

EPS 300 (Educated Perspective Seminar) Course Descriptions

EPS 300: Appreciating Diversity

This course is designed to increase awareness of and appreciation for diversity in all aspects of society. Students will explore their own elements of diversity to discover how physical, social and experiential attributes have shaped their thought processes, perceptions, attitudes and choices. Students will engage in activities designed to increase their appreciation for the diversity of others. In addition, students speculate on the impact of diversity in their chosen field of study.

EPS 300: Capitalism and Morality

This course questions the assumption that capitalism is ethically sound. We shall study the nature of capitalism as well as prominent normative theories of ethics and justice. We shall then look at various ethical issues in capitalism as it is practiced in the United States, including economic distribution, the nature of corporations, corporate auditing, the responsibility of business to consumers and the environment, and the ethics of advertising. Rather than trying to settle these controversies, we will focus on learning and using the methods philosophers use in trying to settle them.

EPS 300: Colonizing Space

In this course we will look at new ideas and new technologies associated with mankind (and womankind) colonizing space. In doing so, we will realize how colonizing space involves and integrates a variety of disciplines, knowledge, and skills emphasized in the General Education program. Activities will include journaling and discussing the legitimacy of information from various media sources, debating the political/economical/ethical issues associated with colonizing space, and creating your own space faring civilization.

EPS 300: Communication and Ethics

Ethics is an aspect of the practice of communication but leaves open for discussion when and where that ethical aspect may be carried out. We will study a variety of ethical dimensions of communication, read and identify the dialectics of ethical dilemmas (right vs. right) and (right vs. wrong); and ponder issues of integrity, moral courage and character. Course goals include: 1) initiating conversation about communication and ethics, 2) developing a vocabulary for talking about ethical issues, 3) experiencing a degree of comfort in discussing ethical concerns, and 4) conducting a research analysis of the ethical dimension of some aspect of discourse in a context of your choice.

EPS 300: Critical Thinking Concepts and Skills

The course is designed to help students achieve deep and significant learning skills for use in all disciplines. By examining controversial and provocative questions students will consider how we think, why we think, and how we can change the type of thinking we participate in through quality thinking and intellectual growth. From the book- "Critical thinking is the disciplined art of ensuring that you use the best thinking you are capable of in any set of circumstances." (Paul & Elder, 2001).

EPS 300: Culture and Literature of the Great Plains

The early 21st Century has renewed our focus on what it means to be an American, but regional identity (or lack thereof) significantly influences our personal identities: how do we see ourselves and how do we present ourselves to others. Though Nebraskans too often think their home as a vacant place on the edge of the map with little but the vicissitudes of a college football program to give it shape, the state and its region have a characteristic history and literature that can define its citizens and provide an agenda for the future.

EPS 300: Doing Justice: You Decide

In this EPS Course, we try to answer the age old question: what's the right thing to do? What if you were in a lifeboat with three other people and the only way to survive was to kill one person so the other three could live how would you choose who should die? Should you choose? Is it okay to lie to save a life? We

explore these and other questions by examining real and hypothetical dilemmas including political, economic, legal, social, moral and religious issues (with the help of guest professors from those disciplines). We debate the issues raised in these cases to reach agreement about the right course of action and then apply philosophical and moral principles to test whether our decisions are correct to test whether we are doing the right thing.

EPS 300: Economic Perspectives of Social Issues

Students will apply an economic perspective to critically examine issues, challenges and current trends related to employment, education, politics and government, social problems (poverty, hunger, homelessness, and crime), diversity, and globalization. The course requires research, writing assignments and discussion, using the NIF (National Issues Forums) or similar models to examine issues from a variety of perspectives to resolve conflict and build consensus.

EPS 300: Endangered Languages: Issues and Solutions

Most of the world's languages are in danger of dying out within the next generation or two. The aim of this course is an understanding of the diversity of endangered languages, and of issues surrounding language loss and language preservation projects. We will approach this goal from several directions. During the first part of the semester we will investigate the variety of human languages: their history, their division into language families, the social and cultural factors affecting their usage, their similarities and differences in sounds and grammar. During the second part of the semester we will study language loss and revival. How have thousands of languages come to be lost or endangered? Why is this an important problem? Why are languages valuable – to their speakers, to linguists, anthropologists, and historians, and to societies? What methods have been tried to strengthen or revive endangered languages, and how well have they worked? During the third part of the semester we will look in more depth at one endangered Native American language, Omaha-Ponca, and students will research a language of their choice. There is no language prerequisite for the course.

EPS 300: Environmental Ethics

Environmental Ethics philosophically inspects religious, economic, political, and health issues that impact us and our planet as a result of human generated waste and pollution. Environmental Ethics is also concerned with allied issues such as race, class, gender and globalization. Environmental Ethics deals with our relationships with nature which have been mainly degrading and destructive. Environmental Ethics is an interdisciplinary course that encourages thinking across cultural, historical, and knowledge boundaries.

EPS 300: Exploring Social, Ethical & Religious Issues through Major Legal Controversies

EPS 300: Global Health: Right, Responsibility and Privilege

Health is a fundamental human RIGHT - however, the RESPONSIBILITY for securing health is a dynamic interaction between individual action and behavior, environment, culture, public policy and socio-economic status of global communities. Furthermore, there is great local and global disparity between health status, revealing an element of PRIVILEGE to health and health resources. The ultimate goals of this course are to understand the roles of knowledge, access and culture in determining personal and global health; and to build your capacity to "Think Globally and Act Locally" toward personal, community and global health.

EPS 300: Global Issues - Let's Trace the Spice Trade

The study of spices and their usage throughout the various regions of the world as viewed from the historical standpoint of trade and immigration is the focus of this course. Students will also investigate the current trade regime, the role of World Trade Organization, as well as some of the controversies surrounding international trade of food. A seminar style setting will enable students to incorporate an interdisciplinary perspective via the culminating project: an international food festival for the community.

EPS 300: History and Geography of the Southwest

This course examines the peoples, places, and events that have given the American Southwest its distinctive qualities. The centerpiece of the class will be a 15-day camping trip to the Southwest to experience the landscapes and cultures firsthand.

EPS 300: Language, Identity and Race

While equality and egalitarianism is a common theme within the rhetoric of western culture, all we need to do is walk down the halls of any American High School to see how students, without the direct influence of adults, are naturally pulled into groups. Whether they categorize themselves as jocks, goths, geeks, or populars, it is their self-categorization that makes up much of their identity. This self-categorization does not end in adolescence, as we continue develop identify with some groups while we discriminate against others into our later years. Using research and theories from psychology, sociology, political science, mass media, and communication, the goal of this course is to explore the development of our identity. We should leave this course with: (a) a deeper understanding of the manner in which we categorize the world into social ingroups and outgroups, (b) a capacity to recognize the prevalence and origin of our own discrimination and prejudice, (c) an ability to view various contexts of communication through an "intergroup lens," and (d) skills to critically investigate and evaluate historical, present, and future social issues.

EPS 300: Leadership Styles

People with college educations are expected to be leaders at their workplace and in their community. In this course, students will discuss a variety of examples of leadership to learn some theories of leadership development and the leadership process. We will also see that leadership in different venues takes very different forms: being a leader in a business is very different from being a leader in education or a leader of your community. Additionally, students will take several personality inventories and leadership assessments to determine their leadership strengths and weaknesses to improve their leadership skills.

EPS 300: Lessons from the Holocaust

What lessons can we learn from the events of the past? A critical examination of the reality and tragedy of the Holocaust may enlighten us as we reflect and analyze the actions of the perpetrators, collaborators, victims, bystanders, rescuers, liberators and survivors. Consulting the evidence of the witnesses and other primary sources will help in distinguishing between fact and fiction. Multiple academic perspectives (economics, psychology, sociology, art, music, literature, education, criminology, mass communications) are crucial to a holistic approach to understanding. The lessons learned will result in a personal civic action plan that will be related to the reduction of the causes of the Holocaust.

EPS 300: Literary Ghosts and Vampires

In this course students will read several texts by authors representing a variety of ethnic backgrounds who write about ghosts, vampires, incarnations, conjurers, and other "shapeshifters" in order to understand the appeal of the uncanny, of spectrality, and of haunting in various forms.

EPS 300: Musical Theater

Participation in the production of a Musical Theater performance; actor training, costume construction, set construction, publicity, stage make-up application, voice training, dance training, musicianship, classroom discussion/lecture, and various related activities will be part of this course. Students will work collaboratively, professionally, and responsibly to enthusiastically present an entertaining and highly anticipated live public performance.

EPS 300: Nature and Culture of the Great Plains

Many people living on the Great Plains have little understanding of its nature and culture. To develop a greater understanding of the Great Plains, this class explores the past, present and future of the region through the lens of natural history and the social environment. The ultimate purpose is to develop a sense what is unique about the Great Plains and to consider its problems and prospects.

EPS 300: Outlaws in American Culture

Outlaws in American Culture will examine the relationship of the outlaw to American culture through an exploration of literary themes in various genres, including novels, short fiction, poems, and essays. America has long had a love/hate relationship to the outlaw, who often serves as a morally ambiguous figure and makes us examine our values as Americans. Students will explore the history and the myths of the American outlaw, and how characterization of such figures has changed with various cultural climates.

EPS 300: Peace Studies

Inner peace, interpersonal peace, and world peace will be explored through several disciplines including counseling, economics, history, literature, political science, psychology, and sociology. Conversations on peace: inner peace, peace in our individual spheres (as students, teachers, professionals), and world peace will be incorporated. Emphases will be on alternatives to approaching conflict and the building of peace.

EPS 300: SciFi /Fantasy Media Criticism

Media criticism is an introduction to media criticism, primarily using popular works of film and television science fiction and fantasy as texts for analysis. Media criticism analyzes the media work itself, and the audience, to make meaning, drawing on multiple perspectives. It requires multidimensional study of the texts. Students will use group dialog, seminar-style presentations, and written analysis that demonstrate critical thinking about the stories, acting, production elements, archetypes, and other elements. Media literacy will also be a focus of the class.

EPS 300: Technology and Society

This course focuses on the nature of modern technology and how technological developments have affected human culture and individuals in society. The content concentrates on Electronic media and Energy and their interaction with society. Issues of both local and national interest are included. Students will develop and refine their own ideas and opinions through readings, lectures, discussion, videos, debates and writing assignments.

EPS 300: The Biology in Science Fiction

This course explores the use of biology in science fiction through readings of short stories and novels and through film. Students will discuss and give presentations on the scientific validity of the biology used in science fiction in general and from the viewpoint of their particular academic discipline.

EPS 300: The Many Faces of Performance

Although one generally thinks of performance as a term associated with the theater or the stage, the realm of performance ranges from religious rituals to an individual acting out his or her role in society. In fact, virtually every element of life involves different layers of performance. This course seeks to explore the different manifestations and categories of performance--from the artistic to the anthropological. Students will be able to describe the different categories, citing general and personal examples. By the end of the semester, students will be able to analyze different forms of visual or social performance, as well as participate in their own performances.