

**HS 277**  
**MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**  
Spring 2008 Dr. Kathleen Roe



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*Our star is not the only star, just the nearest.*

Audre Lorde, 1977

*Border pedagogy points to the need for conditions that allow [participants] to write, speak, and listen in a language in which meaning becomes multiaccultural and dispersed and resists permanent closure.*

Henry A. Giroux (1992) in Collins Airhihenbuwa, 1995

*The question remains: Who is the gardener?*

Camara Jones, 2000

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Intensive reflection and dialogue on principles, knowledge, theories, and skills basic to communication for effective health promotion in contemporary multicultural society. Emphasis on conceptual framework and self-understanding, followed by application to praxis with diverse communities, clients, partners, organizations, and colleagues. Three units.

### **COURSE THEME**

This course is based on the assumption that an in-depth and continuously evolving understanding of culture is central to the design, delivery, and evaluation of effective health education and health promotion. It further assumes that multicultural humility, empathy and competence begin with understanding one's own cultural lens and its historical context, an ongoing process that can then be enjoined with learning about others, and the history & dynamics of our inter-relations.

Individually, seminar participants will explore their own backgrounds and interrogate the effects that these unique experiences have on their worldview and professional practice. As a group, we will examine (deconstruct and reconstruct) multicultural "problems" and "situations", strategies, and skills. Based on class interests and participant expertise, we will draw upon examples from health promotion programs, behavior change interventions, the workplace, client interactions, community organization, evaluation, advocacy, and/or outreach.

HS 277 is critical in our program commitment to eliminating health disparities. It also assumes that eliminating disparities is just one dimension to the essential work of creating and nurturing a just and multicultural society. As in all SJSU MPH courses, theory and practice are integrated throughout.

## **COURSE GOALS**

This course is designed, offered, facilitated, and dedicated to three broad goals:

- ❖ To engage community health education and public health professionals in dialogue regarding the *"myriad pleasures and challenges"* (Duran and Duran, 2000) of work in multicultural contexts;
- ❖ To appropriately center culture in the imagination, design, implementation, and evaluation of public health strategies, programs, and interventions, including those designed to eliminate health disparities;
- ❖ To contribute to the transformation of ethnocentric social structures, social science, and social interactions in the interests of public health and social justice.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to meet the following objectives:

1. To introduce conceptual frameworks for the advanced study of the relationship of culture, communication, and health promotion practice.
2. To provide an opportunity for seminar participants to explore and articulate their own cultural frameworks and to engage in ongoing dialogue with others about their content, origin, dynamics, and implications.
3. To provide a forum for the analysis of both explicit and subtle dynamics of oppression, privilege, prejudice, and stereotyping, and their effects on the design and delivery of health-related policies, programs, services, and research efforts.
4. To explore and analyze the structural, organizational, and interpersonal components of common multicultural communication differences and to identify ways to experience, problematize, understand, and learn from them.
5. To create an environment in which participants respectfully explore the differences and commonalities between them, and then apply what they learn to their own growth and professional practice.

## **OUTCOME OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, participants will be able to:

1. Better understand their own cultural framework, assumptions, and natural communication patterns, and identify the potential impact of these on personal and professional interactions.
2. Describe the multicultural demographics of California and their implications for health education, prevention, and their own areas of professional emphasis.
3. Assess the depth and breadth of their own cultural humility, empathy, and competence, and identify goals and resources for further development and lifelong learning.

4. Analyze communication-related difficulties, or potential concerns, in particular multicultural contexts, and propose strategies for overcoming them.
5. Demonstrate a variety of advanced multicultural communication skills through class interactions, structured activities, and assignments.

### CLASS FORMAT

HS 277 is an intense and interactive course. Presentations by faculty, students, and guests are integrated with discussion, skill assessment and development, small group problem-solving, and case study analysis.

**The course requires regular and thoughtful preparation for each class session, including a substantive reading assignment, journal entry, and homework assignment every week.** In addition to the weekly preparation, several major assignments are introduced at the first class and developed independently over the course of the semester.

**This course also requires full participation by every class member at every session.** Because this course is about communication, "listening only" is not an option. Each person's perspective is important, and each voice needs to be heard in this class. Participants must be willing to share as well as learn. This is not a course to sit through – active participation at every class session is essential and required.

### READING

Reading for the course comes from five sources. **All five are required.**

- ❑ Takaki, Ronald (1998). *A Larger Memory: A History of Our Diversity, with Voices.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company. (\$24)
- ❑ Airhihenbuwa, Collins O. (2007). *Healing Our Differences: The Crisis of Global Health and the Politics of Identity.* Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield. (\$20)
- ❑ HS 277 Class Reader - Online  
Readings posted for online viewing or downloading – no charge beyond individual costs associated with printing. Readings will be made available weekly. The online reader also includes links to documents posted at excellent websites.
- ❑ HS 277 Class Reader - Paper  
***To be purchased in 4 installments from Unique Printing 109 E. Santa Clara between 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, (408) 297-6698 (\$80 total – maybe less!)***
- ❑ Seedlings  
***To be purchased in early December.*** A very special part of HS 277 is the compilation of writing by participants into a volume entitled *Seedlings*. Our volume will be developed during the second half of the semester and available for purchase in early December. Set aside \$30 or so - *Seedlings* is always a treasure! In addition, reading assignments for the last regular class session will come from *Seedlings 2008!* (\$30)

***Reading assignments are specific to each week. All participants are expected to have prepared and reviewed the reading before each class session.***

## ASSIGNMENTS

Writing, homework, and class activities are an important part of this course. The major assignments, briefly described below, are discussed in detail in separate handouts. Specific homework assignments are distributed in class or posted to the course website via webCT.

### ✂ **Value Statement** (draft due 2/4, final due 2/11)

This introductory assignment invites class participants to reflect upon and articulate the values that guide their professional practice, and the relationship of those commitments to the cultural values that have shaped their lives. Participants are asked to locate the core values of public health and community health education within the cultural values of their own biographies. Where is there natural fit and resonance? Where is there tension or lack of alignment? What are the implications of your particular value alignment for your own practice and your impact on the issues/communities you care about? *(10% of semester grade)*

### ✂ **Vignettes** (due 3/10)

This creative assignment is designed to sensitize participants to their own communication frameworks, assumptions, and traditions – and to develop short stories that share all of that with others. Organized around a series of vignettes that illustrate these frameworks, participants write about celebrations as they were growing up, how they learned about health, and experiences of feeling different. *(15% of semester grade)*

### ✂ **Cultural History** (due 4/7)

This assignment asks each participant to investigate and recount the social history of their own family or significant social group in order to better answer the question: How did you end up in this place and what has been the socio-historical experience of your people? This assignment blends personal accounts and remembrances with background research to fill in gaps in family/group history, better understand the context of that history, and/or interrogate the group's experience and relationship to other groups. *(15% of semester grade)*

### ✂ **Projects and Expo!** (update due 3/13; project & abstract due at Expo 5/12)

Semester-long individual projects culminate in a session in which we share what we've done. The project itself provides the opportunity for participants to apply semester concepts, issues, and insights to an aspect of their own work. The project should be 1) directly useful, and 2) based on a clearly articulated conceptual framework. Other than that, the assignment is wide open! In past semesters, participants have created an ongoing *DiversityWorks!* newsletter, compiled an annotated *Children's Multicultural Reading List*, translated suicide prevention materials from English to other languages, developed a *Filipino Health Resource Guide*, created a Multicultural Health calendar, implemented a photovoice pilot project in a multicultural middle school, created a multicultural health resources webpage, and interviewed bi-cultural Iranian American youth about sexuality. Note: An update is due 3/12 using the form available at the class webCT site. A 1 page abstract (to be shared with the class) is due at the Expo. Once we know what our projects will be, we may want to invite others (fieldwork preceptors, faculty, undergrads, community partners, our Site Visitors) to join us to see what you have done! *(10% of semester grade)*

☞ **Seedlings** (due 4/24 and 5/22)

This is easy, because the work will be done by then! Each class participant selects their favorite of the papers they have written (vignettes, value statements) to contribute to our shared volume, Seedlings. Then, you get the volume, read (enjoy!!!!) it, and write comments/reactions to selected authors for our final 5/21 session. (5% of semester grade)

☞ **3 Assessments (AKA: Exams)** (2/26 – 3/1, 4/1-5, 5/6-10)

There will be three quizzes covering the core concepts and data relevant to public health practice in a multicultural context. The quizzes, conducted over webCT, will be a combination of short answer, multiple choice, fill-in, and match/identify questions. Quizzes can be taken at your convenience over the 6 days in which each quiz is open: February 26 – March 1; April 1 – 5; May 6 – 10. There are no make-up or late exams or quizzes. There is also no final exam. (15% of semester grade)

☞ **Journals** (Submitted in progress 2/18 & 4/21; Full Journal and Aha's due 5/22)

Each participant is asked to keep a seminar journal reflecting on course themes, experiences, and Aha's each week. Handwriting in pen is ok, typed is better (but not essential). Journals-in-progress (including Aha's) are submitted three times during the semester; the full set of journals and annotated "Aha's!" is due at the last class session. Three weeks "off" at your discretion is just fine on this one – by the end, you need at least 12 journal submissions (15% of semester grade)

☞ **Reading Discussants** (Dates: \_\_\_\_\_)

Facilitating discussion of the weekly reading is shared by course participants. Each class member will have the opportunity to serve as part of a Reading Discussants Team at least once. Team members facilitate concurrent small group discussions based on assigned reading and then "report back" to the full seminar. A reflective account of the discussion and lessons learned through the facilitation is due from each Reading Discussant Team member (individual submissions) the following week. (Evaluation of this assignment will be incorporated into the class participation proportion of the semester grade)

☞ **Culture Table** (Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Table Partner: \_\_\_\_\_)

Inspired by our alumni Alma Burrell and her colleagues at the Black Infant Health Project, we'll take turns honoring and sharing threads of our cultures with each other each class session. Pairs will prepare a Culture Table for our classroom which displays artifacts or symbols of their cultures, emphasizing what is broadly held and what has been mediated by family or individuals, and then guide us through the things on the table before the Break each evening. Each presentation is strictly limited to 10 minutes and is accompanied by a half page Culture Table Description. (Counts as participation, but should really just be fun!)

*All written work (except the Journal) must be typed.  
Please retain a copy of all written work for your own records.*

**GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES**

A list of group responsibilities will be circulated during the first class period – all participants are asked to sign up for specific tasks that make the group process work (i.e., classroom set-up and clean-up, thank you letters to guests, session evaluation, process notes, websites, etc.). This shared responsibility enriches our experience together and provides facilitators and session planners with crucial feedback as we go through the semester.

Please note these dates and be ready to support the group when it is your turn. If you will be unable to meet your commitment, please arrange for a substitute in advance.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION**

HS 277 is an unusual course and requires an unusual kind of participation. Each member will begin the shared experience from their own unique perspective – monocultural, bicultural, polycultural; from the margins or the center; experienced and knowledgeable about different cultures and different historical experiences – and unaware or misinformed of others; comfortable with different styles of learning and communication, and feeling different degrees of freedom, vulnerability, and interest in exploring culture in this way.

**These differences are the commonwealth of our course.** Our success is largely dependent on the full and respectful participation of each class member.

HS 277 “works” when all class participants embrace responsibility for the learning environment. It is crucial that all participants agree that we all have much to learn – and we all have much to offer – in our common study of culture, health, and communication. A shared responsibility of HS 277 is to “interrogate one’s own praxis” and to share what we find in the process. Each participant is expected to receive what is shared in our dialogue with the open heart and respectful engagement we would ask for people we cherish.

There are many ways to participate in HS 277. Participation will be graded (on evidence of personal growth and consistency in: class contributions, class leadership, and respectful engagement. Participation in ongoing responsibilities, such as Reading Discussants, small group discussions and exercises, full class discussions, class responsibilities, the Culture Table, and contribution to Seedlings will also be considered. Active, consistent, thoughtful, and respectful participation at every class session is necessary for full participation credit. Participation is as important as any of the writing assignments or the exam, and is given the same weight (15%) in the semester grade.

**GRADING**

All writing assignments and the quizzes are worth 15% of the semester grade (with the exception of the Value Statement, which is worth 10% to help take some of the pressure off this first assignment). Class participation is worth 15%.

Semester grades will be determined by the instructor as follows:

Value Statement	10
Cultural History	15
Journals (cumulative)	15
Vignettes	15
Seedlings	05
Assessments (5 pts each)	15
Projects/Expo	10
Participation	15
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Total	100

Semester grades will be based on the total points as follows:		
A+ 97-100	A 93-96	A- 90-92
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82
<u>Note:</u> MPH students must earn a minimum grade of B- in all MPH courses.		

**OFFICE HOURS**

Participants are invited to discuss insights and ideas, their progress in the course, assignments, grades, class dynamics, or any other topics of interest with me at any point. Participation and feedback useful in planning, facilitating, and evaluating the course are always welcome!

Specific hours for HS 277 are **Mondays 4:00 - 5:00, by appointment**. Many other appointment times are available, either in person, over the phone, or by email. Appointments can be made by contacting me directly at [kmroe@casa.sjsu.edu](mailto:kmroe@casa.sjsu.edu). I am on campus on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

**KEY DATES**

2/4	Value Statement drafts to class
2/11	Value Statements due
2/18	Journals-in-progress due
2/26 - 3/1	Assessment #1 open
3/10	Vignettes (3) due
3/13	Project/Expo Update due (online submission)
4/1 – 4/5	Assessment #2 open
4/7	Cultural History due
4/14	10 <sup>th</sup> Annual Sexual Diversity Workshop (event begins at 4:00)
4/21	Journals-in-progress due
4/24	<i>Seedlings</i> submissions due for class volume Paper version due in HS office <u>and</u> electronic version by webCT
5/6 – 5/10	Assessment #3 open
5/12	Projects due – Expo!
5/22	Seedlings reflections & Semester Journals + Aha's due <u>Note</u> : Final Exam Schedule: Class meets 5:15 – 7:30

## Semester Schedule

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### **Module 1: Varied Carols: A Framework for Exploring Multicultural Communication**

- 1/28 Introductions and Welcome: Culture, Communication, & the Semester Ahead
- 2/4 Framework of our Course: Multiple Lenses, Varied Carols, and Orientation to Difference

### **Module 2: Experiencing Diversity**

- 2/11 The Importance of Place: California's Diversity as a Case Study
- 2/18 Diversity, Disparities, and Data: The Politics of Evidence in a Multicultural Society
- 2/25 Culture in Motion: Past and Present Immigration to the United States

### **Module 3: Self and Others in a Multicultural Context**

- 3/3 Identity in a Multicultural Society: Defining Self, Group, and Others
- 3/10 Privilege, Oppression, and Allies: Commonality and Difference
- 3/17 Interpersonal Communication: Body Language, Tone, Space, and Time

**Class Breaks for University Holidays: 3/26 Spring Break, 3/31 Cesar Chavez Day**

### **Module 4: Multicultural Competencies for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Practice**

- 4/7 Developing Programs for a Multicultural Society: Original, Tailored, New Paradigms?
- 4/14 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Sexual Diversity Workshop (Event begins at 4:00)
- 4/21 Research and Evaluation: Ways of Knowing in a Multicultural Society
- 4/28 Materials and Media for a Diverse Society
- 5/5 Building Organizations that Embrace Diversity: Top Down, Bottom Up, Trimtabs, and Tipping Points

### **Module 5: Applying What We've Learned**

- 5/12 Expo! Presentation and Discussion of Semester Projects
- 5/22 **Seedlings** Celebration (Note: Final Exam Schedule, 1715-1930)