

Elements of Successful Coursework in Social Awareness
VSA Academics Committee – 4/1/13

Content

- 1) Rigorous and impactful engagement with at least one major social theme, examples of which include race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and ability.
 - a) Contextualization of that theme, including historical and contemporary perspectives.
- 2) Acknowledgement of and engagement with the intersectionality of systems of oppression and hierarchies of power.
- 3) Basic vocabulary and analytic tools to engage with conceptual and instantiated hierarchies of power and systems of oppression.
 - a) Exposure to one or more major theoretical frameworks for social analysis, examples of which include feminism, Marxism, critical race theory, and queer theory.
- 4) Critical application of the above content to the practice, concepts, and subject matter of the academic field of study.

Format and Structure

- 1) The course must be discussion based and may not be lecture-based.
- 2) The course must include community engagement or action (on or off campus) **and/or** an essay or project that requires students to situate themselves, their backgrounds, and their actions in the context of specific systems of oppression and hierarchies of power.
 - a) If done well, this includes:
 - i) Self-reflection (on social background, and on privilege)
 - ii) Considering the perspectives and experiences of marginalized groups
 - iii) Situating scholars (in the relevant field of study) within systems of privilege and oppression.
- 3) Includes course materials authored by individuals from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and identity groups