

Local Communities – Principles of Community and Civic Engagement (Draft Proposal)

"The mission of Brigham Young University–Hawaii is to integrate both spiritual and secular **learning**, and to *prepare students with character and integrity who can provide **leadership** in their families, their communities, their chosen fields, and in **building** the kingdom of God.*"

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion." –Thomas Jefferson

Course Description

Local Communities – Principles of Community and Civic Engagement is an interdisciplinary course offered as part of the General Education curriculum and first year experience at BYU Hawaii. The course introduces BYU Hawaii students to basic principles of community and civic engagement, integrates BYU Hawaii students into the local community of which they are a part; introduces students to the ways different academic disciplines inform our ideas of community and civic life, and provides a robust service learning opportunity that allows students to serve their local community and prepare for a lifetime of service and learning. **In the context of BYU Hawaii's General Education program, Local Communities is paired with World Communities.**

Course Goals/Outcomes

The goals of the course are to help students develop the skills and capacities to:

- 1) act responsibly as citizens and participants within the community
- 2) develop a lifelong commitment to community service and community engagement through service experiences
- 3) positively identify their experience at BYU Hawaii with the university's prophetic mission
- 4) analyze and evaluate information, and approach problems from different methodological perspectives
- 5) communicate effectively through writing and speaking

Organization:

Unit I: Understanding Community and Civic Engagement

(inquiry, analysis, communication)

Assignments/Learning Activities centered around the following types of questions: What is a community? What are the similarities and differences in how communities are defined around the world? How are communities organized and governed? How do different academic disciplines define communities and understand what creates and sustains them? What is civic engagement? Why is it important? What is a public good? What is the difference between the public and private sphere? (*suggested readings from faculty members demonstrating how their respective fields address these issues?*)

Unit II: Community Case Study: Lā'ie and Ko'olauloa

Interdisciplinary analysis (inquiry and analysis)

How do different academic disciplines aid in our understanding of the Lā'ie and Ko'olauloa communities (anthropology, biology, economics, geography, Hawaiian Studies, history, political science, etc.) *Proposed model: similar organization as world communities (organized into sections, faculty lectures representing different academic fields?)*

What is the significance of the Church's role in Lā'ie and Ko'olauloa history?

Current civic issues, community perspectives: land and development in Ko'olauloa (*outside speakers/community lectures?*)

What is the relationship between Lā'ie and Ko'olauloa? Ko'olauloa and other districts on O'ahu? Etc.

Unit III: Service Learning and Community Outreach

Service project component of course (stewardship and service)

Criteria – service component should: place students in contact with residents of Ko'olauloa, not just Lā'ie; be a multitiered project that engages students by allowing them to connect their service with their interests; take advantage of other community groups and make full use of partner opportunities in Ko'olauloa

Faculty input - TBD

Capstone/Final Project

Capstone project for course – (analysis and communication)

Comparison paper/website/other between Lā'ie/Ko'olauloa and another community you are familiar with?

Draft 25 or 50 year plan for Ko'olauloa – create a vision for the region, identify major challenges, issues, milestones?

INQ 110 – Critical Inquiry & Analysis (Draft Proposal)

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"We do not want BYU ever to become an educational factory. It must concern itself with not only the dispensing of facts but with the preparation of its students to take their place in society as thinking, thoughtful, and sensitive individuals who come here dedicated to love of God, pursuit of truth, and service to mankind."

--Spencer W. Kimball

Course Description

Critical Inquiry & Analysis is an issue-based class offered as part of the General Education curriculum and first year experience at BYU Hawaii. The course introduces BYU-Hawaii students to basic critical thinking skills of inquiry and analysis through engagement with a variety of social issues. There will likely be one particular issue for each section or for a group of sections, but all courses will give students practice in *analyzing* arguments and *inquiring* into the evidence for claims.

Topics could include any issue and while the instructor should be interested in studying this with the students, he or she would not need to be an expert or need to lecture on the topic. Topics could include classic academic issues and debates as well as contemporary issues such as: global warming, obesity and the role of public health measures, limits on free speech, genetically modified food, privacy in the digital age, etc. Any general topic about which a variety of viewpoints could be found and analyzed would work. The topics can be seen as case studies in critical thinking about topics that are widely discussed in the popular press, and, as such, care should be taken to pick an issue that is accessible and interesting for new students, but hopefully not so emotional that their ability to practice detached analysis would be hampered. The goal is not to promote mastery of the issue itself, but to increase proficiency in the skills needed to be critical readers for a lifetime of learning, to become educated individuals in the information age.

Course Goals/Outcomes

The goals of the course are to help students develop the skills and capacities to:

- 1) analyze a text; to read critically, being able to identify an author's claim, arguments, unstated assumptions, and forms of argument
- 2) inquire about support for claims; to understand different kinds of evidence and to make judgments about which would be appropriate for which question
- 3) appreciate potential for ambiguity and multiple explanations

4) develop understanding of others' viewpoints without having to share them, recognizing the impact of different assumptions about reality, different values, and different bodies of evidence on the conclusions that others come to

5) integrate spiritual and secular learning, learning to think critically and faithfully

6) communicate effectively through speaking and writing

For Scientific Inquiry (INQ 120) in particular:

7) be able to distinguish between correlation and causation and to have a basic literacy in understanding evidence involving statistics

Potential Outcome-oriented Components:

Unit I: Thinking Critically and Thinking Faithfully (maybe not all at once, but to come back to this regularly during the semester)

(inquiry, analysis, integrity—integrating faith & study)

Short introductory readings and discussion centered around critical thinking and faith and critical thinking in cultural context:

How do we know? What is real? What are ways of knowing that are used in academic disciplines? What are ways of knowing that we have access to through faith and revelation? What are ways that we can be bilingual in these different ways of knowing as disciple-scholars? How can we learn to pursue truth as educated Latter-day Saints with the additional benefit of a college education?

What are other ways of knowing valued in different cultures? How does our personal and cultural background affect how we see the world? How does that background affect what is persuasive to us and how we pursue truth? How can the critical thinking skills of inquiry and analysis help us pursue truth? How can we pursue truth in a spirit of humility and compassion? (*readings from faculty members sharing how they have navigated these issues in their respective fields; several very good articles by Bruce Hafen*)

Unit II: Thinking Critically and Analyzing

Section-specific readings on multiple perspectives on a contemporary issue (analysis and communication)

*Within this unit students will **practice analyzing the logic of an argument** by preparing for class discussion through writing a series of short analysis papers/outlines/discussion questions on the different readings. The emphasis would vary from section to section, but questions could include the following:*

What are the different claims that are made about this topic?

What assumptions are stated or implicit in each argument?

Are there any terms that are being used differently by each side?

Are there any flaws in the reasoning? (introduce logical fallacies)

Unit III: Thinking Critically and Inquiry about Evidence

Section-specific readings on multiple perspectives on a contemporary issue (inquiry and communication)

*Within this unit students will **practice inquiry about the evidence used in support of the claims** by preparing for class discussion through writing a series of short analysis papers/outlines/discussion questions on the different readings. The emphasis would vary from section to section, but questions could include the following:*

What kinds of evidence are given?

What are strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of evidence?

Are there any issues with claims about correlation and/or causation?

Are there any issues with the statistical claims made?

Unit IV: Multiple Explanations, Ambiguity, and Evaluation

*Capstone oral presentation in which the students **demonstrate their ability to inquire and analyze about a narrow issue** and share the different positions in a balanced and informed way – (analysis and communication)*

What are the different sides of this issue?

Why do they disagree? What are the differences in assumptions about reality? What are the differences in value assumptions? What are the differences in judgments about the evidence?

Are you persuaded by one side more than the other? If so, why?

Do you feel there is a clear answer available at this time? If not, what would you need to know more or to believe in order to come to a decision?

Course Design Direction from Steering Committee: Multiple teaching groups

Teaching groups with a shared topic and readings, often with people from different disciplines, help to design the syllabus and readings and discuss the issues together, but don't teach together

(another option? Team teaching where different sections have two or three different professors and they rotate back and forth, maybe with one day a week working on online modules, lightening the prep time)

(I would recommend a book like *Asking the Right Questions* as recommended or supplemental reading so that we all have shared vocabulary and focus, but not require that it be used by faculty in any particular way)

Working Group ideas for requirements:

Reading assignments – 1,000 pages

Writing that gets feedback, 16 pages, 4,000 words -- research paper???

***Oral presentation at the end

Reflection, review paper at the end after the oral presentation (what did you learn from the process)

Levels of coordination:

General: basic outcomes, general expectations, # of papers, kinds of work, rubrics

Teaching teams: topic, content, assignments

Individual section: own flair, some variety on readings