

**Proposal to the University Curriculum Committee
Freshman Inquiry Course**

Chaos and Community

This course will focus upon the enduring question of how communities are created and sustained in the face of demographic change and the chaos that emanates from man-made and natural disasters. Volcanic eruptions, floods, earthquakes, disease, and other natural disasters have threatened and continue to threaten the bonds of communities across the globe. Population growth and changes in the location and composition of populations equally challenge the continuity of national and local communities. This course will explore the consequences of these and other events and trends on global, national, and local communities. Throughout this course we will use census data, literature, scientific data, economic and political data, and other information to study communities.

Faculty:

Tom Biolsi, Anthropology.

David Holloway, English.

Alex Ruzicka, Geology.

Charles White, University Studies and Political Science.

A. Learning objectives specific to this course:

By the end of this yearlong course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the capacity to engage in analysis of different communities and the responses of communities to different threats and to explain their conclusions using written, visual, and oral modes of communication.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the practice of science as scientists investigate different natural phenomena.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the practice of social science as applied to investigation of the characteristics and trends of communities.
- Demonstrate an understanding of literature as an expression of community response, continuity, and change within the context of differing threats.
- Demonstrate the capacity to apply appropriate research tools to the analysis of research questions. These will include observation, statistical tools, literary analysis, and appropriate review of existing literature.
- Demonstrate an understanding of communities that differ in terms of location, race, ethnicity, religion, and historical experience.

- Demonstrate the ability to effectively use a variety of technological tools including the construction of a digital portfolio.
- Demonstrate the capacity to reflect upon their learning and communicate their learning to others.

B. Assessment of Student Learning (Specific to Theme).

Assessment of student learning in this course is based upon frequent in-class essays, occasional quizzes, assigned essays that are reviewed and revised before final submission, in-class participation both individually and in groups, and through the organization and reflection of electronic portfolios at the end of each term. In-class participation includes in-class writing assignments and quizzes as well as assignments in mentor sessions. Students are assessed on their understanding of course content and the evidence of their progress toward University Studies goals. The latter is a focus of the portfolio evaluation. Although specific assignments vary from term-to-term, the grades for each semester are apportioned generally as follows:

Take-home essays, research papers, oral presentations.	45%
End-of-term electronic portfolio.	15%
In-class assignments & class participation (mentor & lecture).	40%

C. Description of Methods to Ensure Coherence of the Theme Across Participating Faculty.

The “Chaos and Community” team meets weekly. During these meetings assignments are reviewed, new materials and approaches identified, and faculty provide assistance for different course topics. Each member of the team identifies a topic to be included during each term including source materials. The faculty then work together to integrate these topics into a coherent presentation of the theme. Each member of the team presents disciplinary specific material to each section of the course. The syllabi for each section include a common listing of topics, similar reading, and similar in-class and out-of-class assignments. Courses vary in terms of emphasis on different topics but not in the overall content to be covered or course goals to be achieved. The mentor sessions are similarly coordinated. Faculty review student performance and share ideas to provide additional support for student achievement.

D. Interdisciplinarity of the Theme.

Each of the members of the “Chaos and Community” team has a strong commitment to the importance of interdisciplinarity for student learning. The expertise of the faculty includes the natural sciences, social science, and humanities. During each term the topics and materials presented reflect these areas of knowledge.

E. Relation of the Course to Other University Studies Offerings:

Students will receive a foundation that would support their participation in several Sophomore Inquiry Courses and Upper-Division Clusters. Science and the Humanities, Natural Science Inquiry, Community Studies, and American Studies are the most directly related.

F. Relation to University Studies Goals.

University Studies Goal	Representative Assignments	Assessment Plan/Type
Communication: Writing	All Terms: guided essays and/or research papers that are reviewed by faculty and peers and then revised for final submission. Frequent in-class short essays. Spring Term: 10+ page research paper.	UNST writing assessment; Review of Peer Review forms. Essays and research paper graded for content and writing proficiency.
Graphics	Winter and Spring terms: comparisons of survey data, census data, and disease data. Emphasis is on integration of graphic presentation with written and visual communication.	Assess appropriateness of graphic presentation for clarity and integration with overall analysis. Reviewed by faculty and peers. Presentations will be individual and group.
Oral Communication	Individual presentation summarizing group work. Presentation of Power Point. Presentation of Electronic Portfolios. Organized discussion ('debate') panels.	Organization, ability to connect to others, clear presentation of concepts and findings, use of visual tools.
Numeracy	Winter term: Analysis and appropriate use of survey data including probability as well as descriptive statistics. Analysis of disease data. Spring term: statistical comparison of census data.	Understanding of appropriate tools, probability, explanation of descriptive statistics, ability to evaluate conclusions, ability to integrate statistics into overall analysis.
Visual Communication	Develop PowerPoint and/or WebCT student presentations each term including images. Interpret importance of selecting particular images in relation to bias and ideological	Assess creativity and relation to overall inquiry. Ability to interpret and articulate value and bias implications.

	significance. Ability to apply visual images to overall presentation.	
Group Process	Students peer review each other's work throughout each term. Group discussions and summary. Winter and Spring Terms: group assignments related to analysis of different communities, including neighborhood visits. Winter Term-group participation with refugee organizations (CBL)	Students will assess each other's participation and contributions and submit evaluations. Overall product of the group project. Community partner evaluation of the contributions and performance of each group.
Computer Literacy	Courses are WebCT-based. Students learn presentation, writing, and statistical tools. Each student will develop an electronic portfolio that will be uploaded to their personal web space on WebCT. Students also learn appropriate search skills for the internet and use of reference databases.	Clarity of application of tools to class assignments. Observations of Peer Mentors. Content and presentation of electronic portfolios.
Inquiry and Critical Thinking	Assignments emphasize the application of descriptive material to critical analysis of topics. Class debate and discussion includes review of survey data, reactions to immigrants and other changes, and the limits of science. Emphasis is placed upon providing evidence and thinking through alternative explanations.	Assess progress of students from repeating what they have read or heard toward engaging in their own critical review and analysis of the material they are considering. Both written and oral evidence will be applied.
Diversity and Human Experience	This course was designed to emphasize the importance of the differences among human communities. The Fall included a focus upon the experiences of the Kiowa nation as a community. Winter will	Students will present their understandings in a variety of forms including the importance of race, religion, and ethnicity for communities and individuals.

	include an emphasis on Asian immigration and refugees. The Spring will include an emphasis upon the differences among communities in Portland. Throughout the contrast and issues involved with assimilation and pluralism are emphasized.	
Ethic and Social Responsibility	Throughout this course students are confronted with issues of ethical choice and social responsibility. The emphasis on communities renders this a core component of the course. The responsibilities of persons to community, the interactions among communities, the ethical ramifications of choice are woven throughout the course from the study of scientific communities through the consequences of population change, terrorism, and immigration. These are illustrated through literature as well as analysis of scholarly studies	Students are and will be expected to address issues of the bases of choice and the expectations of responsibility through written and other assignments. Their own behavior in group process will be discussed and evaluated in relation to this goal. Students will demonstrate progress toward the capacity to intentionally consider these issues. This goal will be specifically assessed as part of their electronic portfolios.

G. Course Schedule and Topics:

Below is a course schedule from one of the sections of "Community and Chaos." The outlines for the other sections vary somewhat, but the same major topics, core readings, and major assignments are present in each. The topics and explicit schedules for Winter and Spring term are still being refined.

Fall Term:

Tuesday	Thursday
9/25 Introduction. Review Syllabus Hand out first Assignment "Personal Information Essay."	9/27 Draft Essay Due. Begin reading <i>Cowboys</i> pp. 1-50. Begin discussion of Communities

<p>10/2 Draft Essays Returned. Continue Reading <i>Cowboys</i> pp. 51-99. Continue discussion of Communities. Community Essay Assignment handed out.</p>	<p>10/4 Video “Earth’s Shattering Eruptions.” Begin Reading <i>Crucibles</i> pp. 5-27. <i>Cowboys</i>, pp. 100-157 Final Draft of Essay I due on-line by 10/6.</p>
<p>10/9 Hard Copy of Essay I Due. Discuss Video and Readings. Read <i>Cowboys</i> 158-205.</p>	<p>10/11 Read <i>Crucibles</i>, pp. 88-95, 117-123,123-132. Volcanic Hazards lecture by Professor Ruzicka. Draft of Community Essay Due. Begin Peer Review. Hand out Volcano Assignment</p>
<p>10/16 Meet in Library.</p>	<p>10/18. Final Draft of Community Essay Due. Discuss Lecture, videos, Reading.</p>
<p>10/23 <i>Cowboys</i> pp. 209-98. Discuss. Introduction of “Front Page.”</p>	<p>10/25 Draft of Volcano Essay Due. <i>Crucibles, pp. 179-198, 263-285.</i> Review Volcano and Community issues.</p>
<p>10/30 Draft Returned. Continue and Complete discussion of volcanoes and communities.</p>	<p>11/1 <i>Momaday</i> pp. 2-41. Comparison of communities. Continue with organizing portfolios.</p>
<p>11/6 Final draft of Volcano Essay Due. <i>Momaday</i>, pp. 44-63. Discussion.</p>	<p>11/8 Lecture by Professor Holloway. <i>Momaday</i>, pp. 68-89. Discussion. Momaday Essay Assignment.</p>
<p>11/13 Continue discussion of <i>Momaday</i> and lecture. Introduce “Power Point.” Begin comparisons of communities. Discuss personal writing of UNST goals.</p>	<p>11/15 Draft of Momaday Essay Due. Lecture by Professor Biolsi on Kiowa.</p>
<p>11/20 Draft returned. Continue comparative discussion. Review electronic organization for portfolios.</p>	<p>11/22 THANKSGIVING</p>
<p>11/27 Review of Course and comparisons. Review electronic portfolios.</p>	<p>11/29 Final draft of Momaday essay due. Begin individual presentations of portfolios.</p>
<p>During final exam time-continue and complete portfolio presentations.</p>	

Winter Term Topics:

- Asian Immigration and Refugees.
- Bio-Terrorism.
- Public Response to Terror Through Public Policy and Public Opinion Surveys.
- War and Disease as Metaphors.

Spring Term Topics:

- Communities and Demographic Change.

- Communities for Change (public service, international agencies, Utopian communities).
- Global Connections (human rights, transnational sense of ethics).
- Global Environmental Change (pollution, overpopulation).

H. Readings:

The readings for Fall Term included:

Dick Thompson, *Volcano Cowboys*.

Richard V. Fisher, et al., *Volcanoes: Crucibles of Change*.

M. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*.

Additional articles on the Kiowa experience.

The readings for Winter and Spring are in the process of being finalized. For Winter, portions of the following books will be used: War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells); Guns, Germs, and Steel—The Fate of Human Societies (J. Diamond), Viruses, Plagues and History (M. Goldstone), Epidemics and Ideas—Essays on the Historical Perception of Pestilence (eds. T. Ranger and P. Slack), Germs—Biological Weapons and America's Secret War (J. Miller, S. Engelberg, W. Broad), Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans (R. Takaki). Recent newspaper articles will also be used for topical (current events) readings.