

WS 332U: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality in the U.S.

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:50pm in Shattuck Hall 244

CRN: 44842

Professor Gina Velasco

Email: gina.k.velasco@pdx.edu I prefer that you contact me at this email address, rather than using the mail function on Blackboard. I check this email address the most frequently. *Email is the best way to reach me. In general, I will respond to email within 24 hrs, except on the weekends (I may not respond until Monday morning).* **Please cc Kirsten Keith, the teaching assistant, in any email correspondence regarding attendance, absences, or the discussion questions. Kirsten's email address is below.**

Office Hours: **Thursdays 11:45am-12:45pm (by appointment only) and 12:45pm-1:45pm (drop in hours)** in **Extended Studies Building 223**. The Extended Studies Building (XSB) is located across the park blocks from Lincoln Hall. My office is on the 2nd floor of the building. There is no elevator in the building. Please email me if you need to meet with me in a first floor room. Please email me if you would like to meet me during my office hours by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Kirsten Keith

Email: kcketh@pdx.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will examine the ways intersecting notions of race, class, gender, and sexuality are conceptualized and represented in contemporary U.S. culture and society. Throughout the term, we will investigate the institutions, practices, and discourses that comprise these notions as well as consider the ways in which these social categories shape and are shaped by one another. The goal of this class is to prompt students to think critically, develop their own frameworks for analyzing and critically engaging meanings, impacts and representations of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

This course aims to cultivate collaboration in the learning process. Our goal is to create a space in which students will take an active role in the learning/teaching process. This course is an exercise in both critical pedagogy and democratic education. By inviting students to take responsibility for both the learning and teaching process, we are enacting a model of education in which students are more than passive consumers of knowledge, but rather active, critical and engaged participants in a collective learning process.

REQUIRED READING MATERIAL FOR CLASS:

The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality Editor: Tracey E. Ore. *5th Edition* (available at PSU bookstore). All other readings are available on Blackboard.

Attendance/Participation

You are expected to attend all class meetings. You are expected to be in class on time, and to stay for the duration of the class period. Attendance will be noted each class session and students will get a lower attendance grade with any unexcused absence. You should come to each class with carefully thought out critical observations, comments, and/or questions about the reading materials. You are expected to participate as an individual as well as in small group and large group discussions and activities.

Participation means active listening and encouraging others to speak. Class participation is as much about sharing your voice and ideas as it is about learning to listen and cooperate with others – your grade will reflect both these skills. **Students who have more than three unexcused absences will not receive a passing grade for the course.**

All students should be familiar with the PSU’s Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility at www.ess.pdx.edu/osa/osa. This code spells out the legal parameters, which all students are expected to follow, particularly within the space of the classroom

Students are expected to be critically engaged and respectful of varying opinions in the classroom. We will follow seminar guidelines to ensure that our discussion is **respectful** and **productive**, including no interrupting when someone is talking, no name-calling or insulting commentaries, and asking clarifying questions as opposed to arguing. In the interest of openness, students are encouraged to write and speak freely. However, ultimately, the creation and maintenance of a respectful learning environment is more important than any student’s perceived right to free speech.

ASSIGNMENTS

****You are required to complete ALL assignments in order to pass the course.****

ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED VIA BLACKBOARD BEFORE CLASS ON THE DEADLINE. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR ASSIGNMENTS VIA ATTACHMENT AS A MICROSOFT WORD DOCUMENT. PLEASE USE 12 POINT FONT, 1 INCH MARGINS, AND DOUBLE SPACING.

YOU SHOULD MAKE CERTAIN THAT YOU SEE A CONFIRMATION OF YOUR SUBMISSION ON BLACKBOARD TO VERIFY THAT YOUR ASSIGNMENT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED. IF YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS NOT ON BLACKBOARD, THEN IT HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED.

Participation	10%
Discussion questions (8 total)	30% (3.75% each)
Student-lead Discussion (in groups)	15%
Social Location Assignment	20%
Take Home Exam	25%

1) Discussion Question Assignment: You will write discussion questions for **8** out of 18 possible discussion questions. You are required to submit one discussion question assignment per week, with the exception of the first week of class and finals week, for a **total of 8**. *You must submit all 8 discussion question assignments in order to pass the course.*

Format of the discussion question: For each assignment, present one discussion question per reading, then write a paragraph in which you begin to answer your own question. You should ground your discussion in the text, citing specific passages to support your discussion. You should demonstrate both a critical engagement with the text, as well as your understanding of the broader argument of the text. *For each reading, you will present at least one question and one paragraph a discussion.* For example, if there are 3 readings for that day of class, you should present 3 questions and 3 different paragraphs of discussion.

You are required to read your classmates’ posts before class, regardless of whether you have submitted discussion questions for that day. Your questions will serve as the basis for our class discussion.

Discussion questions are due via Blackboard on by midnight the day before class. You need to do TWO things in order to receive credit for your discussion question:

Please post your discussion question to the correct **discussion folder** (labeled by date) on Blackboard by **midnight** on the day before class. *You are required to read 10 of your classmates' posts before class, regardless of whether you have submitted a discussion question for that day.* You should attach your discussion question as a Word document. I encourage you to respond to themes or questions that your classmates pose in previous posts. You are also encouraged to post related links or comments on current events related to course materials/discussions.

In addition, you must submit your discussion question as an **assignment** via Blackboard. You will also attach your assignment as a Word document.

****Please make sure that you submit your discussion question BOTH as a discussion post AND an assignment, or you will not receive credit.****

2) With 3-4 partners, you will co-lead **one class discussion** (approximately 30 minutes), based on that day's readings. Your group will have a choice of which date/theme you would like to address. You will form groups and choose dates during the second week of class. I will give you a prompt to guide you.

3) **Social Location Assignment** (5-6 pages) is due on **January 25th**. This paper gives you the opportunity to explore and explain who you are in terms of the larger forms of difference we will study, such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion and nationality. You may add others that you find important.

This paper requires that you do some research. First, you will research the place (town, city, rural area) that most formed you growing up. If you moved around, explore the causes and effects of your migration. To answer the following questions, you will need to look at government documents such as the census and other sources such as the Chamber of Commerce for your hometown, if there is one. You should answer the following questions:

What are the demographics of your hometown in terms of race and class?

What are the major sources of jobs?

How has this changed over your lifetime?

How did these forces shape your family?

How do gender and sexuality inform the experiences of you and your family?

The second part of your research will include interviewing at least one family member to explore questions of culture, race/ethnicity, citizenship and nationality. What citizenship do you carry? What citizenship do your family members carry? What does your relative/interview subject see as the chief external factors shaping your family's history? If you are a U.S. citizen or your family lives in the U.S., the interview will help you determine where your family immigrated from and when that took place. If you are a citizen of another country and/or your family lives in another country, how long have they been in that country? How does your family fit into class and race/ethnic frameworks in that country?

In writing this paper, you are encouraged to express yourself in a personal voice. Nevertheless, you are also expected to have a clear thesis and sound structure and organization.

4) **Take Home Exam** (5-6 pages) is due on **March 14 at 10am** via Blackboard. You will be given a prompt with more details about my expectations for this assignment.

You are responsible for meeting the above deadlines, for information given in class and on Blackboard, and above all, for contacting me with any problems you may encounter. **Read the syllabus carefully so that you are aware of class policies.** If you have any questions or are struggling with the material, it is essential that you come to see me as soon as possible. Additionally, if you are experiencing any personal issues that make it difficult or impossible for you to complete assignments or come to class, it is your responsibility to let me know in a timely manner so that we can work together to make sure that you successfully complete the course.

Instructions for All Assignments:

Formatting: All papers will be double spaced, 12 point font like Times New Roman, with one inch margins. Minimum page # means FULL pages.

Citations: You should use an accepted academic citation style such as MLA, Chicago, or APA format to receive full points. You must make sure to include at the very least the author's name and the page number in any quote you use! If you do not cite sources properly, that can be considered plagiarism and intellectual theft. Be sure to include a Works Cited Page/Bibliography.

Plagiarism: "Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone's work as your own through copying it without giving the creator of the work credit. Plagiarism can also include using another person's theories, ideas, or phrases without proper attribution. The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing is to always cite the sources from which you gather information or develop arguments. Plagiarism is a serious issue and is a violation of the PSU Student Conduct Code http://www.ess.pdx.edu/OSA/osa_b.htm." PSU Library Citation Guide Plagiarism will result in a 0 for the assignment, and can result in a 0 for the course, and/or expulsion from school.

Please check the course Blackboard page frequently for announcements, links, and assignment prompts.

Electronics policy: During class, please refrain from using your cell phones (including texting), checking your email, or surfing the internet. You may use your laptop computers to access PDFs of readings or to take notes, but please limit your computer use to course-related activity.

COURSE SCHEDULE

***All readings are in the textbook, unless marked as available on Blackboard**

Jan 4 Introduction to the course

Jan 6 **Race and Ethnicity**

1. Part 1: Constructing Difference
2. Racial Formations, Omi and Winant
3. Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, McIntosh (Blackboard)

Jan 11 1. Optional Ethnicities, Waters
2. Becoming Suspects, Nguyen
3. How Did Jews Become White Folks, Brodtkin

Jan 13 **Social Class**

1. Race, Wealth, and Equality, Oliver and Shapiro
2. Media Magic: Making Race Invisible, Mantsios
3. Doubly Divided: The Racial Wealth Gap, Lui
4. Getting Corporations Off the Public Dole, Shields

Jan 18 **Sex and Gender**

1. The Social Construction of Gender, Lorber
2. The Five Sexes, Revisited, Fausto-Sterling
3. The Transgender Paradigm Shift Toward Free Expression, Boswell
4. Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity, Kimmel

Jan 20 **Sexuality**

1. The Invention of Heterosexuality, Katz
2. Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds

Jan 25 1. Sexual Identity and Bisexual Identities, Rust

2. Naming All the Parts, Bornstein
 3. I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities, Lorde (Blackboard)
- Social Location Assignment Due**

Jan 27 **Social Institutions: Work and Economy**

1. Jobless Ghettos, Wilson
2. We'd Love to Hire Them, Kirschenman and Neckerman
3. The Glass Escalator, Williams
4. Cause of Death: Inequality, Reuss

Feb 1 **Social Institutions: State and Public Policy**

1. Welfare Reform, Family Hardship, and Women of Color, Burnham
2. Beyond Crime and Punishment, Western and Pettit
3. Race, Gender and the Prison Industrial Complex: California and Beyond, Davis and Shaylor (Blackboard)

Feb 3 1. The Effects of Affirmative Action on Other Stakeholders, Reskin

2. The Possessive Investment in Whiteness, Lipsitz
3. Crenshaw article (Blackboard)

Feb 10 **Social Institutions: Media**

1. Five Decades and Three Hundred Sitcoms About Class and Gender, Butsch
2. Distorted Reality, Lichter and Amundson

Feb 15 1. Gay Characters in Conventional Spaces, Battles and Hilton-Morrow

2. Metaphors Matter, Tierney, Bevc, and Kuligowski

Feb 17 **Language and Culture**

1. Racism in the English Language, Moore
2. Self, Identity, and the Naming Question, Zola
3. How to Tame a Wild Tongue, Anzaldúa
4. The Dark Side of Sports Symbols, Eitzen and Zinn

Feb 22 **Violence and Social Control**

1. "National Security" and the Violation of Women, Falcón
2. The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence, Kaufman
3. Homophobia as a Weapon of Sexism, Pharr

Feb 24 **Part II: Experiencing Difference and Inequality in Everyday Life**

1. Part II: Experiencing Difference and Inequality in Everyday Life
2. Making Systems of Privilege Visible, Wildman and Davis
3. "Yes, I Follow Islam, but I'm Not a Terrorist," Sawy
4. A Dozen Demons, Cose
5. Always Running, Rodriguez

- Feb 1
1. Separated by Deportation, Nguyen
 2. "Gee, You Don't Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation," Cameron
 3. Living Fearlessly with and within Differences, Milczarek-Desai
 4. I Am Your Welfare Reform, Downey
 5. Bisexuality, Feminisms, Men, and Me, Ochs

Feb 3 **Resistance and Social Change**

1. Resistance and Social Change
2. Toward a New Vision, Hill Collins
3. Cultural Resistance: Reconstructing Our Own Images, Espiritu
4. Good for the 'Hood?', Chaddha

- Feb 8
1. Seeing More Than Black and White, Martinez
 2. White White People Can Serve as Allies to People of Color, Kivel
 3. Dismantling Noah's Ark, Lorber
 4. Voices of a New Movimiento, Lovato