**IS1115: Tackling a Wicked Problem**

4 credits

Semester, year

Instructor name, contact information, office hours

**Course Description:**

In this class, students use a collaborative project development process to reach outside the classroom to address some aspect of a wicked problem. During this project process, students focus on the development and practice of the General Education Habits of Mind. The course culminates in a public event at which students share their reflections on their learning.

**General Education:**

This course is part of the First Year Experience component of the General Education program.

**Habits of Mind:**

The Habits of Mind are a set of four usual ways of thinking or ways of engaging with the world. These Habits of Mind equip you to succeed in your life and work during and after college. As you take courses within the General Education program, you develop and practice the Habits of Mind in various meaningful contexts. Details of the Habits of Mind can be found in the Habits of Mind section of the Open Educational Resource for the course: <https://wicked-problem.press.plymouth.edu/part/habits-of-mind/>

In this class, you will:

* Communicate purposefully
* Practice and employ problem-solving strategies
* Recognize and integrate multiple perspectives
* Regulate your own learning

**Wicked Problems:**

A wicked problem is a cultural or societal problem that is difficult or impossible to solve. We might not have enough information about the problem to solve it or the information we have might be contradictory. The wicked problem might be connected to other wicked problems. Efforts to work on one aspect of the problem might create new, unforeseen problems. Different people might have different perspectives on the causes of the problem. Or the possible solutions to the problem might be prohibitively expensive and, therefore, infeasible.

**Habits of Mind Project:**

The Habits of Mind Project is designed to provide you with the opportunity to practice the Habits of Mind. Your project will not “solve” the wicked problem so that the problem goes away entirely. Instead, you will work collaboratively with other students in your class on one aspect of the problem to try to make a difference in the world. At the end of the semester, you and your group will share what you learned from working on your project in a poster symposium to which members of the PSU community and the larger Plymouth community will be invited. More information about the posters will be shared later in the semester. In addition, you will write an individual paper explaining how your work on the various project activities has helped you to develop the Habits of Mind.

**Learning Outcomes:**

In this class, you will:

* Understand the importance of the General Education Habits of Mind to your success both during and after college
* Progress in your personal development of the General Education Habits of Mind
* Learn about the complexities and challenges of your wicked problem and be able to explain them to other people
* Demonstrate the ability to recognize the need for information to accomplish a specific purpose in a particular context as well as to be able to find, evaluate, use, and properly cite that information.
* Engage in a project development process that includes at least one attempt to make a difference in the world related to your wicked problem and be able to explain what you did to other people
* Explain how your project development activities relate to the General Education Habits of Mind

**Required readings and materials** -- The Tackling a Wicked Problem Open Educational Resource (<https://wicked-problem.press.plymouth.edu/>) and additional resources which will vary with each section

**Course Outline** -- will vary with each section

**Assignments and Activities (including the date of the final exam or final activity)** -- will vary with each section

**OSHA Standards/Safety regulations (if applicable)**

**Attendance Policy:**

Although much of the work of the class will be completed independently within your group, time in class will be used to support that group work and, therefore, your attendance is critical. If you must miss class, you must communicate with your group and your instructor about your absence. The University’s Excused Absence Policy can be found here: [Excused Absence Policy](https://campus.plymouth.edu/faculty-governance/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2017/05/PSU-Excused-Absence-Policy.pdf)

**Grading Criteria/Standards:**

Evaluation of your work will include a self-evaluation as well as an evaluation by your group and by the instructor. You must fully participate in the Habits of Mind Project to pass the class. The University’s Fair Grading Policy can be found here: [Fair Grading Policy](https://campus.plymouth.edu/faculty-governance/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2017/05/PSU-Fair-Grading-Policy.pdf). (The rest of the grading criteria will vary by section.)

**Academic honesty:**

Presenting someone else’s work as your own or without attribution is a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found here: [Academic Integrity Policy](https://campus.plymouth.edu/faculty-governance/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2017/05/PSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf).

**ADA Statement:**

Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should contact Campus Accessibility Services (CAS), located in Speare 210 (535-3300) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with CAS. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from CAS, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.