

Spring 2015 ISEM 301 Great Issues Seminars – Synopsis/Descriptions

Section 2 Informing Spatial Agency: Place, Culture, Identity & Community - Rula Awwad-Rafferty (College of Art and Architecture)

An interdisciplinary seminar focusing on creative interventions that inform and build SPATIAL AGENCY; i.e. the capacity to effectively and collaboratively make decisions of impact and resilience in the human environments locally and globally, moving beyond the typical, and connecting diverse expertise with identity, culture, arts, spatial ethics, democratic praxis, and community discourse. The seminar will also be linked with the College of Art and Architectures Inspiring Design annual symposium as a primary signature event. It will offer opportunities for critical examination of pressing and great issues in multiple theoretical and applied perspectives, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to environmental design, applications in the arts and culture, issues of significance, and planning policy. **Note: attendance at the Inspiring Design Futures Symposium March 26 is required.**

Section 3 Disparities in Obesity and Health (WWW) - Chantal A. Vella (College of Education)

This online seminar will explore health disparities relevant to the US and discuss environmental, social, behavioral, and genetic factors associated with health disparities. The seminar will cover disparities in obesity, physical activity, food access, overall mortality, diabetes, and health with length of stay in the US (Latino paradox). Students will explore individual-level, community-level, and state-level strategies needed to lessen the gap in these health disparities. The seminar will provide a multidisciplinary approach to understanding health disparities, factors that contribute to health disparities and strategies to lessen the health disparities that impact our nation's health and escalating healthcare costs.

Section 4 Inspiring Lives of Scientists - George Newcombe (College of Natural Resources)

The life stories of great scientists and scholars are inspiring in part because their remarkable insights are often rejected or ignored when first proposed. Their life stories are about persistence and courage in the face of opposition, as much as they are about particular discoveries. Three of the six subjects of this course were central to the development of evolutionary theory (Charles Darwin), genetics (Gregor Mendel), and microbiology and medicine (Louis Pasteur) in the 19th century. Two (Alice Kober and Michael Ventris) were scholars who, by 1952, had largely deciphered Linear B, an unknown script of an unknown language discovered earlier in the century in Crete. The last scientist and scholar whom we will discuss is Barbara McClintock, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1983 for her work in genetics. Faced with considerable antagonism each of these six remarkable individuals found their way.

Section 5 Celebrating Idaho Agriculture - Jim Connors (College of Agricultural and Life Sciences)

Agriculture is the leading industry in Idaho. The agricultural industry stretches from the woodlands of northern Idaho, to the rolling hills of the Palouse, to the potato fields of southeastern Idaho. Thousands of people are involved in the production, processing, transportation, and marketing of agricultural commodities across the state. However, agriculture is an industry that is constantly challenged and changing. Issues such as transportation, soil conservation, water rights/irrigation, grazing, and labor are just some issues agricultural professionals face every day.

Section 7 – The Dust Bowl: An American Ecological Disaster – John Hammel and Katherine Aiken

(College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences)

The Dust Bowl region of the southern Great Plains was devastated by a decade of drought and horrific wind erosion in the 1930's while the US was battling a severe economic depression. This environmental disaster degraded more than 150 million farmland acres and caused an exodus of over 2 million people from the Plains states, many to the western US. This drought period, which lasted from the early 1930's through the early 1940's, is considered to be the severest historically in the Great Plains. Importantly, the combination of poor agricultural practices, harsh drought, and economic hardship created the worst ecological catastrophe ever to occur in the US. The Dust Bowl period in US history will be examined through America's agriculture, its economic and social fabric, and its art and literature.

Sections 8, 9, 18 Communication and Culture - Matt Wappett (College of Education)

These seminars provide an introduction to the field of communication and culture by looking at the practical application of theory and research, with each seminar addressing a different culture: African-American, Native American and World. They each focus on fundamental conceptual and practical dimensions of intercultural communication in everyday life and social interactions in multicultural environments. They identify the key challenges presented by intercultural interaction both at home and abroad and how those challenges affect people, their jobs, and their relationships. They also focus on the strategies and skills needed to deal effectively with these challenges in a broad variety of interaction contexts. These seminars aim at developing an individual's intellectual appreciation for cultural differences and sensitivity regarding intercultural interactions. **NOTE: attendance at certain on-campus events required.**

Sections 10 and 17 Global Leadership Talent Needed - Jan Rauk (10) and Erick Larson (17) (College of Business and Economics)

Section 10: In this seminar we will explore today's workplace "megatrends" that influence global market trends. In so doing, we will learn about different styles and types of Global Leadership, and why they are essential for success in business community today. As we look at global leadership, we will review the ten top behaviors that global leaders should possess including: cultural self-awareness, invite the unexpected, results through relationships, frame-shifting, expand ownership, develop future leaders, adapt and add value, core value/ flexibility, influence across boundaries, and third-way solutions. Students will be presented with multi-disciplinary perspective and be expected to attend "international" events sponsored and presented on campus.

Section 17: Every day in the news we see organizational scandals in business, government, or other institutions. Professionals and leaders are all constantly faced with ethical decisions that influence success or failure for themselves and their organizations and stakeholders. In this seminar students will learn how to develop ethical expertise by providing opportunities to practice problem-solving and discussing current events. Throughout the semester we will examine the importance of ethics in the workplace and the role of leaders in fostering ethical behavior. Individual Case studies, discussions, guest speakers, self-assessment exercises, and reading assignments will explore the basic frameworks of ethical behavior and moral leadership.

Sections 11 Information and Society - Greg Donohoe, Michael Anderson and Terence Soule (College of Engineering)

In this seminar, students will explore the role of information in the shaping of society in the Information Age. As detailed in James Gleick's *The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood*, the ability of our society to generate, store, and communicate information has mushroomed, and has changed almost every aspect of our lives, for better or for worse. This class will explore three aspects of this phenomenon.

Science and Technology of Information. The history of information. Development of the technologies that made the Information Age possible. Where this is this technology headed, and the Information Age with it?

Democratization of Information. Throughout history, governments have used the control of information to control their populations. Conversely, the availability of information has been key to democratic movements, from Thomas Paine's pamphlets, to the role of social media in the Arab Spring uprisings. The Khan Academy makes high-quality online education available free to millions. How has developing information technology influenced the course of human events, and what does the future hold?

Information Sharing and Privacy. Information sharing via social media (Facebook, Linked In), e-commerce, data search, and online services such as registering for classes and paying taxes, have enriched our lives in countless ways. We can get what we need immediately, anywhere, any time. But every transaction is quietly being logged by someone, and various entities are creating profiles of us, our activities, and our friends, to use for their own purposes. Should this access be controlled? What are the implications?

Section 12 What is an Educated Person? (Honors) – Rodney Frey (College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences)

Initiated by a university-wide, keynote address by one of the University of Idaho's [Distinguished Professors](#), this seminar will explore the question, "what is an educated person?" Through the academic disciplinary lenses of business/economics, and anthropology/sociology students will consider the varied skills and learning competencies needed on the day they walk across the commencement stage and receive their baccalaureate diploma. Among the questions explored are, what are employers seeking in a graduate? What does a civil democratic society require of its citizenry? What do students themselves desire from their education? These various interwoven questions will be framed within a consideration of the University of Idaho's Learning Outcomes.

Section 13 Water in Society (Honors) – Frank Wilhelm (College of Natural Resources)

The burgeoning human population is stressing a finite supply of clean water that sustains life as we know it. This course examines local to global phenomena using a multidisciplinary approach to help students understand the complexity of water-related issues facing our society.

Sections 14 and 16 Feeding 9 Billion People by 2050 Larry Makus (College of Agricultural and Life Sciences)

Much has been written about the 9 billion people issue, but the primary focus has been on the capability of agriculture to produce sufficient food to feed that number. Although agricultural productivity is as

important component of addressing this issue, there are other relevant issues that need to be addressed that extend well beyond the productive capacity and methods used by the agricultural sector. These other issues include:

1. Economics related to income distribution and the necessary capital that is needed to enhance productive capacity and infrastructure development in key world regions.
2. Political environments that enhance conflict and instability in food production.
3. Government policies that discourage domestic production, restrict trade, and create other perverse incentives.
4. Sociological issues impacting the cultural willingness to adopt change.
5. Environmental impacts and other negative externalities resulting from of a planet supporting 9 billion people.

All of these factors are connected to the feeding 9 billion dilemma, and none have easy answers. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a broader understanding of this issue, develop the realization that we are facing a global challenge that impacts each of us as a global citizen, and recognize that effective solutions must be comprehensive and require a multidisciplinary approach. The initial part of the course (first two weeks) will focus on a basic understanding of the current extent of world hunger and malnutrition, and then on the productive capacity of agricultural to expand production as population increases. Both are extensive and broad issues, but a basic understanding of the challenge is required to appreciate and recognize this problem. The next five weeks will focus on the issues listed above to develop a better appreciation of the complexity of this global challenge, and suggest potential solutions. No solutions are flawless, and all are controversial. The intent is to provide a critical examination of the issue and alternative solutions, and develop an appreciation of the trade-offs involved. The final class period will involve looking at our role as global citizens to better understand and contribute to a positive outcome. “Why does it matter to me” is the final question that needs to be addressed.

Section 7 Teaching to Learn: Money Skills - Karin Hatheway-Dial and Karen Richel (College of Business and Economics, and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences)

Society is strengthened when its citizens are financially literate. Understanding personal bookkeeping, budgeting and financial strategy can bolster society’s citizens on both a personal and professional level. This class will help direct a face-to-face simulation called “That’s Life” by playing the vendor part of the live simulation and selling day to day goods and services to participants. The participants are inmates from a local correctional facility. Both students and volunteers who have participated in the “That’s Life” Simulation often say that the simulation has left an indelible mark for life.

The main objective of this course is for students to learn and teach personal budgeting to others (adult and juvenile offenders). Students through learning to take ownership of their own personal finances will be able relate their own financial circumstances to other cultural populations.