

## Global Studies Initiative in Social Sciences Courses

Parkland College, AY 2018–2019



**Aims of Global Studies Initiative:** Recall that the goals for participating in the Global Studies Initiative course redesign project are: To promote the addition to Parkland’s social science courses of instructional materials on global issues with a focus on the European Union, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia. Further, to provide social science faculty with instructional design tools and aid them with the implementation of new course materials in the classroom.

To achieve the goals of the Global Studies Initiative and finish your participation in this project, please fill out the form below on the course you taught in the Spring semester of 2019, and upload it to the shared folder on Parkland’s One Drive at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/y4qnncb6>

### Global Studies Faculty Project Final Report for Term 2

**Faculty Name:** Dorie Geissler

**Course Taught** (course name, section number, term): SOC-101-003H\_2019SP, SOC-101-005H\_2019SP

**Format of Course** (face to face, online, hybrid): Hybrid

#### **A. Goal(s) for Course.**

Please describe here the changes that you made to your class objectives to increase global studies content and learning about global issues. Keeping this in mind, please answer the following:

1. Please describe here each of your new goal(s) or objectives for the course. These can be based on the Teaching Goals Inventory we covered in EDU 931, and/or related to Parkland College’s General Education Goals.

The new assessments for this class emphasize Parkland College’s General Learning Outcome of global awareness and ethical reasoning. While the current text used in Sociology 101 does incorporate some global awareness this project asks students to compare and contrast various U.S. social institutions with those in other parts of the world. This project also asks students to evaluate how these social institutions effect issues of inequality. Based on the Teaching Goals Inventory used for EDU 931, this project helps to foster higher-order thinking skills and an informed concern for contemporary social issues.

2. Please explain how the new goal(s) promotes the aims of the Global Studies Initiative (described above).

This project promotes the aims of the Global Studies Initiative in that they incorporate materials (video and articles) related to social institutions in other regions of the world and associated project rubrics that can be incorporated by faculty in other classroom settings.

### **B. New Course Material(s) To Achieve Goals.**

Please explain the new material(s) you used for the course. Keeping this in mind, please answer the following:

1. Please list the new material(s) that you used to enhance the global studies and/or world area studies component of your course. Please also provide links online, or reference citations for each of the new material(s) you used in this redesigned course. These may be books, journal articles, magazines, videos, movies, web links, or any other materials that fit the aims of the Global Studies Initiative.

Article: Education in Finland: A Model for Equality

<https://borgenproject.org/education-in-finland/>

Video: Why Finland Has the Best Education System in the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHHFG0161Os&t=472s>

A Research Synthesis/Unequal School Funding in the United States

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may02/vol59/num08/Unequal-School-Funding-in-the-United-States.aspx>

2. Please explain your rationale to show how the new materials fit the aims of the Global Studies Initiative.

The first article provides a succinct summary of how education in Finland differs from the United States. It highlights how the Finnish education system is based on the value of equality in both how education is funded as well as equity in the classroom. The article also emphasizes the high value Finland places on teachers.

The video highlights some of the information in the article and offers a view inside Finnish schools. This video also provides the perspective of a Finnish student who studied abroad in the US as well as a US teacher who is now working in Finland.

The last article provides some background information about how US schools are funded. The most significant part of this article is that it provides some background as to why, US citizens claim they are committed to the welfare of children and the ideal of equal opportunity, and the notion of public education as providing a level playing field, tolerate inequities in education.

### **C. New Activities, Assignments, and Assessments to Achieve Goals.**

Please describe here the new activities, assignments, direct and indirect assessments, and the new syllabus you developed to achieve the aims of the Global Studies Initiative. Keeping this in mind, please answer the following:

1. Please describe all new in class activities and/or take-home assignments that you created for your redesigned course to increase global studies content and learning about global studies issues. In your description, please be sure to explain very concretely how each of these activities/assignments are linked with each of the new course goals (described in Part A).

The materials listed above will be used to as the basis of a new module assignment. This is a take-home assignment which is used to take the place of on-campus class time in a hybrid course. This module is focused on the social institution chapters of the sociology 101 textbook. These topics include, economics, education, religion, family, politics, and forms of government. This assignment asks students to discuss how these institutions (namely economics, education, family, and forms of government) are interconnected. They are also asked to compare how these institutions shape and inform one another to create different educational experiences in Finland and the US, and reflect on their own educational experiences in the US, or elsewhere. This helps to foster critical thinking as well as an appreciation for contemporary social issues – such as inequality an its relationship to education.

2. Please describe all new direct assessments that you used for these new activities/assignments to explore student performance (at one time) and/or learning (across two or more times). In addition, please explain whether each direct assessment is: formative or summative, or quantitative or qualitative. Also, if you used a rubric to help with direct assessment, please explain whether the rubric is holistic or analytic. In your answer here, please be sure to explain very concretely how each of these direct assessments, and any rubrics you created, show student performance and/or learning related to the new course goals (described in Part A).

The new module assignment is a direct assessment – it is qualitative and summative, as it asks students to apply, synthesize, evaluate, and reflect on articles, videos, and their own

experiences. The assessment is summative in that it comes at the end of a module where we have been learning concepts related to various social institutions, however it is not a high-stakes assessment in that the point value is not that high relative to the overall point in the class.

## **Module 5 – Assignment – Social Institutions**

### **Finnish and US Education – International Comparisons**

**Objective:** This assignment asks you to synthesize the material contained in Module 5 – Social Institutions. Specifically, you are asked to examine how economic systems, forms of government, and cultural values, shape and inform one another to create different educational experiences in Finland and the US.

#### **Assignment question:**

For this assignment you are to reflect on the following readings and video:

- Article: Education in Finland: A Model for Equality  
<https://borgenproject.org/education-in-finland/>
- Video: Why Finland Has the Best Education System in the World  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHHFG0161Os&t=472s>
- A Research Synthesis/Unequal School Funding in the United States  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may02/vol59/num08/Unequal-School-Funding-in-the-United-States.aspx>

Your response should be at least 500 words – this generally translates to 2 pages (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font). DO NOT include any identifying information you put at the top of your assignment in your word count or page count. You need 500 words, 2-pages of actual content. Other Module assignment guidelines and assignment rubric are posted to Cobra with this assignment.

Some things to consider:

- How do the US and Finnish education systems differ? Specifically, how do cultural values toward equality, education, students, and teachers differ? How are schools funded, what education options do families have, and how does this relate to the economic system/form or government of each country? How do the formal and hidden curriculums differ?
- How does each education perform or not perform the functions of education (p. 446)?
- Comment on how each system does or does not contribute to social reproduction?
- How is your educational experience similar or different to that of a Finnish student? Would you rather go to school in Finland?
- Do you think a Finnish model of education would work in the US? Why or why not? Here you might want to think about why the US tolerates inequality in education (see the 3<sup>rd</sup> article).

3. Please describe any new indirect assessments you used (if applicable) for these new activities/assignments to explore student attitudes. In your answer here, please be sure to explain very concretely how each of these indirect assessments was created to show student attitudes related to the new course goals (described in Part A).
4. Please attach a copy of your class syllabus for the course you revised for this project. In the syllabus please highlight changes that you made to the syllabus to show what was changed as a result of this project. Please upload your revised syllabus to the shared folder on Parkland's One Drive: <https://tinyurl.com/y4qnncb6>

#### **D. Faculty Reflection on New Course Material**

Please provide your opinion on the degree of usefulness of the new course material you implemented and whether you recommend its continued use. That is, would you use it again? If not, what other material could you use or how else could you better implement the objectives of this initiative?

I found the new course material very useful. For one, it is implemented at a time in the semester where students are starting to lose focus. This module I created as part of the Global Studies Initiative is the last module of the semester. The module assignment I created comparing cultural values and social institutions regarding education between Finland and the US was the perfect way to bring together course content and global awareness. The particular issue of education is very interesting to students because they are, after all students. I found that some of the students already had some awareness of educational practices/structure in other countries, and this assignment helped supplement their existing knowledge. For the students that did not have an awareness, this assignment gave them a view of cultural values and practices outside the US and allowed them to see how their own values about education are shaped by their cultural context. In this way, this assignment not only provided global awareness but reinforced a theme of the course that is, cultural beliefs, values, and social institutions are culturally specific and created by society.

I would definitely use this material again. I might look at how to integrate some of this material into the classroom for a non-hybrid course. I would like to have students do the supplemental reading outside of class and then watch the video included in the assignment as a group. Then, we could answer the assignment questions in small groups.

*Thank you very much for participating in this the Global Studies Initiative and completing this report!*