

## **CLASSISM, RACISM, AND SEXISM**

WSS 240 (31881) / AAS 240 (31140) / LCS 240 (26244)

Online syllabus: [http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/class\\_race\\_gender](http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/class_race_gender)

Fall 2009

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:15-5:35 pm

Lecture Center 6

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### **Course Description:**

This interdisciplinary course will define the terms classism, racism, and sexism and explore how they intersect to shape systems of oppression. Through historical and political consciousness, we will assess different social and cultural forces. We will also examine social constructions of race, gender, and class and how they create worldviews that discourage us from challenging the status quo. In the end, our goal is to dismantle our various "isms" and envision social change for social justice.

### **General Education U.S. Diversity and Pluralism Requirement:**

This course fulfills the General Education U.S. Diversity and Pluralism requirement; we will focus primarily on contemporary experiences in the United States, even as we explore historical developments of our contemporary moment. Courses fulfilling this requirement offer students perspectives on the diversity and pluralism of U.S. society with respect to one or more of the following: age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Given that categories of diversity and pluralism intersect, approved courses will deal with more than one category.

### **Required Texts** (available at the University bookstore and Mary Jane Books)

*The Matrix Reader: Examining the Dynamics of Oppression and Privilege.* NY: McGraw-Hill, 2009.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture.* New Haven, Yale UP, 1992. (abbreviated hereafter as WOB)

### **Requirements:**

1. **Quizzes:** Every Thursday, with few exceptions, there will be a quiz given at the beginning of class. Please note the dates in the schedule with an asterisk (\*). Quizzes will cover readings, videos, and in-class lectures. My Power Point lectures will not be made available online, so it is best that you attend class sessions if you wish to obtain this information. There will be no make-up quizzes, due to unexcused absences or lateness, so use your absences wisely and show up to class on time. If you miss a quiz due to illness or emergencies (for which you will need to provide me with proper documentation), you may submit in lieu of the missed quiz a 4-5 page essay (typed and double-spaced) analyzing reading, video, and lecture materials for that week; you will also need to submit this essay within a week of the missed quiz. Your *two lowest quiz grades* will be dropped from the final grade.

2. Midterm Exam: Scheduled on Thursday, **October 22, 2009**. The exam format includes three sections – short answer segment, quote/passage identification, and short essay.
3. Digital Video Project: In addition to exams, you will be given an opportunity to work in groups on a creative project called the Digital Video. With various new media technologies, such as Mac's iMovie and Window's Movie Maker, as well as other video making/editing software, you can now engage in unique storytelling. Considering that classism, racism, and sexism are "stories" that have been told over time, you and your group will be challenged this semester to create a story of "then" vs. "now" with regard to a social problem that intersects classism, racism, and sexism. This digital video must be at least 7 minutes in length but no longer than 10 minutes (including end credits). You will need to conduct research, create a script, and assemble visuals and audio to tell this unique story. On Blackboard, you will be placed in a Video Team with other members in this class. There are 12 such teams, and each team member will take on a specific role in producing this Digital Video. Your grade for this project will be individually based (specifically, the work that you've done in your role). However, the idea behind this project is to foster collaborative work, community building, and group identity. The team that produces the best video will be rewarded the full points of the Final Exam. In other words, the winning team will be exempt from having to take the final exam. In the event that there is a second-place winner, that team will be rewarded 10 bonus points on the final exam. If there is a third-place winner, that team will receive 5 bonus points. Detailed instructions on this project, as well as guidelines for working as a group for this project, are available on Blackboard. Two dates (**October 6** and **November 19**) are set aside for your group work on this project in class. A Video Proposal is due in class on **Thursday, October 8**, and a Script and Storyboard are due in class on **Tuesday, November 3**. Publicity materials for the Video are due in class on **Thursday, November 19**. The completed video file must be prepared as an .mp4 or .mov file and submitted in class on **Tuesday, November 24**. Presentations will be held from **November 24 – December 3**, with the winning team(s) announced on December 3, the last day of class. Digital videos will be made available on our iTunes U page <<https://maenad.csc.albany.edu/cgi-bin/itunespublic>>
4. Final Exam: Scheduled on **Tuesday, December 15, 1:00-3:00 pm**. The final exam is the same format as the Midterm Exam and will cover all materials studied over the course of the semester.

#### HOW GRADES ARE DETERMINED

<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>DUE DATES</u>
Quizzes	25	Thursdays
Midterm Exam	25	October 22
Digital Video Project	20	Video Proposal (Oct. 8) Script and Storyboard (Nov. 3) Publicity Materials (Nov. 19) Video File (Nov. 24) Presentations (Nov. 24-Dec. 3)
Final Exam	30	December 15 (1-3 pm)

#### Grading Scale:

A = 100-93 points      A- = 92-90 points      B+ = 89-87 points      B = 86-83 points  
 B- = 82-80 points      C+ = 79-77 points      C = 76-73 points      C- = 72-70 points  
 D = 69-65 points      E = Below 65 points

## **EXPECTATIONS**

You are expected to attend class regularly, to listen effectively to lectures and to others, and to bring reading materials to class. Due to the contents of this course concerning gender, sexuality, and racial issues, sensitivity and respect for all are a must. Cell phones must be turned off before class begins. Continued disruptions in class are considered disrespectful and will result in at least 10 points deducted from your final grade.

On Blackboard, you are expected to contribute to discussions with your Video Team members; you are also invited to post ideas and information on discussion boards. You are required to post a photo of yourself (and not anyone else) in the Course Roster on Blackboard by Friday, September 18. Failure to do so will result in a 5-point deduction from your final grade.

Late assignments will result in a 5-point reduction for each day late. After two days late, you will receive a "0" for that assignment.

Plagiarism and cheating are university offenses and will result in failing grades. First time offense will result in a "0" for your assignment. Second offense will result in a failing grade for the course.

### **TO AVOID PLAGIARISM:**

Understand what it means: plagiarism results when someone uses the ideas or writings of another and presents these ideas or writings as her or his own.

When citing sources, it is best to present ideas using your own original words. If you fully understand a source, you will be able to completely describe its themes and ideas in your own words and from your own perspective. However, if you copy a passage that someone else wrote and only change a few words around, it becomes plagiarism.

When quoting directly from sources, it is best to use direct quotes only if the phrasing is apt and powerfully stated; be sure to include proper citation. If the quote is not revelatory or eloquent but simply provides some useful information, then it is best to explain the information completely in your own words while providing proper citation.

### **TO AVOID COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT:**

Since you will be engaged in digital media production and will possibly work with various media sources, you will need to familiarize yourself with copyright policies on "fair use" of others' creative works. Copyright "fair use" laws allow you to reproduce copyrighted work only if your use of such work is "transformative" of the original or if it contains a small portion of it. It is often difficult to determine the nature of such transformations and portions, so when in doubt, it is safest to seek permission from the copyright owner for free use (if your work is for educational rather than commercial purposes, as is the case for your digital storytelling projects) or to pay a licensing fee. For more information, please visit Stanford University's website on copyright fair use laws: <http://fairuse.stanford.edu/>. To access royalty free music in the public domain, please visit: <http://www.freeplaymusic.com>.

## **SCHEDULE**

### Introduction

- |         |                                   |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Sept. 1 | Course overview and introduction. |
| Sept. 3 | Video: "The Story We Tell."       |

Unit One: Understanding the Intersections

- Sept. 8            MATRIX: "Constructing Identities and Examining Intersections" (pp. 7-15); "Toward a New Vision" (pp. 97-108); "Age, Race, Class, and Sex" (pp. 154-159).
- Sept. 10\*        MATRIX: "A History of Women's Bodies" (pp. 246-251); "Rape and the War Against Native Women" (pp. 280-291).
- Sept. 15            Video: "Jefferson's Blood."
- Sept. 17\*        Available in the Media Library folder on Blackboard: "Passing for White, Passing for Black."  
MATRIX: "Seeing More Than Black and White" (pp. 134-138); "La Güera" (pp. 181-186).

Unit Two: Representing the Intersections

- Sept. 22            Video: "Color Adjustment."
- Sept. 24\*        WOB: chapters 1-2.
- Sept. 29            WOB: chapters 3-5, 10.
- Oct. 1              Guest Lecture: Engaging Human Subjects and Interviews in Research.
- Oct. 6              Digital Video Group Meeting (Campus Center Assembly Hall).
- Oct. 8              Video: "In Whose Honor?"  
*Assignment Due: Digital Video Proposal.*

Unit Three: Vulnerability at the Intersections

- Oct. 13            WOB: chapters 11-15.
- Oct. 15\*        Video: "Night and Fog."  
MATRIX: "How Jews Became White" and "Then Came the War" (pp. 301-314).
- Oct. 20            MATRIX: "The Social Construction of Disability" (pp. 93-96); "Disability Discrimination and the Evolution of Civil Rights in Democratic Societies" (pp. 226-246); "Stolen Bodies, Reclaimed Bodies" (pp. 603-605).
- Oct. 22            **MIDTERM EXAM.**

Unit Four: Conflicts at the Intersections

- Oct. 27            Video: "The House We Live In."
- Oct. 29\*        MATRIX: "White Privilege and Male Privilege" (pp. 146-154); "White Privilege Shapes the U.S" and "The Costs of American Privilege" (pp. 186-190).
- Nov. 3            Video: "Flag Wars."  
*Due: Script and Storyboard.*
- Nov. 5\*        MATRIX: "From Outsider to Citizen" (pp. 376-391); "The Hidden Cost of Being African American" and "Why Do We Need Cross-Class Alliances?" (pp. 583-593).

- Nov. 10 Video: "Blind Faith."
- Nov. 12\* MATRIX: "The Invention of Heterosexuality" and "Masculinity as Homophobia" (pp. 36-50).

Unit Five: Coming Together at the Intersections

- Nov. 17 MATRIX: Part V, Section C essays (pp. 612-644).
- Nov. 19 Video Group Meeting.  
*Due: Video Publicity Materials.*
- Nov. 24 Presentation: Digital Videos (Teams 1-6).
- Nov. 26 holiday.

Conclusion

- Dec. 1 Digital Video presentations continued (Teams 7-12).
- Dec. 3 Presentations completed; Course and Final Exam Review.  
*Announcement of Digital Video Team Winners.*

**Final Exam is scheduled Tuesday, December 15, 1:00-3:00 pm.**