Compassion, Empathy, Forgiveness & Social Justice Syllabus

Professor: Dr. Holly Riffe  
Embedded Librarian: Mary Chesnut
Office: 203 BEP 
E-Mail: Riffeh@nku.edu  
Phone: 859-572-5609 
Fax: 859-572-6592
Office Hours: By appointment. Feel free to stop by and see if I’m in the office. Since this is an on-line class, I don’t have scheduled office hours. I typically reply to E-mails M-F within 24 hours (usually a lot quicker). Weekends, I occasionally respond, but do not depend on it.

Course Description:
This is an upper-level undergraduate or graduate on-line course focusing on the meanings of compassion, empathy and forgiveness and the relationship of these concepts to social justice issues.

Students must be proficient in Blackboard and basic word processing/e-mail programs. The instructor is happy to answer questions, particularly if blackboard has been recently updated; however, this is not a course for basic computer skills training. If you do not have the computer skills necessary to complete an on-line class, please look in the class schedule for an in-person class.

Course Objectives:
1. Define and Understand Compassion, Empathy and Forgiveness.
3. Develop Projects to Teach/Use Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness to the Population of your choice based on Current Literature.

Course Documents: This tab has all the information that would typically be found in a course lecture. You are expected to read/view/listen to all of the items found in this section. Most will be on the exam, others will be useful to complete the assignments. I tried to use many different methods (e.g., you tube clips as well as articles) to help you to learn the material. Please let me know what works and what doesn’t. Ask questions about the material as needed. I’ll post answers to the entire class when appropriate.

Assignments
There is an assignment(s) that corresponds to each course objective. Students work individually and as a class to define and understand the concepts. Unlike other group projects, if there is a student who is not completing his/her work in a timely manner, you simply leave that person out. It will neither enhance nor detract from your work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define and Understand Compa ssion, Empathy and Forgiveness</td>
<td>1. Review/view Literature/videos on Course Documents Tab</td>
<td>1. Compassion: 9/7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Discuss/Define Concepts on Discussion Boards with Group</td>
<td>2. Empathy: 10/5</td>
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<td>3. Agree on Definition of each Concept (60 points for this section)</td>
<td>3. Forgiveness: 11/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Violent Communication Training</td>
<td>1. View 2 video series under Course Documents</td>
<td>10/26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Complete corresponding assignment(100 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Projects to Teach/Use Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness to the Population of your choice based on Current Literature</td>
<td>1. Collaborate on Literature Review of Each Concept (150 points)</td>
<td>1. Compassion: 10/5</td>
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<td>2. Turn in 3 projects that teach/use Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness (150 points)</td>
<td>2. Empathy: 11/2</td>
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<td>3. Forgiveness: 11/30</td>
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<td>Apply the Concepts of Compassion, Empathy and Forgiveness in a context of Social Justice.</td>
<td>“take home” Essay Exam (100 points)</td>
<td>12/14 (or before)</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>Providing consistent and timely thoughtful contributions to all discussions (40 points)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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**Grading scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Point Scale</th>
<th>Graduate Point Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A  600- 558 points</td>
<td>A  600- 558 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- 557-540</td>
<td>A- 557-540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ 539-522</td>
<td>B+ 539-522</td>
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<tr>
<td>B 521-498</td>
<td>B 521-498</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- 497-480 below</td>
<td>B- 497-480</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+ 479-462</td>
<td>C+ 479-462</td>
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<tr>
<td>C 461-438</td>
<td>C 461-438</td>
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<td>F 437 and below</td>
<td>F 437 and below</td>
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Graduate students are expected to demonstrate skills (writing and conceptual) on a slightly more advanced level than undergraduate students.

**Embedded Librarian** This course has, as an instructor, Mary Chesnut. She is our very own research and library resource. You are asked to review the literature in Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness to construct projects in each of those areas. Professor Chesnut is the “go to” person for assistance with the literature. She can teach you how to quickly access articles, how to generate key words, how to use the campus resources etc. Please use her. She’ll make your life and my life much happier!

**Student Honor Code**
Please refer to and abide by the student honor code located on the NKU website at http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/HonorCode.htm.

“The work you will do in this course is subject to the Student Honor Code and the discretion of the professor. The Honor Code is a commitment to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct, a commitment that, individually and collectively, the students of Northern Kentucky University will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements.”

**Students with disabilities**
Students with disabilities who require accommodations (Academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services) for this course must register with the Disability Services Office. Please contact the Disability Service Office immediately in the University Center, or call 859/572/6373 for more information. Verification of your disability is required in the Disability Services Office for you to receive reasonable academic accommodations.

**Final Course Evaluation**
I will publish the URL for the final evaluation as soon as it becomes available. Please complete that evaluation.

**Define and Understand Compassion, Empathy and Forgiveness**

1. This is both an individual and a group assignment. As an individual, you will read/view the articles and videos for compassion, empathy and forgiveness under the appropriate folder in course documents. (think of this as part of your text)
2. Next you will go to the appropriate discussion board and enter your thoughts on the readings/viewings. I will be entering my thoughts as well, prodding you to think in a different way.
3. Last, the entire class will engage in a discussion around a common definition that you will use for the class. The group will need to determine how to organize itself to make this work. Think about how you would get a community group to agree on one project to undertake for the year. The good part is that you will have three chances to improve your process (one discussion board each for compassion, empathy and forgiveness).
Non-Violent Communication Training (NVC)

“NVC focuses attention on whether people’s needs are being fulfilled, and if not, what can be done to fulfill these needs. It shows us how to express ourselves in ways that increase the likelihood others will willingly contribute to our well being. It also shows us how to receive the messages of others in ways that increase the likelihood that we will willingly contribute to their wellbeing” (Rosenberg, 2005)

During this course, you will view the introductory course in non-violent communication. The intermediate DVD’s are also available in the Media Center at Steely Library, but they won’t stream. It is my hope that you will gain the skills to communicate effectively with others, and in turn, help others to communicate effectively. Non-violent communication skills are crucial to work in social justice.

My expectations for this section of the course, is for you to not only view the videos, but to practice using NVC in your own everyday life. In addition, you’ll be receiving other practice techniques throughout the course via the announcement page. Try out those techniques as well. This is not just for you, but for all the people in your life…or just those people you pass on the street. The power is with you. You can view this as one class to get over with on the way to earning a degree and getting on with real life OR you can actively participate and realize that this is life. There is no waiting for life to begin when you cross the stage at graduation, or when you get your first job, or when you have your first child. This is it. I promise that as you genuinely practice at the skills of living, your life will improve immensely.

After you complete the training, you’ll complete an assignment that will check on your understanding of the concepts in the videos. There will also be an ungraded discussion board where you can talk with each other and with me about all the things you are learning this semester. Have fun with it!

Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness Project Instructions

You will create three projects (aka: lesson plans, treatment plans) on compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. Each concept is a different plan. You should base your plans on the available literature, modified for your chosen population. Your population could be couples (e.g., couples counseling), prisoners, early elementary school, etc. It doesn’t matter to me which population you choose, but I want it to be important to you.

There is a discussion board attached to each project’s literature review. That is to help each of you to share ideas and findings. You may want to start a list of everyone’s interests so if you come across a topic on say prisoners and you know that another student is interested in prisoners, you could copy the citation and place it in that forum. You will be graded on participation in generating a good literature base for everyone so make certain to work on this. You might find your embedded librarian, Mary Chesnut, particularly helpful in this area.
With each project plan you have two overarching goals.
1. The plan should involve using the concept of compassion, empathy or forgiveness to work with a specific population.
2. Any human should be able to pick up your plan and use it with a group without discussing the details with you. That means you must be very clear about each step. It may look more like an annotated outline than a term paper. That does not mean it will be short. Each step must be provided in detail.

For each project you must include the following sections (there may be many steps in each section):
1. Title (be specific, for example, “teaching compassion to pre-schoolers”)
2. Aim/Purpose (why you are doing the project?)
3. Design (how do you reach the aim/purpose?)
4. Evaluation Plan (how do you know it works?)
5. References (APA style)
6. For additional information see….there might be a seminal article or a website that would help your colleagues.

**Final “take home” Exam**
This will be your last opportunity to add points to your grade. It will be an applied exam based on all the practices you have experimented with and the concepts you have learned.