

## Anthropology H597.05

### Adherence to Issues of the Contemporary World General Learning Outcomes

According to the GEC Learning Goals and Objectives, the goals and expected outcomes for the “Issues of the Contemporary World” GEC component are:

Goals: By drawing upon multiple disciplines, Issues in the Contemporary World coursework provides a capstone experience that helps students enrich their experiences of the increasingly global nature of the contemporary world.

Expected Learning Outcomes: (1) Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to contemporary issues (2) Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between information derived from different disciplines by interacting with students from different majors (3) Students write about or conduct research on the contemporary world

#### 1. How do the course goals of Anthropology H597.05 address the expected learning outcomes above?

This goals of this course are closely aligned with the goals and learning objectives of capstone course category “Issues of the Contemporary World.”

- The Global Food Crisis is by nature a multi-disciplinary, contemporary issue that connects and affects the lives of all people.
- The class will emphasize the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach in tackling this complex problem and will include biological, cultural, geographic, historical, political and economic perspectives.
- The Global Food Crisis is a critical issue that we, as a global society, need to address and this course is aimed at providing students with an appreciation for the complexities of the problem, as well as the power, gained through knowledge and first-hand experiences, to help tackle this critical problem now and in the years to come.
- The course is designed to attract to students from different majors, as well as colleges to stimulate debate and the sharing of knowledge and varied ways of thinking about a common problem.
- The course emphasizes hands-on “experience” as part of the learning process. The course provides students with opportunities (diet and research projects) to gain proficiency in the methods commonly used to assess health outcomes and dietary adequacy and apply what they learn in the classroom to real world problems.

#### 2. How do the readings assigned in Anthropology H597.05 address the expected learning outcomes?

The interdisciplinary nature of the topic and fact that it is relatively new means that to date there is no work that synthesizes information on the issue. Therefore, the readings for the course are drawn from a wide range of disciplines in the social and natural sciences and students will be required to synthesize this information on a weekly basis in one-page papers and during in-class discussion. The course is divided into three sections (1) causes of the food crisis (2) consequences of the crisis and (3) personal awareness and solutions. For section one, readings focus on the book "An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World" by McNeill. The book is used to bring students up to date on the environmental, technological and population changes that occurred over the last 100 years in order to set the stage for a global food crisis to occur. It is also during section one of the course that students are introduced to debates regarding the role of biofuels in contributing to the food crisis and the concept of food as a commodity vs. as basic human right. Two response papers will come from these readings and we will spend considerable time discussing these major debates. In section two the focus shifts to the consequences of the food crisis on human populations across the globe. Readings and activities are aimed at helping students master the techniques of collecting and analyzing anthropometric and dietary intake data - data commonly used to assess food adequacy. To understand human nutritional needs, the course combines data from nutrition, as well as from the anthropological literature on the evolution of the human diet. The concept of food security is introduced and students will read Raj Patel's book "Stuffed and Starved" which emphasizes the ways food is distributed globally and the economic and health consequences of this distribution scheme for human populations around the world, including in the United States. In part three of the course students will be asked to take an in depth look at their own diets in light of global food issues and start discussing solutions that begin with individual decisions. They will read "Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty" which highlights local food movements and provides information on a range of ways we can change our impact on the planet. While reading this book students will also be conducting their individual research projects in local food pantries, organic farms or community gardens. They will also complete the final stage of the diet project which will challenge them to eat locally in order to focus their attention on their own "dietary place" in the global flow of food.

3. How do the topics covered in Anthropology H597.05 address the expected learning outcomes above?

The fact that the course topic is relatively new means there are few readings that synthesize the subject. Therefore, readings for the course are drawn from a range of disciplines and will require students to synthesize the material themselves. Thus, the course topic will directly address the first learning outcome (i.e. synthesis of material from a variety of disciplines). The causes and consequences of the global food crisis touch on issues from a range of disciplines in both the social and natural sciences and the topic has attracted an enormous amount of media attention. Therefore, a course dedicated to the issue should (and in this case has been designed to) attract students from a range of academic fields. This should provide students with ample opportunity to realize the importance of a multi-

disciplinary approach. The readings will also emphasize different perspectives and approaches for understanding the issue. Together these aspects of the course directly address learning outcome two. The class includes numerous writing assignments, as well as two hands-on projects (dietary project and field research project) that will provide all students the opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real-world experiences in order to better understand this global issue. The dietary project is divided into three parts. Students will first learn standard procedures used to collect dietary data and will practice them by collecting data on their own intakes for a three consecutive day period. In the second part of this project students will learn to analyze the adequacy of their diets using professional dietary analysis software. In the final part of this project students will be challenged to eat locally grown/raised foods for a 2-day period. They will then compare their unrestricted 3-day diets with their 2-day eat local diets and will evaluate the degree to which they rely on the global food supply and its relationship to the global food crisis. In their individually designed research projects, students will have the opportunity to design, implement and write-up their own research project. Students will choose a site (organic farm, food pantry, urban garden) where they can address a research question of their choice. Both projects will provide students the opportunity to both conduct research and write about a critical issue in the contemporary world.

4. How do the written assignments completed for Anthropology 597.05 address the expected learning outcomes?

All written assignments for this course are interdisciplinary in nature and students will discuss their opinions in class. The projects discussed in #3 above will require students to use data and techniques/skills from different disciplines. Throughout the quarter students will be assigned to work groups that will purposely combine individuals from varied academic backgrounds. Groups will meet outside the classroom to work on reading and writing assignments, as well as their projects. Responsibility for leading class discussion on different topics/days will be rotated between the groups over the course of the quarter allowing further opportunity for students to share their diverse perspectives and knowledge of the topics.