In the movie, The Matrix, the protagonist Neo visits the future-telling Oracle. In her kitchen hangs a sign, “Nosce Te Ipsum” (Know Thyself). Similarly, Dorothy Day, the famed Catholic activist who worked with the poor noted, “The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us!”

The goal of Honors 200, Honors for Social Change II, is for all of us to explore how we contribute to the maintenance of the status quo and social change. To anchor this concept, I will guide but not dictate the development of critical consciousness and learning.

Course Pedagogy

The pedagogy of the course will be based on a Freirian approach (Freire 1983) and learn by doing philosophy. Freirian pedagogy encourages problem-solving learning through student interaction and discussion. In this system, knowledge is not meant to be memorized but rather wrestled with internally in order for a student to claim it as her own. The Cal Poly learn by doing philosophy will also be implemented. The students will be required to live social problems they choose in order to empathize with those who are suffering from the issue. Along with the experience, students will be required to meet with and discuss problems with community members who are currently living through the challenge or have survived the problem. Combined, students will have a holistic educational experience through interaction, discussion, practice, and connection with community. All of these experiences align well with the recent strategic plan set forth during the WASC evaluation by Cal Poly administration (Cal Poly 2012).

Since Honors courses by their very nature are interdisciplinary, tackling issues will also force students out of their disciplinary silos and to wrestle with the issues from different perspectives. It is rare for an engineering student and a liberal arts student to investigate a problem together and utilize each perspective’s strength to create a more complete solution. This cross-pollination of problem-solving will provide broader and more holistic knowledge creation. Additionally, the problems investigated cannot be understood without taking into account broader social, economic, and historic forces, which will be discussed in class and through readings. Finally, students will also be
able to grow in their own discipline. In small groups each student may be the only representative of their major and will necessarily need to share their disciplinary perspective with others.

**Learning Goals and Outcomes**
As noted earlier, the learning goals attempt to provide students with a holistic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary understanding and approach to the problem solving of social issues.

By the end of the Honors 200 course, students will:

1. Think critically and creatively
2. Communicate effectively
3. Work productively as individuals and in groups
4. Use their knowledge and skills to make a positive contribution to society
5. Demonstrate an understanding of relationships between diversity, inequality, and social, economic, and political power both in the United States and globally
6. Consider perspectives of diverse groups when making decisions
7. Explain how natural, economic, and social systems interact to foster or prevent sustainability
8. Analyze and explain local, national, and global sustainability using a multidisciplinary approach

These learning goals will be evaluated through a final product (research paper) as well as reflection papers discussing the various topics of the course.

**Participation and Attendance**
Please Attend and participate. We cannot grow without class discussion and interaction.

**Readings**
You will suggest topics and I will scour the literature to find appropriate and useful material. Please respect your own ideas and my effort by reading what is available.

**Email:** The simplicity of writing emails, I believe, has encouraged students to email their professor at every whim. I received dozens of emails last quarter in which the answer could have been found in the syllabus, from a classmate, during class, or during office hours. Please only email me if it is critically urgent.

**Disabilities:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. I encourage you to contact me to discuss any individual needs for accommodations. The sooner you do the better.

**POSSIBLE CLASS ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS**
Sociological scavenger hunt in downtown
Guest speakers
Small/large group discussions
Self-directed projects
Quizzes/Tests
Individual/Group Writing assignments
Day in the Life Activity
Presentations (to the class or to the community)
Working with community partners on a project
POSSIBLE CLASS TOPICS

Nosce Te Ipsum
Self-reflexivity, Biases and attitudes
Socialization as a means to maintain the status quo
Definitions of social change
Examples of social change
Social Movements

Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class Theme</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Design this course</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Finals week</td>
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<td>Assessment</td>
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