

W ST/CES/SOC 300

Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, & Sexuality

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Class time: MTWTH(F) 12 to 1:15

Office Hours: T/TH 3 to 4 and by appointment

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Class Location: CUE 407

Summer 2008

COURSE DESCRIPTION [S, M]:

Considering issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, or nationality in narrow, isolated examples is impossible and undesirable if we hope to have a fuller understanding of identity, power, culture, and politics. In order to understand any of these we must also understand the ways in which race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship intersect in complex and often contradictory ways. All of these dimensions of our identities contribute to our material realities as well to our place in relationship to social structures and power relationships. We will consider intersections in the past, present, and future including both local and transnational contexts, the cultural politics of Hip Hop, the structures and systems of white supremacy, the field of Women's Studies, conceptions of consciousness and community, and in the personal and political lives of women and girls of color. In all of these contexts we will consider how we might move beyond the limits of identity politics toward a radical politics of empowerment, justice, and transformation. We are looking to complicate ideas and identities and to begin to make sense of patterns, realities, and possibilities.

Disclaimer: This course is a writing in the major course so *you will have to write*. However, because of our condensed schedule and you will not be writing a full-fledged research paper. Instead, the two short research paper assignments will be condensed research papers with all of the required elements of a larger research paper. Through these assignments you will satisfy the [M] requirement. Further description of these assignments are below and a prompt will be provided for each paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Intersections: Course Reader. Available at Cougar Copies.

This reader contains a variety of readings and will comprise the majority of our assigned readings throughout the course. You should get this reader today. Most of the readings are short, interesting, and accessible. Some readings are more difficult or longer than others. Each section of the reader includes introductory materials for the section theme and bonus extra credit assignments. This reader also includes lyrics for the songs on the course CD.

Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Talents*.

This book is a piece of "speculative fiction" that will allow us to consider intersections in different contexts. We will consider gender, culture, religion, power, sexuality, citizenship, war,

slavery, and family through the past, present, and future. We will use this book to connect with themes that arise throughout this course.

Hip Hop Intersections: Course CD

There are a few songs that we will listen to in class and/or that you should listen to before coming to class. These songs will act as texts that supplement and complement the course subject matter found in readings.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

In many ways, what I expect of you is what is generally expected of students: read, come to class, and do your work. I am serious about these expectations. If you do these things, you will do well in this class.

Students are expected to:

- Come to class and complete all of the readings in time for class discussions and activities.
- Fully participate in all aspects of class including small and large discussions, informal assignments, etc. Bring your Book/Reader every class.
- Do all of the assignments and ask questions when confused or frustrated...or interested.
- Respect everyone in class from fellow students to the teacher to guests.
- Communicate concerns, problems, issues, or anything else with the instructor.
- Challenge yourself and your peers while keeping an open mind to differing opinions and conceptualizations of the world around us.
- Embrace opportunities for individualized education. This class provides many choices and many assignments allow for flexibility so that you can choose the option(s) best for you and what you feel you need to learn (and how). Innovations or replacement assignments are always welcome when proposed at least one week before an assignment is due.
- Do your own work. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.
- Your syllabus is your primary resource for this class. Read it and refer to it daily. You may want to make notes on your syllabus. Keep your syllabus and all handouts together in a safe place.
- Contents of syllabus may change and students are responsible for keeping track of changes. These changes will mostly be made in the interests of the students and general expectations and workload will remain the same.

CLASS CORRESPONDENCE: Updates, Assignments, and Feedback will often be sent via e-mail. If you do not receive an e-mail from your instructor in the first couple of weeks, be sure to double-check your e-mail and/or send an e-mail to your instructor.

PROFESSOR EXPECTATIONS

While these are some of the basic expectations, students should offer their own expectations if they are not covered here.

You can expect your professor to:

- Provide a safe environment for students to share their ideas.
- Challenge students to think in ways that may be uncomfortable.
- Provide guidance for, and feedback to, assignments.
- Act as a resource for the subject matter.
- Provide each student with the tools s/he needs to succeed and grow.
- Respect you and try to meet you where you are coming from.

**Note: The subject matter for this class may be uncomfortable at times. You may become frustrated, angry, sad, defensive, etc. At all times you should remember that we are here to learn and that learning is often uncomfortable. In all cases, you should talk to your instructor if you have any questions, concerns, issues, etc.

ASSIGNMENTS:

There is much flexibility in these assignments. This can be frustrating or challenging, but it can also be liberating and will help you get what you need from this course. I am always willing to help and to answer questions. I am also happy to discuss alternative assignment ideas ahead of time. In all cases you should ask me before or after class, at my office hours, or via e-mail if you have questions or need guidance.

- 1. Daily Writing/Questions, Comments & Connections (25%):** For each **Daily Writing** listed on the schedule below you will type 1 page addressing the question(s) listed for the day's reading (see schedule below). A **total of 14 daily writings will be due** throughout the course. You will have **3 opportunities for extra credit** which can count as a make-up Daily Writing if you miss any. Daily writings are due in class and **no late papers will be accepted**. These Daily Writings count as both **attendance and participation** and will be the starting point for developing your short research papers.

Each **Daily Writing** should include a heading with student's name and Daily Writing #, typed, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins. If typing a paper every day is too much of a burden, hand-written assignments will be accepted if turned in before class starts. The final daily writing will act as your final exam and will be worth 10 points.

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While reading the novel (July 9-17), *Parable of the Talents*, you will prepare **Questions, Comments & Connections** instead of writing a paper. There will be a **total of 6 Questions, Comments & Connections due** throughout the second half of the course.

Each **Questions, Comments & Connections** should include at least one discussion question, one comment, and one connection to previous readings/topics/course materials. Your question and comment should provoke discussion and your connection should be described and developed.

Daily writings and Questions, Comments & Connections will be graded on a plus, check, minus system. Plus = excellent. Check = good. Minus = acceptable. Zero = unacceptable. Daily writings will receive a cumulative score based upon a 3-point scale. Grades will be curved according to the highest score and these assignments will comprise 25% of your final grade. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Papers are graded holistically and, in general, I am looking to see that you did the reading and have some understanding of its main points and what it can tell us about intersections. Daily Writing/Questions, Comments & Connections are, roughly, graded according to the following criteria:

Excellent = Clear understanding of the reading's main argument (thesis); several specific examples are used from the reading to answer the question(s). A focused, developed answer that offers analysis and thoughtful reflection. (3 pts)

Good = A basic understanding of the reading; one or more specific examples are used to answer the question(s). In general, is less focused and developed than an excellent paper. (2 pts)

Acceptable = Shows the reading was done and the answer to the question(s) shows that some thought was given though this answer may not be as thoughtful or focused as an adequate paper. May be incomplete or may make false assumptions. (1 pt)

0 = Wrong information and a lack of analysis of the issue(s) at hand; clearly shows a lack of reading; not complete or not turned in.

2. Short Research Papers (2 @ 25% each): Based upon your daily writings, you will do research to expand and develop one or more of your writings into a formal critical analysis/argument paper. You will receive a prompt with further details for each of these papers and will be expected to follow the guidelines on the prompt. When considering topics for your papers it may be helpful to carefully consider your writings for the daily questions on your course schedule as well as the titles for each day and the overall topic for the paper/course section. You should also consider the introductory materials in your reader. These will give you starting points to expand and analyze. Each paper will be 5 to 6 pages and should include a works cited page. These two papers will comprise 50% of your final grade (25% each) and will fulfill the [M] requirement.

PAPER #1: Intersecting & Overlapping Identities—due Wednesday July 2

PAPER #2: Power, Consciousness, & Community—due Monday, July 21

3. Action/Project (25%): Women's Studies and Comparative Ethnic Studies have an activist element in addition to their academic functions in the university; both of these fields were formed through individual and collective challenges to traditional knowledge production and legacies of patriarchy and white supremacy. In these struggles people had to find ways to introduce new ideas, concepts, and paradigms to people and structures that were often unwilling to engage with, or even listen to, these ideas, concepts, and paradigms. Finding ways to bring

together theory and practice in powerful and empowering ways is work that both Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies scholars and activists continue to do.

For your project you will find a way to put feminism and/or intersectional analysis into practice. There are a wide variety of ways in which you can do this assignment and it may grow out of something you already do. Most importantly you should remember that this action/project is *something that you do*. You might decide to challenge gender norms by cross-dressing and applying for a job or going into the "wrong" bathroom. You could show a film on campus and lead a discussion. You could do a survey about identity, feminism, or state violence. You could create a piece of art or write a poem. You could create a "social/cultural intervention" meant to educate other students or the community about issues from this class. You could think up your own project idea or propose several. In all cases, you should feel free to make an appointment with me to discuss your ideas.

This action/project will be comprised of several parts (prompt provided). Project proposals will be due Wednesday, June 25. Project analysis will be due Wednesday, July 23 when you will do your informal presentation. This assignment has four parts: Proposal, Action, Informal Presentation, and Analysis will comprise 25% of your final grade. You will receive a prompt for this assignment and you may choose to work in small groups.

GRADING

Each student's grade will be calculated according to the criteria discussed above and on each prompt as well as a standard grading scale and the following percentages:

Daily Writing/ Questions, Comments & Connections	25% (25 points total, curved)
Short Research Papers (2 @ 25% each)	50% (50 points total)
Action/Project (and components)	25% (25 points total)
Total for Final Grade	<hr/> 100% (100 points total)

All Daily Writing extra credit will go toward that 25% of the grade. Cohort and other extra credit will be added to the final points to determine the final grade. The value of all extra credit work will be determined on an individual basis.

DISABILITY

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in these classes, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the DRC (Administration Annex Building, Room 205). Please stop by or call (509) 335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

INTERSECTING & OVERLAPPING IDENTITIES

Monday, June 16—**Introduction to Intersections/Dimensions**

Watch: “The F Word”

Listen: Aceyalone, “Ms. Amerikkka” (1)

Tuesday, June 17—**Feminism as Intersection**

Read: The Combahee River Collective. “A Black Feminist Statement” *But Some of Us Are Brave*

Listen: Dead Prez, “Propaganda” (2)

Daily Writing 1: How does this collective define feminism? Why/how is feminism understood in these ways? How does this definition of feminism compare to those definitions we saw in “The F-Word”?

Wednesday, June 18—**Translating Feminism**

Read: Hernández, Daisy. “Bringing Feminism a la Casa” *Listen Up: Voices From the Next Feminist Generation*

Listen: Immortal Technique, “The Poverty of Philosophy” (3)

Daily Writing 2: How are intersections important for the ways in which Hernández and her friends/family understand feminism? Why might feminism need translating? (Optional: Where are the women in “Poverty of Philosophy”?)

Thursday, June 19—**Intersections and Material Realities**

Read: Brooks, Siobhan, “Black Feminism in Everyday Life: Race, Mental Illness, Poverty, and Motherhood” *Colonize This!*

Listen: Talib Kweli, “Black Girl Pain” (4)

Daily Writing 3: How does Brooks use intersectionality to make sense of her mother’s life?

Friday, June 20—**Girls and the State**

PROMPT FOR ACTION/PROJECT DISTRIBUTED

Watch: *Girlhood: Growing Up on the Inside*

Daily Writing (Extra Credit): DUE Mon, June 23. How do intersections shape the lives of Shanae and Megan? At what kinds of intersections does each girl find strength/power?

WEEK 2

INTERSECTING & OVERLAPPING IDENTITIES, continued

Monday, June 23—**Finding Voice Out of the Intersections**

Read: Excerpts from *Yell-Oh Girls*: “Re-Orienting Self”; “Paradise Ain’t Shit So Why Don’t You Just Shut You’ Mouth” (poem); “My Country Tis Not of Thee”; “Flushing”; “For Those Who Love Yellow Girls”; Maybelline on Maple Street” (poem); “Best Friends”; “Finding My Eye-Dentity”; “A Big Bad Prank: Broadening the Definition of Asian American Feminist Activism”; “Model Minority Girl”; “Excerpts from *The Conversation Begins: Mothers and Daughters Talk About Living Feminism*”

Watch: Yellow Rage (spoken word)

Daily Writing 4: What themes surface in these readings and how can these common themes help us to better understand intersections? (Use specific examples from multiple readings to support your identification of one or more themes.)

Tuesday, June 24—**Privilege & Intersection**

Read: Rothenberg, Paula. “Invisible Privilege: A Memoir About Race, Class, and Gender” (excerpt: Prologue)

Read: Tim Wise, “Privilege” *White Like Me* (excerpt)

Read: Chrystos, “White Girl Don’t” and “I Am Not Your Princess” (poems)

Daily Writing 5: How do intersections (especially race and gender) help us understand privilege? How do intersections complicate privilege?

Wednesday, June 25—**Intersecting Sexualities**

*****PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE*****

SHORT RESEARCH PAPER #1 PROMPT DISTRIBUTED

Read: Jordan, June. “On Bisexuality and Cultural Pluralism” from *Affirmative Acts: Political Essays*

Read: Mattilda, “Free Radical” from *Bitch Magazine*

Daily Writing 6: If cultural pluralism was the norm in American culture, how would our identities and social locations be different? What is “radical” about Mattilda’s ideas?

Thursday, June 26—**Conscious Crossings**

Read: Lugones, María. “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling, and Loving Perception”
Making Face, Making Soul

Daily Writing 7: Who “world-travels” and why? What are the advantages of “world-traveling”? How can this metaphor help us to understand intersections?

Friday, June 27

NO CLASS

Work on Short Research Paper #1

WEEK 3

POWER, CONSCIOUSNESS, & COMMUNITY

Monday, June 30—**Hip Hop Feminism**

Read: Pough, Gwendolyn D. “Love Feminism but Where’s My Hip Hop? Shaping a Black Feminist Identity” from *Colonize This!*

Read: Milne, Carly. “Radio Is Cleaning Up the Nation: Why Sarah Jones’ Revolution Won’t Happen on Your Airwaves”

Listen: Queen Latifah, U.N.I.T.Y. (5); Sarah Jones, “Your Revolution” (6)

Daily Writing 8: How does Pough see the relationship between Hip Hop and girls and women? What does/can Hip Hop teach about feminism?

Tuesday, July 1—**Girl Power: Race, Class & Gender**

Read: “Girl Power: Representations of the ‘New’ Girl from *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power, and Social Change*

Daily Writing (extra credit): How can intersections help us to understand the ways in which girl power has been understood? How can “girl power” be empowering?

Wednesday, July 2—**Confronting the State**

*****SHORT RESEARCH PAPER #1 DUE*****

Read: Wahneema, Lubiano. “Talking About the State and Imagining Alliances” from *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*

Read: Jordan, June. “Poem About My Rights”

Listen: Paris, “Evil” (7)

Listen: Kanye West, “Diamonds of Sierra Leone” (8)

Daily Writing 9: How are individuals implicated in the politics of “the state” and why is it important to understand this dynamic? How does Hip Hop help us to understand this dynamic? How does June Jordan speak (back) to the state?

Thursday, July 3
NO CLASS
Work on Projects

Friday, July 4
NO CLASS
Work on Projects

WEEK 4 **POWER, CONSCIOUSNESS, & COMMUNITY, continued**

Monday, July 7—**Global/Local Community**

Read: Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, “Introduction: Listening to the Women: The Real Experts” *Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory*

Daily Writing 10: How is silence used to perpetuate inequalities and oppress women of color? How do women use voice and empowerment to counter hegemonic power?

Tuesday, July 8—**Creating Community**

Read: Joy James, “Forging Community: From Segregation to Transcendence: from *Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics*

Listen: Fresh 1, “Hold My People Down” (9)

Listen: Spearhead, “Crime to Be Broke in America” (10)

Daily Writing 11: James describes two ways of imagining community—as it is constructed by social/cultural forces like racism and capitalism and as it is imagined by a “transcendent community.” Who are the members of each of these communities and how do each help us to understand power, consciousness, and community? How do each of these songs illustrate James’ arguments?

FUTURE INTERSECTIONS

Wednesday, July 9—Future Intersections

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 1-60

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Connections, Comments & Questions 1

Thursday, July 10—

SHORT RESEARCH PAPER #2 PROMPT DISTRIBUTED

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 61-133

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Connections, Comments & Questions 2

Friday, July 11—

NO CLASS

Work on Short Research Paper #2 and Project

WEEK 5

FUTURE INTERSECTIONS, continued

Monday, July 14—

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 135-205

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Connections, Comments & Questions 3

Tuesday, July 15—

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 206-293

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Connections, Comments & Questions 4

Wednesday, July 16—

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 294-347

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Connections, Comments & Questions 5

Thursday, July 17—

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 348-408

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Connections, Comments & Questions 6

Friday, July 18—

NO CLASS

Work on Short Research Paper #2 and Project

WEEK 6

FUTURE INTERSECTIONS, continued

Monday, July 21—

*****SHORT RESEARCH PAPER #2 DUE*****

Read: Butler, *Parable of the Talents* p. 411-424

Watch: *V for Vendetta*

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Daily Writing (extra credit): Butler describes a future that is much like the present—and too much like the near future. What might *Parable of the Talents* teach us today about transforming tomorrow? What does Butler tell us about “future intersections” and how is this helpful toward social justice?

Tuesday, July 22—

Watch: *V for Vendetta*

Listen: Deltron 3030 (11-16)

Wednesday, July 23—**Intersections in Action**

*****PROJECTS/ PROJECT ANALYSIS DUE*****

Informal presentations of projects

Daily Writing 12: Do a feminist and/or intersectional analysis of *V for Vendetta* and/or *Deltron 3030*. What does each tell us about “future intersections”?

Thursday, July 24—**Intersectional Tools**

Read: Lorde, Audre. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”

Read: hooks, bell, “Critical Consciousness for Political Resistance

Listen: Visionaries, “Domakesaythink” (17)

Course Evaluations

Daily Writing 13: What are some of the “Master’s Tools”? What is “critical consciousness”? What kinds of tools can we fashion from an understanding of intersections? How can a critical consciousness help us do this?

Friday, July 25—**Reflections on Intersectionality**

Final **Daily Writing 14**: Due by 5 pm

Prompt for final daily writing will be distributed on July 23. Write at least 2 to 3 pages, worth 10 points total.