Course Identifier: (e.g. TLC801) ISS325

Course Name: War & Revolution

Department: Center for Integrative Studies  College: Social Science

Primary contact name, phone number, and email (normally this will be the lead instructor)

Christina DeJong, 432-9978, dejongc@msu.edu

Faculty and Staff Involved in Developing and Offering the Course please list full name, position at MSU, email address, and project role for each person

NAME                        MSU Affiliation                    PROJECT ROLE

Christina DeJong            Center for Integrative Studies in Social Science   Instructor

Type of Course:
___ FULLY ONLINE (no required face to face component)
___ BLENDED/HYBRID (some face to face time is replaced by online learning)
_x_ TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED FACE-TO-FACE (a face-to-face course which uses technology for teaching and learning in an innovative way)

Semester(s) offered in 2010-2011 and number of students enrolled:

SEMESTER        # STUDENTS
Spring 2011  25
I. Course Description (400 word limit)
(broadly, what does the course teach, how is student performance assessed, what aspects of the course are online or technology-enhanced)

My section of ISS325 is subtitled “The Criminology of Genocide”. In this course, we investigate genocide as a series of social processes focused on theories of criminal behavior and the workings of the criminal justice process. Our discussion of genocide reveals that the same social processes that lead to genocide are present (albeit on a much smaller scale) in our everyday lives. In addition, I hope to expose the students to issues related to genocide and human rights across the globe—issues that the American government has historically ignored, and in which they have refused to intervene.

Students are assessed through oral and written discussion, monthly journal entries, independent research in the form of a genocide case study and group project, and a cumulative final exam. The course is run in a face-to-face environment, in which the professor meets with students twice per week for approximately 1 hour 50 minutes per class.

In terms of technology, the course has an ANGEL page that contains Power Point outlines of each lecture, discussion boards on which students can earn participation points and other relevant multimedia (links to research, videos, etc.). Students can earn participation during class meetings, but they are also encouraged to reflect on the material presented in class and contribute online. This also allows students who may be uncomfortable participating in discussions to make a valuable contribution to the course.

The second technological component used in this course is Facebook. A fan page was created entitled “Genocide and Human Rights Research at MSU”. Every semester, students are encouraged to “like” the page and are able to earn participation points for commenting on posts. Given that former students are also fans of the page, current students are able to enter into discussion and debate with former students who still like the page. It is my hope that this “generational learning” will continue long after the students have left MSU. Even if students do not contribute to discussion, posts will continue to appear on their news feed if they continue to like the page. In this way, they receive current news about genocide and human rights violations around the world. Discussion is facilitated in ANGEL and Facebook by three Undergraduate Learning Assistants. These undergraduate students have been trained in ethics and confidentiality as well as interpersonal communication.

II. Learning and Interaction Goals of the Technology Enhanced, Face-to-Face Course
(what learning and interaction outcomes did you hope to achieve in your use of technology, why is this an award-worthy course)

Two types of technology are used in this course. ANGEL was used to organize course materials, provide opportunities for online discussion, and serves as a location to upload written assignments and papers. Facebook is also used to encourage class discussions—given that many students spend hours each week (and possibly hours every day) interacting with friends on Facebook, it seemed like a natural opportunity to provide constant exposure to current events and course issues.
Both ANGEL and Facebook were used to accomplish common several learning and interaction outcomes:

1. Allow students to discuss difficult topics in the safety of the online environment (ANGEL & Facebook):

   As an example, we discussed the crime of rape in the genocidal context in a recent course. Some students may feel anxious about sharing their thoughts in the classroom in a “live” setting, but may be more comfortable contributing to the discussion online. Students who attend class are able to earn participation points by contributing to the online discussions.

2. Provide an opportunity for students to reflect and contribute to discussion a few hours—or a few days—later (ANGEL & Facebook):

   With a serious topic such as genocide, students frequently need time to reflect on the material before contributing to the discussion. In addition, students sometimes have “light bulb moments” after class has ended. Online discussion forums allow them to make a contribution to the ongoing discussion—they also frequently incorporate topics from other courses, thereby truly integrating the educational experience at Michigan State.

3. Facilitate discussion and communication between students, the instructor, scholarly experts, and laypersons with an interest in issues surrounding genocide and human rights.

   Creating the “Genocide and Human Rights Research at MSU” Facebook page allows multiple instructors and students to like the page and encourage discussion among a diverse group of people. Because anyone can “like” the page, even individuals not affiliated with MSU can join in the discussion.

   It is important to note that this is NOT a course page on Facebook. It is open to anyone with interest in issues surrounding genocide and human rights. In addition to encouraging public discourse on this important topic, the page can be used to highlight research and outreach activities by MSU faculty and students.

4. Facebook is used to expose students to current events and continue the educational experience beyond the classroom.

   One of the goals of integrative studies is to make social science relevant to students in their daily lives. Because of the way in which Facebook is structured, it is very easy to “like” a page but slightly more difficult to stop liking it—therefore, my hope over time is that the fans will grow and the conversation will continue over generations of students.

III. Points of Interest and Innovation

(Please discuss course highlights and including URLs and/or screen shots of key components of the course you want to bring to the attention of the judges. Possible outstanding aspects of the
Technology is used in this course in a number of ways to enhance the learning experience. Section III of this application highlights the following points of interest with regard to the use of technology in ISS325:

- Organization of lecture materials and display of multimedia content
- Student journals
- Discussion in ANGEL and Facebook

Course Organization and Multimedia Content
ANGEL is used to keep course materials organized. Figure 1 demonstrates how the course materials are organized—a few days before each lecture, a new module opens to allow students to work ahead.

Figure 1: Organization of Course Materials

![Figure 1: Organization of Course Materials](image)

Each lecture’s folder contains the same organization, along with optional materials to enhance student learning. In the module below (Figure 2), students are provided with a link to the
personal story of Geddy Lee (of the band “Rush”), whose parents were Holocaust survivors. In addition, students watched a music video discussing the Israel-Palestine conflict in which the similarities between both cultures are highlighted, rather than the differences. Time was spent in lecture discussing whether the treatment of Palestinians by the government of Israel meets the definition of genocide as contained in the Convention Against the Prevention of Genocide.

Figure 2: Organization within Modules

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Student Journals

Because of the difficult nature of the course topic, students complete five personal journal entries during the semester. I cannot share the content of these journals as I have promised the students confidentiality, but this image below demonstrates how the journals are organized. The discussion boards are set up in “personal journal” format so that students cannot see each other’s posts.
Course Discussion: ANGEL and Facebook

In addition to the use of ANGEL and Facebook, I frequently use multimedia content to enhance the learning experience for students. As an example, we recently discussed the controversial “Groupon” advertisement that played during the 2011 Super Bowl. In a segment of lecture I referred to as “Offensive or Not?”, we discussed the advertisement along with other examples of genocide in popular culture. We viewed clips of movies on YouTube (specifically, “Springtime for Hitler” from The Producers), spoofs of the Groupon ad on television shows (Late Night with Conan O’Brian).

Facebook allows clips to be shared easily, and also encourages non-students to participate in the discussion. So far, few individuals outside of my own students have engaged in discussion, but I hope to grow that number in future semesters.

Ideally, other professors who conduct research and teach about genocide and human rights will join in the discussion as well. I envision this Facebook page as a medium through which communication and collaboration will thrive at Michigan State University.
Figure 4: Shot of Main Facebook Page with Discussion

Figure 5. Discussion of Another Topic on the Facebook Page
IV. Accessibility

(It is not a requirement that winning entries be accessible to learners with visual, auditory, mobility, and cognitive disabilities. However, if your course content is accessible, or if it incorporates an innovative approach to accessibility, please describe.)

This course does not contain any special accessibility for students with learning disabilities. However, in future semesters I plan to adapt the course as needed to fulfill the needs of all students.

V. Evidence of Effectiveness with Students

(Please include evidence such as comparative test scores, SIRS results, short student letters of support, your own observations of project or group performance, etc.)

This is the second time I have offered this course. The first offering was in Spring 2010, but that section did not contain the social media component.

SIRS results for Spring 2010 were strong. All ratings fell between 1 (Superior) and 2 (Above Average), with the highest ratings for “Instructor Involvement” (1.30) and “Student-Instructor Interaction” (1.32). The lowest rating was for “Course Demands” (2.00), which I believe reflects the challenging nature of the course material—several comments from students in their journals and on the SIRS indicated that they felt the assigned reading was a bit heavy.

I have included a few comments from students in Spring 2010 (N=25) to provide some evidence of the effectiveness of the course in general:

“Thanks for such a wonderful semester. I’m graduating in May, and I know for a fact that this is a class that I will carry with me for a long time. I wish you the best in future classes!”

“I just wanted to say this I enjoyed this class A LOT. It is not like any other ISS class offered at MSU. …I loved doing the personal journal entries. They allowed us to share our feelings, sometimes, things we don't want to say in class.”

“I really enjoyed this class. There was a nice balance between lecture and videos, and the videos were well picked to give the most impact on what we are learning and make it easier to make the connection between lectures and what really happened. I looked forward to it every day and even though I never spoke out and participated in the actual discussion, it was very interesting to listen to the students’ comments.”

“I really enjoyed this class. I find myself more informed of the world around me and I am using stuff I learning in this class in everyday situations. … Because of this last semester I feel that I can change the world for the better and not be a bystander anymore and strive to become a rescuer and a leader.”
“Dr. DeJong is amazing! The class is so interesting! It doesn't even feel like I'm in an ISS class because the material is so interesting and fun to learn.”

My own observations of the course support the student evaluations. Students are eager to discuss these issues in class, and refer to stories posted on Facebook even if they did not post a comment to the discussion. Thus, I have some evidence that they are paying some attention to the material posted on Facebook.

VI. Plans for Sustainability

The down side of allowing students to participate online is the time & effort needed to encourage discussion and mark participation in class. For the second year in a row, I have used Undergraduate Learning Assistants to facilitate commentary on ANGEL and now on Facebook.

In Fall 2010, the Center for Integrative Studies in Social Science began offering an online training course for students interested in participating in the Undergraduate Learning Assistant program. Students can take the course for credit and receive an honorarium for participating. I have been very pleased with the ULAs who contribute to my class, and I have been successful at finding students whose academic backgrounds fill the gaps in my own knowledge (my most valuable students have been majors in James Madison College with specialized coursework in comparative politics and international relations).

In Fall 2011, this course will be modified and be taught under a new number: SSC499. It will serve as a capstone course for students in the Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science major. While the core readings will remain the same, the focus on criminology will be broadened. Instead, the course will study genocide more broadly. I plan to continue using ULAs and social media to facilitate discussion and spread knowledge about genocide.

Finally, given that the Facebook page contains current students, former students, professors, and people not affiliated with MSU who have interested in the topic, I believe it will provide an ongoing method for encouraging discourse on issues of major social import.