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SOCIOLOGY XXXX: SEMINAR ON INTERSECTIONAL THOUGHT

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of intersectionality. We begin by historically grounding intersectional frameworks in Black women’s activism and writing, which has long drawn attention to how race, class and gender mutually determine social location. We will then follow the academic evolution intersectional thought, survey suggested methodological approaches to intersectional research, and read empirical studies that employ intersectional frameworks to analyze data. The assigned readings seek to develop your sociological imagination and methodological toolkit, such that you are prepared to conduct independent research that attends to the ways in which intersecting social hierarchies yield different experiences of identity and inequality.

Emerging from critical race theory, “intersectionality” as conceived by Kimberlé Crenshaw theorizes how interrelated systems of power, particularly racism, capitalism and patriarchy, produce dilemmas for Black women that are distinct from white women and Black men. A central claim of intersectionality is that race, class and gender mutually constitute *everyone’s* experiences—including those with axes of relative power. Thus, research about groups who are already visible in the sociological literature and/or privileged in society is enhanced when analyzed through an intersectional lens that is attentive to history, inequality, and culture. This insight has expanded intersectionality from a content specialization on Black women’s experiences into an analytical tool for conducting empirical research on a wide range of social phenomena and communities. As such, we will also read scholarship that has elaborated upon race/class/gender intersectional frameworks to consider nation, sexuality, ability, age, and more. As you examine these theories, consider how they have developed in relation to one another, that is, as critiques to address the perceived weaknesses of previous perspectives.

This course suggests an interdisciplinary approach to understanding social issues that bridges sociology, gender studies, and ethnic studies. Our specific goals in this course are:

- To become acquainted with the central insights of intersectionality, and how intersectional frameworks have revised dominant theories within sociology, gender studies, and ethnic studies literatures
- To learn the virtues and limits of various methodological approaches to intersectional research
- To be able to apply the tools of intersectionality to an empirical problem or social justice issue to which you are committed

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Bettie, Julie. 2003. *Women Without Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hosang, Daniel, Oneka LaBennett and Laura Pulido. *Racial Formation in the 21st Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kang, Miliann. 2010. *The Managed Hand*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Moore, Mignon. 2011. *Invisible Families*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

** Most of our readings are photocopied articles and chapters; on the first day of class we will discuss how to access them.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Class Participation: You are expected not only to attend class regularly but to participate in class discussions. The more you talk about the material, the better you will understand it and your relationship to it. To gain practice in developing your sociological imagination, it is essential that you complete *all* of the assigned reading prior to class and come prepared for intellectual discussion.

Oral Presentations:

- a) **Discussion Facilitator:** You will select one week to present the readings to the class with a partner. There is no set structure you are expected to adhere to; however the presentation should include a discussion of the historical context, summarize the main perspective, present critiques, and end with discussion questions. Your questions might deal with “comprehension,” pondering the significance of one passage or theme in the text. Or, your questions might be evaluative or comparative.
- b) **Final Presentation:** You will prepare a 10-minute independent presentation for the class based on the research topic you chose for your final paper. This presentation should include a literature review, present your theoretical approach, outline categories of analysis, propose a methodology, and hypothesize findings.

Writing Assignments:

- a) Each week from weeks 2-13, you will write a short 1 paragraph response to the readings for inclusion on our course blog, due Sunday by 5pm. Discussion facilitator pairs may use these response papers to develop their ideas and prepare questions for that week’s class.
- b) One midterm essay that synthesizes and reflects upon three or more readings from the class. Your response should use our class discussions and the course material as a starting point to delve deeper into the questions that most interests you
- c) A literature review that synthesizes empirical research on a phenomena or social problem of your choosing. You will identify gaps in the literature or activist framing and propose new directions for future research or praxis.
- d) A final paper that employs that puts readings on the syllabus in conversation with your literature review. Feminist and anti-racist theories/frameworks engage, critique, and extend one another. This paper is an opportunity to participate in the process of theorizing, knowledge production, and critique.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Participation (10%)
Discussion Facilitator (10%)
Blog Posts (15%)
Midterm Essay (15%)
Literature Review (15%)
Final Presentation (15%)
Final Paper (20%)

SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Introducing Ourselves, and Introducing the Course

Week 2: Looking Back: Historicizing Intersectional Thought

Truth, Sojourner. 1851. Speech at the Akron Convention. Pp. 426-429 in Rossi's (Ed.), *The Feminist Papers*, Northeastern University Press.

Combahee River Collective. 1977. "A Black Feminist Statement." Pp. 231-232 in *Words of Fire: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall. New York: The New Press.

Essence. 1984. "Revolutionary Hope: A Conversation Between James Baldwin and Audre Lorde."

Week 3: Looking Back: Women of Color Academics Highlighting Difference

Lorde, Audre. 1984. "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." Pp. 288-293 in *Feminist Theory, A Reader*, edited by Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski. Mayfield.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Social Problems* 33(6): 14-32.

Mohanty, Chandra. 1988. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review* 30:60-88.

Week 4: Critical Race Theory and Intersectional Frameworks

Harris, Angela. 2012. "Critical Race Theory" *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Available at: http://works.bepress.com/angela_harris/17/

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241-99.

Harris, Luke. 2013. "Lessons Still Unlearned: The Continuing Sounds of Silence." *Du Bois Review* pp. 513-525.

Week 5: Interlocking Origins and Linkages

Nagel, Joane. 2003. "Sex and Race: Color of Sex in America." Pp. 91-139 in *Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*. Oxford University Press.

Chapters 1 and 2 in *Racial Formation in the 21st Century*

Week 6: Theorizing through an Intersectional Lens: Additions and Revisions

- Thorne, Barrie. 2004. "Editorial: Theorizing Age and Other Differences." *Childhood* 1:403-407.
- Calasanti, Toni. 2007. "Bodacious Berry, Potency Wood, and the Aging Monster: Gender and Age Relations in Anti-Aging Ads." *Social Forces* 86(1): 335-355.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal* 14(3):1-32.
- Maile, Arvin Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill. 2013. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler-Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25(1):8-34).

*** Turn in research topic**

Week 7: Grappling with Academic Institutionalization

- Davis, Nira Yuval. 2006. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13:3(2006): 193-209.
- Dhamoon, Rita Kaur. 2011. "Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality." *Research Quarterly* 64:230-243.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2015. "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 1-20.
- May, Vivian. 2014. "'Speaking to the Void?' Intersectionality Critiques and Epistemic Backlash." *Hypatia* 29(1): 94-112.

***Midterm paper due**

Week 8: "Doing" Intersectionality- Methodological Considerations

- Leslie McCall 2005. "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30: 1771-1800.
- Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2007. "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm." *Perspectives on Politics* 5:63-79.
- Carbado, Devon W. 2013. "Colorblind Intersectionality." *Signs* 38(4): 811-845

Week 9: Methodological Considerations Continued

- Choo, Hae Yeon and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010. "Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities." *Sociological Theory* 28(2):129-149.
- Winker, Gabriele and Nina Degele. 2011. "Intersectionality as Multi-Level Analysis: Dealing with Social Inequality." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 18(1):51-66.

Week 10: Intersectional Critique, Intellectual Conversations

- Williams, Christine. 1992. "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the 'female' Professions." *Social Problems* 39:253-67.
- Harvey Wingfield, Adia. 2009. "Racializing the Glass Escalator." *Gender and Society* 23(1): 5-26.
- West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society*

1(2):125-51.

West, Candace and Sarah Fenstermaker. 1995. "Doing Difference." *Gender and Society* 9(1):8-37.

Bonus:

Williams, Christine. 2013. "The Glass Escalator, Revisited: Gender Inequality in Neoliberal Times." *Gender and Society* 27(5): 609-629.

*** Literature Review Due**

Week 11: Intra-categorical Intersectionality- Race, Gender and Sexuality

Introduction through Chapter 3 in *Invisible Families*.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2005. "Prisons for Our Bodies, Closets for Our Minds: Racism, Heterosexism, and Black Sexuality." Chapter 3 in *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender and the New Racism*.

Week 12: Inter-categorical Intersectionality- Race, Gender and Beauty Work

Introduction, Chapter 3, and Chapter 5 in *The Managed Hand*.

Week 13: Emphasizing Class

Acker, Joan. 2006. "Chapter 1: Introduction—The Feminist Problem with Class." Pp. 1-14 in *Class Questions: Feminist Answers*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

** Uploaded to Blackboard

Chapters 2-3 in *Women Without Class*.

Week 14: In Class Presentations

Week 15: In Class Presentations

Research paper due December 12th in my mailbox