

Addendum

RACEETH 496—Special Studies: Hmong American History and Culture and the U.S. Racial/Ethnic Diversity Course Guidelines

Beginning in Fall 2014, for a course at UWW to be considered for a U.S. Racial/Ethnic Diversity designation, the course proposal must state how Course Objectives 1, 2, and 3 are met. In addition, it must state how at least one additional Course Objective (4 and/or 5) is met.

Course Objectives

1. *Examines how the interaction and contributions of at least one historically underrepresented racial/ethnic group has shaped and continued to shape United States society.*

This course will examine the many ways in which Hmong Americans have contributed to the history and culture of the United States, from their courageous and sacrificial actions on behalf of the United States during the Vietnam War to their current efforts to maintain and share their rich cultural heritage with younger generations of Hmong Americans and non-Hmong Americans alike. At the same time, like all immigrants, they are also creating new hybrid identities and experiences here in the United States, which give rise to both challenges and achievements.

2. *Relates the core of the course content to at least one historically underrepresented racial/ethnic group within in the United States.*

The course content covers both Hmong and Hmong American history and cultural practices. As one of the most recent Asian American immigrant groups, Hmong Americans, especially given their relatively higher population concentrations in Wisconsin and Minnesota, merit focused attention as the subject of university-level coursework. This course will be the first at UWW to do so.

3. *Examines how the cultural practices of at least one historically underrepresented racial/ethnic group in the United States are expressed and how a group's differences in relation to the majority group and/or other minority groups evolve, overlap, and intersect in a variety of contexts, and how the key diversity concepts of power and privilege, and access, impact one's life and the lives of others.*

This course will examine how the cultural practices of Hmong Americans—in some cases, traditional Hmong, in other cases a hybrid between Hmong and mainstream American—can cause conflict within the Hmong American community and between Hmong American and mainstream communities, especially in rural Wisconsin and Minnesota, areas which tend to be less racially diverse than the larger urban centers in the United States, and hence less equipped and experienced to negotiate cultural differences. Among the cultural practices discussed will be religious practices, especially those connected to birth, weddings, and death, and gender roles within the family and larger community. Within discussions of specific Hmong American

cultural practices as well as discussions about identity, cultural barriers, discrimination, cultural hybridity, assimilation, and exile (among other topics), the key diversity concepts of power, privilege and access will be addressed. How, for example, might the routine Shaman practice of tending to a sick child be misconstrued by a county's social services department as child abuse, hence rendering the child's parents legally culpable and morally suspect.

4. *Engages students to participate in multicultural activities (for example, travel study, guest speakers, experiential learning) of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups of the United States.*

This course will culminate in a travel study experience in Week 12 (two days, one night) to Minneapolis-St. Paul, where we will be visiting five Hmong American sites: 1. Hmong Cultural Center in St. Paul; 2. Hmong House Restaurant in St. Paul; 3. Hmong American Partnership (HAP) in Minneapolis; 4. Hmong Archives in St. Paul; 5. Hmong Village in St. Paul. In addition, a guest speaker will be invited to speak about his experiences in a refugee camp and how those experiences inform his experiences and perspectives as a Hmong American. Further, students will be required to attend two co-curricular activities on campus relating to Southeast Asian topics.