

Course Information: Human Relations (Education 240) – Cornell College

Type: Paper

Professor Jill Heinrich and Consulting Librarian Jean Donham

Level: 200

This course studies prejudice and discrimination in race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, and sexuality. It examines individual and group values, lifestyles, cultural and sexual diversity, and persons with handicapping conditions. It includes six hours of observation-practicum.

Block Plan Context:

	S	M	T	W	R	F	S
1							
2							
3							
4							

Important Features of the Assignment:

- Utilizes **sequencing** by beginning with group discussions on the topic and proceeding to writing a position paper on the same topic
- **Critical thinking skills** are required to examine the “American Dilemma” and take a position.
- Students must **integrate and synthesize** controversial points-of-view as they write a reasoned paper
- **Proper documentation and citations** are emphasized

Description of Assignment:

Students will write an original analysis of the “American dilemma” after having small group discussions on the contradictions between American ideals and social practices. Students will take a position on whether racism, sexism, classicism and other types of discrimination in our society motivate us, as society and individuals, to take both reactive and proactive steps in an effort to enact meaningful change.

EDU 240 Human Relations
Position Paper: *The American Dilemma*
 INTASC Standards (#1, 2, 6, 8)

Some social scientists have pointed to the contradictions between American ideals and social practices. Gunnar Myrdal for instance argues that a major ethical inconsistency exists in U.S. society, one he refers to as the “American Dilemma.” Myrdal’s argument is as follows: The American Creed, an ideology that most Americans live by, honors such values as liberty, equality and human dignity. However, a serious contradiction lies in the fact that in America these ideals coexist in a society that not only tolerates but also perpetuates personal and institutional discrimination. For instance, America is a society that places a high value upon the notion of equality, in terms of treatment and opportunity, for all of its citizens; however, it is also a society that has yet to rid itself of certain institutional forms of prejudice against a variety of ethnic, racial and religious groups. Myrdal contends that this variance creates a dilemma in the minds of most Americans. The consequence is that Americans in turn experience the need to reconcile their democratic ideals with daily practice—that is they must reassure themselves that their democratic values and beliefs dictate their treatment of other people.

According to Myrdal then the “American dilemma” is in fact a “good” thing in that it has empowered oppressed groups in their fight for social and political equality. The fact that most Americans, when confronted with this ethical and social inconsistency, experience the need to take action and augment meaningful change has

actually led to the elimination of those practices that are inconsistent with their democratic ideals or the American Creed. Not all social scientists agree with Myrdal, however, for many argue that the majority of Americans experience no such dilemma. Socially and culturally distanced from the discrimination experienced by many racial and ethnic groups, most Americans, they argue, experience little empathy or perceive minimal need to actively involve themselves in the fight for civil rights. Essentially, their argument is that the “have’s” care little about the “have not’s.”

Group Activity: In your discussion groups carefully consider these contradictory positions—Myrdal’s and his critics. As you do so, address the following questions and record your responses on this paper.

The American Creed - The American Creed values liberty, equality and human dignity for all. In fact, a key component in U.S. core culture is the idea expressed in the *Declaration of Independence* (1776) that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” How well have we, as a nation, lived up to the ideals so prominently articulated in this creed? To answer this question, begin by citing those social and cultural institutions and practices that have historically complied with the American Creed. Once you have done that, cite those that have not complied, in that they have denied basic civic and human rights to certain groups on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and ability. As you discuss possibilities, consider each facet of our country’s legal and educational systems.

Essay Assignment - Position Paper: As your group discusses this issue, record your notes on the following page as a basis for the essay you will write. The essay question reads:

In your opinion, do most Americans experience the phenomenon Myrdal refers to as the “American dilemma” or do they seem collectively indifferent to social and institutional prejudice; in other words, does the existence of racism, sexism, classicism and other types of discrimination in our society motivate us, as a society and individuals, to take both reactive and proactive steps in an effort to enact meaningful change?

You will articulate your response to this question in a five to six page position paper. Begin your essay by clearly stating your position and providing reasons for support. Then develop those reasons through the use of example, illustration, description, definition, comparison, contrast etc. See attached sheet for specific requirements.

Compliance with American Creed

Contradictions to the American Creed

EDU 240: Human Relations for the Classroom Teacher **Course Paper: The American Dilemma** (INTASC # 1, 2, 6, 8)

J. Heinrich

This assignment requires you to take a position and then develop that position through cogent argumentation. The paper is persuasive in tone, and so your discourse and style should be formal. The paper should be approximately six pages in length and adhere to APA style format. Yes, attention to style, grammar and

usage is important, so take the time to revise and proofread carefully. See evaluation rubric for specific assessment guidelines.

Specific Requirements:

Final Due Date: Tuesday, December 7th

Thesis & Outline Due Date: Wednesday, December 1st

Point Value: 150 points

Format: APA Style format; 1inch margins, typed and double spaced

Bibliography: You must include a bibliography cited according to APA that lists each work referenced through the course of the paper. However, you should only refer to course readings and should use no other outside sources for this paper. It is to be an original analysis which means that you should not consult what other writers have to say about this issue.

Two paper copies must be turned in, and I will not accept electronic submissions. One copy will be returned while the other will be kept on file. Papers are due at the beginning of class, and late papers will be reduced one letter grade for each day they are late. Plagiarism, which includes improper use of outside sources (i.e. failure to document properly or failure to document at all) or submission of another student's work, will result in an zero on this assignment and a possible "F" in the course. Plagiarism may also result in denial to the teacher education program (see Education Department policies on our department's website).

Although I will not read drafts of the paper itself, I am more than happy to meet with you individually to help organize your paper or answer specific questions. You will not be allowed to revise this paper, so make sure that you ask for guidance and support prior to assessment of this piece. Take advantage of the Writing Studio throughout your writing process.

Paper Topic:

In your opinion, do most Americans experience the phenomenon Myrdal refers to as the "American dilemma" or do they seem collectively indifferent to social, political and institutional prejudice? In other words, does the existence of racism, sexism, classicism, homophobia and other types of discrimination in our society motivate us, as both a society and individuals, to take action, in both a reactive and proactive fashion, in an effort to overcome inequality and enact meaningful change in our world?

Some Things You Might Want to Know to Succeed with this Assignment

Step # 1: Writing a Clear and Detailed Thesis Statement

You should articulate your response to this question in a well-written thesis statement positioned near the end of your introduction. It is essential in a position paper that you clearly state your position so that the reader understands what the purpose of this paper will be. You may also wish to include your major arguments or at least allude to them in the thesis itself, although doing so is not at all necessary.

Step # 2: Identifying & Organizing Major Arguments

Your next step will be to identify your major arguments and decide how to strategically position them in the body of the paper. How you arrange these arguments is up to you, but you should have a reason for your choice. For instance, you might position your strongest argument first, your weaker ones in the middle of the paper, and then end with your second strongest argument. This strategy brings your reader in immediately and then ends with a compelling conclusion. When determining an organizational structure for your arguments, remember that some arguments can be developed in a single paragraph while others, because of their complexity, will require two or three paragraphs to adequately develop. Take the time to outline all of this in advance so that your paper flows in a logical and coherent fashion.

Step # 3: Identifying Support for Major Arguments

Once you have clearly articulated your major arguments, decide what types of support you will use to develop these arguments. Refer to the essays read in the Noel text and the chapters read in the Banks and McGhee text for support. You may also wish to draw upon additional course materials as well, such as film and fiction. List each work you will reference beside its corresponding argument so that you can easily reference it as you begin writing the draft of your paper. *To ensure development of your position (and earn a good grade), you should refer to no fewer than five works studied during throughout the block.*

A few guidelines when referencing works:

- The first time you refer to a work, state the author's last name and the full title. Titles of books and films are *italicized* or underlined; titles of "articles" and "short stories" and placed in quotation marks.
- If you quote something from the work, make sure that you properly cite the source. You can do this by placing the author's last name and the page number in parenthesis at the end of the sentence. If you cite the author's name in the actual sentence, you need only cite the page number at the end of the sentence in parenthesis.

i.e. The "Boy Code" is an unwritten code that dictates adolescent male behavior in both the social and the educational sphere (Pollack p. 25).

Pollack argues that the "Boy Code" is an unwritten code that dictates adolescent male behavior in both the social and the educational sphere (p. 25).

Step # 4: REVISE, REVISE some more, and then consult the RUBRIC

Visit the Writing Studio for assistance. Remember that your instructors are notified when you visit the Writing Studio for support. That bit of information certainly can't hurt you now can it??????????????

EDU 240: Human Relations for the Classroom Teacher
Holistic Rubric for the *American Dilemma* Position Paper

Distinguished	Proficient	Basic
<p>Thesis: The thesis statement clearly articulates the writer’s position and explicitly states or alludes to major arguments that will be developed through the course of the paper.</p> <p>Organization & Clarity: The major arguments are clearly articulated and organized into a logical and effective manner that develops the overall purpose of the paper. The introduction, body and conclusion of the paper work together to form an organic whole.</p> <p>Development: Thesis statement and individual arguments are thoroughly and clearly developed; writer uses a various methods of development to support central and individual arguments (examples, reasons, illustrations, description, definition, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, etc.)</p> <p>Content: The writer displays insight, critical and analytical thinking, and sensitivity in his/her argumentation. Reference is made to course readings to support and enhance individual arguments and show an understanding of multicultural issues.</p> <p>Coherence, Style & Usage: The paper has been revised so that sentence structure is varied, complex and coherent. Transitions are used effectively to connect ideas. Grammatical and mechanical errors are minimal and do not interfere with comprehension. Course readings, when referenced, are cited correctly using APA format, as is the bibliography.</p>	<p>Thesis: The thesis statement states the writer’s position although it might be further developed and more detailed.</p> <p>Organization & Clarity: The major arguments are organized in a logical fashion although the paper itself and individual paragraphs might benefit from a tighter organization pattern. Arguments and prose style could also benefit from further revisions for purposes of clarification.</p> <p>Development: Thesis statement and individual arguments could be strengthened through further development. Writing could be enhanced by using various modes of development. Additional reference to course readings would strengthen argumentation and augment development.</p> <p>Content: The paper suggests that the writer has read and analyzed various sources, although reference to additional sources is needed to support the writer’s overall purpose. The paper shows evidence of thoughtfulness and depth of thought in its analysis of course readings, although this analysis is at times shallow and thus lacking in development.</p> <p>Coherence, Style & Usage: There is evidence of revision but sentence structure could be enhanced through the use of sentence combining and transitions to link ideas. Grammatical and mechanical errors are occasionally surface but typically do not impede meaning. Course readings, when referenced, are cited correctly using APA format, as is the bibliography, although minor errors may appear.</p>	<p>Thesis: The thesis statement is weak in that it does not articulate the writer’s position.</p> <p>Organization & Clarity: The major arguments are poorly organized so that argumentation is difficult to understand and follow. Individual paragraphs fail to transist in a logical and coherent fashion. Lack of clarity, wordiness and awkwardness make it difficult to understand the writer’s intent and individual arguments.</p> <p>Development: The overall purpose of the paper fails to reveal itself as major ideas are not developed to the reader’s satisfaction. There is little evidence that the writer has used various methods of development to support individual arguments. Reference to course readings may be adequate but analysis of these works is surface in tone and thus does little to develop the writer’s overall position.</p> <p>Content: Although there may be reference to course readings, analysis of these works is lacking in depth and development. The reference to and analysis of these works may also lack relevancy as the writer fails to relate to analysis to the overall purpose as stated in the paper.</p> <p>Coherence, Style & Usage: There is minimal evidence of revision as sentence structure is often awkward, unclear and wordy. Grammatical and mechanical errors may impede comprehension. Course readings, when referenced, are sometimes cited incorrectly as they fail to adhere to APA format.</p>

Timeline:

Wk	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Weekend</i>
1		Librarian meets with class on RefWorks.				
2		Position paper due				
3						
4						