

**CLASSISM, RACISM, AND SEXISM**  
**WSS 240 (7898) / AFS 240 (9092) /LCS 240 (9845)**  
<http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/wss240>

Spring 2012  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
2:45-4:05 pm  
Education 120

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How do we learn classism, racism, and sexism? More importantly, how do we *unlearn* them? This interdisciplinary course will examine the social constructions of class, race, and gender, and explore how they intersect to shape inequalities, hierarchies, and power relations reflected in various social, cultural, and political systems. We will also study different historical and contemporary examples impacting on our worldviews. In the end, our goal is to dismantle these various “isms” and envision a world based on equality, social justice, and liberation.

### **COURSE LEARNING GOALS**

During the course of the semester, students will learn to:

1. Define and complicate categories of class, race, and gender.
2. Dismantle rhetoric and actions based in classist, racist, and sexist thinking.
3. Take charge of their own learning through student-based teaching and projects.

### **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 and also examine scenarios outside the U.S.

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.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Equipment: This class will use **i-Clickers**, which is available for purchase at the University Bookstore and must be registered at <http://www.iclicker.com>. Clickers will be used for regular class participation, pop quizzes, and poll-taking.

Assigned Reading (available for purchase at Mary Jane Books, located on the corner of Western Ave. and Quail St):

*Course Packet* (abbreviated in the course schedule as CP).

Additional readings and materials are available on Blackboard 9.1.

### Assignments:

*Class Participation*: You are expected to regularly attend class, to bring your Clickers to each session, to bring reading materials to class the day that we discuss them, and to regularly contribute to discussions and in-class exercises. You are allowed **three unexcused absences**, but once you miss more than three classes, you will receive a 5-point deduction for each additional absence. In these cases, exceptions will be made only for emergencies and illnesses, with proper documentation provided.

*Pop Quizzes*: Occasionally, you will take quizzes in class, through the use of Clickers, based on reading and video assignments. Because these quizzes will be unannounced, you must always anticipate a “pop” quiz, so be prepared by doing reading assignments ahead of class time and by showing up to class on time. There will be no make-up quizzes, nor will you receive extra time to complete them if you show up late; please remember that the quizzes are conducted through Clickers. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped from your final grade.

*Team-Based Learning and Teaching*: You will be randomly assigned to one of 8 teams this semester. Occasionally, you will be meeting with your teams in class and engaging in group work and discussions over reading and video assignments, beginning in February. Beyond the in-class team meetings, you are responsible for planning and preparing for a Debate Team session with your team members. These sessions will take place from **April 24 through May 3**. Your team will have an opportunity to work on a Proposal for this Debate Session (due in class on **Thursday, March 8**), preparing to debate a selected question, as voted by the class. You will be given the task of preparing and debating an argument in response to the question and debating the issue with another team in a special session. The debate session will last 60 minutes. Prior to the debate, the class will be polled on their positions, and after the debate, the class will be polled again to see if their positions have changed based on the debate. Whichever debate team “wins” that session will earn **5 bonus points** on the final exam. Please check the Course Schedule for your scheduled Debate session. Each team must submit an Annotated Bibliography of 10-12 primary and secondary sources consulted in your research on the topic, due in class on **Tuesday, April 10**.

*Final Exam*: The final exam will cover materials studied in the semester and include short-answer questions, true/false questions, and a short essay. Some of these questions you will help to formulate and post on Blackboard. It is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 16, 8:00-10:00 am**.

**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

**HOW GRADES ARE DETERMINED**

ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS	DUE DATE
Class Participation	20	Each session
Pop Quizzes	20	Unannounced
Team-Based Teaching	30	March 8 (Debate Team Proposal) April 10 (Annotated Bibliography) April 24-May 3 (Debate Presentations)
Final Exam	30	May 16, 8:00-10:00 am

**COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS**

Class sessions will be structured around lectures, class discussions, and team-based exercises. Due to the contents of this course, sensitivity and respect for all are a must. Please turn off cell phones (or keep on vibrator alert in cases of “emergency” calls) before class begins. Texting and Internet surfing on personal laptops are considered disrespectful use of class time and will result in reduced points from your final grade if they become regular occurrences.

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.

**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.

\*CP = refers to readings available in the Course Packet.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- Jan. 19 Course overview and introduction.
- Jan. 24 CP: Frye, "Oppression"; Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference."
- Jan. 26 CP: McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."

### **UNIT ONE: WHERE RACE MEETS GENDER MEETS CLASS**

- Jan. 31 Screen: *Jefferson's Blood*.
- Feb. 2 CP: Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black."
- Feb. 7 CP: Martinez, "Seeing More Than Black and White"; Cruz-Janzen, "Latinegras."
- Feb. 9 Screen: *La Operacion*.

### **UNIT TWO: SHAPING THE BODY POLITIC**

- Feb. 14 CP: Hubbard, "Who Should and Who Should Not Inhabit the World"; Ross, "African-American Women and Abortion: A Neglected History."
- Feb. 16 Screen: "The Story We Tell," from *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.
- Feb. 21 CP: Hammad, "Of Refuge and Language"; Naber, "So Our History Doesn't Become Your Future."  
Game: ICED (link available for download on the online syllabus).
- Feb. 23 Screen: "The House We Live in," from *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.

### **UNIT THREE: SITES OF POWER, SITES OF RESISTANCE**

- Feb. 28 Online: BFP, "The Ruin Porn Post," "Consequences of Ruin Porn," and "Movement: Rust Belt Style."
- Mar. 1 Screen: *Maquilapolis*.
- Mar. 6 CP: Clare, "Clearcut: Explaining the Distance...Losing Home...End of the Line."  
You Tube: Carter, "Greening the Ghetto."
- Mar. 8 Team Meeting.  
Due: Proposal for Debate Team Session.

Spring Break

#### **UNIT FOUR: THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL**

- Mar. 20 CP: Hallett, "Rape is Rape"; Smith, "Beyond Restorative Justice."
- Mar. 22 CP: Bierria, Liebenthal, and *Incite!*, "To Render Ourselves Visible."
- Mar. 27 Screen: *Blind Faith*.
- Mar. 29 continued.
- Apr. 3 BLACKBOARD: Pharr, "Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism" (pages 1-26).
- Apr. 5 CP: Stone, "What the Homosexuality Debates Really Say about the Bible."

#### **UNIT FIVE: WHOSE COMMUNITY?**

- Apr. 10 Screen: *Flag Wars*.  
Due: Annotated Bibliography.
- Apr. 12 continued.
- Apr. 17 CP: Baca, "Our People are the Internal Exiles."

#### **CONCLUSION: DEBATING THE ISSUES**

- Apr. 19 In-class Meeting with Teams.
- Apr. 24 Debate: Teams 1 and 2.
- Apr. 26 Debate: Teams 3 and 4.
- May 1 Debate: Teams 5 and 6.
- May 3 Debate: Teams 7 and 8.
- May 8 Course review and reflection.
- May 16 Final Exam, 8:00-10:00 am.