

Diversity and Resiliency: Human Differences and our Ability to Overcome Challenges

Dates: September 9 – December 2, 2017 (Saturdays)

Time: 10:30 – 2:30 (including lunch)

Location: Classroom 1055, Wilson Building, McMaster University

Faculty: Anju Joshi

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Coordinator: Marina Bredin

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Student Support Team: Sophia Kooy

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Course Description

This course examines human differences (diversity), how these differences can create challenges for people in their daily lives and how people overcome these challenges. Human differences can help to develop resiliency in individuals, groups of people or communities. Resilience is often defined as the ability to recover from setbacks, adapt well to change and thrive, and to keep going in the face of loss, difficulties or adversity. Differences such as age, ability, sexual orientation, gender, income, race, culture and religion can influence life experiences in various ways. There is much to be learned from those who have not let their differences and challenges keep them from living a meaningful life.

You will:

Learn about important qualities that influence our identity and our interactions in society

Explore the specific traits of resilient individuals, families or groups of people and communities

Discover some of the ways humans develop resiliency

Examine a topic of interest to you related to human diversity and resilience

Strengthen your reading and research skills

Increase your skills in interpreting and evaluating information

Develop your own creative expression in writing, art (including music), or in media such as photography or video

Project

In addition to exploring the different aspects of Diversity and Resiliency during the first part of the class, we will work on the projects in class time, after our lunch break. You are free to develop whatever project captures your imagination related to the course theme. The Student Support Team will help you!

Class Format

The class meets every Saturday for twelve weeks (September 9 – December 2, 2017) from 10:30 am to 2:15 pm. On Saturday, December 9 a graduation ceremony and celebration will be held.

10:00 – 10:30 Conversation and coffee (if arriving before class time)

10:30 – 12:00 Guided discussion (with presentation)

12:00 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 - 2:15 Workshop/ structured discussion/activity

There are two parts to the course. During the first half of each class (lecture and discussion), Anju Joshi will provide background on the week's topic and/or may have to guest addressing a specific topic through sharing their personal story or their research and work experience. During the second half of most classes, the Student Support Team will lead small group discussions and help you work on your projects. They are a terrific team of resourceful people who are eager to help. We plan to take a learning trip to Six Nations as part of the course.

Instructor and Support Team

Instructor

Anju Joshi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health, Aging and Society at McMaster University and has been teaching here for 30 years. Her interests are in gerontology (study of aging), diversity and inclusion and care coordination. She is responsible for the overall structure and delivery of the course. Anju organizes the curriculum, visiting speakers, fieldtrips, and assigned readings, and she responds to the students' projects. She works in close collaboration with Marina Bredin and the Student Support Team.

Coordinator

Marina Bredin is Coordinator for the Discovery Program and a recent graduate of the Arts and Science Program at McMaster University. She works closely with the Student Support Team and takes care of course logistics. Marina is the person to speak with if you need to miss a class and want to make up the work. She will be available each week outside of class by phone and email and is always happy to help you with any questions or concerns you may have.

Student Support Team

This year's Student Support Team members are: Sophia Kooy, Srikrupa Prasad, Paul Weiser, and Avery McNair.

They are exceptional students selected to act as teaching assistants for the Discovery Program. They will run small group discussions, help you with your projects during the workshop sessions, and generally support your learning throughout the course. You can reach them via their McMaster emails.

Important Notes

We will support you

We want you to enjoy the course and grow through your experience with each other and with the subject matter we are studying. Anju, Marina and the student support team are committed to ensuring that you are supported and encouraged on your way to success in the course. Tell us how we can help you!

Feedback on Projects

You will not be assigned a grade for this course, but Anju Joshi will provide written comments on your final projects once they have been completed.

Working with and respecting one another

Students, professor, coordinator, and the Student Support Team will all treat one another with courtesy. Everyone's voice is important and is to be respected. Behaviour that interrupts, impedes, or belittles others will not be allowed. If discourteous or disturbing incidents occur, you may be asked to stop attending the course.

Attendance policy

The course will succeed only if you are committed to attending all classes. A good learning environment depends on students and teachers knowing each other and being able to rely on each other to be prepared for class and ready to contribute to discussions. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. If you miss a class, you will be expected to make up the work. If you miss

more than 2 classes and have not contacted Marina to explain why you missed the classes, you may be asked to stop attending the course.

Class schedule

Class schedule will be provided to students on the first day of class.

This schedule is a guide for our class activities and assigned readings. This schedule may be modified if necessary. Should we need more time on a given subject, we will be flexible in order to give the class enough time to discuss the material.

Homework for this course will take about an hour a day, though sometimes it may take longer. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings each week and/or to have completed any assigned activity.