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IDH – 3005: Comparative Cultural Perspectives on Disease, Medicine, and Law /  
FALL 2009

The Honors College at FIU  
Florida International University

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**Instructor:** Suman Kakar

**Office Hours:** PCA 352 B Wednesday (1:40-6:00pm)

**Phone:** (305) 348-5992

**E-mail:** Please use Blackboard Course Mail or kakars@fiu.edu

**Web site:** <http://www.fiu.edu/~kakers>

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a general introduction to socio-cultural perspectives on Disease, Medicine, and Law. It explores comparative cultural perspectives that address the legal and ethical issues related to disease, sickness, and medicine in different societies and times. Using a multidisciplinary approach, this course explores the socio-cultural dimensions of diseases, medicine, and law in specific places and periods to expand understanding of relations between values and ethics across cultures. Topics include strategies of dealing with disease in colonial and neocolonial contexts; changing ideas about contamination, hygiene, segregation, and contagion; legal and ethical contexts across cultures, the cultural politics of blame and responsibility; the individual and collective experience of illness; the class, ethnic and racial dimensions that accompanied the efforts to understand certain diseases; and metaphors and representations of certain diseases in the media, cinema and in literature. This course will examine various culturally comparative perspectives on very distinct and closely related concepts such as disease, medicine, and law with an emphasis on environmental issues. We will examine the role of infection, nutrition, genetics, immunity, environment and behavior and the scientific and philosophical systems that underlie our understanding of them as "causes" of disease.

This course is the second of a series of two-semester Honors College courses. These courses are very different from most other courses in the University, in that we will explore not only the *what*, but also the *how* and *why* of knowing. The present course is less about content, and more about discussions of the context of, and connections between, ideas. The very broad (and not particularly comprehensive) theme of the course is origins, and how ideas of origins affect our perception of both ourselves and the world around us.

**This semester we will explore how we can explicate the links between culture, history, law, and health. We will use comparative approaches to consider how culture structures law and legal systems in the US, including a comparison of minority experiences in the US and how the study of non-US examples can inform our understanding of the situation at home. The course**

**covers the role of culture in legal systems in the United States and in comparison with non-US legal systems.**

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

**Prerequisites:** The Honors College and the Instructor's approval.

### Learning Outcomes:

The goal of the course is that by the end students will be able to:

- Define and classify relationships between culture, law, and legal systems.
- Identify the value of comparative vs particularistic cultural approaches to legal systems
- Explain the variation in crime and punishment using a variety of comparative and critical tools and approaches
- Explain the law and legal systems as constructs of culture
- Explain the value of and apply comparative and cross-cultural approaches to the study of law and legal systems.
- Describe and compare the structure and impact of diverse legal systems in the world, and appraise their consequences
- Explain how socio-cultural factors inform design, delivery, and evaluation of US and other country h programs.
- Explain and compare legal systems.

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

- **E-mail:** Contact me via my Blackboard email or personal email at [kakars@fiu.edu](mailto:kakars@fiu.edu)
- **Discussion Forum:** It will be used for class discussions and other postings of general interest that are directly related to the course. Everyone can read Discussion Forum postings; therefore, do not post private information.

## GRADING

Course Requirements	Weights
Reading Questions and Participation	10%
First Draft	15%
Second Draft	20%
Third Draft	20%
Final Draft	25%
Presentation	10%
Total	100%

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	94 – 100%	B-	80 – 82%	D+	68 – 69%
A-	90 – 93%	C+	78 – 79%	D	63 – 67%
B+	88 – 89%	C	73 – 77%	D-	60 – 62%
B	83 – 87%	C-	70 – 72%	F	60% or below

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As a college, we care about and enforce the Policies and Procedures as they are important to the quality of the education we are providing to you. Details on FIU Policies can be found at:

[http://online.fiu.edu/wct\\_files/Policy/Policies\\_Requirements.html](http://online.fiu.edu/wct_files/Policy/Policies_Requirements.html)

## FIU LIBRARY SUPPORT

The FIU library provides a number of services to distance learning students. For example:

- Students can request a chat session in Blackboard for an explanation on how to access library resources.
- Students can request detailed instructions on how to access library resources.
- One-on-One assistance from the Distance Learning Librarian.

Don't struggle through your library research alone! Help is available. For further information, contact Sarah Hammill, Distance Learning Librarian, via email at [hammills@fiu.edu](mailto:hammills@fiu.edu) or call 305-919-5604.

You can visit the FIU Library at: <http://library.fiu.edu>

## SERVER MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

In an effort to provide online/hybrid students with reliable and secure access to the online learning technology resources, FIU Online has standard maintenance periods to perform scheduled maintenance and system upgrades. FIU Online courses will be unavailable during the established maintenance schedule. System maintenance is performed weekly between the hours of 11:59 PM on Friday night through 5:00 AM on Saturday morning. We thank you for your patience and we apologize in advance for any inconvenience that this may cause.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### ***Internet Access:***

This course will be conducted primarily over the internet using WebCT. To enroll in this course you will need access to a computer, a java compatible browser (e.g. Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer) and an internet connection. Information on the availability of FIU computing labs is online at

<http://uts.fiu.edu/index.cfm?action=labstud>. In order to begin this online course, you will need to *login to WebCT*. Use your Panther ID and your default password which is your date of birth, input as MMDDYYYY. The first time you log into WebCT, you will be required to change your password. To lookup your Panther ID number, go to <http://sis.fiu.edu/> and click on "Get Your Panther ID."

### **Required Readings**

You will be required to read at least 10 of the assigned research articles and books. These are listed and available on line and/or library. You are responsible for finding and downloading the assigned research articles.

**IMPORTANT: More reading assignments will be added at a later date.**

### **Recommended Readings**

**IMPORTANT: More reading assignments will be added at a later date.**

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Grading:**

**Research Paper.** Students are expected to critically analyze and evaluate crime, punishment, laws and legal systems from a historical and cross-cultural perspective. You will write and submit **THREE** drafts and a **FINAL PAPER**. Each draft will build on the previous one and the final paper will be a synthesis of all four drafts.

- First draft will take the form of a book/research article review of about 1,000-1,500 words of one or several books/research articles. It is advisable to discuss with me in advance your selection.
- Second draft of about 1,500 – 2,000 words. An outline and bibliography for this assignment is mandatory.
- Third draft will be 2500-3000 words. This draft will include an abstract, literature review, conceptual framework, research data and analysis if any and conclusion.
- Your final paper will build upon and include information from your earlier drafts. This will be a complete research paper including all the elements of a research paper.

- o For those who are not familiar with modes of historical writing, writing conventions, and source documentation I recommend to read Richard Marius and Melvin Page, *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. Students must complete all writing assignments to pass the course.

Class participation:

As a seminar, this course is designed to be interactive. In order to facilitate a high level of discussion, students are required to read prior to class, prepare for the discussion and actively participate in all discussions.

**Attendance.** This is fully online course. Online discussions are the main forum of exchange of ideas between your professor and colleagues. Every week a discussion topic will be posted and all of you are expected to engage in interactive discussion on the issues posted and at the end of the week you will be submitting your weekly summaries of the discussion. The system keeps record of all the time you spend in discussions so there will be no dispute about I was there. You are strongly encouraged to participate in all online discussions.

**Grading.** The final grade will be based on the percentage of total points earned on all drafts, reading assignment questions, final draft and paper presentation, and class presentation. Your drafts, paper, and presentation will be graded based on the Communication Grading Rubric presented below. Extra credit will not be granted.

Grade	Percent
A	94-100%
B+	88-93%
B	80-87%
C+	78-79%
C	70-77%
D+	68-69%
D	60-67%
F	Below 60%

**Incomplete grade.** An incomplete grade is given at the discretion of the instructor for work not completed because of serious interruption not caused by the student's own negligence. To be eligible, written documentation must be provided. The student also must have successfully completed half of the work in the course with a C or better. A student who meets the criteria for an incomplete may receive a grade of "IN." An incomplete changes to an F automatically after two semesters if the work is not completed. There is no extension of the two semester deadline. The student must not register again for the course to make up the incomplete. Students who receive an incomplete grade and have applied for graduation at the end of that term, must complete the incomplete grade by the end of the third week of the following term. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of graduation application. The student will need to reapply for graduation.

**Student misconduct.** Academic misconduct is a serious offense at FIU because it diminishes the quality of the scholarship and learning experience for everyone on campus. An act of academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and classroom disruption (e.g., cell phones), may lead to

penalties such as a reduction in grade, probation, suspension, or expulsion. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotations, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency who may or may not be engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. Turnitin.com is an electronic resource that assists in the detection and deterrence of plagiarism by electronic comparison for textual similarity. Students agree that enrollment in this course constitutes permission that all required papers may be submitted to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and that all submitted papers will be retained as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database and used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

<b>Tentative Schedule</b>		
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Chapters</b>
Week 1 8/19/09	History of Crime and Punishment (United States) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 2 8/26/09	History of Laws and Legal Systems (United States) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 3 9/2/09	History of Crime and Punishment (United States) FIRST DRAFT DUE	
Week 4 9/9/09	History of Laws and Legal Systems from a Cross-Cultural and International Perspective CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 5 9/16/09	Eugenics CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 6 9/23/09	Eugenics SECOND DRAFT Due	
Week 7 9/30/09	Law and Legal Systems	
Week 8 10/07/09	Law and Legal Systems (United States) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 9 10/14/09	Law and Legal Systems (United States) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 10 10/21/09	Law and Legal Systems (Cross-Cultural) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 11 10/28/09	Law and Legal Systems (Cross-Cultural) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 12 11/04/09	Crime and Criminal Justice (United States) CLASS DISCUSSIONS	
Week 13 11/11/09	Crime and Criminal Justice (International and Cross-Cultural) FINAL DRAFT DUE	
Week 14 11/18/09	CLASS PRESENTATIONS DUE ON OR BEFORE Dec. 4, 2009	
Week 15	CLASS PRESENTATIONS DUE ON OR BEFORE Dec. 4, 09	

12/04/09		
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\* Deadline to drop a course with a DR grade.

<b>Communication Grading Rubric</b>						
<b>Area of Assessment</b>	<b>Exceptional (A=9-10)</b>	<b>Competent (B=8)</b>	<b>Acceptable (C=7)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (1-6)</b>	<b>Paper Points</b>	<b>Debate Points</b>
Analysis and synthesis	Clear connections between ideas	Reasonable connections between ideas	Some connections between ideas are weak	Few, generally weak, inappropriate, or no connections between ideas		
Logic, clarity and justification	Organizes and develops ideas well	Shows sufficient control over organizing and developing ideas	Some lapses in organizing and developing ideas	Major lapses in organization, inadequate development of ideas, incoherence		
Language	Almost completely free of errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation and mechanics. Language clear, effective, and well articulated.	Has basic control of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics but displays a few errors. Language clear, few problems with articulation.	Overall control, but shows a pattern of errors in one area (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics). Language generally clear but one or two problems evident.	Shows extensive errors in two or more areas. Multiple and persistent mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics. Extensive problems with clarity of language and articulation.		
Persuasiveness and overall effectiveness	Highly effective communication; purpose clearly communicated and accomplished using a persuasive manner	Effective communication; purpose communicated and accomplished using a convincing manner	Adequate communication of purpose, convincing on some points but not all	Purpose of communication not completely clear to intended audience, inadequate attempts to persuade		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

### ***Class Participation:***

Students will have to actively participate in on line discussions. Students are also expected to regularly check their email for information provided by the instructor. I do not include chat room participation in grading, because I want well thought out remarks when students address course content. The chat room is for clarification and casual interaction. Students are expected to disagree in their discussion posts, but they should at all times be polite and respectful. Students should feel free to disagree with the instructor in discussion posts. Taking part in a discussion requires reading the posts of other students and making your own posts in a regular and consistent manner. Making five posts in one day every two weeks is not taking part in a discussion.

### ***Punctuality:***

You must complete all assignments as scheduled. As mentioned earlier, no make-ups will be given and no extension on the time and deadline will be given.

## GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATIONS

### *Email:*

1. Always include a subject line.
2. Remember without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way. Be careful in wording your emails. Use of emoticons might be helpful in some cases.
3. Use standard fonts.
4. Do not send large attachments without permission.
5. Special formatting such as centering, audio messages, tables, html, etc. should be avoided unless necessary to complete an assignment or other communication.
6. Respect the privacy of other class members

### *Discussion Groups:*

1. Review the discussion threads thoroughly before entering the discussion. Be a lurker then a discussant.
2. Try to maintain threads by using the "Reply" button rather starting a new topic.
3. Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other members of the discussion group. Be respectful of other's ideas.
4. Be patient and read the comments of other group members thoroughly before entering your remarks.
5. Be cooperative with group leaders in completing assigned tasks.
6. Be positive and constructive in group discussions.
7. Respond in a thoughtful and timely manner.

### *Chat:*

1. No chat room participation is required in the course.
2. Introduce yourself to the other learners in the chat session.
3. Be polite. Choose your words carefully. Do not use derogatory statements.
4. Be concise in responding to others in the chat session.
5. Be prepared to open the chat session at the scheduled time.
6. Be constructive in your comments and suggestion.

## STUDENT HOMEPAGE

Every student should create his/her own student homepage. Please introduce yourself and post a picture, as well. To access directions about student homepages please [click here](#).

## DISABILITY NOTICE

If you have a disability and need assistance, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (University Park : GC190; 305-348-3532) (North Campus: WUC139, 305-919-5345). Upon contact, the Disability Resource Center will review your request and contact your professors or other personnel to make arrangements for appropriate modification and/or assistance.

## RELIGIOUS HOLYDAYS

The University's policy on religious holy days as stated in the University Catalog and Student Handbook will be followed in this class. Any student may request to be excused from (on-line) class to observe a religious holy day of his or her faith.

## RULES, POLICIES, AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Assignments from the text and other resources are listed below for each class session. Students are expected to pace their learning according to the posted course assignments.

It is expected that interactive learning and teaching will enrich the learning experience of all students, and that each student will work in partnership with the professor to create a positive learning experience for all. Student engagement is a necessary condition for an effective learning experience, and includes contributions to debate and discussion (if any), positive interactive learning with others, and an enthusiastic attitude towards inquiry. Everyone is expected to be a positive contributor to the class learning community, and students are expected to share the responsibility of teaching each other.

### **Statement of Understanding between Professor and Student**

Every student must respect the right of everyone to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students must adhere to a standard of academic conduct, demonstrating respect for themselves, their fellow classmates, and the educational mission of the University. As a student at FIU taking this class:

1. I will not represent someone else's work as my own.
2. I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another's cheating.
3. I will be honest in my academic endeavors.
4. I understand that if I am found responsible for academic misconduct, I will be subject to the academic misconduct procedures and sanctions as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Failure to adhere to the guidelines stated above may result in one of the following:**

Expulsion: Permanent separation of the student from the University, preventing readmission to the institution. This sanction shall be recorded on the student's transcript.  
Suspension: Temporary separation of the student from the University for a specific period of time.

By taking this online course, I promise to adhere to FIU's Student Code of Academic Integrity. For details on the policy and procedures go to [ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT](#) (Section 2.44)

**NOTE:** Intensive Auditing of the course will be conducted to prevent academic misconduct.

## EXPECTATION OF THIS COURSE

This is a fully online course, meaning that all course work (100%) will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in fully online courses are the same as for traditional courses; in fact, fully online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Fully online courses are not independent study courses. You will be expected to interact online with the professor and your fellow students; to do assignments; to meet deadlines; and in many classes, to work in virtual groups. In some fully online courses, you may be required to come to campus to take midterms and exams, but in most, you will take your tests online.

Tips for Success in your online course, [click here](#).

Online Etiquette, [click here](#).

## ONLINE LEARNING TUTORIAL

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