UN1001-31 Perspectives on Inquiry
Global Poverty

"History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves."

Jared Diamond

Room: 143 Walker
Time: 2:05-3:20 p.m. TTh
Term: Fall 2000
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Office Hours: noon-1:00 p.m. TTh;
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Required Texts


Perspectives on Inquiry: Official Description (from the faculty handbook)

The goal of the Perspectives on Inquiry course is to engage students in college level inquiry through which they will develop fundamental intellectual habits, will understand how to integrate various perspectives on knowledge, and will begin to learn how to meet the changing needs of a global, technological, diverse, and environmentally sensitive society.

More specifically, the course will:

• engage students as active learners though inquiry into interdisciplinary questions

• help students learn how knowledge from a variety of perspectives can be integrated to provide richer and more complex insights
• introduce students to the intellectual habits of: critical thinking; critical reading; accuracy and thoroughness; creativity; using reasoning and evidence to support arguments; thoughtful consideration of others' ideas and positions; effective oral, written, and visual communication; textual, empirical, and other kinds of research; effective learning strategies; time management

• help students identify with MTU’s mission to promote diversity, creativity, leadership, and teamwork in order to meet the changing needs of our society

Description of this Section: Global Poverty

We will use readings and both written and oral communication—in the form of class discussions, conferences, oral reports, in-class writing, and formal essays—to examine the causes of global disparities in wealth, why we should care about such disparities, and what, if anything, might be done about them.

Over the past several decades, much attention has been paid to multicultural literacy. Some have argued for such literacy in order to celebrate our diversity; others have done so in order to enhance America’s global competitiveness. However, in addition to celebrating our diversity, we should also foster a sense of community, for example, by exploring our common biological and cultural origins. This sense of community might then be appealed to in addressing such problems as global disparities in wealth, the most pressing problem facing the human family now and in the foreseeable future. From this problem derive a host of others, such as hunger, disease, illiteracy, population pressures, mass migrations, environmental destruction, terrorism, and war.

Preliminary Questions to Guide Inquiry

1. How has the human experience led to a situation in which part of the world’s population lives in great abundance while another part lives in abject poverty?

2. Why should we care about global poverty? What effects, if any, do global disparities in wealth have on other global problems, such as hunger, disease, illiteracy, population pressures, mass migrations, environmental destruction, terrorism, and war?

3. What, if anything, can we do about global poverty? Can broader exploration, discussion, and understanding of our common biological and cultural origins—and, hence, our common humanity—help to reduce the alienation that makes global disparities in wealth sufferable to the wealthy?
Reading and Class Discussion

"We don't understand anything until we've discussed it."
Russian Proverb

I assume that none of us have the political sophistication of a secretary of state or a U.N. ambassador. Nevertheless, as college-educated adults, we should be at least as well informed about world affairs as the majority of the world's people, and, collectively, we should be able to engage in an insightful and constructive dialogue about causes and possible solutions to the problem of global inequities in wealth. We may also enjoy some advantage over seasoned diplomats due to what is sometimes referred to as "beginner's mind": the ability to address a problem or issue unencumbered by the dogmas that often accompany the thinking of more experienced people and limit their willingness to consider what can or cannot be done.

Course Portfolios

Course portfolios are required by the overall Perspectives on Inquiry Program. They must all contain at least these items; which you will be responsible for collecting and submitting at the end of the semester:

1. All formal papers written for the class.
2. Cover letter: written by the student at the end of the course, reflecting on the work he/she has done in the course and reviewing the contents of the portfolio.
3. Reflection statements: 5-minute in-class statements responding to this prompt: What important things did you learn in class this week? and what use will you make of what you learned?

These materials will be used for program assessment and in the required Revisions course that you will take next year.

Attendance Policy (from the Michigan Tech Student Handbook)

"Ninety percent of success is just showing up."
Woody Allen

Students are expected to attend all classes, including recitation and laboratory sessions, beginning on the first day of regular instruction as stated in the University academic calendar. This date can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog and in the Time Schedule Booklets.

Students having excused absences are permitted to make up graded work. Whenever possible, students should contact the instructor prior to the absence and arrange a mutually acceptable
make-up procedure. Otherwise, the students should account for the absence at the first opportunity.

Students who are unable to notify instructors concerning their absence from class or who must notify several instructors on short notice should contact the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

An absence is excused under the following conditions:

1. A student is participating in off-campus, University-sponsored activities, such as field trips, fine arts performances, intercollegiate athletics, judging teams, etc. The faculty or staff members supervising the off-campus activity will send a notice via e-mail to all academic departments and the Office of Student Affairs before the activity takes place. The notice will include the name and date of the activity, the name of the supervising person, and a list of all participating students.

2. The instructor is assured that a student's absence from class was due to circumstances beyond the student's control. The student must provide verification of the special circumstance if the instructor requests it.

3. Excuses are usually given in the following circumstances: illness, funeral of any relative or close friend, military duty, court appearance, and personal emergencies.

4. The instructor deems it excusable. Some examples might include professional and graduate school interviews, plant trips, job interviews requiring travel, and professional society meetings.

Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined approximately as follows:

20% First paper
20% Second paper
15% Reading and discussion quiz
25% Class participation and oral presentations
20% Third paper
Format of Papers

Your three essays should be word processed and printed on 8.5" x 11" white paper in a 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides. No cover pages are necessary; instead, put your name in the upper right corner of the first page, skip one line (i.e., single space) and put the course title (Global Poverty); skip another line, and put the date; skip one more line and put your title (centered), then skip two lines and begin your double-spaced essay. Number your pages, and staple your papers in the upper left corner.

Academic Dishonesty (from the Michigan Tech Student Handbook)

Academic integrity and honesty are central to a student's education. Ethical conduct in an academic context will be carried forward into a student's professional career. Academic honesty is essential to a community of scholars searching for and learning to seek the truth. Anything less than total commitment to honesty undermines the efforts of the entire academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for insuring the academic integrity of the University.

In their academic work, students are expected to maintain personal academic integrity; treat all academic exercises as work to be conducted privately, unless otherwise instructed; ask faculty to clarify any aspects of permissible or expected cooperation on any assignment; and report any cheating activity.

Definitions of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty, can be found in the Academic Integrity Policy [see below]. Copies of the policy can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs and chairs of academic departments.

Students found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive a sanction ranging from academic integrity warning to expulsion. Please refer to Student Rights and Responsibilities in the University Community or the Academic Integrity Policy for more information.

Definitions of Academic Dishonesty (from the Michigan Tech Academic Integrity Policy)

A. Plagiarism: Knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation. This includes reading or hearing another's work or ideas and using them as one's own; quoting, paraphrasing, or condensing another's work without giving proper credit; purchasing or receiving another's work and using, handling, or submitting it as one's own work.

B. Cheating: Intentional, unauthorized use of any study aids, equipment, or another's work during an academic exercise. This includes unauthorized use of notes, study aids, electronic or other equipment during an examination; copying or looking at another individual's examination; taking or passing information to another individual during an examination; taking an examination for another individual; allowing another individual to take one's examination;
stealing examinations. All graded academic exercises are expected to be performed on an individual basis unless otherwise stated by the instructor.

C. Fabrication: Intentional and/or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation during an academic exercise. This includes changing or adding an answer on an examination and resubmitting it to change the grade; inventing data for a laboratory exercise or report.

D. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Knowingly allowing or helping another individual to plagiarize, cheat, or fabricate information.

The Michigan Tech Writing Center

Michigan Tech has an excellent Writing Center, which is located in Walker 107. I encourage you to schedule, regular weekly appointments with a writing coach. Establish a schedule early in the semester, because appointed times (as opposed to drop-in times) tend to get booked quickly. For more information, call 487-2007 or check the Center's Web page at www.hu.mtu.edu/wcl/.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, your department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

Schedule of Assignments and Class Activities

Dates indicate when reading and writing assignments are due, not when they are given. Reading assignments for weeks 1-9 are in Guns, Germs, and Steel; reading assignments for weeks 10-14 are in Fighting for Survival.

Week 1: Introduction; Preface and Prologue
   TU 8/29: Overview of course and syllabus; self-introductions
   TH 8/31: Preface and Prologue

Week 2: Part One: From Eden to Cajamarca
   TU 9/5: Ch. 1: Up to the Starting Line; video
   TH 9/7: Ch. 2: A Natural Experiment of History; Ch. 3: Collision at Cajamarca
Week 3: Part Two: The Rise and Spread of Food
TU 9/12: Ch. 4: Farmer Power; Ch. 5: History's Haves and Have-Not (Note: The section on pages 94-98 presents a detailed discussion of complexities of radiocarbon dating. This section might have been better presented as an endnote. I encourage you to read these few pages selectively.); Ch. 6: To Farm or Not to Farm;
Library Visit: meet in the library
TH 9/14: Ch. 7: How to Make an Almond; Paper due (6 pages); schedule individual conferences; video

Week 4: Part Two: The Rise and Spread of Food (continued)
TU 9/19: Ch. 8: Apples or Indians
TH 9/21: Ch. 9: Zebras, Unhappy Marriages, and the Anna Karenina Principle; Ch. 10: Spacious Skies and Tilted Axes

Week 5: Part Three: From Food to Guns, Germs, and Steel
TU 9/26: Ch. 11: Lethal Gift of Livestock; video
TH 9/28: Ch. 12: Blueprints and Borrowed Letters; video

Week 6: Part Three: From Food to Guns, Germs, and Steel (continued)
TU 10/3: Ch. 13: Necessity's Mother
TH 10/5: Ch. 14: From Egalitarianism to Kleptocracy; Paper due (6 pages)

Week 7: Part Four: Around the World in Five Chapters
TU 10/10: Ch. 15: Yali's People
TH 10/12: Ch. 16: How China Became Chinese; Ch. 17: Speedboat to Polynesia;
Midterm Grades Due (S/U)

Week 8: Part Four: Around the World in Five Chapters (continued)
TU 10/17: Ch. 18: Hemispheres Colliding; review for quiz
TH 10/19: Ch. 19: How Africa Became Black; reading and discussion quiz

Week 9: Epilogue and Oral Presentations
TU 10/24: Epilogue; oral presentations
TH 10/26: Oral presentations

Week 10:
TU 10/30: Foreword and Ch. 1: The Transformation of Security
TH 11/2: Guest speaker; Ch. 2: Environmental Stress

Week 11:
Monday, November 6, 8 p.m. in the Rozsa Center: Jerry Greenfield Cofounder of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream and a member of the Board of Directors of Oxfam America: "Social Responsibility, Radical Business Philosophy, and Free Ice Cream for All"

TU 11/7: Ch. 3: Conflict over the Environment
TH 11/9: Guest speaker; Ch. 4: Inequality and Insecurity
Week 12:

TU 11/14: Ch. 5: People on the Move
TH 11/16: Ch. 6: Vicious Circles: Two Case Studies

11/18-11/26 Thanksgiving Break

Week 13:

TU 11/28: Ch. 7: A Human Security Policy
TH 11/30: Guest speaker; Ch. 8: Enhancing International Peace Capacity

Week 14:

TU 12/5: Ch. 9: A Human Security Budget
TH 12/7: Ch. 10: A Global Partnership for Human Security?

Week 15 Oral Presentations

TU 12/12: Oral presentations
TH 12/14: Oral presentations on projects; course evaluations; final papers due (7-8 pages);
portfolio and cover letter due