

PACIFIC SEMINAR 1: WHAT IS A GOOD SOCIETY?
University of the Pacific
Common Syllabus
Fall 2008

Course Description

Pacific Seminar 1 is a shared intellectual experience with a uniform syllabus and common course reader that introduces students to the question “What is a Good Society”? The discussion-oriented course is designed to expose students to the rigor of university study by reading, discussing, and writing about the ideas and arguments of historical and contemporary writers who address the following aspects of a good society: (1) Education, (2) Family and Civil Society, (3) Politics, Law, and Government, and (4) The Human Relationship to the Natural World. Course sections serve as a microcosm of our democratic republic for the discussion of significant personal, social and political issues. Pacific Seminar 1 also develops skills you will need to succeed in any field of study at the University and beyond. The course thus represents an introduction to general education in the best sense of the term: education for self-examining and self-governing citizens.

Course Objectives

Through a study of the question “What is a Good Society?” students will:

- (1) Examine and expand their assumptions and beliefs about a good society;
- (2) Develop and understand the process of critical thinking through reading, writing and class discussion;
- (3) Reflect on their personal and social responsibilities;
- (4) Recognize the value of intellectual curiosity and life-long learning.

As stated in Pacific’s General Catalog, “All students who enter the University as freshmen must complete Pacific Seminar 1 and Pacific Seminar 2. Students are not allowed to drop these courses for any reason, even if they plan to transfer to another college or university.” Pacific Seminar 1 is also a prerequisite for Pacific Seminar 2. Students who receive an Incomplete in PACS 1 must clear it by the first Friday of the spring semester in order to take PACS 2.

Course Readings & Course Handbook

The readings for the course are collected in the Pacific Seminar 1 anthology that is to be purchased at the Bookstore. Included with this textbook is Ann Raimes’ *Keys for Writers: A Brief Handbook*. This handbook is a useful reference guide for most university courses that require essays and research papers. The handbook will also be used in Pacific Seminar 2.

Students must keep the course reader since some readings will be reassigned in Pacific Seminar 2.

Section Meetings

Students enrolled in Pacific Seminar 1 are divided into sections of approximately twenty-two students. Class meetings are discussion-intensive and will focus on close attention to the readings. Your instructor will provide a second customized 'section' syllabus that explains additional course policies and expectations. Students should bring their Pacific Seminar 1 reader to class everyday.

Course Assignments & Grade Percentages

The course assignments are the means to judge how well students have achieved the course objectives. Your grade in Pacific Seminar 1 will be based on four essays, other course writing, and class participation. There is no final examination. **All of the essays must be completed in order to pass the course.**

The weight of the various course assignments is as follows:

<i>Essay 1</i>	=	10%
<i>Essay 2</i>	=	15%
<i>Essay 3</i>	=	15%
<i>Essay 4</i>	=	15%
<i>Other Course Writing</i>	=	20%
<i>Class Participation</i>	=	20%
<i>Self-Reflection Assignment</i>	=	5%

Essays

Essays are a formal extension of a conversation involving the readings, other course writing and class discussion. They are thesis-driven and will demonstrate engagement with the readings and refer directly to specific ideas from our authors. With the exception of the first, shorter essay, the other three essays will be between 4-6 typewritten pages long (double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font). All essays must be submitted through Turnitin in Blackboard. Students must also submit a hard copy to their instructors. Essays that are turned in late without a compelling reason will be lowered one-third of a grade per day. If students do not have a draft to exchange for the peer review sessions, the final grade on their essay will be lowered one full letter grade.

Other Course Writing

Faculty will require **ten** short out-of-class writing assignments during the semester; see your section syllabus for the kinds of writing assignments. The purposes of these assignments are to demonstrate a critical understanding of the ideas in the readings, to improve class discussion, and to develop ideas as a foundation for the essays. Your instructor will provide a grading scheme for this type of writing in his or her section syllabus.

Participation

In a seminar, class discussion is essential. The professor expects that you will participate in the conversations and be prepared for every class meeting by carefully reading and reflecting on the material. Your professor will give you feedback on your participation, with suggestions for areas to improve, at least three times over the course of the semester. Here are the general criteria for your class participation grade; your instructor might add other details to these criteria in the section syllabus.

A = Always prepared and engaged during class. Makes frequent and relevant contributions to class discussions, yet not dominating. Often (though not necessary always) gives accurate statements about the material and asks probing questions.

B = Usually prepared and attentive during class. Contributes to class discussion but not consistently. Typically gives accurate observations about the material and occasionally asks probing questions.

C = Sometimes prepared for class. Does not take any initiative to ask questions. Often unable to respond accurately to questions about the material. Detrimental or distracting behaviors.

D = Intensified "C" performance.

Films

Students will be required to watch two films outside of class that are connected to the course themes and to turn in a typed assignment on the film as determined by their instructor. The film responses will count as part of the 'Participation' grade. The following films will be shown on PACS2 TV on five consecutive evenings in the residence halls at both 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm:

<i>Pleasantville</i>	Sunday, September 14th – Thursday, September 18th
<i>Who Killed the Electric Car?</i>	Sunday, November 16th – Thursday, November 20th

The films will also be shown in the Pacific Theatre at 7:00 pm on the following days:

<i>Pleasantville</i>	September 16th and 17th
<i>Who Killed the Electric Car?</i>	November 18th and 19th

Attendance Policy

Participating in class discussion is an essential part of the Pacific Seminar experience, and regular attendance develops the habit of being responsible for your commitments, which is a valued behavioral trait outside of the university. In this course, students are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester. After three unexcused absences, your final grade for the course will be lowered by one-third of a grade (i.e., from a "B+" to a "B") for each day that you are absent from class without a valid excuse. This means that if you miss five days of class

without a valid excuse, your final grade for the course will be lowered by two-thirds of a grade (i.e., from a “B+” to a “B-”). A valid excuse for missing class will require written documentation from a person who can certify the seriousness of your illness or other misfortune.

Blackboard and E-Portfolio

Faculty will maintain a Blackboard course site to enrich the Pacific Seminar I learning experience. The site is located at <https://pacific.blackboard.com> Login with your PacificNet ID and password. Students will also assemble an electronic portfolio of work in the course that will form part of their general education e-portfolio, which culminates in their senior year in Pacific Seminar 3. Students will complete an e-portfolio training during class between November 10 – December 10th. Students are expected to post to their portfolio by the end of the semester at least one formal essay (and perhaps a draft of it), and the self-reflection assignment.

Honor Code

In this course, you will learn about the University Honor Code and how to avoid plagiarism. It is a violation of the Honor Code to submit all or part of someone else’s work or ideas as your own. Violations of the Honor Code are serious. They harm other students, the professor and the reputation of the university. Violations will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs. If found guilty, a student might receive a range of penalties, including failure of an assignment, failure of the course, or suspension from the University.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

Date	Assignment	Topic	Reading(s)
Week 1			
Aug. 27		CIRP survey & Course Introduction and Expectations	
Aug. 29		Course Introduction and Expectations	Morowitz
Week 2			
Sept. 1		Labor Day - NO CLASS	
Sept. 3		Nature and Value of a Liberal Arts Education	Bok
Sept. 5		Free Speech and Knowledge	Mill
Week 3			
Sept. 8		Free Speech and Knowledge	Mill
Sept. 10		Thinking for Oneself	Rampton and Stauber
Sept. 12		Academic Integrity Session 1	
Week 4			
Sept. 15		Academic Integrity Session 2	Sadler
Sept. 17	Essay 1 due	A View of Civil Society	Elshtain
Sept. 19		Friendship	Cicero

Week 5

Sept. 22		Marriage	Coontz; Syfers; California Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage
Sept. 24		Filial piety	English
Sept. 26		Raising Children	Orenstein

Week 6

Sept. 29		Free Market Economics	Friedman
Oct. 1		Critique of Free Market	John Paul II
Oct. 3		Fall Student Break – NO CLASS	

Week 7

Oct. 6		Work	Seligman
Oct. 8		Equality in Education	Kozol
Oct. 10		Media	Postman

Week 8

Oct. 13		Art	Kingsolver; Shakespeare
Oct. 15	Exchange Essay 2	Review of Chapter 2	
Oct. 17	Peer Review		

Week 9

Oct. 20	Essay 2 due	Conflicting Obligations	Sophocles
Oct. 22		Classical Liberalism	Locke
Oct. 24		American Political Ideals	Declaration of Independence; U.S. Constitution

Week 10

Oct. 27		American Political Realities	APSA
Oct. 29		Tolerance	Williams; May & Nunn
Oct. 31		Church & State	Perry

Week 11

Nov. 3		Obedience to Law	Plato; King
Nov. 5		Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism	Nussbaum; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Nov. 7	Exchange Essay 3	Review of Chapter 3	

Week 12

Nov. 10	Peer Review		
Nov. 12	Essay 3 due	Experiences in Nature	Muir; Snyder
Nov. 14		Individual Liberty, Environmental Tragedy	Hardin

Week 13

Nov. 17		Water	Gertner
Nov. 19		Consumption	Ryan & Durning
Nov. 21		Animals	Pollan

Week 14

Nov. 24		Environmental Justice	Ringquist
Nov. 26		Thanksgiving	
Nov. 28		Thanksgiving	

Week 15

Dec. 1		Chemicals	Lomborg
Dec. 3		Energy	Brown
Dec. 5		Review of Chapter 4	

Week 16

Dec. 8			
Dec. 10		E-portfolio training days Nov 10 – Dec 10	Love & Guthrie; Douglass
Dec. 12		Course Conclusion & Evaluation	

Week 17

Dec. 15	Essay 4 & Self-Reflection due	NO CLASS	
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