

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN OUR SOCIETY

MRS. STANLEY

This course is a study of discrimination and the inequalities that exist in our culture. The goal of this course is to help students foster a growing sense of respect and tolerance for themselves, each other, and the global community.

Some of the specific areas that will be reviewed are racism, sexism, sexual orientation, mental illness, physical disabilities, and bullying, among others.

To reach these goals, it is anticipated that the course will use research from various texts, mass media, guest speakers, and films. Each student is required to complete a cultural journal, an advocacy project, debates and presentations, and actively participate in class discussions.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

**Class Participation...15pts

Class discussion is an integral part of this course. Students will be expected to attend every class session, arrive on time, and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and participate in class activities. This includes:

- * being on time to class
- * creating an atmosphere in which everyone can work
- * using class time wisely (not sleeping, doing other work)
- * being prepared (taking notes, notebook with you, participating in class discussions)
- * respect for classmates, teacher, and self

** Various Assignments...20 pts.

You will be responsible for various homework, experiments, and assignments that will be given throughout the semester

**Community Challenge Project...10pts

Each student must either create or participate in a community event that aids in the acceptance of all people. YOU are responsible for setting this up- the teacher will not do this for you. However, You must have it cleared and approved by the teacher before participating in the event. Some ideas include but not limited to:

- participate in an existing event such as “Take Back the Night”
- volunteer at a soup kitchen
- volunteer during the holiday season at salvation army as bell ringers
- toy donation for local charities during holiday season
- create and produce a public service announcement and ask local radio stations to play it

**Articles/ Responses...15pts

You will be required to find articles for each section we will cover in class. You are expected to locate, read, and write a one page typed paper on the summary and your views on the issue/article. You will also be expected to share your article with the class for further discussion.

The topics are as follows:

- Religion
- Race/ ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Physical disabilities
- Mental disabilities
- Body discrimination
- Poverty

Peer Education/School Project...25pts **SPEAK UP

Students will create their own project on intolerance in collaboration with the teacher. You will then present your project within our school district to promote tolerance and acceptance of all students and faculty. This project will start with a particular subject, be researched based, identify the forces that cause the intolerance, what can be done to combat the intolerance, add creativity, and design your program. Each group will be required to:

- design and present a visual display in one of the shadow boxes in the high school.
- Bring a guest speaker that has expertise in your designated topic area
- Provide an interactive learning experience for the entire class to participate in – this will be one class period and will pertain to promoting tolerance based on your specific topic

** Final Project...15pts.

- a.) This final assignment involves keeping a journal of the cultural messages you receive as you engage in everyday activities, e.g. watching television, going to the store, going to the movies, listening to the radio, reading your text books, looking at magazines, life at school etc. Look particularly for race, ethnic, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, and social class stereotypes and messages. Your journal should be a minimum of 6 pages. It may include your reaction, something of interest to you, pictures you have either seen or drawn, your ideas on how to help eliminate/reduce stereotypes, etc.
- b.) You will also be required to write a reflective piece in your journal on what you experienced from class and any new perspectives you may have gained from this class. In it you should include your own personal biases combined with your strengths and weaknesses regarding open mindedness and prejudice.