

COURSES

Study Circles in Northwest Indiana began in 2000 when a group of dedicated Valparaiso University faculty and staff voluntarily participated in a weekly study circle on race relations. The positive experience led to the core group's decision to use this model as a tool to educate students and the community, in a proactive way, on ways to improve race relations. Members of this original VU core group obtained training to become study circles facilitators. And, an academic course was developed utilizing the study circles model. In addition, VU's Sociology Department hosted a tri-county conference in 2001 to promote study circles in the region. Since then, study circles on race relations have continued both on campus and in the surrounding communities.

Three courses are available through the Study Circles on Race Relations Program. Taken in a sequence package, these courses satisfy the three-credit Cultural Diversity Course component of the Cultural Diversity General Education requirement.

GS200: Study Circles on Race Relation (2 Credits)

S/U

This course will offer students the opportunity to engage in a series of participatory, democratic discussions about race relations on campus and in society. In addition, students will learn how to become involved in improving human relations by developing and implementing an 'action plan' component that involves collaborative, practical strategies that improve race and ethnic relations on campus and in our community. The instructor(s) for the course will serve as facilitator(s), establishing ground rules for safe, focused discussion in which participants can exchange ideas freely and consider a variety of views about race relations.

GS201: Facilitator Training for Study Circles (1 Credit)

Prerequisites GS 200; S/U

By taking this course the students will: understand the role of a facilitator and practice the basic skills needed to be an effective study circle leader. There will be weekly readings and reflection papers as well as an end of the term report.

GS202: Study Circles: Civic Engagement (1 Credit)

Prerequisites GS 200; S/U

Students earn the credit by expanding the scope of their GS 200 action plan. The written proposal must entail a substantial time commitment (a minimum of 20 hours of work is required), the work to be done, and identify a written reflection component to the project. Students must file a proposal with one of the co-directors of the Study Circles Program and register for the credit.