

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## SOCIAL CONTROVERSIES

SOC/IDIS 256

SPRING 2007

MORAVIAN COLLEGE

DR. DEBRA WETCHER-HENDRICKS



### CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR

Office: PPHAC 314

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:45-10:15 a.m. and from 11:30 a.m. – noon

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### REQUIRED READING MATERIAL

**available at Moravian College's bookstore:**

Crossroads (2006) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Custom Publishing.

**available on Academic Search Elite:**

Blau, F.D., and Winkler, A.E. (2005) Does Affirmative Action Work? *Regional Review*, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 14:3.

Colt G.H., and Hollister, A. (1998) Were you born that way? *Life* 21:4.

Legrand, L.N., Iacono, W.G., and McGue, M. (2005) Predicting Addiction. *American Scientist*, 93:2, 140

Nieli, R. (2004) The Changing Shape of the River: Affirmative Action and Recent Social Science Research. *Academic Questions*.

**on reserve in Reeve's Library:**

Center of the American Experiment (2006) Ideas to go: Affirmative Action. *Intellectual Takeout* <http://www.intellectuالتakeout.com/ideastogo/documents/Affirmative%20Action-To-Go.pdf>

Kennedy, J. F. (1961). *Executive order 10925*. Washington DC: The White House.

Kinsey, A., Pomeroy, W., & Martin, C. (1948). *Sexual behavior in the human male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders.

Parker, R. (1989). Myths of Monogamy. *Open Hands*, 5:2

Pinker, S. (2004). Why nature & nurture won't go away. *Daedalus*.

**distributed in class:**

Additional primary and secondary source articles chosen by students.

# course outcomes

This course will provide students with

1. familiarity with various controversial issues related to the formation of social identity and the management of society.
2. the ability to approach controversial issues objectively, recognizing the importance of acknowledging differing attitudes regarding these issues.
3. well-developed sociological imaginations, allowing for the consideration of relationships between personal circumstances and large-scale conditions related to the topics raised in the course.
4. strong critical thinking skills, enhanced by evaluating particular controversial issues through the combination of scholarly documented evidence and logical thought.
5. skills for formulating and justifying strong, cohesive arguments for chosen positions on controversial issues.
6. appreciation for the interdisciplinary natures of the topics discussed in the course.

Two non-cumulative exams assess student understanding of the basic concepts discussed in class and in assigned readings. Exam questions, which require written answers ranging from a sentence to a paragraph in length, vary in point value.

During the semester, students, in groups of three (or four if the class cannot be evenly divided into groups of three) must assume responsibility for organizing and presenting lessons on chosen topics. The "Guidelines for Presentations" contains specific instructions and suggested topics for these presentations.

In addition to the topic addressed by each student in his or her presentation group, he or she must select three issues considered worthy of further attention than given in class. For each of these topics, students must write a two-page response that provides a subjective analysis of and any questions related to the topic. A description of the requirements for reactions can be found in the "Guidelines for Written Assignments."

From the issues discussed in class, students must choose a single topic (It is suggested that they select from those that served as bases for their two-page responses.) to examine in depth, resulting in a position paper. A description of the requirements for the position paper can be found in the "Guidelines for Written Assignments."

Each student also receives a class participation/class activities grade. The participation portion of the grade reflects students' interaction in class. Providing substantive class discussion and contributing to groupwork increases this grade. Conversely, disruption (such as consistently arriving to class late), a lack of effort, or obvious inactivity (including sleeping) lowers the grade. The class activities portion of the grade reflects a student's efforts toward and completion of in-class assignments and exercises.

The preceding factors will be combined in the following manner to determine students' course grades.

EXAMS	36% (18% each)
PRESENTATION	18%
RESPONSES	18%
POSITION PAPER	18%
CLASS PARTICIPATION/CLASS ACTIVITIES	10%

Course grades follow the letter-grade system. Please consult the Moravian College Student Handbook for a description of the work characteristic of each grade. The numerical ranges used in assigning each letter grade in this course are as follows.

A	92%-100%	B-	80%-81.9%	D+	68%-69.9%
A-	90%-91.9%	C+	78%-79.9%	D	62%-67.9%
B+	88%-89.9%	C	72%-77.9%	D-	60%-61.9%
B	82%-87.9%	C-	70%-71.9%	F	0%-59.9%

## Policies

All policies listed in the college catalog that deal with attendance, withdrawal, cheating, plagiarism, and any other pertinent policies apply to this class.

Please make every possible effort to take exams on the scheduled dates (see course schedule). All missed examinations are given at the end of the semester. A student who does not attend class on the day of his or her scheduled presentation receives a grade of 0 on the presentation. (It is unrealistic to state that NO excuses will be accepted. But, very few excuses will be considered legitimate. A valid excuse must be accompanied by proper documentation as well as approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.)

Responses must be submitted in the class directly following that in which the topic of the response was discussed. Late responses will be accepted with a five-point penalty for each day they are late, beginning with the due date. Position papers that are submitted after the due date will be penalized fifteen points for each day that they are late.

Attendance, itself, does not directly affect students' grades in this course. However, attendance is indirectly reflected in the class participation/activities grade. Class participation grades rely, in part, upon presence in class. Also, students may not make up class activities that take place during classes for which they are absent.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Course Schedule on the following page provides an anticipated calendar of topics and assignments. Please be aware that this schedule is subject to change based upon the progression of the term.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

Copies of reading assignments followed by an asterisk (\*) are on reserve in Reeves Library. Copies of reading assignments followed by two asterisks (\*\*) are available through Academic Search Elite. All other assignments can be found in the *Crossroads* reader.

<u>CLASS DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC(S)</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS CLASS</u>
January 15	Introductions Nature vs. Nurture	Read: Pinker*; Colt, and Hollister** (in class)
January 22	Sexual Orientation Public Perceptions of Homosexuals and Bisexuals	Read: Kinsey* (pgs 636-666); Walters and Hayes; Lacayo; Weston
January 29	Public Perceptions of Homosexuals and Bisexuals	Read: Parker*; The New Republic; Ruether; The Christian Century Choose favored presentation topics
February 5	Addiction as a Disease	Read: DSM-IV* (pgs 199-209 and 214-222); DeZolt; Legrand, Iacono, and McGue**
February 12	Addiction as a Disease	Read: Becker; Fox
February 19	Exam 1 Poverty	STUDY Read: Mergenbagan; Cox
February 26	Role of and Concerns about Welfare	Read: Chafel; Ehrenreich and Piven
March 5	SPRING BREAK	
March 12	Concerns about Welfare	Read: Edin and Lein; Cohen, Hofferth
March 19	Racial and Ethnic Stratification Role of and Concerns about Affirmative Action	Read: Feagin and Sikes; Eddings; Obgu, Kennedy*
March 26	Concerns about Affirmative Action	Read: Platt; Intellectual Takeout*; Blau and Winkler**, Nieli**;
April 2	Exam 2 Presentations	STUDY Read student-assigned documents
April 9	HOLIDAY BREAK	
April 16	Presentations	Read student-assigned documents
April 23	Presentations	Read student-assigned documents
T.B.A. (Exam week)	Position Paper due	Write position paper