UNST 421: Tutoring & Mentoring Native American Youth

NOTE: This syllabus is also posted on PSU Online (www.psuonline.pdx.edu).

Instructor: Anmarie Trimble
Phone: (503) 725-9403   Email: atrimble@pdx.edu
Office: CRAMER 117Q   Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-5pm, or by appt
Class UNST 421 536: M 3-6pm (NAYA), F 11am-2pm (CH 400A)
Class UNST 421 525: T 3-6pm (NAYA), F 11am-2pm (CH 400A)
Class UNST 421 526: W 3-6pm (NAYA), F 11am-2pm (CH 400A)
Class UNST 421 530: R 3-6pm (NAYA), F 11am-2pm (CH 400A)

Community Partner: Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)
http://www.nayapdx.org/
5135 NE Columbia Blvd. Portland, OR 97218., Portland OR 97227-1165
Phone: (503) 288-8177

Education Coordinator (Learning Center contact): Daniel Rowell danielr@nayapdx.org
Youth Advocate: Anna Allen: anna@nayapdx.org
Youth Advocate: Jeremy Matsen jeremym@nayapdx.org

WELCOME to your Senior Capstone! This class is an opportunity to explore the complexity of issues surrounding education and the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA). In doing so, we examine and reflect on the role of difference, connection to others, and empathy in the learning relationship through in-class dialog, written reflection, and the practice of tutoring and mentoring youth. In order to be an effective tutor, it is essential to have a background and curiosity about not only the community with which we will be working, but also ways our own background shapes our educational and other social experiences. We will therefore need to examine our own assumptions, biases, and learning around issues of poverty, race, class and other relevant social and historical factors.

COURSE CONTEXT:
Multnomah County has the 9th largest urban Indian population in the United States, and 33% of Natives are under the age of 18. According to the most recent census, poverty rates in the local Native community are triple those in White communities, with an average poverty rate of 34%. The child poverty rate is 45.2%, which is almost four times higher that the poverty rate for White children. More than half of Native students do not graduate high school. To address these issues, the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) provides culturally-specific programming and education resources for Native American youth and families in the Portland Metro area, including an alternative high school academy.

NAYA’s Education Retention Program provides academic and social opportunities for Native American students to help them reach their full potential though a culturally sensitive holistic approach. Important components of this program include the Learning Center for middle and high school students, which is open Monday-Thursday, 3:00-6:00pm, after school programming, and the High School Academy.

At the Learning Center, NAYA students receive a stable drop-in program with tutors trained in cultural issues and tutoring. NAYA also offers various academic and sports-related after-school programs. Together, these programs provide an opportunity to develop relationships with educational role models. Many NAYA youth receive little one-on-one support from teachers or parents; according to NAYA, some of these students struggle in traditional American academic settings because Native American culture strongly emphasizes one-on-one experiential learning. NAYA’s learning center aims to bridge the gap between their institutional and cultural learning environments.

OUR ROLE AS A CAPSTONE COURSE: In this Capstone, you will have the opportunity to learn and practice tutoring and mentoring to students of various ages in various academic disciplines, with the aim of helping the Native American Youth Association (NAYA) fulfill its mission of empowering youth via education, community involvement, and cultural programming by creating positive learning experiences. There may also be opportunities for PSU students to assist in the High School Academy.

PSU students will meet 3 hours per week at PSU as a class on Fridays, and also meet with NAYA students 3 hours per week at NAYA (3-6pm, which should be listed on your Banner schedule). PSU weekly meetings will discuss readings on learning, education, diversity, and the status of any ongoing project(s) you may be doing for NAYA. Individual writing assignments would include personal reflective journals, and a final reflective narrative. A background check will be required for this class.
MY ROLE AS COURSE INSTRUCTOR: My role is to guide you through your experience at NAYA by serving as a mentor and facilitator. As an experienced teacher, I will share my expertise, push each of you to reflect on assumptions (your own and others), and to find the learning opportunities in the challenges we will experience together in service to our larger goal—to help kids learn. To do so, I work to facilitate a respectful, collaborative learning environment where we each actively share our perspectives and knowledge. My hope is that we come to a deeper understanding of how your cultural background has shaped your perspective and integrate the perspective of others. To this end, I ask the following of students in this class:

- Be willing to share your ideas, experiences, and questions with the class.
- Come prepared. If you’ve not completed the reading and taken time to think through the implications of class materials, your participation won’t be as meaningful and (worse!) you’ll either feel unprepared for tutoring, or bored in discussion.
- If you’re a reserved person who finds conversing in a group difficult, challenge yourself to join the dialog. Vice versa, if you are a talkative or outgoing person who finds conversing in a group relatively easy, challenge yourself to hold back a little and allow others a chance to speak.
- Be respectful of the ideas and experiences of others, even though you may feel that they are different from your own.
- I ask each of you to listen respectfully; do not interrupt, and reserve judgment until you have attempted to hear what another has to say. Don’t assume that because people are quiet that they have nothing to say. Listening is a strong value in the NAYA community, and therefore don’t feel that silence is a gap to be filled; listen, and ask others what they think.

University Studies Goals: The approach and content of this course is based on University Studies' approach to learning and general education. It is based on a philosophy of participation and collaboration among faculty and students who together develop a learning community that is characterized by mutuality and responsibility. The goals and objectives of University Studies are to develop and reinforce skills that will be crucial to your success in the university and beyond. Achieving these goals will result in:

- Conceptual tools for critical thinking and inquiry.
- An ability to use key communication modes.
- An appreciation of the diversity of contemporary and historical human experience.
- An awareness of crucial issues involving ethics and social responsibility.

COURSE TEXTS
1. *Flight*, by Sherman Alexie (purchase at a venue of your choice)
2. Readings on e-reserve, book reserve, and on D2L (specific text locations are indicated on the class schedule)

GRADING
- Weekly Journals: reflect, connect, ask questions 40%
- Class Participation & Tutoring: be engaged! 50%
- Final Reflection: consider what you’ve learned 20%

OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION:

1. Participation: This course is based on the premise of peer teaching and learning. The cooperative learning environment in this class will help us create the learning community necessary to achieve our course objectives. Your experiences and ideas are crucial to the development of your own and others’ skills and knowledge of tutoring and mentoring. This cooperative approach will rely heavily on active participation and will therefore be dependent upon the level of responsibility that you choose to take for yourself and for your classmates. In addition to completing your journals and other assignments before class, I expect everyone to come prepared to discuss the week’s readings and/or a problem or issue you experience while tutoring at NAYA, and to listen actively and respond thoughtfully and respectfully.

2. Social Responsibility (aka attendance policy): This is a community-based course and will therefore require your courteous and timely attendance both in the classroom and at NAYA. By participating in this course, you’re representing PSU’s partnership with NAYA, and it is important that you maintain a sense of commitment to our classroom community at PSU as well as to your community partner. In cases of emergency, please contact Anmarie and NAYA as soon as possible if you are to be late or absent.

   Classroom Attendance: You are allowed to miss one (1) scheduled class without penalty. Further absences or consistent lateness will result in a deduction in your final grade. Please respect your other classmate’s learning environment and DON’T BE LATE! A pattern of late arrival will also impact your grade.

   Community Attendance: Because we’ve made a commitment to our community partner, unexcused absences constitute a breach of responsibility. If you’re ill or have an emergency, you are expected to contact NAYA and Anmarie immediately, and make arrangements to make up your tutoring day. To document your attendance, you must sign the Volunteer Sign Up Sheet in the Learning Center (this is in addition to signing in/out at the main desk.)
3. **Journals:** The class readings are designed to help you reflect on the issues surrounding our work with the children, staff, and volunteers at NAYA. This assignment is therefore meant to enhance the continuous nature of reflective thought on your experience—to foster mindfulness of your work, your impact on others you work with, and connections between ideas in this class and your experience at NAYA. Each week, write an approximately **2-3 page reflection on both the readings and your experience tutoring and mentoring at NAYA.** These journals are to be posted to D2L in the Discussions forum BEFORE Friday’s class sessions.

4. **Conduct:** It is your responsibility to read the Student Conduct Code (see [http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct](http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct)), which details your rights and responsibilities as a student and as a member of PSU. These codes are strictly enforced.

5. **Technology etiquette & multi-tasking:** To foster a productive environment, free of distractions for all participants, there is a zero-tolerance cell phone policy. (This includes text messaging.) When you enter the classrooms, turn off or silence your phone and put it away. Similarly, other technological devices are not allowed in class unless you are using them for the sole purpose of taking notes.

6. **Other assignments:** All formal written assignments (such as your final reflection) must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font. You may use the format of your primary discipline (MLA, APA, etc.) Cite sources for texts you reference.

7. **Grading:** Grading criteria for assignments are based on how well you follow instructions as they fit with the course's learning objectives. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Journals are graded for participation only; if you do them thoughtfully and thoroughly, you will receive full credit. Late assignments will receive a deduction. **Assignments will not be accepted more than a week after their due date, except in cases of emergency.**

8. **Ability:** Students with disabilities will be accommodated. If you require assistance obtaining resources, let me know.