

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Proposal for a Certificate in Social and Cultural Diversity
(revised to add a freestanding option)

I. Why is the Certificate Needed?

Political scientist Walter Truett Anderson has observed, “We all share the good fortune-or the misfortune, depending on how you look at it-of being present at a great historical/evolutionary event: we are seeing now the emergence of a social reality that is different in important ways from anything we have known before, the first global civilization.” Variouslly characterized as the emergence of a post-industrial or postmodern society, this transformation is a result of the communications and information revolution and the concomitant breaking down of boundaries between nations, cultures, and economies. No individual, community, or university is exempt, and even our disciplines and departments find themselves struggling to understand and respond to the implications of the developing global village as old cannons and assumptions become obsolete. While there is much uncertainty where all of this is leading, we do know that growing social and cultural diversity will be one of the central features of this transformation.

In his work, *Browning of America*, William Henry III observes that by 2056, “the ‘average’ U.S. resident, as defined by Census statistics, will trace his or her descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific Islands, Arabia -- almost anywhere but white Europe.” In California, racial and ethnic minorities now outnumber whites in the state’s population. The recent controversy about categories in this year’s census is further indication of the growing sensitivity of the nation to the matter of diversity.

Awareness and management of social and cultural diversity in the labor force have become issues of increasing concern to business communities everywhere as they anticipate the effects of demographic changes in the not so distant future. The term “cultural diversity” has become commonplace in management literature, as a reality, a problem, an opportunity, etc. Many companies have instituted diversity management programs and seminars of various kinds to help employees and managers deal with differences in cultural origins, race, gender, sexuality, and class. A couple of years ago, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce created the Cultural Diversity Council for helping local outfits identify and evaluate problems and remedies in their own operations. “Diversity” is now a common element of workplace consciousness, so the holder of such a certificate would be appropriately credentialed for work in this environment. It would be a useful complement to virtually anyone entering or already in the workforce.

In order to prepare students to live in the global village and be successful in the increasingly diverse workplace, the department of sociology and anthropology proposes the establishment of a Certificate in Social and Cultural Diversity. This will be a 15-hour certificate designed to provide students with an academic concentration in the study of social and cultural diversity.

The curriculum is designed to take advantage of the core strengths of the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, and of our faculty, to offer focused study of race, class, culture, gender, and sexuality, all fundamental factors that contribute to social and cultural diversity within and between societies.

II. Curriculum for the Certificate

The major topics of the certificate will be race, class, gender, sexuality, and culture and how they provide the foundations for social and cultural diversity:

E105 Culture and Society

2 Core Courses

- S164 Marital Relations and Human Sexuality
- S317 Inequality
- S335 Race and Ethnicity
- S338 Gender Roles

1 Culture Course

- E320 Indians of North America
- E397 Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East
- S362 World Cultures and Societies
- S405 Religion in America
- E402 Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective

1 400-level Capstone Course

- A460 Diversity and Conflict
- S410 Sociology of Oppression and Privilege
- S410 International Inequalities
- S410 Gender, Inequality and Work

The certificate program will consist of five 3-credit courses. All students will be required to take E105 Culture and Society as the introductory course to the certificate with an emphasis on the factors that contribute to cultural diversity. Students will take two core courses from a list of four possibilities that cover the fundamental factors that contribute to social diversity, including race, class, gender, and sexuality. These courses will provide focused study on each of the factors and serve as a foundation for more integrated treatments of social and cultural diversity in the culture and capstone courses. One culture course will also be required, chosen from a list of possibilities that focus on a particular culture or examine an aspect of culture, social structure, or a major social institution from a cross-cultural and comparative perspective. Finally, all students will take a 400-level seminar that will serve as a capstone course for the certificate. Each of these seminars examines social and cultural diversity from an integrated perspective.

This is a freestanding certificate and there are no hidden prerequisites, as E105 will serve as a prerequisite for all upper-level courses required for the certificate.

However, students who wish to enroll in the certificate program who do not already have a Bachelors Degree must take and satisfactorily pass W031 Pre-composition, or else score at a non-remedial level on the IUSB placement exam in Composition. They must also take and pass M014 Basic Algebra, or score at a non-remedial level (III or above) on the IUSB Math Placement Exam.

III. Major Student Outcomes

Students who have successfully completed the certificate will:

1. Be aware of the fundamental factors contributing to social and cultural diversity;
2. Understand the social structures and processes connected to race, class, gender, and sexuality;
3. Have developed a multicultural perspective on the world.

IV. Assessment

Assessment of the student outcomes will be based on a combination of course-embedded assessments based on performance on class assignments, exams, journals, and research papers and projects. In addition, a portfolio will be maintained for each student in which will be placed 3 to 5 samples of work from each student enrolled in the program. Upon completion of the certificate program, the department's assessment committee will evaluate each student's portfolio using the major outcomes listed for the program. Finally, every 3 to 5 years, a survey of alumni and their employers will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the program. Each year, reports from the assessment committee and the surveys will be presented to the faculty of the department along with any recommendations for program revisions or development based on the results of the assessment.

V. Target Population

The primary populations being targeted by this certificate are associate's and baccalaureate students from all divisions at IUSB who wish to obtain greater understanding and a credential that reflects their focused study of social and cultural diversity. Since this is an increasingly important requirement of employers, we think that the demand for the certificate will be healthy. We anticipate some interest from other members of the community who wish to acquire a competency and understanding in social and cultural diversity but who do not intend to complete any other degree at the university. We will market the certificate to both populations.

VI. Relation to Campus and Departmental Mission

While there already exist several offices on campus concerned with social and cultural diversity on campus, none is academic. This certificate will provide an academic complement to the activities of these other offices and offer students academic training and certification not currently available. The logical home for such an activity is in Liberal Arts and Sciences, and particularly the department of

sociology and anthropology as social and cultural diversity is at the center of our disciplines.

A recent report by the American Sociological Association and American Association of Higher Education recommends that sociology departments in liberal arts institutions place the underlying factors of diversity, race, class, and gender, at the center of their curriculum. They argue this is one of the major and most important contributions sociology can make to the liberal arts curriculum. Anthropology has long been at the forefront of exploring other cultures and contributing to the development of a multicultural perspective that is becoming an increasingly important sensibility associated with a liberal arts education.

The courses required for this certificate can be easily incorporated into the associate's concentration in sociology or anthropology, as well as the sociology minor and major. In the case of an associate's or minor, two or three courses from the certificate could be applied to requirements for these degrees. At least four of the courses taken for the certificate could be applied towards the sociology major. For this reason, we believe that many of our sociology and anthropology students will choose to take the certificate.

VII. Relationship to Existing Programs

There are no other programs at IUSB that provide similar education and training. The closest is the Certificate in International Studies. However, this certificate does not focus on the full range of factors that contribute to social and cultural diversity, but rather is more narrowly concerned with national origins and differences. Nonetheless, we do anticipate cooperating with the Certificate in International Studies in areas of overlap where we may pool resources and eventually offer courses jointly. Several of the courses that fulfill requirements for our certificate, already are part of the Certificate in International Studies.

VIII. Resources Required for Implementation

Since social and cultural diversity are at the center of our disciplines, our existing faculty has a wide range of expertise in this area, and we already offer several courses directly related to it, we do not need any new resources to implement the proposed program. We already offer the introductory and core courses every semester. We also offer at least one of the courses required for the culture and capstone portions of the program once each year, and often once each semester. Recent faculty hires with expertise in cultural diversity, gender, inequality, and sexuality, as well as already existing expertise in race and ethnicity has also allowed us to build up our library holdings in these areas. Several of our faculty members are carrying out research in these areas as well.

IX. Innovative Features of the Program

Several of the courses contained in the curriculum for the program engage students in service learning and/or hands on research. Many faculty members also work in cooperation with the Office of Campus Diversity. It is our intent, once the certificate is established, to continue to develop these cooperative relationships.