**COUN 2000**

Living & Communicating in a Diverse Society

**Tuesdays & Thursdays**

2.00-3.15 pm

(Zoom)

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**Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling**

**College of Education**

Instructor Information:

**Sahana Sen** (She, her)

M.A. (Counselor Education - MFT) UCF’19, M.SW. Visva Bharati, India, ’12,

Doctoral candidate, TA  
Counselor Education & Supervision

Special Ed-Rehab-Counseling

**2084 Haley Center**

**szs0293@auburn.edu**

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Office Hours:

Haley Center **1232A** or **Zoom**

*(By appointment Only)*

**SYLLABUS**

**1. Course Number: COUN 2000 (3 semester hours)**

**Course Title: Living & Communicating in a Diverse Society**

**University: Auburn University**

**Prerequisites: None**

**Instructor: Sahana Sen** (Pronouns: She/her; Preferred Salutations: Instructor, Mrs. Sen, Sahana)

**Contact Info: 2084 Haley; szs0293@auburn.edu**

**Class Meeting: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2.00-3.15 pm via Zoom.**

**2. Date Syllabus Prepared:** August 2024

**3. Required Readings and Media Content:**

**Text**: Johnson, A. (2018). *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (3rd Ed). McGraw Hill.

**Chapters and Articles:**

Blumenfeld, W. (2006). Christian Privilege and the Promotion of “Secular” and Not-So “Secular” Mainline Christianity in Public Schooling and in the Larger Society. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 39*(3), 195–210.

Brzuzy, S. (1997). Deconstructing Disability. *Journal of Poverty, 1*(1), 81-91.

Crenshaw, K. (2016, October). The Urgency of Intersectionality [Video]. TED. <https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en#t-140471>

Dancy, T. E., II, Edwards, K. T., & Earl Davis, J. (2018). Historically White Universities and Plantation Politics: Anti-Blackness and Higher Education in the Black Lives Matter Era. *Urban Education, 53*(2), 176–195

The New York Times. (2019, May 31). The Stonewall You Know Is a Myth. And That’s O.K [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7jnzOMxb14>

Norton, M. I., & Ariely, D. (2011). Building a Better America-One Wealth Quintile at a Time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(1), 9–12.

Sacred Land Film Prokect. (2015, May 26). Indigenous Reflections on Christianity [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoxNyNWFvZw>

Starr, B. (2017, July 26). Through the eyes of women: Joan Trumpauer Mulholland shares how “she should for freedom” [Audio Podcast] Retrieved from <https://www.khsu.org/post/through-eyes-women-joan-trumpauer-mulholland-shares-how-she-stood-freedom#stream/0>

4. **Course Description:**

**This course meets SLO 9. The class focuses on content addressing the cultural context of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups, and communities. Because successful living in a diverse society requires successful communicating, the course also focuses on communication around difficult topics (often referred to as difficult dialogues).**

5. **Course Objectives:**

The assumption in this course is that all students in the College of Education are working to be competent, committed, and reflective professionals.

Upon course completion students will:

1. Knowledge of multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concernsbetween and within diverse groups nationally and internationally
2. Attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, **including specific experiential learning activities.**
3. Individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups.
4. Cultural self-awareness: understanding citizens’ roles in social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, the nature of biases, prejudices, processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of the human spirit, mind, or body.
5. Awareness of advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for diversity individuals.
6. Understanding of value of cultural diversity in a progressive society
7. Ability to engage in conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture in ways that are respectful, increase understanding among participants in the conversation, and support intergroup and intragroup cohesion to work toward common solutions.

6. **Course Philosophy**

As individuals living in a diverse society, there is value in understanding the culture of those around us. This course will expose students to opportunities to learn about other cultures, challenge beliefs they may hold about individuals from other cultures that may impede their ability to work and live in a diverse society and gain awareness of ways diversity in society is enriches society. The class will blend the tradition of knowledge acquisition with experiential learning and self-exploration/reflection. It is critical in classes such as this that the environment is one of respect and sensitivity and is a safe environment for people to speak and share. As such, I expect that you will approach the content of this course as a student and good citizen who other people as human beings. This means that you are expected to make a distinction between your ideas/beliefs that reflect your worldview and those that reflect the body of knowledge. Finally, this also means thathateful speech and actions will not be allowed in the class.

Each of us has cultural beliefs and a worldview that shapes how we see the world, what we value, and biases we hold. I ask that you develop an awareness of when your ideas and views reflect your culture and worldview rather than an absolute of what is right or wrong or good or bad. A fundamental part of this class is to identify ways in which the diversity of values and worldviews adds to the society in which we live.

**7. Course Content** **and Schedule:**

This course schedule (including assignments, requirements, and mode of instruction delivery) is tentative and may change at the instructor’s discretion. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class and/or via email and it is the students’ responsibility to be aware of such announced changes.

**Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module** | **Topics** | **Required Readings** | **Due Dates** |
| 1 | **Introduction**   * Introductions * Syllabus Overview * Perspective Exploration |  |  |
| MLK Day – no classes on January 20 | | | |
| 2 | **Skills for Deeper Conversations**   * Skills for Difficult Dialogue * Defense Mechanisms * Terminology * Implicit Bias | Johnson’s Introduction & Chapter 1 | **Reflection 1: Where are you now, and where are you going?**  **Due: Sunday, January 21st at 11:59 PM** |
| 3 | **The Power of Narratives**   * Community Building * Socioemotional Development * Gardener’s Tale * Emmett Till | Johnson’s Chapter 6  Lee County Remembrance Project Video |  |
| 4 | **Mapping Differences**   * Social Implications * Privilege * Oppression | Johnson’s Chapter 2  Dancy et al., 2018 | **Reflection 2: Lee County Remembrance Project**  **Due: Sunday, February 4th at 11:59 PM** |
| 5 | **Institutional Harm**   * Documentary: Race – The Power of Illusion * Historical Context of Race and Racism * Types of Racism * Anti-Racism | Johnson’s Chapter 4 |  |
| 6 | **Racial Identity Development**   * Identity Development * Intersectionality |  |  |
| 7 | **Disability Visibility**   * History and Rights * Health Disparities |  | **Reflection 3: Racial Identity Models**  **Due: Sunday, February 25th at 11:59 PM** |
| **Spring Break – no classes March 10-14** | | | |
| 8 | **Invisible Boxes**   * Sex vs Gender * Gender Norms * Sexism | Johnson’s Chapter 7 |  |
| 9 | **LGBTQ+**   * Terminology * Discrimination * Inclusivity and hope | Johnson’s Chapter 8 | **Group Video Project:**  **Discussion on Ableism**  **Due: Sunday, March 31st at 11:59 PM** |
| 10 | **Wealth, Class, and Social Status**   * Economic systems * Intersectionality * Social mobility | Johnson’s Chapter 3 & 5 |  |
| 11 | **Role of Religion**   * Privilege and Oppression * Interfaith and Pluralism | Johnson’s Chapter 9  & Blumenfeld, 2006 | **Video Project: Wealth Disparity**  **Due: Sunday, April 14th at 11:59 PM** |
| **AU Project related** | | | |
|  | AU Culture project |  | **AU Culture Project**  **All projects due on Canvas:**  **Sunday, April21st at 11:59 PM**  **Presentations will take place April 22-26** |
| **Final Exam:**  **Online (Proctored) May 5-9** | | | |

**8. Course Requirements/Evaluation:**

**Readings**: At the beginning of each week you should have assigned readings completed prior to attending class. The readings will introduce you to the discussion for the day.

**In-Class Activities (15 points):** to receive credit for in-class activities, you must be in attendance, and you must participate in the activity. An unexcused absence will result in a 0 on that day, these points/activities cannot be made up.

**Reflection Assignment: Where are you now, and where are you going? (minimum 500 words without title, name, double-spaced, 12pt font; 10 points)** Write a paper answering the following prompts:

* **2 points:** Who are you? To answer this question, delve into different aspects of your identity (your age, your sex, your family, where you grew up, whether you have pets, have religious affiliation, play a sport, what country/city/town you’re from).
* **2 points:** How are you *similar* to other students at Auburn or in this class? These similarities might be visible or invisible. How did you learn you have these shared experiences or identities?
* **2 points:** How are you *different* from other students at Auburn or in this class? These differences might be visible or invisible. How did you learn about these differences?
* **2 points:** In this class, we will be discussing: race, gender, sexuality, disability, wealth and poverty, religious affiliation, as these topics relate to us and other people. Which of these topics will you be *most comfortable discussing and why?* Which of these topics might be more *difficult to navigate*, and why?
* **2 points:** Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? Describe the diversity of race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, and wealth that you may experience/encounter at that stage of your life.

**Reflection Assignment for Lee County Remembrance Project (500 words minimum, double-spaced + Reference Page, 12pt font; 10 points)** Write a paper answering the following prompts after viewing the Lee Country Remembrance Project Guest Lecture

* **6 points:** Provide a detailed description of the 3 most important pieces of information you learned from the LCRP lecture (2 pts per detailed description). What is “most important” to you will be subjective: for example, these could be points connected to your identity, information that surprised you, connections to our class content, or points that caused an emotional reaction
* **2 points:** Explore in detail whether the information presented to you was new. What did you learn that you had not been previously aware of before this lecture? What experiences in life led to you not being aware of this history? If you were not taught this in school, why do you think that is?
* **1 point:** What information did you already know before this lecture? What experiences facilitated you already being aware of this history? If you were not aware of any of this information, discuss what you wish you had known before today
* **1 point:** Finally, discuss how you might share what you learned from the LCRP presentation with a friend or family member. Discuss who that person is, what their prior knowledge of the topic might be, and why it may be important for you to have that conversation with them
* **1 point will be removed for each of the following:**
  + Failureto reach the word requirement
  + Failure to include references (APA format)

**Reflection Assignment for Racial Identity Models (500 words minimum, double-spaced + Reference Page, 12pt font; 10 points)** Write a paper addressing the following prompts after reviewing all the Racial Identity Development Models and viewing the lecture that incorporates Racial Identity.

* **2 pt: Use of the chosen Racial identity development model that best fits you**
* **2 pt:** Exploration of at least 2 stages you feel most closely align with where you fit from said model. This should include a description of the stages and practical applications from your own life (e.g., descriptive examples that indicate being at said stage)
* **2 pt:** Examination of how your identity and experiences have helped your racial identity development growth
* **2 pt:** Examination of how your identity and experiences have hindered your racial identity development growth
* **2 pt: Based on what you presented above regarding the different oppressions and privilege you experience**, how are your opinions, those you have empathy for, biases, prejudices, and life goals influenced by these experiences? Give us 2-3 examples
* 1 point will be removed for each of the following
  + Failureto reach word requirement
  + Failure to include references (APA format)

**Group Video Project - Ableism: 20-30 minutes (15 points)**

**You will be assigned a group in class. Record a group discussion on Zoom after you watch the documentary *Crip Camp—A Disability Revolution*. Your group should hold a thorough and nuanced discussion of the documentary which should include the following:**

* **5 points:** Each member should describe the two most important pieces of information gained in the documentary. What is “most important” to you will be subjective: for example, these could be points connected to your identity, or information that surprised you or caused an emotional reaction
* **5 points:** Group members will engage in a thorough discussion by asking and answering questions with one another. This discussion should be organic as if members are talking with one another naturally about the documentary. Points will be awarded based on the following:
  + questions are insightful and reflective of a thorough understanding of the documentary
  + questions and answers connect to other course content learned across the semester
  + it is clear from the question-and-answer content that all group members have reflected on their identities as they related to the documentary
* **5 points:** Based on the group discussion, the group will consider together how their opinions, biases, empathy for, and/or prejudice for diverse abilities have been shaped and impact their engagement
* 1 point will be removed for each other following:
  + The recording is outside the required time limit of 20-30 minutes long
  + Not everyone was engaged
  + Group members are distracted (for example, by phones, other people in the room, driving, walking, etc).

**Video Project – Wealth Disparity: 5-6 minutes (10 points)**

**Discuss the following questions on video after listening to the assigned podcast and engaging in the assigned poverty simulation:**

* **2 points:** Describe your relationship, understanding of, and experiences with money and/or socioeconomic status. Utilize 1-2 key life experiences (for example, experiences that helped you grow, molded you, or had a deep impact) to illustrate this relationship
* **2 points:** Discuss how your identity intersected or influenced the experiences you described above. How does **your intersectionality** influence how you think and engage in economics?
* **3 points:** Discuss three aspects of the podcast that were most eye-opening or meaningful to your learning
* **1 point:** Discuss your experience with the simulation
* **2 points:** How are your opinions, those you have empathy for, biases, prejudices, and/or life goals influenced by your intersectionality and your understanding of poverty in America? Give 2 concrete examples

**AU Culture - 15-20 minute presentation, including videos (15 points)**

**This is your biggest project this semester; it gives you and others the chance to reflect on your growth, conduct meaningful research about Auburn, and share your learning.**

**Options:**

1. Disability
2. Gender and Sexuality
3. Race and Ethnicity
4. Religion and Spirituality
5. Veteran Status and Veteran Affairs

* **2 points:** Describe the history of the topic you were assigned, both at Auburn and nearby institutions in comparison to the country at large (this is a good place to include facts and statistics)
  + Who is impacted? What has been done to address this issue in past years?
  + How does the community discuss this issue?
* **5 points:** Describe how this issue is *currently* viewed and experienced on campus by students, administration, and the community at large
  + Were there any recent events that were covered by newspapers or radio stations? What have you found on social media?
  + Discuss groups and individuals who have made changes in this area
    - What can still be done to improve the current services in this area?
    - Reflect on the visibility and access of these services, as well as any neglect you may have noticed
* **3 points:** Interview 3 individuals who are connected to this issue in some capacity
  + - You will include a 1-minute video of each individual you interview
    - You will submit the full video interview with a transcript to your instructor
* **5 points:** Each group member discusses how they were impacted by this project
  + Discuss your strengths and weaknesses as a group member
  + What did you contribute to the project?
  + How has learning this information impacted you personally?
  + How will you use this information moving forward?

**Final Exam**

The final exam will be administered using an online format. If you cannot access an online exam (smartphone, laptop, tablet, etc.), please contact me immediately after the first class. The exam format will be multiple choice and short-answer response questions, based on the readings, videos, class lectures, and discussions. The best way to do well is to stay actively involved in the course material (take notes as you read, review lectures, and quiz yourself).

### **Assignment Grading System**

**Attendance & In-Class Activities:**

10 activities 15 points

**Video Projects**

Wealth Disparity: Podcast & Activity 10 points

Group Video Project: Ableism 15 points

**Reflections**

Where are you now, where are you going? 10 points

Racial Identity Models 10 points

Lee County Remembrance Project 10 points

**Presentation**

AU Culture 15 points

**Assessments**

Final Exam 15 points

**Total 100 points**

**Grade Criteria** (grades will be rounded to the nearest whole number)**:**

A 90 - 100 points

B 80 – 89 points

C 70 – 79 points

D 60 – 69 points

F < 60 points

**9. Classroom Behavior:** Students are expected to be considerate of other perspectives and experiences in all class discussions and interactions. It should be obvious that insulting language, minimization, and personal attacks are unacceptable. Though, none of us are perfect, and at times we may say something that causes harm because of our own lack of awareness. I expect everyone in this class, even myself, to be open to recognizing how we can be better and more aware of microaggressions and biased or marginalizing language. This is an inclusive class environment. This class values the individual identities of its students. Pronouns are a way to affirm someone's identity. They are simply a public way in which people are referred to in place of their name (e.g. "he" or "she" or "they" or "ze" or something else). In this classroom, you are invited to share what pronouns you go by, and we will refer to people using the pronouns that they share.

**10. Respect for Diversity**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let your instructor know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let your instructor know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

1. Discuss the situation privately with your instructor. I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. Notify your instructor of the issue through another source such as your advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with your instructor, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

*Diversity Statement Adapted from Lynn Hernandez, Behavioral and Social Sciences, School of Public Health, Brown University*

**11. Class Policy Statements:**

Late Assignment Policy: **Late assignments are not acceptable**. It is expected that you have completed all assignments by 11:59pm on the day it is due. All assignments will be turned in via Canvas. If you run into technology difficulties on Canvas it is your responsibility to make sure the assignment is still completed and received on time. Contingency plans include an email with the assignment attached or a link to the assignment in a University box folder. Failure to turn an assignment in on time OR failure for the instructor to access the electronic version of an assignment will result in unsatisfactory completion of that course requirement, and in many instances, would mean an inability to pass the class. It is therefore imperative that students complete all course requirements on time. I reserve the right to allow exceptions to this policy, for example, in the event of an emergency.

**12. Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required. Attendance is required. Students are expected to watch all asynchronous lectures (which constitute online class attendance) and **attend all synchronous class meetings with their cameras on.**

For asynchronous lectures, it is important to watch the lecture prior to completing any

assignments. **For synchronous meetings, attendance will be taken in the same way as a face-**

**to-face class would take attendance**. Active, cooperative, and collaborative learning are

strongly emphasized in this class. Thus, open and active participation is expected from

students.

**For synchronous meetings, this means being present with your camera on and not**

**engaging in side conversations or other tasks.**

Students with more than one unexcused absence will result in an Unsatisfactory grade in this class. After one unexcused tardy or early departure of 15 minutes or more, each subsequent tardiness or early departure will be considered an unexcused absence from class. If you are unable to attend an asynchronous lecture or turn in an assignment on time due to an excused absence please contact your instructor immediately. Students are granted excused absences for the following reasons: illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student’s immediate family, death of a member of the student’s immediate family, trips for student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for university classes, trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoena for a court appearance, and religious holidays. Students who wish to have excused absences from class for any other reason must contact the instructor in advance of the absence to request permission. The instructor will weigh the merits of the request and render a decision. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any excused absences, but in no case, shall notification occur more than one week after the absence. Appropriate documentation for all excused absences is required. Please see the Student Policy eHandbook at www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies for more information on excused absences. For an excused absence to not count against the attendance grading requirement, students must make up the missed class period in a manner acceptable to the course instructor within one week of the absence or notification of absence (in cases when notice prior to the absence is not possible—but again, all excused absences must be

communicated to the instructor no later than one week of the absence).

**13. Title 1X:**

Auburn University is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment based on protected class. If you believe you have been the victim of harassment or discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, or sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression), we encourage you to report it. If you report sexual assault or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, the faculty member is obligated to notify the University’s Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. For more information about your Title IX reporting and resource options at Auburn University, please go to: www.auburn.edu/titleix

**14. Accommodations:** Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a zoom meeting with your instructor during the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

**15. Technology Requirements:** This course may require particular technologies to complete coursework. If you need access to additional technological support, please contact the AU Bookstore ataubookstore@auburn.edu.

**16. Honesty Code:** All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) found in the Student Policy eHandbook (http://www.auburn.edu/student\_info/student\_policies/) will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

**17. Office Hours:** I am available during my office hours and by appointment via Zoom. Auburn email is the best way to reach your instructor to schedule an appointment. I encourage you to make an appointment with your instructor if you have any questions or concerns about the course or your performance in it. I am happy to meet with you via Zoom at any time throughout the semester.