

TCORE 113 A: Introduction to Social Sciences
Communities and the Common Good
Professor Linda Hurley Ishem
Winter 2014

Class Times	8:00-10:05AM Tuesdays	8:00-10:05AM Thursdays
Office Hours Office Location	1:45-3:00PM Mondays PNK 312	(by appointment) PNK 312
Contact	lishem@uw.edu	253/692-4761

Course Description

Communities and the Common Good is an **experiential** social science course designed to examine our rights, roles and responsibilities as members of the various social groups to which we belong. Based on interdisciplinary assumptions, theories, and methods of the social sciences, this course will explore various definitions and configurations of the “individual,” “community,” “civic engagement,” and “the common good.” The course will examine tensions between individualism and communalism; individual rights and social responsibilities; and special interests in relation to the common good. Course themes will be examined within the context of: social group formation, social structure and social control.

The course includes small group and full-class community service components. In 2-4 member groups, students will plan and perform 15-20 hours of community service. Additionally the entire class will partner with Safe Streets (a local non-profit agency) initiative in the Stewart Middle School and surrounding neighborhood.

We live in an era of giving back, paying it forward, and random acts of kindness. Contrast that to growing income inequity, rampant individualism, greed and excess. Accordingly, the course examines questions such as: What are the limits of our individual responsibilities for establishing and maintaining the common good? How have perspectives on individual rights and responsibility changed over time? How do physical, relational, and cultural identities affect our sense of belonging and responsibility to the community? We will draw from a strengths perspective in which resilience, empowerment, and the primacy of human relationships inform our understanding of individual and social responsibility.

Core

The Core program consists of a coordinated series of courses that represent the various disciplines in the university. This course, along with the others in your cohort, fulfills one of the university’s general education requirements in each of the areas of knowledge plus composition. The courses are designed to both support and challenge you to develop the critical thinking, writing, research, and analytical skills you’ll need at UWT while introducing you to relevant topics in the social sciences, humanities, and sciences.

Course Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this class, you will:

- Understand “diversity” beyond traditional definitions based on physical characteristics (such as race or gender) to issues of world view and historical/cultural experience;
- Understand how groups develop, function, and accomplish tasks from the micro to macro levels;
- Recognize and evaluate your personal role and responsibilities in various civic and social structures;
- Demonstrate in written and oral work an understanding of how social structures, policy, and planning are informed by varying world views, experiences, and power differentials;
- Effectively express ideas orally and write cogent essays that reflect the conventions and purposes of assignments;
- Express yourself in public forums as a means of engagement with your communities.

Required Texts:

Ballantine, J.H., & Roberts, K.A. (2012). *Our Social World: Condensed version*. (2nd edition) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

All other required reading will be posted on the course electronic workspace.

Canvas and UWT Email Required

Check your UW email and the course Canvas website daily for updates. The announcement page will provide important information and guide you to other resources. Canvas and email will also be used extensively for communication, announcements, assignments, lecture notes, exchange of ideas, and feedback.

Classroom Principles

The best way to learn is to be an active, informed learner and to push yourself to think in new ways, interact with your instructor, classroom guests, and other students, and practice expressing your thoughts orally and in writing. Silence all electronic devices before class begins. Internet surfing and side conversations are huge distractions that are prohibited during class. We will typically take a 5-10 minute break during each class. Please wait until that time to leave and re-enter the classroom. Turn assignments in on time otherwise they will be graded down. Challenge yourself to think critically, speak your mind, but be respectful of those who may not agree with you. Initial the daily attendance log and as a courtesy please notify me in advance if you plan to miss class. I am not interested in the reasons for your absence; you pay dearly for the privilege of attending college presumably your absence is justified. Ask classmates for notes on missed material. Keep in mind that your absence impacts class activities, your learning, and possibly your grade.

Formatting – Formal written assignments must be typed in 11-12-point font, double spaced with standard margins, using APA citation style and submitted electronically in a WORD compatible format via Canvas.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

The course will be based on lectures, films, guest speakers, field and community-service learning experiences, in-class exercises, discussion board reflections, papers and presentations.

Grading (700 points total)

<http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/enrollment-services/grading-policies>

Course Requirements

“How Many Pages?”	“What Is The Assignment?”	“How Many Points May I Earn?”
2-3	Paper #1: Voluntary and Lifestyle Community	50
3-4	Paper #2: Ascribed and Involuntary Community	100
	3-5 Minute Concept Sharing	50
4-6	Paper #3: Service Learning Community	100
Multimedia	Group Service Learning Presentation	100
1 Paragraph per Presentation	Feedback on Presentations	50
1-2 Paragraphs per Entry	Reflections Journal	100 (10 per week)
Multi-dimensional	Active Participation	150 (15 per week)

Participation (-150 to +150 points)

In this course, we strive to create a learning community. Active participation is a necessary condition to that end. Failure to participate via absence, silence or other means diminishes the resources and expertise available to other members. Participation includes active involvement in peer review of assignments and active involvement in and meaningful contribution to class discussion and activities. Because participation can be either positive or negative and that negative participation has an effect on all other group members, it is possible to have a negative participation score for grading purposes.

Participation will be evaluated based on a rubric developed by David Harris (and adapted for this course). It includes substantive and procedural dimensions. In terms of substantive contributions, students are expected to: (1) state, identify, and clarify issues; (2) bring knowledge to the discussion; (3) specify claims or definitions; (4) elaborate statements with explanations, reasons and evidence; and (5) recognize values or values conflict.

Procedural dimensions:

Full positive credit means	Negative participation credit means
The student comes prepared; Acknowledges the statements of others; Challenges the accuracy, logic, relevance, or clarity of statements; Summarizes points of agreement and disagreement; Invites contributions from others; Comes prepared with written reactions to the reading and is prepared to discuss them in a conversation cafe (http://www.conversationcafe.org/) format.	Making irrelevant, distracting statements, engaging in “side conversations”; Interruptions; Monopolizing the discussion; Engaging in personal attacks; Uses technology for a non-course-related purpose; and/or Takes credit—explicitly or implicitly—for the work of others (e.g., plagiarism).

Reflection Journal/Discussion Board

You will keep a journal of reflections on weekly course content (to include readings, discussion, films, visitors, etc.). While this exercise requires only one or two paragraphs per week, it does require thoughtful consideration of the material. Please allow ample time to do this effectively. This exercise is meant to help you think about your relationship to the social structures and the world around you. **Consider preparing your reflection while the material is fresh** either after class each Thursday or before you begin reading the next week's assignments. Questions to consider:

1. How did you see your life reflected in this week's content?
2. How did the content reinforce or challenge your previous thoughts on this topic?
3. Personally, not necessarily in class, what more would you like to explore about this topic?

Writing Requirements

Assignment #1 – Voluntary Lifestyle Community

Length 2-3 pages (50 points)

You will write a personal essay on a lifestyle or affinity group (community) in which you voluntarily maintain membership. The community may be formal or informal, such as sports or recreational teams, performance groups, virtual/gaming groups, volunteer or religious groups. This essay draws on your personal experience as a group member complemented by course materials and class discussions. This assignment should not require outside research. Your essay should include the following:

- Description of the group (how the community is defined) including:
 - Purpose, function and or mission
 - The authority structure
 - How membership is determined (who's included and excluded)
 - Rights and responsibilities of members
- Your motivation to join
- Description of the common good as defined and as practiced by the group (note whether there are discrepancies between the group's pronouncements and practices, i.e. "All men are created equal" excludes indigenous or Native Americans, Africans and women).
- Provide an example of the group's initiatives that serve or promote the greater good.

Assignment #2 – Ascribed, Involuntary and Inherent Community

Length 3-4 pages (100 points)

For the second essay choose a group or community to which you are naturally, inherently and/or involuntarily classified as a member by virtue of inherited characteristics or circumstances of birth. Many such communities are socially constructed and include race, class, gender, sexuality, generation, nationality and citizenship. As in the previous assignments, you are expected to draw on your experience as a "community" member. Relate this essay to course readings and discussions and build on what others have written about your community. **This assignment will require use and citation of at least two scholarly articles. In addition to the scholarly articles you may use other print or electronic sources.** Your essay should include the following:

- Description of the group (how the community is defined) including:
 - Purpose, function and or mission
 - The authority structure
 - How membership is determined (who's included and excluded)

- Rights and responsibilities of members
- Your membership
 - your position within the structure
 - your role and responsibilities
- Description of the common good as defined or practiced by the group
- Scholarly literature
 - Summarize a contemporary debate, issue or trend that your scholarly articles identify for this community.
 - What do you think about the identified issue?
 - How does this issue affect you

Concept Sharing (50 points) – each student will prepare a 3-5 minute in-class presentation on a contemporary debate, issue or trend affecting his/her ascribed community as identified in the scholarly literature. Some groups are stigmatized such that a student may be reluctant or feel unsafe talking about group membership to the class. If this is the case please talk to me about accommodation.

Assignment #3 – Civic Community: Community Service and Service Learning Project

Paper length 4-6 pages (100 points), group presentation 15 minutes (100 points)

Each student will join a self-selected team of 2-4 members for the following assignment:

Part 1, Step 1: This project allows students to explore aspects of civic engagement and community service. You are encouraged to choose a project that will expose you to new and different ways of thinking about your community, your role and your responsibility to it.

Step 2: Choose a community and a service of interest to your group. You will need access to the community and you must collectively possess the skills, knowledge and any other resources needed to perform the service you envision. Document the community's need for your service and whether you effectively fulfilled the expectations. The goal is to spend 15 to 20 hours (an average of 1½ to 2 hours per week) working on this project.

Step 3: Prepare a fifteen-minute class presentation documenting your service learning experience for the final week of the quarter. Your learning may be both content and skills oriented: what did you learn about the people/community served, the institutional contexts in which they find themselves; what skills did you develop, and what did you learn about your own interests, strengths, and capacities in this context? What did you learn about working in groups?

Part 2 - Write an essay about your participation in the collaborative community service project. This essay draws on your personal experience as a service-learning community member complemented by course materials and class discussions. Note however that this assignment may require that you access outside resources to describe and contextualize the community your team selected for service and any partner agency. Your essay should include the following:

- Description of your CORE team including:
 - Purpose, function and service plan
 - The authority structure
 - How membership and the project were determined (who's included and excluded)
 - Rights and responsibilities of members
 - If your team partnered with an established organization, describe the organization, its mission and structure
- Your motivation to join or how you came to be a member of this community

- your position within the structure
 - your role and responsibilities
- Description of the common good as defined or practiced by the group
- Provide an example of the group's initiatives that serve or promote the greater good.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Teaching and Learning Center

The TLC provides a wide variety of instructional resources and support for teaching and learning at UW Tacoma. Teaching and learning are ongoing processes that take practice, commitment, and time. We are here to assist you in achieving your goals and provide math/quantitative, writing, science, and other tutoring services.

<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/tlc/>

Academic Standards/Plagiarism

All student work must be free of plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined in the University catalog and in the Student Handbook. Consult your professor if you have any questions.

A major part of your experience in the class will be reading, synthesizing, and using the knowledge and ideas of others. It is the responsibility of the faculty to help you in this process and to be certain you learn to credit the work of others upon which you draw. To plagiarize is to appropriate and to pass off, as one's own ideas, writing or works of another. Plagiarism is no less of a misconduct violation than vandalism or assault. Ignorance of proper documentation procedures is the usual cause of plagiarism. This ignorance does not excuse the act. Students are responsible for learning how and when to document and attribute resources used in preparing a written or oral presentation.

For more information, please refer to the "Student Academic Responsibility" document prepared by the Committee on Academic Conduct in the College of Arts and Sciences, UW Seattle:

<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>

Library

The UWT Library provides resources and services to support students at all levels of expertise. We guide students through the research process, helping them learn how to develop effective research strategies and find and evaluate appropriate resources. For more information about the Library and its services, see:

<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/library/>

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices (including, but not limited to, cell phones, pagers, laptops, and personal digital assistants) may only be used in the classroom with the permission of the instructor. Activities that are non-relevant to the course, such as checking/sending email, playing games, and surfing the web, are considered disruptive activities when class is in session.

E-mail Policy

http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/policies_procedures/E-mail_Policy.pdf

Student Health Services

Student Health Services (SHS) is committed to providing compassionate, convenient, and affordable health care for University of Washington Tacoma students, from care for illness and minor injury to women's health and preventative medicine, including vaccination services. Insurance is not required. Funded by UW Tacoma student fees, office visits are provided free of charge. Treatment plans may incur costs, such as medications, labs, or vaccines, most of which are offered at discounted rates. For more information, please visit www.tacoma.uw.edu/shs or email at uwtshs@uw.edu. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please call (253) 692-5811 or stop by SHS at the Laborer's Hall on Market Street.

Counseling Center (Student Success)

The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 354.

http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm/

Disability Support Services (Student Success)

The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS) functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," is eligible for services from DSS. If you are wondering if you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DSS reception desk at 692-4522.

http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm/

Campus Safety Information

<http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/administrative-services/campus-safety>

Safety Escort Program

For your safety, UW Tacoma encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to use the Safety Escort Program. Campus Safety Officers are available to walk you to your car or other campus destinations during the following hours: Monday - Thursday — 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday — 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The service is free of charge. During busy periods, the Campus Safety Officer may ask you to meet in a common location as to facilitate escorting multiple people. Dial 253-692-4416 to request a Safety Escort.

In case of a fire alarm

Take your valuables and leave the building. Plan to return to class once the alarm has stopped. Do not return until you have received an all clear from somebody "official," the web or email.

In case of an earthquake

DROP, COVER, and HOLD. Once the shaking stops, take your valuables and leave the building. Do not plan to return for the rest of the day. Do not return to the building until you have received an all clear from somebody "official," the web, or email.

Inclement Weather

Call (253) 383-INFO to determine whether campus operations have been suspended. If not, but driving conditions remain problematic; call the professor's office number. This number should provide information on whether a particular class will be held or not, and/or the status of pending assignments. If the first two numbers have been contacted and the student is still unable to determine whether a class will be held, or the student has a part-time instructor who does not have an office phone or contact number, call the program office number for updated information.