to write and communicate clearly and effectively

Ability to evaluate various forms of evidence and knowledge

Ability to engage in analytical reasoning and argumentation

Ability to see across disciplinary boundaries

Understanding cultural diversity in the United States

Understanding the world as a diverse and interrelated community

Understanding the relationship of the individual to society and its culture and institutions

Understanding the role of the fine and performing arts and the humanities in shaping and expressing a culture’s values and ideals

If this appears to be a fairly heavy burden on the course, consider the substantial overlap among the course objectives. We can boil these objectives down to a few, clearly identified objectives for the course, and identify how each of these will be assessed.

Students will be able to write a clearly argued and well supported paper regarding the History of Prejudice.

This will be assessed through the assigned papers.

Students will be able to discuss, with each other and the professor, the nature of prejudice both in the United States and the broader Western world, noting its impact on both dominate and minority cultures.

This will be assessed in an ongoing manner through the monitoring of class discussions and forum posts.

Students will demonstrate, in their discussions and papers, an understanding of the multiple ways in which prejudice may be studied and understood.

This will be assessed through the papers, monitoring of the class discussions and forum posts.

# “Fuzzy”—But Incredibly Important--Goals

Students will grow intellectually

Students will encounter and engage with new ideas

Students will reevaluate long held ideas

Students will learn something about themselves

People interested in quantifying the results of education often do not like “fuzzy” goals because they are notoriously difficult to assess.  They are also very difficult to pin down to one class. Many of them develop in the interplay between multiple classes and life beyond the classroom.

These goals are incredibly important to me. They represent the heart and soul of an expanding mind and intellect. I do not accept the “cognitive hypothesis” which postulate, essentially, that students need more facts, larger vocabularies, to do more math problems and learn more chemistry equations. The “cognitive hypothesis” was developed to help prepare students for college, and it has been the driving force behind increased standardized testing. The assumption was that students with larger vocabularies would do better in college, so young children needed to be exposed to more and more words. The payoff has been minimal. On the other hand, if parents play their children’s games with them—games that provide both challenges and rewards for meeting the challenges, and games that require and inspire the imagination—the payoff is enormous. [[2]](#footnote-2) Does this mean we should just play games in a college classroom? No… but children do love puzzles, and the history and persistence of prejudice offers a lot of puzzle pieces for us to try to put together.

When you leave this course, I hope you know something about prejudice. I hope you can imagine a world without prejudice, which is a prerequisite for *creating* a world without prejudice. I hope you are more open to, and capable of, examining your own beliefs and ideas, that you can understand things you once thought were beyond your grasp and do things you once thought might be beyond your intellectual abilities. I hope that you will be inspired to continue learning, and to continue imaging, and to continue growing as person.[[3]](#footnote-3)

# Preparing to Succeed

In twenty years of teaching I have noticed a few things about the people who pass the class as opposed to the people who either drop or fail. People who pass the class do not let one or even two “bad grades” derail their efforts or undermine their belief that they can, in the end, pass the class. Why is this? I don’t believe that they are simply “eternal optimists.” Too much optimism often makes people incapable of dealing with setbacks when they do occur. Instead, students who pass have a strategy—sometimes conscious, but not always—for anticipating potential obstacles and for rebounding from setbacks. In fact, most of them assumed that they would encounter setbacks before it happened and they prepared themselves to face those setbacks in a proactive manner.[[4]](#footnote-4)

It is not enough to want to pass the class. I’ve never had a student who didn’t want to pass the class. To pass the class you need to commit to passing the class. That means you need to decide, consciously, to do what is required in the class. You also need to make some plan for passing the class. That plan should include an assessment of likely difficulties and a strategy for addressing those difficulties and rebounding from setbacks. That plan should also include some self-imposed rules for success: possible rules, depending on your habits, might include things like: turn the TV off when you study, turn the Wi-Fi off on your computer when working on a paper so you aren’t tempted to check your email or Facebook, or never study in the presence of your romantic partner.[[5]](#footnote-5)

# Keys to Success:

Be Present: of course you *will* come to class, but you should also be present in class. Class is not taking place on your iPad nor is being text-messaged to you. It's happening in real-life.

Be Open: some of the ideas and topics we will discuss will conform to ideas you've already held; but, some will be brand new and others will conflict with beliefs you already hold. Be as open to the new and the contrary as you are to the old and comfortable.

Be Careful: accept that unknowns will always exist, that it is impossible to know even most things, much less everything; in that knowledge of limitations, weigh the available evidence and arguments with care and caution.

Be Mindful: attend to the matters of the class, think them through, consider what they mean *and* what they could mean. Allow what you learn to become a part of you and a part of your life.

Be Challenged: challenges make life interesting and exciting. No matter how difficult or easy you find a task, you should always allow yourself to be challenged, and to challenge yourself. No one thinks twice when they hear "no pain, no gain" for physical fitness, yet few realize that the same is true in intellectual pursuits.

This Moment Matters: everyone will be something later, we all have the *next* thing to do; but let that wait until its time comes. For now, pay attention to what is *now* not what is *next*.

# Students with Disabilities

The University has specific and varied resources and requirements for accommodating students with disabilities. If you qualify for such, please see the professor to make the necessary arrangements.

# Thoughts on the Assignments:

## Papers

You have the opportunity to write five papers. You will one paper one each of the following subjects: Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, Religious prejudice. Your “final” paper will address the nature of prejudice and the commonalities among and the differences between the types of prejudice we have examined over the course of the semester. More information about each paper assignment is available on EduCat.

In the unfortunate event that you receive a grade below a C- on two consecutive papers, I *will not*grade the subsequent paper *until*you have met either with me to create a strategy for improvement—which you must do *before*the next paper is due. Please note that you must have a grade for *every*paper in order to pass the course. That means that your decision not to seek assistance on your paper will result in your automatic failure of the course.

Please note: this policy is for your own good. *Every*semester I get a flood of emails in the last week or two from students who have consistently received low grades wondering how they can improve. By that time, it is far too late. This policy is intended to force the struggling student to be pro-active earlier in the semester. If you are not a struggling student, it will have absolutely no effect on you whatsoever. If you are a struggling student—or discover yourself to be a struggling student—this is designed for your benefit.

## Forum Posts

You have your own forum for this class; I fully admit I borrowed the idea from a professor at NYU.[[6]](#footnote-6) In your forum, you will post links to various articles that you have found on the topics assigned (you can always post more than is required). You should also post your comments and thoughts on those articles. More importantly, you should browse your colleagues forum posts, take a look at the articles they have found, and engage in an online discussion by posting your own thoughts or by responding to their comments. Here is an opportunity to do more than is required, will you take it?

One goal of the forum posts is to create a catalog of personal experiences with prejudices. We would all like to think there is minimal prejudice around us, but without careful observation of daily interaction, we can never be sure just how much exists.[[7]](#footnote-7)

# Grading:

Participation: 30%

Forum: 20%

Papers: 50%

Your "Papers" grade is weighted as follows:

Topical Papers: 60%

Final Paper: 40%

## Additional Thoughts About Grades:

In truth, students are far more obsessed with grades than they ought to be; nevertheless, the university will require that I give a grade at the end of the session and, so, you should be aware of a couple of the ground rules for earning a grade:

1. You must complete the course. This means you must complete *all*the assessments and assignments. Since discussion board material is graded (although, I must admit, a bit more liberally than the assessments and assignments) you *must*participate in all of the graded discussion boards.
2. You must do legitimate work. This means, of course, you must not plagiarize (see separate handout). It also means that you must do work that reasonably meets the expectations of the class. Most people see college as a stepping-stone to a middle-class professional job; therefore, I expect that you treat the course as part of a middle-class professional job, and that you treat the assignments as tasks given to you to be completed in order to keep your middle-class professional job.

If, *and only if,*you successfully meet the above two criteria of completing the course and doing legitimate work, will you be eligible for a grade above that of "F"; however, merely being eligible for a grade above that of "F" *does not*guarantee that you will, in fact, get such a grade.

You may think that stringent requirements that you do *everything* in the class before you can even possibly pass works against my earlier claims about rejecting the “cognitive thesis.” It does not. While we often hear the mandate “think outside the box” sometimes we should think inside the box.[[8]](#footnote-8) May I suggest the Food Network’s show “Chopped” as an example of thinking inside the box? Contestants open a box with several ingredients, many of which you would never pair together and some of which I will have never heard of before they are announced on the show; the chefs must use *everything* in the box in their culinary creations, which are judged on taste, presentation, and creativity, and they must do so under considerable time constraints. Think of each component of this course as an ingredient necessary for the intellectual creations you will be producing this semester.

# Anticipated Organization of the Course

I have divided the course into five sections. The first, “understanding prejudice” is designed to help come to a clear-cut idea about what, exactly, we mean when talk about prejudice. Most people have a vague idea what it means, but vague ideas are only a starting point for scholarly inquiry. We need something more solid before move into the core of the course. The four sections that follow are designed around “Big Four”: religious prejudices (anti-Semitism and Islamophobia), Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia. They could have been put in any order, but I have selected this order because religious ideas often underpin racism, sexism, and homophobia, and so I thought it would be best to start there. Frederickson ties the development of anti-Semitism directly to the emergence of racism in *Racism: A Short History,* so I have chose to follow religious prejudice with racism. Many of the ideas about women’s inferiority and weakness inform prejudices against gay men as they have been deemed “effeminate” and, therefore, I have chosen to examine the nature of sexism—as discussed in Nancy Tauna’s work, *The Less Noble Sex*—first, and then examine how those ideas do or do not apply to homophobia.

## Considering Prejudice

Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History*

Student provided readings on the nature of prejudice

Student forum postings

## Religious Prejudice

Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*

Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia*

Student forum postings

## Racism

Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*

De Leon, *They Called them Greasers*

Student forum postings

## Sexism

Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex*

Breines*,Young, White, and Miserable*

Student forum postings

## Homophobia

D’ Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*

Jay, *Tales of the Lavender Menace*

Student forum postings

1. Division I of the Liberal Studies program is the university’s English Composition requirement. Students must complete the composition requirements before taking and upper-division Liberal Studies course. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Paul Tough, *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* Kobo e-book edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012) introduction; Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education* revised edition, Kobo e-book edition (New York: Basic Books, 2011) chapter 1 “What I Learned About School Reform.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eric Liu and Scott Noppe-Brandon, *Imagination First: Unlocking the Power of Possibility* Kobo e-book edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009); Tough, *How Children Succeed.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Tough, *How Children Succeed,* chapter 2 “How to Build Character.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Tough, *How to Children Succeed,* chapter 2 “How to Build Character.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2004) 145-147. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Liu and Noppe-Brandon, *Imagination First,* practice 25, “Challenge your Challenges”; Becker and Swim, “Seeing the Unseen” *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Liu and Noppe-Brandon, *Imagination First,* practice 6 “Think Inside the Box.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)