

COMMON COURSE OUTLINE

HIST 120

Ethnicity: American Dream

3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

Three hours of lecture a week; one semester. This is a multidisciplinary course designed to integrate the methods, assumptions, and values of history, political philosophy and other social sciences while examining the American experience from a multicultural perspective. The ideals of freedom and equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence are examined through primary documents to explore how gender, race, ethnicity, religion, economic class, and sexual orientation influence the realization of the American Dream. Prerequisites: Reading Skill 1; ENGL 102.

Overall Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. analyze in writing a variety of sources of historical information including secondary sources, interpretive essays by historians, electronic sources, and primary sources such as biographies, diaries, letters, newspapers, and statistical reports. (I, II, III; 3)
2. analyze the classic documents in American history that express the demands for first class citizenship and economic and political equality put forward by women, African Americans, industrial and agrarian laborers, gays and lesbians, and European and Asian immigrants. (I, II, III, V; 3, 9, 10)
3. prepare a formal paper that synthesizes information from both print and electronic sources to construct an argument about the specific ways in which social reform movements, industrial development, and the expansion of education continue to transform the interactions among diverse groups with the U.S. (I, II, III, IV; 1, 2; 3, 5, 6, 10)
4. analyze the convergence of individuals, ideas, social institutions, technology, economics, and social structures in the development of major historical issues, and support this thinking with specific documented evidence. (I, II, III, VI; 1, 3, 5, 8, 6)
5. determine the role that religion, race, class, gender, and ethnicity play in influencing historical issues and events. (I, II, III, V; 2, 3, 5, 8)
6. discuss the concept of the American Dream through the use of oral history interviews and documentary films that focus on groups representative of different classes, races, ethnic groups genders, and sexual orientations. (I, II, III, IV, V; 4, 5, 7, 8, 9)
7. analyze and interpret data to determine demographics of immigration to North America from the pre-Columbian era to the present. (I, II, III, IV, VI; 1, 3)

Major Topics

(Suggested texts are: *America: Classics that Help Define the Nation*; *American Dreams: Lost and Found*, by Studs Terkel; *Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry)

- The translation of the intellectual perspective of the European Scientific Revolution and enlightenment into American political and social philosophy.
- The convergence of Native American, European and African cultures on the North American continent.
- The Lockean ideals of the Declaration of Independence as they contrasted with the social reality of limited equality in America's Revolutionary period.
- The classic documents of African Americans, women, immigrants, industrial workers, lesbians and gay men, and Americans with disabilities that seek access to first class citizenship.
- The perspectives of contemporary Americans from diverse backgrounds and circumstances on the possibilities of and conflicts inherent in the concept of the American Dream.
- The contributions made to expanding democracy by Americans of diverse backgrounds and circumstances.
- The experiential dimension of communicating across the complex boundaries of ethnicity, religion, race, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation.
- The widely divergent points-of-view expressed by diverse social groups on public policy issues.
- The introduction by computer technology and particularly the Internet of a more inclusive and democratic access to information and cross-cultural communication, and the problems raised by the digital divide.
- The examination of a piece of literature as an expression of the aspirations for equality and independence that is located analytically in a particular era of American life.

Course Requirements (VII)

Individual course requirements will be determined by the instructor and will be described in the syllabus for each section. However, all students will:

1. analyze and conceptually describe possible causes, effects and underlying issues inherent in the disparity between American ideals of freedom and equality and the struggles of excluded groups for full access to first class citizenship;
2. analyze primary documents of disenfranchised groups seeking first class citizenship;
3. evaluate at least one public policy issue by identifying an important problem within our society, assessing their own assumptions about the issue, researching and arguing the

point-of-view of a social group of which the student is not a member, and participating respectfully in a debate/discussion of multiple points-of-view on this issue;

4. produce an oral history interview that demonstrates the ability to listen respectfully to cross cultural dialogue, and that compares and contrasts diverse cultures to their own cultural heritage;
5. produce a formal paper in several stages with frequent instructor feedback that is between 12 and 15 pages long and that constructs an argument, synthesizes researched information, and interprets perspectives from significantly diverse cultures and points-of-view.