

Fall 2001
INDV 101: The Politics of Difference
Ethnicity/Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality

Tu and Th 2:00 - 3:15 pm

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With courtesy affiliations in Women's Studies,

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Course Description

This course will examine the *politics* (understood broadly as differential access to and control over material and symbolic resources) of *difference* (understood as institutionalized social hierarchies that oppress individuals). We will focus on four key structures of difference and their interaction: ethnicity/race, class, gender, and sexuality. We will pay particular attention to how gender dynamics shape individual identities, group structures, and the reproduction of multiple social hierarchies of difference.

The politics of additional structures of difference (along the dimensions of religion, physical ability, age, etc.) are understood to interact with our key structures and to constitute significant forms of oppression. These dimensions of differences will be acknowledged and integrated into our discussion whenever possible. Due to time constraints, however, this course focuses on the construction of ethnicity/race, class, gender, and sexuality--and their interaction--as experienced and analyzed in the United States.

Course Objectives

The course has three purposes. The first is **informative**: students will become familiar with empirical indicators of how individuals' lives are materially and symbolically marked by difference. Empirical evidence substantiates the asymmetrical power, that is, politics, of these markers. Historical-empirical studies help us to understand how the social hierarchies are *made* in specific contexts, not simply 'found' in nature. The second is **analytic**: we will study theories that purport to describe and explain how and why these structures of difference are so powerful, how we are taught to think about and respond to 'differences,' and how asymmetries of power are rendered invisible (by being made to appear natural or inevitable). The third is **normative**: as we study hierarchies of power, we will consider the goals of individuals and societies, asking ourselves 'What kind of individuals and societies do we seek?' and 'How can we move beyond racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism (homophobia)?'

In sum, upon completion of the course, it is expected that students will 1) have greater knowledge of systematic empirical differences that constitute oppressive social hierarchies, 2) gain familiarity with a variety of theories that purport to explain systemic oppressions, and 3) become more effective agents of social change insofar as they apply this knowledge in their own lives.

Classroom policies

Some of the issues addressed in class will be controversial, which raises two points. First, it is important to sustain an atmosphere of shared *respect* for the experience and contributions of all participants. No 'personal attacks' will be permitted. Second, sharing personal experiences and feelings is relevant and welcome in classroom discussions. Personal opinions, however, cannot substitute for thoughtful contributions and evidence of your understanding of the course materials. An important key to lifelong learning and growth is, first, being open to perspectives that may initially seem unusual or uncomfortable; and second, recognizing that growth often requires moving *through* discomfort to new and deeper understanding. In this course, understanding the material does not mean that you have to agree with it, but it does mean that you read the material attentively, be aware of its points and argumentation, and be able to discuss it knowledgeably. Please note: once you have read the syllabus and chosen to remain enrolled in this class, I will assume that you are aware of and have accepted these 'ground rules' for the course.

We are participating in the Teaching Teams Program offered to enhance the student's learning experience in General Education courses. A number of student preceptors may be facilitating discussion in class and available to students outside of class. Their role is to contribute to a peer support system by assisting with assignments, writing projects, collaborative learning activities, and preparation for exams. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this exceptional resource, and for some assignments you may be required to contact preceptors.

Course requirements/evaluation

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to participate actively, to complete reading assignments prior to class, and to bring to class points or questions related to the readings and scheduled course topics. In

addition, all writing assignments must evidence attention to spelling, grammar, and composition; essays must be thoughtfully organized and well-argued.

An attendance sheet will be circulated during each class for you to initial. Excused absences (illness with a doctor's note, documented family emergency, religious observance) will not be counted against you. Unexcused absences *will* have a negative effect on your course grade. You are responsible for finding out about any assignments if you were absent.

The semester grade will be comprised of the following: 1) short critical 'response piece' essays (RPs) assigned throughout the semester; 2) a group project producing Power Point slides featuring course topics; 3) approximately six unannounced 'pop' quizzes primarily covering the reading assignments; 4) two exams/ papers, one of which will constitute the final. Attendance and quality of in-class participation will be taken into consideration in determining the course grade.

Instructions regarding exam/papers

No fancy covers please! Simply staple pages together in upper left-hand corner.

When grading your essay exams/papers, I will look be seeking the following characteristics: The exam/paper is easy and pleasurable to read; it responds to *all* parts of the question as asked (it fulfills the assignment); the argumentation reflects thoughtful attention to and comprehension of course materials and discussions (it is accurate and clear); the essay is particularly well-organized (doesn't spend time on irrelevant issues or wander) and compelling (doesn't simply list facts and figures but builds a case), with supporting evidence for each generalization; and the criteria for academic writing are met (answers the question; clearly argued and coherently structured; spelling and grammar are correct).

Reading materials

Three **books** have been ordered as *required* texts for the course; we will read all of these (omitting a few chapters from the reader), so please purchase them from the UA Bookstore.

- Ore, Tracey E. 2000. *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing. [= Ore in schedule of assignments]
- Johnson, Allan G. 2001. *Power, Privilege, and Difference*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing. [= AJ]
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books. [= BE]

I have also asked that these books be placed on Reserve at the Main Library.

Other reading assignments will be posted on POLIS and accessed online through a password.

Course Topics/Reading assignments

Note: Assignments not in the required texts (Ore reader, AJ and BE books) will be posted online at POLIS site for this course. The password is:

8/21: Introduction to course; orientation and paperwork. No assignment

8/23: Introduction to constructing differences and assuming privilege

Ore in Ore 1-17

AJ Introduction and 1-14

8/28: Learning about privilege

AJ 15-41

Ore in Ore 472-474

McIntosh in Ore 475-485

8/30:

AJ 42-72

Cose in Ore 486-495

9/4:

AJ 73-95

Allan Johnson video

9/6:

AJ 96-116

9/11:

AJ 117-136

9/13:

AJ 137-171

9/18:

Ore in Ore 191-212

Miller, Jean Baker. 1998. Domination and Subordination. In Paula S. Rothenberg, ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. 4th edition. New York: S. Martin's Press. Pp. 73-80.

Frye, Marilyn. 1998. Oppression. In Paula S. Rothenberg, ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. 4th edition. New York: S. Martin's Press. Pp. 146-150.

9/20:

Omni and Winant in Ore 18-29

Waters in Ore 29-41

Sacks in Ore 52-67

9/25:

Kozol in Ore 253-260

Rubin in Ore 233-242

Dill in Ore 212-233

9/27:

Mantsios in Ore 71-79

Schwarz in Ore 67-71

Gordon in Ore 291-302

10/2:

Mantsios in Ore 512-527

Williams in Ore 312-323

Albelda and Tilly in Ore 323-329

10/4:

Bornstein in Ore 178-191

Lorber in Ore 106-113

Fausto-Sterling in Ore 113-120

10/9:

Mohr, Richard D. 1998. Anti-Gay Stereotypes. In Paula S. Rothenberg, ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. 4th edition. New York: S. Martin's Press. Pp. 458-465.

Katz in Ore 137-150

Stoltenberg in Ore 150-160

10/11: **Mid-term Exam.** Bring large blue books to class.

10/16"

Reskin in Ore 338-350

Lipsitz in Ore 350-361

Cole in Ore 329-338

10/18:

Hochschild in Ore 242-248

Sadker and Sadker in Ore 278-291

Cohn, Carol. Article on 'wars, wimps and masculinity' in Michael Kimmel, *Gendered Society Reader*.

Pogrebin, Letty C. Article on 'jewish american princesses' in Cyrus reader.

10/23:

Sabo, Dan. 1998. Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain. In Paula S. Rothenberg, ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. 4th edition. New York: S. Martin's Press. Pp. 325-328

Canada in Ore 528-534

Pharr in Ore 462-472

Ochs in Ore 541-546

10/25:

Moore in Ore 396-407
Anzaldua in Ore 419-429
Churchill in Ore 429-433
Zia in Ore 433-436

10/30:

Butsch in re 361-371
Nardi in Ore 384-396
Zola in Ore 407-419

11/1:

Cameron in Ore 503-509
Uehara-Carter in Ore 509-512
Vásquez In Ore 534-541

11/6: For four sessions, beginning on 11/6, we will have Power Point Presentations by Small Groups *and* class discussion of the assigned readings
BE (Ehrenreich book) 1-10
Presentations by Groups 1 and 2

11/8:

BE 11-50
Presentations by Groups 3, 4, 5

11/13:

BE 51-120
Presentations by Groups 6, 7, 8

11/15:

BE 121-192
Presentations by Groups 9 and 10

11/20:

BE 193-221
Quiz Game in Class

11/22: Thanksgiving. No class or assignment.

11/27:

Collins in Ore 557-571
Sidel, Ruth. 1998. Toward a More Caring Society. In Paula S. Rothenberg, ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. 4th edition. New York: S. Martin's Press. Pp. 549-559.

11/29:

Espiritu in Ore 571-581
Martinez in Ore 584-591
Lorber in Ore 591-598 only (not the entire article)

12/4:

Lorde in Ore 604-612
hooks in Ore 612-619

12/13: **Final Exam** 2-4 pm. Bring large blue books to class.