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BELIEF SYSTEMS

**Family and Consumer Studies 3240.01 – 3 credit hours
Earns Upper-division Communication/Writing Credit**

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Ever wonder why you see the world as you do and why many people don't agree with you even though you know you are right?

If you are usually right about the things that are important to you, don't you think it is amazing that folks don't see things as you do and that they resist your best efforts to convince them that you are right?

A big part of the answer to these questions is found in your personal beliefs and how they are organized into belief systems about all kinds of things and that your brain has many built in cognitive biases that tend to make you think you, your friends, family, and favorite authority figures are always right. This course studies these things and many related matters. One of the most important ideas we will study in depth is how open-mindedness and being open-minded can help us learn to understand that people with different values and belief systems about the world and things in it subsequently view similar policies, laws, problems, and issues regarding gender, sexuality, families, co-habitation, marriage, divorce, re-marriage, child-bearing, parenting, etc., in very different ways. To facilitate this, we will study how these things are generally perceived within conservative, centrist, liberal, feminist, and different ethical perspectives prevalent in our society and the social, economical, political, and religious systems in which they are embedded. Ultimately, we have to acquire the abilities to see and understand things from more than one or two different points of view as well as discover and work through the strong and weak components of our beliefs. Here are a few other questions that we will endeavor to understand and answer.

What does it mean to be open-minded? What can we do to be more open-minded?

How can we be more open to other people and their beliefs without feeling threatened by beliefs different from our own?

Why is it so hard for other people to understand us? Why is it so hard for us to understand others? How can we help other people understand more about us and our beliefs so they can understand us and we understand them?

If everyone thinks they are right, how do we figure out who is really right? Or is everyone really right?

Grades are based on a combination of small-group and class discussions, in-class writing activities, reading insights, and two in-depth written analyses of your learning. Come and check us out, become a contributing member of our class, and learn some useful stuff. When learning matters a lot to you, you will learn a lot that matters! Thanks for your interest. Hope to see you in class sometime soon.