

**NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
HUM 165 – CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE (3 CR.)**

Course Description

Introduces students to selected issues in contemporary American culture. Includes topic areas ranging from welfare reform, economic development, privacy, environmental protection and conservation, evolution vs. creation, to family values, and special interest lobbying in our state and national governments. Focuses on the development of the student's critical thinking skills by analyzing, evaluating, and reflecting on opposite sides of the same issue as expressed by public leaders, special interest groups and academicians. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

This course is an elective course and may be taken by students wanting to gain some knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues that unite and/or divide Americans.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

English speaking, reading, and writing skills (ESL 13 English level and above)

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the interplay of factors that influence Americans in their decision to favor or not favor issues, positions, or policies that affect their daily lives
- Analyze the role of education, cultural affinity and/or orientation, interaction with others, generation, and socio-economic status in the positions they espouse in regards to issues that affect them
- Evaluate the different opinions and perspectives expressed by community leaders, elected officials, educators, and policymakers in regards to specific issues that affect the American society
- Form their own views and positions regarding specific issues after exposure to other texts, writings, and discussions and
- Demonstrate appreciation for democratic processes at work in expressing one's views, understanding dissent, and respecting contrarian ideas.

Major Topics to be Included (may vary each semester depending on immediacy and importance of contemporary issues involved)

- a. Gay Marriage
- b. Terrorism and its Aftermath
- c. Genetic Engineering
- d. Welfare Reform (within the context of AFDC)
- e. Evolution v. Creationism
- f. Pornography and Civil Rights
- g. Privacy- The Patriot Act and FISA
- h. English as an Official Language or one of the Official Language