

IIT Hyderabad

Human Values
HS 1001 & HS 1002

Course Description

June 4, 2008

Human Values I
HS 1001 (0-2-0-2)
Offered in odd semesters

1 Course Description:

1.1 Objective:

The Human Values course tries to achieve the following objectives.

1. To develop a critical ability to distinguish between essence and form, or between what is of value and what is superficial, in life.

What makes it difficult is the fact that the ability is to be developed not for a narrow area or field of study, but for everyday situations in life. It covers the widest possible canvas.

2. To move from discrimination to commitment.

It is not sufficient to develop the discrimination ability, it is important to act on such discrimination in a given situation.

3. The course does not teach values.

It encourages students to discover what they consider valuable. Accordingly, they should be able to discriminate between valuable and the superficial in real situations in their life.

1.2 Pre-requisites:

None. However, Jeevan Vidya Shivir (1-week long) is a compulsory, co-requisite.

1.3 Course Topics:

The classes in the course will run as a series of discussions in small groups. Every week faculty mentor selects a topic from self experience or from the pool of available materials.

1.3.1 Background

When one studies the situation we are in today, we arrive at the following:

1. **At the level of Individual:** We see today that humans on the one hand have unhappiness, dissatisfaction, lack of hope, and a sense of futility about them, and on the other are faced with domination and other problems. The health of the body is steadily declining in spite of improved levels of material and medical facilities. A majority of people find themselves engulfed in the problems of some type, and some people have even come to believe that no solutions are even possible.
2. **At the level of Family:** One sees complaints, fights inter-personal tensions, injustice, hatred and numerous attempts to solve these, ultimately leading to disintegration and a feeling of being deprived of material facilities.
3. **At the level of Society:** Problems are visible in the form of tendency to snatch from one another, opposition, exploitation, struggle, war, poverty and unemployment. There is talk of working in harmony with each other, but never end up being successful.
4. **At the level of Nature/environment:** Problems manifest in the form of imbalance, pollution, scarcity of physical and ecological disturbances. poisonous material are on the increase in the air, water, soil and food while the fertility of the soil is decreasing.

The topics covered in the course will draw the attention of the students towards issues which affect us and the society we live in.

1.3.2 Topics

- **Self confidence.** Relative and absolute confidence, being self-determined, swatantrata (loosely equivalent to freedom).
- **Peer pressure.** Examples of external pressure, relating to swatantrata (freedom), making one's own choices.
- **Relationship with family and friends.** Major cause of unhappiness today.
- **Anger.** Investigation of reasons, watching ones own anger. Is anger a sign of power or helplessness, distinction between response and reaction.

- **Right utilization of physical facilities.** Determining one needs, needs of the self and of the body, cycle of nature.
- **Relationship with teachers.** Inside the class, and outside the class interacting with teachers.
- **Time Management.** Issues of planning, as well as concentration (and aligning with self goals).
- **Respect.** Do you respect yourself? Do you respect others? Feeling of respect is different from expression of that feeling.
- **Expectations from your self.** Excellence and competition, coping with stress, Identifying one' interests as well as strengths.
- **Complimentarity of skills and values.** Distinction between information & knowledge
- **Goals.** Short term goals and long term goals (discussing one's goals). How do we set our goal? How to handle responsibilities which have to be fulfilled while working for goals.

1.3.3 Mode of conduct

During every class the faculty mentor introduces a topic and initiates the discussion. While analysing and discussing the topic, the faculty mentor's role is in pointing to essential elements to help in sorting them out from the surface elements. In other words, help the students focus on the important or critical elements.

While discussing different topics, the mentor encourages the student to connect with one's own self and do self observation. The student is encouraged to take up "ordinary" situations rather than "extra-ordinary" situations. Such observations and their analyses are shared and discussed with other students and faculty mentor, in a group sitting.

Experiments or practicals are important. The difference is that the laboratory is everyday life, and practicals are how you behave and work in real life.

The group discussions would also provide support to a student in performing actions commensurate to his/her beliefs. Hopefully, this would lead to development of commitment, namely behaving and working based on one's beliefs (or values).

There would be no formal lectures in the course (other than in the Jeevan Vidya shivir which is a co-requisite). For the above topics, scenarios may be used to initiate discussion. Depending on the nature of topics, worksheets, home assignment and/or activity may be included.

1.4 Text book:

No textbook, however "Resource Material for Teachers" has been prepared. It contains for each of the major topics, outline of sample scenarios with issues and discussion points. They are made available to faculty mentors for use in their respective discussions.

1.5 Evaluation:

This will be a PCO course, and there would only be pass/fail grade. Participation in discussions, weekly report and final report will be used in evaluation. Pass grade will be given if student satisfies the above requirement.

1.6 Outcome:

At the end of the course, students are expected to become more aware of their surroundings and would have better critical ability. They would also become sensitive to their commitment towards what they believe in (human values). It is hoped that they would be able to apply what they have learnt to their own self in different day-to-day settings in real life, at least a beginning would be made in this direction.

Human Values II

HS 1002 (0-2-0-2)

Offered in even semesters

(To be read in conjunction with course description of HS 1001 Human Values I)

2 Course Description:

2.1 Objective:

The course is aimed at furthering the understanding of human values gained in HS 1001. Thus, the objectives are same as those for HS 1001. However, emphasis will shift to point 2, namely, to move from discrimination to commitment.

2.2 Pre-requisites:

HS1001 Human Values I.

2.3 Course topics

2.3.1 Background

Same as in HS 1001

2.3.2 Topics

- **Peer pressure.** Being self determined or swatantrata. Apply in the context of felicity (cultural festival).
- **Relationship in family and friends.** Trust and respect. Apply to conflict situations at home with siblings and others, or in hostel in a group or with roommate or others.
- **Health and regular lifestyle.** Peer prssure causing irregular lifestyle, and eating and sleeping habits.
- **Identifying our needs.** Being self-determined helps us determine our needs, revisiting and analyzing our goals.
- **Relationship with nature.** Right utilization of physical facilities related to needs. Sensitizing towards waste of water, electricity, and food, in both hostel and lab. Applying it to local organization (such as hostel committee, mess committee, and lab. committee) to avoid waste.

- **Global warming.** Production through mutually enriching relationship with nature.
- **Role of values in society.** Rules and norms, social behaviour, legality vs morality

There would be book reading assignment based on selected books such as biographies of MK Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Maulana Abdul Kalam, APJ Abdul Kalam, and other books such as Small is Beautiful, Jonathan Livingstone Seagull, Premchand's stories, etc. Discussions would also be organized around some of these.

2.3.3 Mode of conduct

Mode of conduct will be same as in HS 1001.

2.4 Text book:

No textbook. Resource material for teachers has been prepared. List of possible books for reading assignment, as well as list of activities are also prepared.

2.5 Evaluation:

This will be a PCO course, and there would only be pass/fail grade. Participation in discussions, weekly report and final report will be used in evaluation. Pass grade will be given if student satisfies the above requirement.

2.6 Outcome:

Development of critical discrimination ability in the students, and development of a stronger commitment towards their own beliefs. It is hoped that many students would start acting based on their beliefs.