

WST/SOC/CES 300  
INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Fall 2015, MWF 1:10 – 2pm, CUE Room 114  
Prerequisite: 3 hours of CES, WST, or SOC 101

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This interdisciplinary, reading- and writing-intensive course serves as an introduction to the concept of “intersectionality,” a theory that speaks to the ways in which structures of power and domination (such as racism and sexism) operate simultaneously and are deeply interconnected and mutually constitutive. As opposed to separately addressing various axes of power (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.), intersectional approaches to the study of American life – both past and present – grapple with the nebulous, constantly shifting space where these interlocking forms of oppression come together. In practice, intersectionality has long structured the lives of black women in the United States since they are all too often caught in an interstitial “in-between” position between white women and black men in ways that often render their multidimensional experiences virtually invisible. But in the late 1980s, in the wake of the Civil Rights and second wave feminist movements, legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw first articulated intersectionality as a theoretical model, one that has further developed into a sophisticated paradigm for exploring the ways in which multiple axes of oppression shape human experiences. This course adopts an interdisciplinary, historical perspective to engage some of the most compelling examples of this phenomenon in American history as case studies. While many of these directly involve African American women, they also intersect with and stand alongside other examples that involve white women, black men, working-class whites, and those with disabilities in ways that demonstrate the broad applicability of this complex theoretical framework. Therefore, students will engage blackness and whiteness, masculinity and femininity, etc. as well as examples that highlight classism, heterosexism, and ableism. In addition to engaging historical case studies, students will also be asked to employ intersectionality *vis-à-vis* representations of specific groups of people in popular culture and in relation to contemporary events and social justice issues.

### OBJECTIVES

This course has three primary objectives. First, it seeks to build on students’ core understandings of socially-constructed categories like race and gender to demonstrate how they function in even more complex ways when considered simultaneously. Second, it challenges students to recognize, identify, and analyze this phenomenon both historically and in contemporary times. Finally, as a course designated “Writing in the Major,” it also aims to further develop students’ writing skills and hone their ability to convey essential points of original analysis to readers in a clear and concise manner.

### POLICIES

Attendance/Participation: This course will be driven by engaged conversations; therefore it is not only essential but REQUIRED that you attend class regularly AND complete all of the readings, reflect on them, and prepare IN ADVANCE a list of major themes to discuss, thought-provoking

questions to ask, and/or examples of how you connect the current readings to those engaged previously. In order to succeed in this class and acquire full points for attendance and participation, then, students must be present and prepared. Students can miss THREE classes without penalty (it is not necessary to contact your professor about these first three absences if you cannot come). Each absence BEYOND the first three will result in a 2% deduction from your attendance/participation score which can dramatically impact your final grade for the course since it accounts for 10% of your total grade.

Late work: Written work and other assignments (with the exception of the final research paper) may be turned in for up to two weeks after the due date with the following stipulations: if it is submitted in the first week after the due date it will be docked 25%; if submitted during the second week after the due date, it will be docked 50%.

Plagiarism: According to WSU's Student Standards of Conduct, plagiarism is defined as "Presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgment of the source. This includes submitting a commercially prepared paper or research project or submitting for academic credit any work done by someone else. The term 'plagiarism' includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or academic materials" (<http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/standards-of-conduct/>)  
**PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND IMMEDIATE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST STUDENTS WHO CHOSE TO PLAGIARIZE OR UNWITTINGLY DO SO AS A RESULT OF APATHY. THIS CAN RESULT IN A ZERO FOR THE PARTICULAR ASSIGNMENT THAT WAS PLAGIARIZED OR, IF THE PROBLEM PERSISTS, FAILURE OF THE COURSE AND/OR MORE SEVERE ACTION. DO YOUR OWN WORK AND BE MINDFUL OF PROPERLY CITING THE IDEAS AND WORDS OF OTHERS!**

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please speak with your professor immediately and either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Susan Burch and Hannah Joyner, *Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Random House, 2010).

Assignments and Evaluations\*:

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION	10%
CRITICAL RESPONSE ESSAYS (2)	30%
CRITICAL FILM ANALYSIS	15%
RESEARCH PAPER, MULTIPLE PARTS	<u>45%</u>
	100%

\*See Appendix I for an overview of these assignments

Grading Scale:

93-100 A	83-85 B	73-75 C	60-65 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	0-59 F
86-89 B+	76-79 C+	66-69 D+	

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

WEEK ONE:

Aug 24	Introductions
Aug 26	In-class screening, Race: The Power of An Illusion, episode 1
Aug 28	Key Themes and Concepts
Reading:	“Patricia Hill Collins: Intersecting Oppressions”

WEEK TWO

Aug 31	Intersectionality in American Slavery
Sep 2	continued
Reading:	Deborah Grey White excerpt, “Jezebel and Mammy: The Mythology of Female Slavery,” <i>Ar’n’t I a Woman?: Female Slavery in the Plantation South</i> , p. 27-46
Sep 4	continued
Reading:	Adrienne Davis, “‘Don’t Let Nobody Bother Yo’ Principle’: The Sexual Economy of American Slavery”

WEEK THREE

Sep 7	NO CLASS – HAPPY LABOR DAY!!
Sep 9	Intersectionality and Citizenship in the Age of Emancipation
Reading:	Susan Mann, “Slavery, Sharecropping, and Sexual Inequality”
Sep 11	continued
Reading:	Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, “African American Women and the Woman Suffrage Movement,” in <i>One Woman, One Vote</i>

WEEK FOUR

Sep 14	Deadly Intersections in ‘the Nadir’
Sep 16	
Reading:	Gail Bederman, “‘Civilization,’ the Decline of Middle-class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells’ Antilynching Campaign” (pp.407-32) in <i>We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible</i>
Sep 18	In-class screening, Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice

### WEEK FIVE

- Sep 21 Intersectionality and Medical Experimentation in the U.S.
- Sep 23 Reproductive Health  
Reading: D. Ojanuga, “The medical ethics of the Father of Gynaecology, Dr. J Marion Sims”
- Sep 25 The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

### WEEK SIX

- Sep 28 Discussion  
Reading: Rebecca Skloot, *The Immoral Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Part I
- Sep 30 Discussion  
Reading: Rebecca Skloot, *The Immoral Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Part II
- Oct 2 Discussion  
Reading: Rebecca Skloot, *The Immoral Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Part III

### WEEK SEVEN

- Oct 5 American Eugenics  
\*\*REFLECTION PAPER ONE DUE\*\*
- Oct 7 Continued  
Reading: Douglas Baynton, “Defectives in the Land: Disability and American Immigration Policy, 1882-1924” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 24, No. 3 (Spring, 2005): 31-44
- Oct 9 Continued  
Reading: Anna Stubblefield, “‘Beyond the Pale’: Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization” in *Hypatia*, 22, Iss. 2 (May 2007): 162-81.

### WEEK EIGHT

- Oct 12 Discussion, *Unspeakable*, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2
- Oct 14 Discussion, *Unspeakable*, Chapters 3-5
- Oct 16 Discussion, *Unspeakable*, Chapters 6-9

### WEEK NINE

- Oct 19 Intersectionality in 1960s Social Justice Movements  
\*\*REFLECTION PAPER TWO DUE\*\*
- Oct 21 continued  
Reading: Vickie Crawford, “African American Women in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party” in *Sisters in the Struggle*

Oct 23            Preparing for “The Help”  
Reading:        Association of Black Women Historians, “An Open Statement to Fans of *The Help*”  
                    – online at: <http://www.abwh.org/images/pdf/TheHelp-Statement.pdf>  
                    Jennifer Kowalski, Stereotypes of History: Reconstructing Truth and the  
                    Black Mammy:  
                    <http://www.albany.edu/womensstudies/journal/2009/kowalski/kowalski.html#top>  
                    Michelle Wallace-Sanders, “Preface: Gathering the Stories Behind this Book” from  
                    *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory*:  
                    <http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472116140-fm.pdf>

#### WEEK TEN

Oct 26            In-class screening, *The Help*

Oct 28            In-class screening, *The Help*

Oct 30            In-class screening, *The Help*

#### WEEK ELEVEN

Nov 2            Discussion of film and upcoming research paper projects/library time

Nov 4            Library Meeting with Gabriella Reznowski, TERRELL RM 20E  
                    \*\*FILM ANALYSIS DUE\*\*

Nov 6            Library Meeting with Gabriella Reznowski, TERRELL RM 20E

#### WEEK TWELVE

Nov 9            Library Meeting with Gabriella Reznowski, TERRELL RM 20E

Nov 11           NO CLASS – HAPPY VETERAN’S DAY!

Nov 13           Intersectionality and the Criminal Justice System: The War on Drugs  
                    \*\*RESEARCH QUESTION DUE\*\*

#### WEEK THIRTEEN

Nov 16           Intersectionality and the Criminal Justice System: Mass Incarceration  
Reading:        Excerpts from Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*

Nov 18           Mass Incarceration Continued, Discussion of Detailed Outline Assignment  
                    \*\*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE\*\*

Nov 20           NO CLASS

**\*\* THANKSGIVING BREAK NOV 23-27 \*\***

#### WEEK FOURTEEN

Nov 30 Intersectionality and the Criminal Justice System: Women's Experiences  
Reading: Sandra Enos, "Mass Incarceration: Triple Jeopardy for Women in a 'Color-Blind' and Gender-Neutral Justice System," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Feminist Thought*: Vol. 6: Iss. 1 (2012).

**\*\*DETAILED OUTLINE DUE\*\***

Dec 2 Intersectionality and the Criminal Justice System: LGBT Perspectives  
Reading: Angela Irvine, "'We've Had Three of Them': Addressing the Invisibility of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender Non-Conforming Youths in the Juvenile Justice System," *Columbia Journal of Law and Gender* 19, no.3 (2010): 675-701.

Dec 4 Intersectionality and the Criminal Justice System: Policing  
Reading: Julie Passanante Elman, "Policing at the Synapse: Ferguson, Race and the Disability Politics of the Teen Brain"

#### WEEK FIFTEEN

Dec 7 Class Optional, Paper Writing Workshop

Dec 9 Class Optional, Paper Writing Workshop

Dec 11 **\*\*FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE\*\***

**\*\*HAVE A WONDERFUL WINTER BREAK!\*\***

## APPENDIX OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. *Critical Response Essays (2 total, 30% of final grade)*

Students are required to write a total of two short essays on *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and *Unspeakable: the Story of Junius Wilson*. These essays MUST:

- (1.) Demonstrate a critical engagement with each text (not simply a basic summarization of it).
- (2.) Clearly identify and articulate the major argument(s) of the text being analyzed.
- (3.) Place the text in conversation with other course materials (lectures, previous readings, etc.)
- (4.) Use specific examples to explain how the text informs, challenges, and/or expands your understanding of the concept of intersectionality.

Essays must be a MINIMUM 4 pages (no more than 5 pages) in length, typed (in 12-point font), double-spaced, with standard 1” margins. They must also be free of grammatical errors/typos and use proper citation techniques specific to your discipline (if this is unknown, please use parenthetical references similar to MLA-style – please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab for examples <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> or raise your concerns with your professor in class so that this technique can be briefly reviewed).

#### DUE DATES FOR CRITICAL RESPONSE ESSAYS:

MONDAY, OCT 5 – Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

MONDAY, OCT 19 – Susan Burch and Hannah Joyner, *Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson*

### 2. *Critical Film Analysis (15% of final grade)* – DUE: WEDNESDAY, NOV 4

After an in-class screening of *The Help*, a 2011 Best Picture Oscar nominee film about an unlikely partnership between a well-to-do white woman aspiring to be a writer and a group of black maids in Civil Rights-era Mississippi, students will think both critically and historically about the meaning and significance of the film in 21<sup>st</sup> century American society. They will then write a 4-5 page analysis of the film, employing an intersectional approach and drawing on relevant course readings and discussions. Reviews must be a MINIMUM of 5 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, with standard 1” margins. They must be free of grammatical errors and use proper citation techniques. Further in-class direction will be given at the appropriate time in the semester.

### 3. *Research Paper, with multiple parts as follows (45% of final grade)*

Research Question	5%	DUE: FRIDAY, NOV 13
Annotated Bibliography	10%	DUE: WEDNESDAY, NOV 18
Detailed Outline	10%	DUE: MONDAY, NOV 30
Research Paper (7-10 pages)	20%	DUE: FRIDAY, DEC 11

CES/SOC/WST 300 is a “Writing in the Major” course so students are required to produce a 7-10 page formal research paper that examines a historical or contemporary social justice issue through the critical lens of intersectionality. This assignment has a number of component parts that we will discuss extensively in class at the appropriate time; however, below is a brief explanation of each.

### Research Question

Submit a 1 page paper that identifies the research question you came up with, why you selected this particular topic, and what your preliminary research has started to reveal.

### Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a **list of sources** that you intend to use in your research project, with a **brief description** for each that states what the source is about, why it is useful to your project, and what problems you may have with it (if any). This description is the “annotation.” Your annotated bibliography should have at least **seven** entries. The sources should be academic journal articles, chapters from academic anthologies or books (NOT newspapers, magazines, websites, Wikipedia articles, or internet-based materials).

### Detailed Outline

A **detailed** outline maps out the introduction, body and conclusion of a research paper. Since it establishes the organization and flow of the paper, students will have to think deeply about how they want to approach writing their paper. Outlines must include the paper’s **thesis statement**, specific **themes** presented in a logical order, where specific pieces of **evidence** will fit into their paper and **transition sentences** that shift from topic to topic. “Specific” and “detailed” means direct quotations or paraphrased information from research materials with corresponding page numbers added directly into the outline to think through and show how it will be used before actually writing the paper.

### Final Paper

Students must produce a 7-10 page research paper that examines a historical or contemporary social justice issue through the critical lens of intersectionality. This paper must:

- include a formal title page and page numbers
- connect with the major course themes
- include at least TWO primary sources (to be discussed during library meetings)
- include at least FIVE secondary sources (also to be discussed during library meetings)
- be well written and clearly organized (with an introduction, clear thesis statement, body, and conclusion)
- be free of grammatical errors and typos
- include proper citations for all quotations and/or paraphrased material
- list cited materials in a bibliography or works cited page.

Additional instructions will be provided in the second half of the semester when we begin working toward this particular assignment.