

# LIVING THE GOOD LIFE: POWER, IDENTITY, COMMUNITY

## ALC 3, SPRING 2013

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### Course Information

#### *Instructors*

**Dana Kivel:** SLN 4018, 278-6429, Office Hours: MW, 1:00-2:30pm; and by appointment

**Christina Bellon:** MND 3000, 278-4759, Office Hours: MT 2:00-3:00pm; and by appointment

**Janet Hecsh:** EUR 321A, 278-7226, Office Hours: TBA.

NOTE: Please contact instructors through SacCT messaging.

#### *Instructional Student Assistants*

Felicia Yu

Kody Fernandez

NOTE: Please contact ISAs through SacCT messaging.

#### *Course Meetings*

**M** Lecture: 9:00-11:50am, Brighton Hall 110

**W** Discussion: 9:00-11:50, Brighton Hall 110

**F** Activities/Web Online

### Course Description

This academic learning collaborative focuses on what is meant by “a good life” from multiple perspectives including historical and contemporary texts and ideas. Students will engage in projects that include an examination of leisure and its various contexts; consideration of ethical and moral reasoning; and the ways that the “good life” is reflected at Sacramento State and in public and private settings including organized and community centered leisure, the arts, organized sporting and recreational sites and organizations. Students will design, analyze and reflect on a plan for their own good life as an educated person.

In this course students will examine, reflect on and attempt to answer what is perhaps the seminal question in human history: What does it mean to live a good life in community with others? Reformulated for our own time, it could be understood to ask: How do individuals and groups contribute to designing a good life for themselves and others in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How are we impeded in living our own good and how do we impede others in living their good life?

While this is perhaps the most human of questions, it is rare in our lives that we find opportunities even to think about it, let alone to answer it. In this course, our attention will be devoted to it. But, before we can answer it, we have to be clear about what it asks of us, what we need to know, and what we already know. Of course, to attempt to answer a question as

all-encompassing as this one, we will need some resources. In our pursuit of an answer to this question we will draw upon several interdisciplinary tools, including:

- Intellectual theories from ethics, philosophy, leisure studies and sciences, social psychology, and education, as they contribute to an enriched understanding of the nature, value, meaning, and content of a good life
- Various ethical, educational, cultural, and community values

Finally, as Plato noted so long ago, the good life is indistinguishable from the just life, a life lived in justice with others. But, this is not something a person can achieve in isolation; it takes all of us in community to live a good life. In more modern terms, living a good life involves navigating that which separates us as much as that which unites us. We need a clear understanding of our relationships, especially as these relationships reflect and reinforce the power structures in which we live and as these shape and infuse our identities. Power, identity, community: these are the basic building blocks for living a good life.

### Required Texts

Susan J. Ferguson (ed), *Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality* (Sage: 2013). <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book235365>

Additional readings as assigned, available as PDFs in SacCT.

### Course Details and Learning Outcomes

This course satisfies 9 units of lower division General Education, including areas: **A3** (Critical Thinking), **C3** (Intro to Humanities) and **D2** (Social Problems). You must complete the course in all its requirements with a satisfactory grade of C- or better to ensure GE credit. Your single grade for this course will have a weighted equivalent of a grade for 9 units of coursework, expressed individually on your transcript. This course will be divided into four units.

#### UNIT 1: Identity

**At the end of this unit, students will be able to do the following for each area:**

- a. Define and appropriately use basic scholarly language and core terminology related to leisure, ethics, and critical thinking
- b. Explain the relationship between different elements of an individual's life as they shape and inform her/his identity
- c. Identify and apply several major current theories and concepts relevant to formulating and analyzing identity construction.

#### UNIT 2: Power

**At the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

- a. Describe and analyze how power is constructed and affects daily life.
- b. Define and describe how knowledge about markers of identity related to race, gender, disability, class, sexuality, is constructed.
- c. Identify and discuss dimensions of power.

### **UNIT 3: Ethics, Critical Thinking And Leisure In Community**

**At the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

- a. Formulate, articulate and assess a vision of the good life for oneself and those with whom one is in relation.
- b. Learn strategies for identifying reliable sources, develop community-based research strategies, conduct empirical observation based research, and gain confidence working with complex arguments and sources.

### **UNIT 4: Bringing it all together, making a difference, and living a good life**

**At the end of this section, students will be able to:**

- a. Identify, define and discuss the ways in which different markers of identity facilitate or block individuals and community in living a good life.
- b. Explain relevant political and policy problems and identify strategies for their solution on personal and institutional levels.
- c. Develop and assess strategies for making change in oneself and one's community.

## **Course Structure and Organization**

### **ONLINE COMPONENT**

This course has a substantial on-line component. In addition to MW in-class meetings, Friday will alternately be devoted to online work or group activities. Participation in this course will require regular in-class attendance, online work, and occasional trips off campus. All exams, quizzes and assignments will be available only online, unless otherwise specified. Student work must be submitted through our SacCT course site, except where instructors have expressly indicated an alternate submission process. This will require you to have regular and reliable access to computing facilities.

In our SacCT course, you will find the preparatory material, reading assignments, project instructions, assessments, and announcements relevant to the week's topic. It is your responsibility to keep up with the course requirement and the assigned readings from the texts.

### **GROUPS**

Every student in the course will be assigned to a learning group at the beginning of the semester. You will remain with your assigned group for the duration of the semester. Much of the in-class practical activities and exercises will be done in your group, and some assignments will be submitted as group work for a group grade. It is imperative that you ensure you are in a group at the beginning of the semester to enable you to participate fully in the in-class segment of the course.

Each group can create its own identity and will have a corresponding space in our SacCT group area for virtual meeting purposes, where information and resources can be shared in advance of class, and group assignments can be discussed. Only members of the group will have access to this virtual group meeting space.

**A Note on Group Work:** People who do academic work in well-functioning groups often learn more than they would have learned working alone. But well-functioning groups don't just happen. They take planning, careful attention, and a willingness to contribute. Group work can present a number of challenges, ranging from personality mismatches to freeloading on the work of others. To help ensure you that you will participate in a well-functioning group, we will give you time early in the course to meet and get to know your peers. We will then help you form groups and go through community-building and agreement-making activities. Once you commit to a group, you cannot join another group. However, if a majority of members of your group decide through a formal vote to ask the instructors for a change, you can be "booted out" and will then complete tasks as an individual. So ensure your group has no reason to boot you out! Yes, group work can be challenging, taxing, and frustrating. However, providing the tools and opportunity to learn to live well with others is perhaps the single most important contribution any ethics education can make to an individual's life. With this in mind, get into your group, take responsibility for yourself, and realize that others are depending on you!

### Student Evaluation and Assessment

Students will be evaluated by several means. These will include a series of quizzes or in-class practical assignments, midterm exam, Leisure in Community Project, and the "Good Life" project, and the Great Day Project. The course is graded on the basis of 100pts (1pt = 1%).

### GRADING SCALE

<b>A</b> Outstanding (96pts and above)	<b>A-</b> Very Good (90-95pts)
<b>B</b> Range Satisfactory (80-89pts)	<b>C</b> Range Minimally Satisfactory (70-79pts)
<b>D</b> Range Poor (60-69pts)	<b>F</b> Unacceptable (below 60pts)

This is based upon a 100 pt scale with 1pt = 1%

### Leisure in Our Communities Assignment (LIOCA) (30%)

This component of the course consists of four parts. You and your group will conduct a personal leisure assessment, identify and assess leisure resources in your community, track your use of these resources through the semester, and develop a policy proposal for improving and enhancing access to leisure for everyone in your community. Student Groups will be engaged in developing this project over the course of the semester that will include drafting and sending a letter to the editor of a local media outlet (e.g., The Sac Bee, The News & Review, News10).

### Great Day Project (3parts, 20pts total)

The purpose of the Great Day project is to synthesize the course material and integrate it into your own life. The Great Day project will occur in three parts. The first part will be administered on the first week of class. You will write a short paper in which you describe what you think would be an ideal (but within the realm of possibility) 24 hour period. We will discuss the results of this paper in class as a way of motivating philosophical and sociological theories regarding the good life.

The second part of the project will occur later in the semester after you have been presented. You will write another version of the paper you wrote the first day of class. This time, however, you will show how your selection of elements for your Great Day relates to the theoretical and empirical material covered in the course, as well as with your own research on the subject outside of the course. You will be expected to justify your choices by reference to that material. Part of this justification will involve weighing the respective merits of various theoretical and empirical approaches in cases where those approaches yield conflicting results.

For the third part of this project, you will be given the challenge to actually live your Great Day before submitting your paper. You will be asked to record in your paper what you did and what you felt over the course of the day, and to report the results in a final paper. This paper will require you to reflect on your attempt to make your Great Day a reality. In what way did this attempt confirm the theoretical and empirical ideas studied in class? In what way did it conflict with them? Reflection on the way in which your own experience contributes to your theoretical and empirical understanding will be an important part of this final paper.

### **Good Life Inquiry (20%)**

This semester long cumulative experience project asks you to formulate a plan for living a good life. This plan can be long-range or short-term, it can express your expectations and desires for your future, it can integrate different aspects of your life or reveal your prioritization of different aspects of life. Whatever it looks like, it should meet the following objectives:

- Integrate what you have learned from the course
- Be practical and feasible enough for you to use to guide your life decisions and actions
- Be something you can commit to, at least for the short-term
- Reflect your values, priorities, and beliefs about yourself and your place in community
- Reflect both your existing strengths and what you need to develop in yourself and in relationship with others in order to achieve your plan

Students will be engaged in developing this plan over the course of semester.

### **Midterm Exam (10%)**

There will be a midterm exam that incorporates material from the entire ALC.

### **Participation (20%)**

This component of the course includes: quizzes, exercises and participatory activities throughout the semester in class and on line, as well as attendance. The frequency and format of these assessments may vary with each instructor.

## **Course Policies**

### **EXPECTATIONS**

**Regular and constructive Attendance:** We expect that, out of respect for your peers and others associated with the course, you will attend class and that your presence means that you have read and critically analyzed the material to be discussed. This class will be based on a lecture-

seminar format. Thus, **everyone** takes responsibility for keeping up with the readings and is ready to discuss the assigned readings during class.

**Diversity and Respect:** CSUS attracts a diverse population of students, faculty and staff with a wide range of cultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs and backgrounds. Opinions may vary on many issues, but students and faculty in this class will be expected to converse and debate in a respectful and tolerant manner.

This class will only be rich if everyone feels free to express her/his views and personal understandings of leisure in a diverse society. Because this is a class about leisure in a diverse society and because we're all a diverse bunch, we all look at the world a bit differently. Do not curb your passions during our discussions, but let us all be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions. Everyone has a responsibility to make the classroom environment a place where we can respectfully agree to disagree.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is expected and encouraged from all class participants. Attendance will be taken each class period. Sleeping, using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, doing assignments for other classes, or otherwise engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be met with a loss of ½pt (per incidence) from the final course grade. All cellular devices and iPods/music players must be turned off during class.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are due at the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per calendar day (not merely class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at the instructor's discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor before the assignment is due. ***When submitting any assignment in SacCT, ALWAYS check its status to ensure it was submitted. Do not merely hit "submit" and leave. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignment was submitted accurately and timely. Do not wait for the instructor to ask you about it or for a "0" to appear in your grade column!***

**No extensions, no exceptions.** It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

### **PLAGIARISM/CHEATING**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences which will not be tolerated in this class. Assignments in which plagiarism or other forms of cheating are found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. ***It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University's Academic Honesty Policy*** <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/UMA00150.htm>.

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or

assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please see the instructor by the ***end of the third week of semester*** so that arrangements can be made. Failure to notify and consult with the instructor by this date may impede my ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you.

Students with other types of accommodation requirements, such as English as a second language, are invited to discuss them with the instructors to facilitate understanding and the best learning experience for all. All information will remain confidential.