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