

U.S. Women of Color

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Office Hours: M 3-5, W 3-4, or by appointment
CHST /WMST/AAS 4675
Fall 2009; T 7:10 – 10:00, CR 147

Course Description:

This course examines the social conditions that shape the experiences of women of color in the U.S. We will approach the problem of race, class, gender, and sexual inequality from a critical race feminist perspective. The expectation is that students will gain the theoretical tools necessary for understanding the historical and structural process of inequality as it impacts U.S. women of color. Specifically, students will gain an understanding of the intersection race, class, gender, and sexuality, in shaping the lived experiences of oppressed communities. The main objective of this course is to encourage students to think critically about social inequality, and to gain a better understanding of the institutional, ideological, economic, and political forces that shape the experiences of women of color in the U.S.

Students should walk away from this course with a firm grasp of the following **major ideas:**

- Contemporary class, race, and gender inequality is directly related to historical inequality.
- Individuals are sociohistorical creations. As such, individuals are all bearers of structure.
- The intersections of these historical and contemporary structures shape the experiences of all individuals.
- The concept of intersectionality captures the particular experiences of women of color.

These ideas are not easy to grasp. However, working hard, reading the material, listening, keeping an open mind, reserving judgment, and respectfully engaging in dialogue will help clarify these ideas. Students will be expected to demonstrate their level of understanding of these ideas in their final response paper.

USP Credit: U.S. Diversity (D)

This course fulfills the Diversity in the U.S. (D) requirement of the 2003 University Studies Program. Diversity in the U.S. (D) explores the complexities of culture in the U.S. both through history and contemporary experience. Diversity in the U.S. (D) courses examine the complexity of cultures in the U.S. and the interdependence of these cultures. Understanding influences such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, offer insight into how the diversity of the cultural traditions of the United States have shaped and continue to shape contemporary experience.

Class Rules: No laptops or texting devices are allowed during class. Disruptive students will be dropped from class. No late papers will be accepted without a university excuse. Come to class prepared. Expect to be called upon.

Assignments and Grading:

Assignments for this class consist of four short response papers on the readings, in class film credit, a final response paper, an optional research paper, and active class participation.

Four Short Response Papers: Each response paper will be a typed 2-3 page response to the assigned readings. The response should briefly outline the main points in the readings and your response to those ideas. Students may receive up to 25 points for each paper for a total of 100 points. The response papers are worth 60 percent of the total grade.

One Final Response Paper: The final response paper will be 5-6 pages. Students will selectively choose points from readings, lecture and discussion to demonstrate their understanding of the four major ideas outlined above. This paper is worth 30 percent of the total grade.

Film and Attendance Credit: Unannounced films will be shown throughout the semester. Students will be allotted attendance credit based on the percentage of films attended. Film, attendance and participation total 10 percent of the final grade.

Optional Research Paper: In order to earn an “A” in this class a student must submit a research paper of “A” quality on the last day of class in addition to maintaining an “A” average on the standard class requirements.

The research paper is due on November 30th. This 10-12 page research paper will examine a particular problem as it impacts women in a U.S. community of color.

Grading Criteria for Optional Research Paper: Your paper will be graded, and points allocated based on the following criteria:

40 pts. Research: Use of relevant sources, adequate number of sources to answer the question, and understanding of material.

40 pts. Analysis: The strength of the question, ability to conceptualize a problem and draw out either historical, structural, ideological and/or political implications, identify and understand assumptions.

20 pts. Coherence and clarity: strength of argument, make strong relationships between points, writing clarity.

Extra Credit: At any time during the semester, students will be given the opportunity to earn an extra credit points towards their response papers. In order to earn extra credit, a student will present to the class a YouTube clip s/he found relevant to the ideas studied in class. After showing the clip, the student will discuss how it relates to the broader issues. The students in class will determine if the presentation is worthy of extra credit through

secret ballot. Students will notify professor prior to class of their intentions to present on any given day.

Required Texts and Readings:

Race Class & Gender: An Anthology 7th edition edited by Margaret Anderson and Patricia Hill Collins

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments: (Note: The schedule below is an estimate. It is possible that we may spend more time on a particular topic than I have allowed in the syllabus. Thus, we will adjust the readings and discussions to follow the flow of the class.)

Week 1 8/24	Introduction
Week 2 8/31	Race, Class and Gender Anderson and Collins “Introduction” Ch. 5 “Oppression” Ch. 6 “Label Us Angry”
Week 3 9/7	Race and Racism Anderson and Collins “Introduction” to Systems of Power and Inequality
Week 4 9/14	Race and Racism Ch. 4 “Katrina” Ch. 9 Race and Risk Response Paper I Due
Week 5 9/21	Race and Racism Ch. 10 Color-blind Privilege Ch. 11 White Privilege
Week 6 9/28	Class and Inequality Ch. 13 Race as Class Ch. 16 Hidden Cost
Week 7 10/5	Class and Inequality Ch. 17 Is Capitalism Gendered and Raced? Ch. 18 The New Working Class Response Paper II Due
Week 8	Gender and Sexism

- 10/12 CH. 19 Sex and Gender
 Ch. 22 Masculinities and Athletic Careers
 Ch. 23 Gladiators, Gazelles and Groupies
- Week 9 Sexuality and Heterosexism
 10/19 Ch. 29 Prisons for Our Bodies
 Ch. 30 The Invention of Heterosexuality
 Ch. 32 Darker Shade of Queer
- Week 10 Work
 10/26 Anderson and Collins “Introduction” to The Structure of Social
 Institutions
 Ch. 34 Race, Class Gender
 Ch. 38 Invisible Poor
- Week 11 Families
 11/2 Ch. 41 Straight is to Gay
 Ch. 42 Unequal Childhoods
- Response Paper III Due**
- Week 12 Media
 11/9 Ch. 46 Crimes Against Humanity
 Ch. 47 Media Magic
- Week 13 Education
 11/16 Ch. 49 Can Education Eliminate Inequality?
 Ch. 50 Why Segregation Matters
 Ch. 51 How a Scholarship Girl Becomes a Soldier
- Week 14 Health
 11/23 Ch. 52 Life at the Top
 Ch. 53 Intersections of Race Class and Gender
Response Paper IV Due
- Week 15 State Policies
 11/30 Ch. 54 The First Americans
 Ch. 55 Policing the National Body
Final Response Paper Due

