

*Sociology of Empathy, Leadership, and Civic Engagement*  
(SYP 4306, Class # 26294, section WM40)

When: Tuesday 5-6 periods (11:45 a.m. - 1:40 p.m.), Thursday 6 period (12:50 p.m. - 1:40 p.m.)  
Where: ROLO 115

This section is NOT a Writing Requirement section for the 24,000 word-writing requirement.

Dr. William Marsiglio  
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Office Hours in Room Turlington 3108.

Tuesday: 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
Thursday: 10:30 a.m.-- 12:30 p.m.  
And by appointment (zoom perhaps too)

**NOTES:**

1. I will use Canvas for this course. **If you want to communicate with me via email, please do so directly at [marsig@ufl.edu](mailto:marsig@ufl.edu) rather than through the Canvas system.**
2. Ideally students should have taken at least one lower level course in sociology, women's studies, or psychology, but I have had numerous students with limited experience in the social sciences excel in my upper-division courses when they are committed to working hard.
3. This is a reading intensive course with 4 books and 8-10 chapters/essays. Thus, if you do not like to read you should avoid taking this course. But the course is also designed to be a lot of fun!

**COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Examines the processes that frame how we manage the relationship between the “me” and “we” in our culture. Showcases how skill-building initiatives to promote MEAL life skills (mindfulness, empathy, altruism, and leadership) can empower people while producing healthier social systems. It also illustrates strategies to create supportive environments to promote personal growth, community engagement, and social justice.

**COURSE SUMMARY**

Many of us face difficult and diverse challenges as we search for a sense of group belonging and we-ness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this high-tech and politicized age, we grapple with new options for defining ourselves and group belonging. At the same time, we are also losing other opportunities to develop we-ness. By restructuring our communities to make them more car-oriented, increasing our online consumption patterns, and becoming more obsessed with our cell phones we are in effect minimizing the face-to-face rituals that once helped us build forms of we-ness.

The issues associated with group belonging highlight our potential and vulnerability as individuals, as a society, and as a global village. We are vulnerable, partly, because the 21<sup>st</sup> century news industry, social media platforms, and tribal politics breed a group think mentality and rhetoric that threatens our democracy, social institutions, and way of life. As Americans, we have become increasingly polarized in our culture wars and politics. The culture wars deepen ideological divides and reinforce whatever specific brand of we-ness we hold dear. Despite our circumstances, our desire to experience we-ness and our uncanny ability to cooperate if motivated, signal that we still have the potential to create a promising future.

This course, set against the backdrop of rapid social change and intense divisiveness, is designed to help students better understand and engage with this imposing social reality. At its core, the course examines the historically situated and socially constructed processes that frame how we interpret the relationship between the “me” and “we” in our culture. Moreover, the course showcases how skill-building initiatives to promote what I refer to as *MEAL* life skills (mindfulness, empathy, altruism, and leadership) can empower people while producing healthier social systems at every level. The course demonstrates how promoting personal growth, community engagement, and social justice perspectives provides the logic to create supportive environments that cultivate healthy forms of we-ness in diverse contexts.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Requires students to work both independently and in small groups to achieve four objectives:

1. Identify the key elements of the MEAL framework
2. Articulate the contributions of key thinkers to the development of the MEAL framework
3. Apply key course concepts to complete a self-assessment of the student’s leadership and followership roles
4. Design a group proposal for an initiative that addresses a community-based social issue while integrating key course elements/concepts

My plan is to balance the individual versus the cooperative learning approach. Roughly 70% of your grade will be based on your individual efforts and 30% will reflect your involvement in group-based activities.

Students will explore why, how, and with what effect we build we-ness into our lives during these complex and turbulent times. We examine the social processes by which we attempt to achieve a state of we-ness that produces either good, bad, or mixed outcomes by focusing specifically on:

- 1) intimate groups of family/kin, friends, and close associates,

- 2) opportunities that foster ideological commitments based on shared beliefs and values, most notably politics and religion,
- 3) leisure/hobbies and sports activities,
- 4) community groups, activism, volunteering, and disaster responses, and
- 5) paid work sites—especially those marked by high risk and commitment.

The course will also demonstrate how promoting personal growth, community engagement, and social justice perspectives provides the logic to create supportive environments that will ensure that healthy we-ness flourishes in diverse contexts. Toward this end, we highlight how the prospects for creating forms of we-ness that empower people are inextricably tied to our ability to enhance and mobilize our empathy and leadership skills. Informed by the prevailing trend championing experiential and service learning, the course underscores the virtues of civic engagement and national service programs. Done well, these programs will inspire young people, address key social problems, ease our entrenched social divisions, strengthen the larger social fabric, and uplift our spirits as both Americans and global citizens. In the process, they will teach leadership skills and bolster healthy forms of we-ness. We'll explore the value of the cultivating *MEAL* life skills (mindfulness, empathy, altruism, and leadership)

During the second week of the semester (after drop/add period), students will be assigned to a small group (3-4 students). Students will be responsible for completing a team project outlined below. They will also have other in-class assignments to complete as part of this group. My vision is that the group's supportive energy will grow organically and provide students with an informal, semi-structured resource to help them navigate the course. Ideally, it will provide students with an insider's view of how we-ness can be built and managed in real-time. My plan is to balance the individual versus the cooperative learning approach. Roughly 70% of your grade will be based on your individual efforts and 30% will reflect your involvement in group-based activities.

### **REQUIRED READING MATERIALS**

I've listed the readings below in the course in which we will read them, so *Chasing We-ness* will come first. I placed an order for the books at the Florida Book Store, but may be able to find used copies online as well.

- 1) Marsiglio, William, *Chasing We-ness: Cultivating Empathy and Leadership in a Polarized World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023). pp 474, Available at Florida Book Store.
- 2) Picciolini, Christian, *Breaking Hate: Confronting the New Culture of Extremism* (New York: Hachette Books, 2019). pp. 216
- 3) Zaki, Jamil, *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World* (New York: Crown, 2019). pp. 196

- 4) Brown, Brené, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.* (London, UK: Penguin, 2018). pp. 272

In the syllabus, you'll also see some assigned readings that list information instructing you to either access them using: a link I've provided, the Smathers Library West's online system, or retrieving copies that I've placed on reserve at Library West. You'll be responsible for deciding whether you want to print/copy them or not.

**CLASS FORMAT AND ETIQUETTE**

This course is reading and discussion intensive. The format is a combination of lecture, class discussion, in-class small group exercises, and videos. The lectures supplement the assigned reading material, so it is important that students attend class regularly in addition to reading the assignments. I encourage student participation and portions of some classes will be set aside specifically for class discussion on selected topics. Students will be encouraged to refine their critical thinking skills individually while completing small in-class team projects. In addition, students will have an opportunity to learn about qualitative interviewing and personally conduct in-depth interviews.

Students should feel free to think about how their personal experiences are relevant to our class discussions and group exercises; however, it is essential that students attempt to understand how their experiences illustrate sociological concepts and general patterns or represent exceptions to those patterns.

Because many students are likely to have strong personal opinions about the issues we will cover in this course, we need to create an environment in which students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and disagreeing with one another in a civil manner. My teaching philosophy is grounded on the assumption that it is better to "allow" students to take unpopular or unconventional stands on gender issues than to try and police speech. However, I expect students to direct their critical comments toward a specific idea or philosophy, rather than personalizing attacks against other students. So long as the comment does not reflect a personal attack, I will expect students to take the initiative to defend their own position in a civil way if they are offended by another student's way of thinking.

If all goes as planned, we should have a lot of fun and learn from each other.

Assignment Due Dates and Final Grade Contribution			
	Due Date	Points	Percent Toward Final Grade
Attendance: In-class Small Team Projects,	Because I emphasize class attendance, in-class group work, informed class participation, and collaborative learning, I incorporate a	200	20%

<p>Individual Reading Reflections</p>	<p>combination of options for students to earn points that require class attendance (and in some instances, written individual or small group work that is submitted during class).</p> <p>Students must attend class to earn these points. To incentivize attendance, I do NOT permit students to submit material online instead of attending class. There will be between 10-14 opportunities during the semester of this type.</p> <p>In those instances where I simply take attendance (“attendance only days”) I will do so randomly, ie., I will not announce them in advance. Students will receive 10 points if they arrive on time and stay the entire period. Proportional point reductions may occur for late arrivals or early departures, e.g., if you only attend class for 25 minutes you would be eligible for 5 points.</p> <p>On those occasions in which I ask students to do written group work in class, do a writing assignment outside of class but submit it during a designated class, or do a written assignment in class on their own, I will evaluate those assignments out of a 10 or 20 point maximum. For in-class small group assignments, team members will receive the same score based on the quality/quantity of their work. I will announce during the previous class and on CANVAS if an outside writing will be due the following class session..</p> <p>Students who supply documentation for a university authorized absence and who either miss the “attendance only” days or do not hand in a written assignment on those days in which the assignment is due, will have an opportunity to earn those “missed” points on the final exam. They will answer a BRIEF essay question during the exam. Students have always had sufficient time to complete the multiple course exam and the brief essay during the 2-hour finals block, but should you need additional time to complete the essay beyond that 2-hour time frame, I will</p>		
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	ensure that you have the extra time to complete your essay. The essay will cover material that you are expected to know for the multiple choice exam. See a more detailed description below in the section on Project Assignment Descriptions.		
Quiz	February 11, Tuesday, 11:45 a.m.	100	10%
Individual Analytic Essay	April 3, Thursday, 12:50 p.m.	250	25%
Team Project (Typed Proposal & Report, Oral Presentation with Power Point Slide Show) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal (20)</li> <li>• Written Report (50)</li> <li>• Oral Presentation (180)</li> </ul>	<b>Proposal Due Date: TBA</b>  <b>April 14<sup>th</sup> (MONDAY, 12:00 p.m. noon),</b> <b>Written Report</b>  Note: We may have to change this date depending on how many students enroll and how many teams we have. We need days/times to do the oral presentations.	250	25%
Final Exam	May 1, Thursday 10:00 – 12:00 p.m. (noon)	200	20%
	There is <b>NO extra credit</b> for this course!	1,000	

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. **Link to Full Description:**  
<https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1516//regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **UF UNDERGRADUATE ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences count from the first class meeting.

In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved.

Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.

You cannot participate in classes unless you are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors.

If you do not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which you are registered, and you have not contacted the department to indicate your intent, you can be dropped from the course. You must not assume that you will be dropped, however.

The department will notify you if you have been dropped from a course or laboratory. You can request reinstatement on a space-available basis if you present documented evidence.

The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory. After due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

## **GRADING POLICIES**

The quiz will consist of 20-25 multiple choice questions (and perhaps a short essay question). The final exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. The questions for both the Quiz and Final Exam will require students to understand the meaning of concepts, theories, and empirical patterns related to the material. The final will be cumulative. I will provide some sort of study guide late in the semester. The exam is the property of this course. Students are NOT permitted to take an exam out of the classroom or office nor may they write down exam questions--failure to comply will result in an "E" since non-compliance is, in effect, cheating. Cheating or copying during an exam also results in an "E" for the exam and the entire course and I will not hesitate to take students to honor court.

I expect all students to take the exam during the scheduled class period. I do not give make-up exams except under the rarest of circumstances. You **MUST NOTIFY ME IN ADVANCE** that there is a very serious problem, and I will process your request based on university policy regarding excused absences and make-up exams. If I administer a make-up exam, I reserve the right to give an exam that is of the same format but different questions from the exam the class had. Students who take make-up exams for **ANY REASON**, other than university authorized absences, will be graded on a straight percentage scale (i.e., any curve that is applied to students who take the exam during the scheduled period will **NOT** apply to students taking a make-up exam). My policy is designed to promote fairness for students taking the exam during the scheduled period because those who take it late have additional time to study and potentially consult with students who have taken the scheduled exam. I encourage you to not take this class if you anticipate that you might miss an exam. I will administer **NO EARLY FINAL EXAMS** (everyone, including seniors and out-of-state students, will take the exam during the scheduled period).

I expect to receive all individual student papers and group reports by the assigned due dates. I will assign a late penalty of 20 points per DAY (not class period) for papers handed in after the announced due date (regardless of your excuse unless it is a university authorized absence). If the project is due on a Tuesday and you don't get around to submitting it to me until Thursday, you will be penalized 20 points apiece for Tuesday and Wednesday (40 points). For example, if you would have earned, say, 260 points out of a possible 300 (87% = B+), your project score would be 220 due to the penalty (73%= C). A good strategy is to complete your paper a week in

advance and then spend the last week making minor changes to it if necessary and having your friends proof-read it.

Your final grade is based solely on the assignments and grading scale listed above. In addition, I may, on rare occasions, award a student from 1-10 additional points if he/she has done an **EXCEPTIONAL** job in class discussion and has stellar attendance. Offering insightful comments and asking thought provoking questions on a regular basis throughout the course is required--simply talking a lot does not suffice nor will an occasional brilliant comment earn you any of the points. Being present and being prepared EVERY day (having read the material) is part of EXCEPTIONAL participation in my mind. To clarify my philosophy regarding these potential points, I'll describe a specific student I once had who would have risen to the level of being awarded some EXCEPTIONAL participation points (she actually earned an A so she didn't need them). The person attended class EVERY day; she was on time EVERY day; she did her readings on time throughout the ENTIRE semester; she actually read them early in the morning prior to each class period; she was able to answer EVERY question regarding the readings that other students could not; she offered insightful commentary on a consistent basis throughout the ENTIRE semester--not in spurts; she asked thought provoking questions at various points throughout the ENTIRE semester; and she was a leader in her small in-class team projects. This student is the standard I use to assess EXCEPTIONAL participation. I include this option to provide a little protection to the rare student who works incredibly hard but may have some unforeseen tragedy adversely affect his or her performance on one of the other assignments.

There is absolutely NO additional extra credit for this course. **Please do NOT ask about extra credit.**

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Your final point total, and the letter grade associated with it, are FINAL. I will NOT simply add a point or two to someone's final point total so he or she can get a passing grade or a score that will enable the student to graduate that semester. Students should not ask for preferential treatment: it's unfair to the other students and challenges the integrity of the grading scale. **Students must complete ALL assignments to pass the course.**

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Students are **NOT** permitted to sell class notes or tapes of lectures, presentations, or discussions. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which they need to present to me when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. The SDS office is located in 001 Reid Hall.

Students interested in seeking writing assistance should consider visiting the UF Reading & Writing Center (RWC). It provides 30-minute consultations. The RWC is located in SW Broward Hall, phone: 392-6420 <http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter>

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

## Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273- 4450.
- Collegiate Veterans Success Center: The Collegiate Veterans Success Center supports UF student veterans, service members, and family members of veterans with a designated space on campus to study, socialize, and meet with on and off campus resources in a fun and relaxing atmosphere. Please visit the website or contact [vetsuccess@dso.ufl.edu](mailto:vetsuccess@dso.ufl.edu) or 352-294-7233 for more information.

## Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392- 1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email [ask@ufl.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@ufl.libanswers.com) for more information.
- Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.

**Link for UF Grading Policy: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>**

## **FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

The distribution I list below shows the range of grades, the grade point value in terms of how a student's grade will be calculated into his or her GPA, the percentage range I will be using to assign final grades, and the point value range that I'll use to determine final grades. PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU EARN A GRADE OF "C-" OR BELOW IT WILL NOT BE COUNTED TOWARD YOUR SOCIOLOGY MAJOR REQUIREMENTS. In other words, you will need at least 730 points in this class in order for it to count toward your sociology major requirements.

Grade	Grade Points	Percent	Points
A	4.0	93-100	930-1,000
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899
B	3.0	83-86	830-869
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799
C	2.0	73-76	730-769
C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
D	1.0	63-66	630-669
D-	.67	60-62	600-629
E	0	Below 50	599 and below

## **INCOMPLETE GRADES**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has a specific policy and proceed regarding incomplete grades. Please see the following documents:

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/forms/incomplete-grade-contract.pdf>

## **UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HONOR CODE**

In 1995 the UF student body enacted an honor code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students.

### **Preamble**

In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code

is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

### **The Honor Pledge**

*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*

*On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.*

The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

### **Student Responsibility**

Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean, Student Honor Council or Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution in the Dean of Students Office.

### **Faculty Responsibility**

Faculty members have a duty to promote honest behavior and to avoid practices and environments that foster cheating in their classes. Teachers should encourage students to bring negative conditions or incidents of dishonesty to their attention. In their own work, teachers should practice the same high standards they expect from their students.

Any form of "paper sharing," electronic paper purchasing, or plagiarism will not be tolerated. I will fail students for the entire COURSE for any form of academic misconduct regarding the preparation of their paper. Please do your own work!

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Attendance Related: In-class Small Team Projects, Individual Reading Reflections (worth 200 points)**

Because this course will be discussion oriented and include a number of in-class exercises, so attendance is **CRITICAL**. At various points throughout the course (20 times at most, unannounced many times), I will ask students to complete projects during the class period or I

will request that students answer a question I pose in class and submit their answer to me before the following class period. Sometimes I will just take attendance and those who are there from the **VERY BEGINNING** will receive 10 points; late students will receive fewer than 10. Some of the in-class projects will involve small group exercises and a few may be worth 20 points. In general, if you miss an announcement that I make at the beginning of class because you are late or did not attend, it is your responsibility to know what's going on in class. Everyone should make at least two "class-buddies" to keep them informed of class assignments if they are late or miss a class. I will try to post announcements on CANVAS in a timely way. However, it's ultimately the student's responsibility to stay on top of missed material/announcements.

The projects/reflection papers will be worth 10 or 20 points apiece and will occur randomly throughout the semester. Those persons who participate and satisfactorily complete their small team projects or reflection papers will be eligible for points. Fewer points will be awarded to persons who are part of a group that does a mediocre job. For the written assignments on a class reading, I will assign points based on the quality of the work the student submits during the class period. **You can NOT make-up these exact in-class participation projects under any circumstances (see alternative point option below). You also can NOT email me answers or hand them in late.** The projects are designed to promote class interaction that cannot be duplicated outside of the class environment. However, for students who miss turning in an assignment or miss class on a day when an in-class project is conducted and have a university authorized excuse, they will have an opportunity to earn the value of the assignments not submitted. In other words, if, during the semester, you do not submit projects that would have added up to, say, 20 points, or 30 points, ... you will complete a short essay question during the Final Exam that will be worth a max of either 20 or 30 points, respectively. Students have always had sufficient time to complete the multiple choice exam and the brief essay during the 2-hour finals block, but should you need additional time to complete the essay beyond the 2-hour time frame, I will ensure that you have the extra time to complete your essay. This essay will cover material that you are expected to know for the multiple choice portion of the exam. I expect and hope that students will ATTEND ALL classes.

If you're absent, please keep me in the loop as to why this has happened. I will only accept university authorized excused and documented absences. As noted above, I will be giving students the opportunity to make up EXCUSED missed in-class assignments (attendance/group projects) by answering one short essay question during the final exam. **This essay option only applies to students who receive a "0" for specific in-class projects/response papers.** In other words, if you submit a very poor quality response paper and receive a "4," you do NOT have the option of earning back those points on the final essay.

Purpose: I require attendance to reinforce the importance of learning as an interactive process and to secure your commitment to the success of this course. I also want to encourage and reward students to read their assigned readings on time. By attending and participating in class discussions and group projects, students will have the opportunity to develop their critical thinking and team-work skills. These skills are essential for today's labor market.

## **PROJECT ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

## Team Project and Presentation Guidelines (250 Points)

During the second week of the semester students will be assigned to a group of 3-4 students and tasked with generating a strategy to build a *hypothetical* but realistic initiative to address one of the issues listed below. Alternatively, a group can propose a social issue they would like to address, but they must receive my approval before moving forward. Students will be expected to do the following:

1. Initially, do preliminary research on the assigned social issue to learn about local, regional, national, or international groups that have addressed the issue in the past and/or currently.
2. Develop ideas about how they can promote both bonding (within group) and bridging (between groups) social capital that will energize the initiative and enhance the likelihood that the initiative will be successful. Hint: think about potential partnerships and alliances between groups with somewhat similar issues and complementary expertise.
3. Develop a written 8-10 page (double spaced 1 inch margins and Times Roman 12 inch font) report that includes the following sections:
  - a. Describe the nature/scope of the social issue
  - b. Plans to mobilize individuals in the local community to participate and establish a sense of we-ness
  - c. Creative ideas to enhance bonding social capital
  - d. Creative ideas to enlist the help of different groups to generate bridging social capital
  - e. Creative ideas to promote effective leadership with an emphasis on what style(s) of leadership is likely to be most effective for your initiative
  - f. Creative ideas to promote engaged and productive followership
  - g. Summary of how course concepts inform your efforts to build this initiative
4. Prepare a brief 10-15 minute presentation of your efforts that will be given to the class including PowerPoint slides.

### Possible Community-Based Social Issues

1. Gun safety
2. School-based sex/reproductive education
3. Homelessness
4. Mentoring of disadvantaged elementary/middle school children
5. LGBTQ+ rights in the community
6. Bullying/cyberbullying among adolescents
7. Locally-based environmental concerns (e.g., water, air, trash)
8. Racial discrimination/police brutality/incarceration
9. The elderly and mental health
10. Health, fitness, and kids

11. Drugs/alcohol abuse
12. Poverty/access to resources
13. Health disparities in Gainesville
14. Mental health of subpopulation (e.g., veterans, ex-prisoners)
15. School-prison pipeline

### **Individual Project Options and Guidelines (Select any 1 of the 3 options)**

#### **1. Personal Experience with We-ness and Group Belonging (250 points)**

After reading the assigned book *Chasing We-ness: Cultivating Empathy and Leadership in a Polarized World*, you will need to develop an essay that illustrates and analyzes an aspect of your life relevant to the we-ness concept/process. I expect you to integrate key ideas from the course readings and concepts as part of your essay. Your essay needs to demonstrate that you can integrate course material into your analysis in a thoughtful, meaningful fashion. I expect you to analyze your circumstances and experience systematically, not simply describe your life. Your paper needs to be informed EXPLICITLY by the material in the book, *Chasing We-ness*. You can focus on the process of seeking some type of we-ness, navigating your group belonging and sense of we-ness once you achieved it, or the process of transitioning out of we-ness. Alternatively, you are free to analyze two or all three phases of the we-ness experience.

More specifically, I expect you to write a coherent essay that relates course concepts to one another and demonstrates not only your understanding of what these concepts mean in general but how they relate specifically to your real-life experience. Furthermore, I expect you to organize your paper EXPLICITLY by drawing upon **at least 10 concepts** that are discussed in the book draft. (**BOLD** the terms the first time you use them in the text). Your paper should *integrate course material systematically and explicitly*.

Your essay should be AT LEAST 7 typed pages but no more than 8, and it is due during the class period. You should choose a we-ness experience that holds a great deal of meaning for you. You are likely to write a stronger paper, and learn more about yourself, if you write about something that has affected you in a profound way. Your papers are confidential. I will collect and return them via the Canvas portal.

#### **2. One-on-One Empathy Reflection (250 points)**

For this project, students will be asked to connect with someone who is in some way different from themselves. Informed by course material with a specific emphasis on empathy, students will initiate an extended conversation or interview with this person. I strongly encourage students to record this conversation to reference when they write their report, but students are not expected or required to do a taped interview. Having a recorded document of the interview will be very helpful to you in writing your reflection and including verbatim comments. You can have these conversations in-person, phone, or Zoom/Skype.

Students must first identify a person who can provide them with a perspective they are experientially unfamiliar with, one that is different from their own. This person could be a

stranger or someone the student already knows. One way to identify a person to interview would be to think about the social domains discussed in this class (intimate groups of family/kin, friends, and close associates; opportunities that foster ideological commitments, most notably politics and religion; communities and community groups; leisure, hobbies, and sports; and paid work). Reflect on your own personal experiences in one of these social domains and then think about the diverse experiences other people might have in that domain. Choose someone that has accumulated different experiences in this domain compared to you. For example, if you're a white female sorority sister you might interview a lesbian women of color who is in your sorority or another one. If you are a middle-class man of color who played sports at a private high school, you might interview a white man who played sports at a public high school. If you are a cisgender woman you might interview a FTM transgender person about family life issues. There are an endless number of options you could choose. Feel free to consult with me if you want to confirm your possible choice.

Students will then interview that person to learn about their experiences. During the interview students can ask the following broad questions:

- How is your experience unique from others in relation to (whatever social domain you are focusing on)?
- To what extent do you experience or struggle with a sense of belonging?
  - How do you feel you relate to others within (the social domain students are focusing on)?
- What opportunities and challenges have you faced?
- To what extent and in what way is your membership in (this social domain/specific group/ideology/etc.) a central aspect of your identity?
  - How did it come to be this way? What other (domain/group/ideology/etc.) would you consider to be a central part of your identity?
- What would you like to change about the way you experience (the social domain students are focusing on)?
- What would people be surprised to know about you in relation to (the social domain students are focusing on)?

Students are also expected to develop questions on their own that are more specific and appropriate for the person they choose to interview. Ask them questions about themselves and allow them to share stories from their life.

Each student will prepare a double-spaced report that is at least 7 pages but no more than 8 (1-inch margins, Times Roman 12-inch font, include cover page but it does NOT count toward the required page limit). Your paper should *integrate course material systematically and explicitly* while addressing the following:

- a. Provide a descriptive overview of the person (anonymous—no names)
- b. What did you learn about this person and their experiences?
- c. Discuss how you applied empathy in your interview, including the ways your interpretations were informed by empathy during your interview/conversation?
- d. How did this experience shape your understanding of empathy?

- e. What did you learn about yourself by talking with and interviewing this person?

Students are encouraged to reflect on empathy and their own positionality in addition to the guidelines above. By positionality, I mean what features of your life shape how you sometimes see and experience the world (disability status, race/ethnicity, native born or immigrant, bilingual, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social class, etc.) Your analysis needs to include **EXPLICITLY** at least 10 social science concepts from the lectures and readings (**BOLD** the terms the first time you use them in the text).

### 3. Leader/Follower Profile Assessment (250 points)

In this individual project a student can demonstrate their ability to apply course concepts and insights related to their personal experiences as a leader or follower. Each student must identify a past or current situation in which they were/are actively involved with a group (e.g. sports team, school club, campus organization, volunteer group, civic organization, work, study group, gang, church group, or the like). After selecting a group, the student will describe and analyze their experience by *integrating course material systematically and explicitly* into their analytic narrative. The student will focus on their involvement as a leader and/or follower in their chosen group. If a student has been both a leader and a follower in the **SAME** group at different points in time, they can explore both roles.

Each student will prepare a double-spaced report that is at least 7 pages but no more than 8 (1-inch margins, Times Roman 12-inch font). Your analysis needs to include **EXPLICITLY at least 10 social science concepts** from the lectures and readings (**BOLD** the terms the first time you use them in the text). Your essay needs to address the following questions/issues:

- a. Provide a brief description of your role(s) in your group. Then identify what personal attributes defined/define you as a leader and/or follower in that group. If an attribute evolved over time, make sure you highlight how it changed.
- b. If you were/are a leader, describe the roles other members of the group assumed in relationship to you. Using the course material, comment on your leadership style(s). How did you express whatever power you had in the group? Identify examples of conflicts that arose and examine how you tried to resolve them. How did you try to motivate people? To what extent and how did you express empathy in relation to your position as a leader? To what extent and how did you try to shape the “mission” or “purpose” of the group?
- c. If were/are a follower in your group, describe how you managed your role in your group. How did you interact with the leader(s)? How did you interact with the other members of your group? What were the group dynamics like? How did the group dynamics change while you were involved?
- d. Discuss how the styles of leadership and followership were informed by empathy in relation to your position as either a leader or follower in the group.

- e. Explore how you could have changed the way you expressed your leadership or followership role that might have enhanced group success?

### **Quiz (100 points)**

I will ask students 20-25 multiple choice questions. I MAY include a brief essay question.

**Purpose:** The quiz is designed to discourage students from procrastinating. I want students to engage with the course material as soon as the course begins. I plan to assess early on whether students are doing the readings, paying attention, and grasping the main course ideas.

### **Final Exam (200 points)**

I will ask you to answer 50 multiple questions. These questions will cover the main perspectives, concepts, debates, and social patterns highlighted throughout the entire course. You'll need to be familiar with the critical themes/patterns associated with each of the main texts and supplemental readings used in the course. I will provide you with a study guide

**Purpose:** This final exam is designed to encourage students to keep up with the readings and to complete all the assignments. The questions will cover readings, lectures, and in-class projects. The lecture material will be emphasized.

## **ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

Your readings include books and selected book chapters. I've had the book chapter readings copied and placed into a packet produced by BOOKiT. The packet can be purchased from the company's store.

I expect students to read the required readings PRIOR to the week they are assigned. **My experience is that almost all students will retain information better if they highlight key ideas as they read and then go back to study their highlights and margin notes.**

### **Week 1: (January 13-17) Introduction**

**READING:** *Chasing We-ness* (INTRODUCTION)

- Why are mindfulness, empathy, altruism, and leadership important?
- Discuss we-ness examples from history, pop culture, TV shows, movies, sports, and newsworthy events
- Connect we-ness to the personal by looking at how we-ness manifests itself in our everyday lives (everyone is a part of different groups, such as families, friends, teams, and organizations)
- We-ness can be good, bad, or mixed

This session will briefly introduce some of the main concepts of the class, like we-ness, mindfulness, empathy, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement. We-ness can be seen throughout history, social movements, pop culture, TV shows, movies, sports, and newsworthy events as well as in our everyday lives through the bonds we foster with family members, friends, communities, teams, and organizations. Comment on we-ness producing positive, negative, and mixed outcomes.

## **Week 2: (January 20-24) Threads of Self**

**READING:** *Chasing We-ness* (Chapter 1: SELF MEANINGS)

- Mead’s conception of the social self (we come to see ourselves through the eyes of others)
- Kenneth Gergen’s “saturated self” in high tech societies
- Four Threads of Self: mind, body, heart, and soul
- How a person’s point of view and position in society shapes the way they see the world, and in turn, how societal forces shape individuals (social location, intersectionality, and life course markers)

This session will explore Mead’s social psychological conception of the “social self,” Kenneth Gergen’s treatment of the “saturated self,” and how people come to see themselves through the eyes of others in order to connect the self to the group or the “me” to the “we.” Then, the four threads of self will be discussed (mind, body, heart, and soul) using examples and showing how these four threads are interwoven and connected. Social location, intersectionality, and life course markers will be discussed to demonstrate how a person’s point of view and position in society shapes the way they see the world, and in turn, how societal forces have a role in shaping the individual.

## **Week 3: (January 27-31) Social Historical Context for We-ness, Empathy, and Consciousness**

**READINGS:**

1. Jeremy Rifkin (2009), Chapter One “The Hidden Paradox of Human History” in *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis*. Cambridge, England: Polity. (pp. 5-43) **COURSE RESERVES LIBRARY WEST**

2. Putnam, Robert (with Shaylyn Romney Garrett). 2020. Chapter 1: What's Past is Prologue, in *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*. New York: Simon & Schuster. **READ ONLINE VIA SMATHERS LIBRARY**

- Charles Horton Cooley's conception of the "we" label and "we" feeling, and how people's membership to larger groups is linked to how they experience everyday life
- The three waves of empathy proposed by Krznaric
- Founding of the *Mind & Life* institute in 1991 and the study of empathy and contemplative practices scientifically
- Discuss Rifkin's extensive historical analysis of the relationship between culturally-based styles of communication/consciousness and how those styles are related to the major energy production regimes of a particular time period
  - \* Hunter gather societies-----Mythological—oral tradition
  - \* Hydraulic power (irrigation)-----Theological consciousness
  - \* Water/wind/wood-----Ideological consciousness
  - \* Electricity/coal/oil-----Psychological consciousness
  - \* Renewable (distributive capitalism) -----Dramaturgical/Biosphere consciousness
- Begin to discuss Putnam's historical perspective on the shift from "we" to "me"

We will introduce Jeremy Rifkin's ideas about the historical relationship between entropy and empathy. He argues that "each new, more complex energy-consuming civilization in history increases the pace, flow, and density of human exchange and creates more connectivity between people" (p. 23). In addition, as the trend toward greater differentiation in social activities is enhanced, it increases the opportunities for individuals to develop a stronger sense of selfhood. "The awakening sense of selfhood, brought on by the differentiation process, is crucial to the development and extension of empathy" (p. 24). "A heightened empathetic sentiment also allows an increasingly individualized population to affiliate with one another in more interdependent, expanded, and integrated social organisms" (p. 24).

We will also cover Charles Horton Cooley's conception of the "we" label and "we" feeling, and his main ideas relating to the connection between individuals and the group. Krznaric conceptualizes empathy by describing three waves of empathy:

- the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries emergence of humanitarian organizations across Europe and the United States, and the shift in public sentiment away from things like slavery, torture, and cruelty;
- the collective empathy that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s following the atrocities of the two World Wars and the identity movements that emerged; and
- the third wave of empathy in the 1990s with the increase of empathy in public messages and the growth in teaching empathy skills. The *Mind & Life* institute was also founded in 1991 and promoted the more scientific study of empathy and contemplative practices.

**Week 4: (February 3-February 7) Conceptualizing We-ness and Connection to Me-ness**

## READING:

1. Putnam, Robert (with Shaylyn Romney Garrett). 2020. Chapter 9: Drift and Mastery, in *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*. New York: Simon & Schuster. **READ ONLINE VIA SMATHERS LIBRARY**
  - Complete discussion of Putnam’s historical perspective on the shift from “we” to “me”
  - Refine and elaborate on definition of three types of we-ness: deep dyadic, ideational, and spontaneous
  - Team chemistry (social and task) and flow issues

We will focus on we-ness as a process of transitioning in and out of bonds, relationships, and groups. This week’s session will start by defining we-ness and going over the three types of we-ness (deep dyadic, surface ideational, and spontaneous) with examples. This week will also cover how our we-ness bonds and relationships can have good, bad, and mixed outcomes depending on the situation, context, and people involved. Stemming from that it will be important to address how we-ness is a dynamic process that occurs throughout our lives as we transition in and out of bonds, relationships, and groups.

## Week 5: (February 10-14) Motivational Forces and Social Domains

### READINGS:

1. *Chasing We-ness* (Chapters 2 and 3: MOTIVES AND SOCIAL DOMAINS)
2. *Chasing We-ness* (Chapter 4: JUDGING OUTCOMES: THE GOOD, BAD, AND MIXED)
  - Ten motivational forces promoting our pursuit of we-ness
  - These motives can be explained using personal examples, movies, songs, social media, TV shows, social movements, notable events, inspirational stories, and sports stories.
  - How do some of these motives overlap?
  - Five social domains of life
  - Good, bad, mixed outcomes

This week will cover the ten motivation forces of we-ness with examples: shared genetic heritage, family love, romantic love, companionship, calling out social injustice, celebrating lofty ideals, targeting a shared enemy, sharing pain and suffering, mentoring affection, and sharing a practical goal. These motives can be explained using personal examples, movies, songs, social media, TV shows, social movements, notable events, inspirational stories, and sports stories, and how these motives overlap can be explored. We will highlight the five main social domains in which we-ness is experienced: primary groups, communities, creating ideas and sharing beliefs, leisure/play/sports, and paid work

**Quiz (all reading and lecture material covering weeks 1-4).**

## Week 6: (February 17-21) Navigating We-ness in Social Domains

### READINGS:

1. *Chasing We-ness* (Chapter 5: Navigating Transitions)
2. Class Picciolini, Christian. 2019. *Breaking Hate: Confronting the New Culture of Extremism*. New York: Hachette Books.
  - How do people navigate moving into and out of forms of we-ness?
  - How does we-ness play into individuals' adopting hate ideologies and bonding with bigoted persons/groups?

The lesson for this week will focus on transitional issues associated with people moving in and out of we-ness experiences in five social domains. We will highlight ideas by using examples of couples and families coming together, different types of communities developing a communal spirit, ideas and beliefs among certain groups that foster collective identity, the world of leisure, play and sports, and characteristics of paid work sites. We will illustrate in detail how Picciolini's discussion of deradicalization informs our understanding of navigating we-ness and the mixed outcomes associated with whether we-ness is based on hate or openmindedness. Listening skills are a crucial component of being able to empathize with another and the importance of listening is highlighted in Picciolini's "Seven 'L' Steps of Disengagement."

## Week 7: (February 24-28) Social capital and Civic Engagement: Meaning and Trends

### READING:

1. Putnam, Robert. 2000. Chapter 1 "Thinking about Social Capital in America" in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. **READ ONLINE VIA SMATHERS LIBRARY**
2. Putnam, Robert. 2000. Chapter 24 "Toward an Agenda for Social Capitalists" in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. **READ ONLINE VIA SMATHERS LIBRARY**
  - What is social capital? What are bonding and bridging social capital?
  - How to build social capital? Benefits?
  - Introduce Robert Putnam's main ideas
  - History of civic engagement (participatory democracy)
  - Discuss Robert Putnam and the decline of civic engagement (rise of technology/social media?)

This week's material will aim to define social capital and distinguish between bonding and bridging social capital using examples. Some ways to build social capital and the potential

benefits of building social capital can be discussed and tied to we-ness. This session will also connect civic engagement to social capital and explore what civic engagement means. The history of civic engagement can be briefly described in relation to the development of a participatory democracy and what that means for the United States. Robert Putnam's research and his findings on the decline in civic engagement in recent years in different organizations and groups is important to this topic.

### **Week 8: (March 3–March 7) Conceptualizing Empathy**

**READING:** Zaki, Jamil. 2019. *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*. New York, NY: Crown.

- Define empathy, key characteristics, how empathy manifests itself in different ways?
- Overlapping processes of empathy: experience sharing, mentalizing, and prosocial concern
- How empathy is built and the connection between storytelling and empathy
- Listening and empathy

This week's lesson will focus on defining empathy and discussing the key characteristics of empathy, such as the three overlapping processes Zaki explains: experience sharing, mentalizing, and prosocial concern. Empathy is closely connected to storytelling, and different art forms, like novels, poetry, films, and photography, provide a powerful means for people to connect with others and build a more empathetic self.

### **Week 9 (March 10-14) Conceptualizing Empathy & Leadership**

**READING:** Zaki, Jamil. 2019. *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*. New York, NY: Crown.

#### 1. *Chasing We-ness* (Chapter 7: Leadership)

- Extend discussion from week 8 on empathy.
- What is leadership?
- How is empathy relevant to good leadership?

During this week, we will begin to make the connection between empathy and leadership in different social domains.

### **Week 10: (March 15-22) Spring Break**

### **Week 11: (March 24-28) Leadership/Followership: Historical Context and Conceptualization**

**READINGS:** Brown, Brené. 2018. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*. London, UK: Penguin.

- Robert Merton (respect, competence, two-way communication and active listening, democratic style of decision-making)
- The impact of historical leaders (what makes a good leader, what makes a bad leader, are lines sometimes blurred?)
- How have key themes of leadership transformed over time? What made someone a good leader at different points in time? What broad social trends have influenced these changes?
- Explore generational differences in how people tend to think about and express leadership. Many younger workers do not have the same ‘loyalty’ to employment as previous generations, and that could be a driving force for leadership and management styles to change as the workforce changes.
- Integrative (emotional) and instrumental leaders
- MMDI (Team Technology) leadership styles (participative, change-oriented, executive, action-oriented, ideological, visionary, theorist, and goal oriented)
- Kellerman’s five types of followers (isolate, bystander, participants, activists, diehard)
- Different spheres of leadership (sports, work...)
- Spending some time exploring the relationship between the various combinations of leaders and followers (this feels like a rich opportunity to encourage students to find real-world examples of leadership that could fit into this framework; maybe a potential mini-assignment could be to assign students a leadership and followership style and ask them to find a real-world example and why they think it fits).
- Introduce Ryan’s seven archetypical personality characteristics that contribute to team chemistry (sparkplug, sage, kid, enforcer, buddy, warrior, and jester)
- How do leaders use social media?

This week extends our discussion of leadership by examining Robert Merton’s work on leadership and the foundations he laid for how to study leadership. The impact of historical leaders on our understanding of leadership today can also be looked at and how leadership has changed over time. The bulk of the week will focus on conceptualizing leadership and followership by looking at some of the way scholars have classified leaders and followers. Broadly, two classifications of leadership are integrative (emotional) and instrumental; however, the MMDI leadership styles break down leadership into eight distinct categories. Kellerman is one of the main scholars to look at followership and classify followers into five different categories.

## **Week 12: (March 31– April 4) Initiatives to Build *MEAL* Life Skills (Mindfulness, Empathy, Altruism, and Leadership)**

### **Individual Paper Due April 3rd.**

#### **READINGS:**

1. Kabat-Zinn, Jon. (2018). “Foreward” *Meditation is Not What You Think: Mindfulness and Why it is So Important*. New York, N.Y.: Hachette. (IX-XXI).

Accessed online at: <https://www.crisrieder.org/thejourney/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Meditation-Is-Not-What-You-Think.pdf>

2. Kabat-Zinn, Jon. (2018). "Introduction The Challenge of a Life's time—and a Lifetime" in *Meditation is Not What You Think: Mindfulness and Why it is So Important*. New York, N.Y.: Hachette. (IX-XXI). (pp. XXXIII-XLIII)

Accessed online at: <https://www.crisrieder.org/thejourney/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Meditation-Is-Not-What-You-Think.pdf>

3. Reiss, Helen (with Liz Neporent). 2018. Chapter 7 "The ABCs of Empathy in Education." in *The Empathy Effect: 7 Neuroscience-based Keys for Transforming the Way We Live, Love, Work, and Connect Across Differences*. Boulder, C.O.: Sounds True. (pp. 95-111) **COURSE RESERVES LIBRARY WEST**
4. Singer, Peter. 2015. Chapter 1 "What is Effective Altruism?" *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (pp. 2-8) **COURSE RESERVES LIBRARY WEST**
5. Singer, Peter. 2015. Chapter 7 "Is Love All We Need?" *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (pp. 75-83). **COURSE RESERVES LIBRARY WEST**

- *Mind & Life* Institute
- *Roots of Empathy* program
- Empathy Museum and "A Mile in My Shoes" (Roman Krznaric)
- *Center for Building a Culture of Empathy and Compassion* (Edwin Rutsch)
- How to develop mindfulness?
- What is the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program?
- How to incorporate and practice empathy and leadership in your everyday life?
- Expansion of social media and communication technology
- Paradox of coming together and distancing/we-ness and loneliness
- How social media gives people a platform to tell their stories and gives others access to those stories and events?
- What is the meaning of "effective altruism?" (Peter Singer)

This week's topic will discuss some of the initiatives that have been created to engage people and build empathy, and why initiatives like these are important. With the expansion of social media and communication technologies a paradox has formed in which more and more people have the means to access and come together with others, but technology and social media have also led to distancing and loneliness. The *Mind & Life* institute not only promotes empathetic practices but has been committed to studying empathy and has found that practice is key to building empathy within people. Through education and schools is one pathway to promote empathy, like the *Roots and Empathy* program has shown, and empathy can also be built for the general public through initiatives like Krznaric's *Empathy Museum* and Rutsch's

*Center for Building a Culture of Empathy and Compassion.* Some of the discussion will also focus on attempts to incorporate empathy trainings into leadership initiatives.

### **Week 13: (April 7-11) National Service Program Options**

**READING:** *Chasing We-ness* (Chapter 8: TRANSFORMING OUR FUTURE)

- What is a national service program? What does it look like?
- Brookings Institute published a series of essays on national service after 9/11
- Debates around the role of the government
- John Bridgeland and *Heart of the Nation*
- Stanley McChrystal and the *Franklin Project*
- The Brookings Institute's *Will America Embrace National Service?*
- What national service programs offer? Tie empathy to leadership

This week's session will bring empathy and leadership together by looking at national service program initiatives. What is the history of national service initiatives and what are their defining characteristics? What national service programs have to offer and how they can fit into society will be an important part of this week's lesson.

### **Week 14: (April 14–April 18) Group Presentations**

**Written Report for Team Project Due April 14<sup>th</sup> (MONDAY, 12:00 p.m. noon,)**

The plan is to devote this week to the team oral presentations.

### **Week 15: (April 21-25) Final Exam Prep**

**Note:** [April 22nd last class meeting]

**Final Exam:** May 1, Thursday 10:00 – 12:00 p.m. (noon)

### **OPTIONAL READING MATERIAL**

Below you will find a list of books that are relevant to the material we cover in the class. I do NOT expect you to read any books beyond the ones I've assigned for the course. However, if the course inspires you and you would like to explore the substantive issues in greater depth and breadth, I recommend that you consider looking at some of these titles in your "free" time. You should be able to excel in this course without ever reading any of the optional readings. I'm simply trying to make it convenient for you if you're curious, so I've listed these personal recommendations for you.

### **General, History, and Civic Engagement**

Bridgeland, John M. 2013. *Heart of a Nation. Volunteering and America's Civic Spirit*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bridgeland, John. M. and John J. DiIulio, Jr. 2019. *Will America Embrace National Service*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute.

Christakis, Nicholas A. 2019. *Blueprint: The evolutionary origins of a good society*. New York, N.Y.: Little, Brown Spark

Christakis, Nicholas A. and James H. Fowler. 2009. *Connected: The surprising power of our social networks and how they shaped our lives*. New York: N. Y.: Little, Brown Spark.

Harari, Yuval Noach. *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. 2018. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press.

Hunter, James Davidson. 2024. *Democracy and Solidarity: On the Cultural Roots of America's Political Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Junger, Sebastian. 2015. *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*. New York, NY: Twelve.

Klein, Ezra. 2020. *Why We're Polarized*. New York: Avid Reader Press.

Meacham, Jon. 2018. *The Soul of America: The Battle of Our Better Angels*. New York: Random House.

Moffett, Mark. W. 2019. *The Human Swarm: How Our Societies Arise, Thrive, and Fall*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Musolino, Julien. 2015. *The Soul Fallacy: What Science Shows We Gain from Letting Go of Our Soul Beliefs*. Amherst: New York, NY: Prometheus Books.

Ord, Toby. 2020. *The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity*. New York, N.Y.: Hachette Books.

Osnos, Evan. 2021. *Wildland: The Making of America's Fury*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Palmer, Parker J. 2011. *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*. San Francisco, C.A.: Jossey-Bass.

Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, Robert (with Shaylyn Romney Garrett). 2020. *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D. and Lewis M. Feldstein. 2003. *Better together: Restoring American Community*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster.

Waytz, Adam. 2019. *The Power of Human: How Our Shared Humanity Can Help Us Create a Better World*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Wilkerson, Isabel. 2020. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York: Random House.

### **Communication and Loneliness**

Cacioppo, John T. and William Patrick. 2008. *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*. New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Company

Haidt, Jonathan. 2024. *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. New York: Penguin.

Harari, Yuval Noah. 2024. *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks From the Stone age to AI*. New York: Random House.

Murthy, Vivek H. 2020. *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*. New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins.

Olds, Jacqueline and Richard Schwartz. 2009. *The Lonely American: Drifting Apart in the Twenty-first Century*. Boston, MASS: Beacon.

Turkle, Sherry. 2011 (revised 2017). *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York, N.Y.: Basic Books.

Turkle, Sherry. 2015. *Reclaiming conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin.

### **Mindfulness, Empathy, and Altruism**

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