**American Culture**

**Description and Syllabus**

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| Instructor | William Hoversen | E-mail | Whoversen@gmail.com |
| Office | Room 439 | Office Hours | Thursday 8:00 – 10:00 |

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will look at the basics of American society and culture from an outside perspective. Emphasis will be on understanding how Americans think and feel, based on their history and culture. Most importantly, we want to understand why Americans live the way they live and do the things they do. As always, the answers are complex, but interesting.

**Attendance:** Come to every single class. The university allows you to miss three classes, if you miss four you fail for the entire semester. I take a note of all late students. Three late occasions equal one missed class. It adds up very quickly, so arrange your matters accordingly. It is your responsibility to know how many classes you have missed and how many times you have been late. I will not remind you at every class.

If I see you using your phone in class you will be marked absent. That includes taking notes. Please refrain from checking your email or Facebook/Twitter/Instagram etc during class. If I find you not paying attention during class and looking at other stuff on your chosen piece of technology you will be sent out of the room. If your mind is not on the class there is no reason for you to be there, bothering others who want to pay attention and learn.

**Expectations**: You will need to bring 3 questions to every class about the readings. Your questions can be about anything you did not find enough information on in the chapter, or anything related to something you heard/saw/smelled on TV, the Internet, movies, etc. that is related to the chapter of the week. If you fail to bring your questions, you will be marked late. Also, you will be writing a pop quiz at the beginning of some classes. This ensures that any readings, documentaries, or films assigned are watched or read. You are allowed three failing grades on these quizzes until I begin deducting from your grade. Missing a pop quiz will result in a fail.

**Evaluation:**

Prepared Lesson from material in the Text 10%

In-class participation 15%

End of Term Final Exam 75%

**Texts:** Datesman, M.K., Crandall, J., Kearny, E. *American Ways (4th Edition): An Introduction to American Culture*. Pearson, 2014

**Final Course Grades:**

*All* of the above will need to be completed and not more than three missed classes for the following grades to be assigned.

100% to 91% = 5

90% to 81% = 4

80% to 71% = 3

70% to 60% = 2

**Rules of the class:** No off color language will be tolerated (I can joke, you can joke, but we will not put someone down, we will not make anyone feel uncomfortable). If you are late, do not knock, just come in as unobtrusively as possible and take a seat. Phones are away while you are in here. You have a phone out, you are here in person only and not engaged in the class. Ergo, it’s an absence. I reserve the right to change any or all of the syllabus during the semester.

Schedule Fall 2017

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|  | Class | Subject | Reading |
| 1 | Sept 13 | Class Introduction and Introduction to Cultural Studies and a little history of the Beginning of the United States (including the Constitution) |  |
| 2 | Sept 20 | American Demographics | Chapter 1 pgs. 4-11  “America by the Numbers episode 1” to be watched at home |
| 3 | Sept 27 | Traditional American Beliefs and Values | Chapter 2 pgs. 31-37 |
| 4 | Oct 4 | American Religious Heritage | Chapter 3 pgs. 54-62  “Jesus Camp” to be watched at home before the class |
| 5 | Oct 11 | The Frontier Heritage | Chapter 4 pgs. 80-86  “Gun Nation” to be watched at home |
| 6 | Oct 18 | The Heritage of Abundance | Chapter 5 pgs. 102-110  “Super Size Me” and the American Obesity Epidemic |
| 7 | Oct 25 | Government and Politics in the United States | Chapter 7 pgs. 153-164 |
| 8 | Nov 1 | No Class |  |
| 9 | Nov 8 | Ethnic and Racial Diversity in the United States | Chapter 8 pgs. 180-188 |
| 10 | Nov 15 | Education in the United States | Chapter 9 pgs. 205-217 |
| 11 | Nov 22 | How Americans Spend Their Leisure Time | Chapter 10 pgs. 232-242 |
| 12 | Nov 29 | Sports in America  Documentary – “Trophy Kids” to be watched in class. Discussion to follow |  |
| 13 | Dec 6 | The American Family | Chapter 11 pgs 255-280 |
| 14 | Dec 13 | Final Exam |  |
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