

**WST/CES 300: INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND
SEXUALITY
[DIVR]**

Spring 2017

TTH 1.25-2.40, Hulbert Hall 27

Instructor: Dr. Nishant Shahani

Office Hours: T/TH 12:00-1:00 & by appt.

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“No progressive movement can succeed while any member of the population remains in submission”

-- Cherrie Moraga, “Queer Aztlán: the Re-formation of Chicano Tribe”

“There is no hierarchy of oppressions”

-- Audre Lorde

Course Description

WST/CES/SOC 300 offers an intersectional analysis of the social construction of gender, race, class, and sexuality. It proposes to understand the interlocking nature of social inequalities—their historical variations, their continuing impacts, their structural logics, and their institutional mediations. With a focus on the U.S. and global contexts, we will read and research critical frameworks that interrogate the logics of discrimination and structural oppression from an intersectional and interdisciplinary perspective. Consequently, we will examine how activist and political communities have forged intersectional alliances across various vectors of identity in order to create alternatives to normative ideologies and hegemonic institutions.

Course Objectives and Learning Goals

1. To unpack the intersecting nature of structural oppressions
2. To employ theoretical and critical vocabulary to critique these modes of oppression in research and writing assignments.
3. To understand intersectional modes of resistance to inequalities; to analyze how activism and community formations of marginalized groups have created alternatives to dominant ways of thinking and acting.
4. To enhance communication and writing skills through research assignments and oral presentations.

NOTE: This course has prerequisites (WST 200, CES 101, or SOC 101). Hence **WST/CES/SOC 300 is not an introductory level class.** It is a **reading and writing intensive** class. It also presumes that you already have a basic and introductory knowledge of concepts and issues in the fields of gender, sexuality, and critical race studies. The following ideas are thus considered axiomatic for this class and are taken as “givens” (hence they cannot be debated and refuted):

1. Gender and Race are **social constructions**. **Ideology naturalizes** dominant logics as common sense and “obvious” when in fact they are rooted in **false consciousness**.
2. Dominant logics of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and neo-imperialism exist in the present and cannot be relegated to a past historical moment. In other words, white, heterosexual male **privilege** is still a material and historical reality.
3. Social oppressions do not disappear due to the gains and upward mobility of a select few minorities.
4. There is no such thing as reverse racism or sexism.
5. Social oppression is **institutional (macro)**, not merely personal or individual (**micro**).

If you have difficulties grasping these concepts, you must visit my office hours in the first month of the semester, since the course readings build off these taken for granted tenets in critical cultural studies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Course Packet:
(Available at Cougar Copies only. **You must bring your course packet to class everyday.**)
2. Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies* (buy online)
3. *Fruitvale Station* (Dir :Ryan Coogler ; rent or buy on Itunes)

Assignments and Evaluation (Grading): Your grade will be calculated, using a 1000 point scale, as follows: Reading Responses 10%; Quizzes 10%; Class participation 10%; Exam 10% Mid-term Paper (4-5 pages) 20%; Final Research Paper (7-8 pages) 40%. All work should be completed by the due dates in the handouts given to you during the semester. **No incompletes will be given in this course unless there are extraordinary circumstances and the student must be passing the class at the time the incomplete is requested.** Requests for incompletes must be made in writing (email ok) before the last class.

Reading Response Folder/Blog (100pts/10%): You will write brief responses (approx 1 paragraph or 250 words) to readings and films before the reading/discussion due date. I will begin each class by asking some of you to read out your response to the day’s readings. For your response, note down the main arguments of the essay, with one question or comment about the essay that engages with its implications or applications

Pop Quizzes (100 pts/10%): Surprise quizzes will be given at any point during the semester to ensure you are doing the reading. **You cannot make up quizzes if you are absent or late to class.**

Class Participation (100pts/10%): Active participation in class discussions, group activities, and application exercises that are based on class readings and lectures is expected. Specific in-class group activities will be conducted throughout the semester; additionally, readings will be taught through class discussions (and not only lectures) in which you must participate. While I encourage difference of opinion (from the text under consideration, the instructor, or a point of view expressed by a classmate), I expect you to be respectful and civil. Any form of bigotry will not be tolerated. Please note that class participation does not

only mean “talking” in class. You must engage with the text under consideration. If you are failing quizzes, you are obviously not reading the required materials. **Failing quizzes will drastically affect class participation points. If you fail 3 quizzes or more, you automatically lose 50 class participation points.** Sleeping, chatting with friends, reading a newspaper, eating, not submitting assignments on time, not preparing for class, will all result in low class participation points. I reserve the right to confront you about your conduct and participation in class. I also reserve the right to call on you to ask you your response to any of the readings that you have done for the day. You must come to class prepared with an insight or a question about the reading. I recognize that not everyone is confident speaking in front of a large number of people – there are various ways you can make up for this – emailing me questions before class, visiting my office hours to discuss materials one on one. Below is a break up of your class participation grade:

100-80 points: Excellent participation; Active and insightful contributions; Significantly enhances the classroom dynamic with questions, comments, and responses. Engages the text under consideration and does all the reading. **To get full points on class participation you should not fail any quizzes.**

79-60: Consistent participation with adequate insight into text. Good but somewhat basic contributions.

59-40: Rarely contributes but attentive and not disruptive in any way.

39-20: Indifferent, consistently failing quizzes, physically present but checked out of class.

19-0: Disruptive to classroom activities; use of cell phone/texting; disrespectful of professor and fellow students.

Exam (100pts 10%): The in class exam will be comprised of identification of key terms & concepts and essay type answers. It will cover information from the assigned readings, films excerpts, and material presented in class. You will receive all the questions for the exam two weeks prior to the exam date.

Mid-term Paper (200pts/20%) & Final Research Paper including In-class

Presentation (400 pts/40%): There will be two major writing assignments for this course: a Mid-term Paper gender analysis of an event, an object, or text (4-5 pages), which will require research, critical analysis and synthesis of reading material; and a Research Project (6-8 pages, with a one page Presentation) which will consist of an analysis and illustration of theoretical framework or topic we have discussed in class. Handouts for all the assignment requirements with grading criterion will be given to you prior to the assignment.

Extra Credit Options:

WSU Women’s Transit Volunteering (50 pts): You must complete all training and shift hours or no credit will be received.

Exhibits, Panels, & Speakers (40pts): Extra credit will be offered for a number of events that are relevant to our class this semester. They will be announced in class or you may inquire whether events of your choice might count for extra credit. Students not taking the

Women's Transit option can earn up to 40pts at 20 points per event. You must turn in a written summary and reaction to the event (minimum two pages, typed, double-spaced) in the class immediately following the event.

Grading Scale:

930-1000	A	800-820	B-	670-690	D+
900-920	A-	770-790	C+	600-660	D
870-890	B+	740-760	C	Below 600	F
830-860	B	700-730	C-		

Course Policies

Attendance & Absences

Attendance is compulsory. You are allowed a maximum of 3 personal absences and 1 absence for which you have university sanctioned documentation (given to me BEFORE you miss the class). For your 3 personal absences, I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so please use these absences for genuine emergencies. For every additional absence beyond this, your grade will drop. In other words, if your final class grade is B+ and you have 4 personal absences, your final grade will drop to B. You are responsible for any work you might have missed during your absences.

Tardies

If you are more than 5 minutes late to class, you will receive a tardy. Tardies will be calculated in accordance to the class watch, not yours. Three tardies will constitute an absence. In other words, **if you miss more than 15 minutes of class, you will be marked absent for the day.** I take attendance at the very beginning of class. If you come to class late and miss attendance, it is your responsibility to come up to me after class and inform me that you were present. I will change the absence into a tardy, but you are allowed to do this only two times during the semester. If you miss a quiz because you are late, you will not be able to make up the quiz, and will not receive any points for it. In general, you are requested to be very mindful of time—entering class late is a distraction to the instructor as well as to your peers. **The same rules apply to leaving early. So if for any reason you need to leave early, let me know at the beginning of class, but keep in mind that “tardy” rules still apply. In other words, leaving 10 minutes early will give you two tardies. If you need to leave 15 minutes early, you will not be marked as present on that day.**

Disability Accommodation

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 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.

Technology and Academic Etiquette

* **Students must turn off all phones and electronic gadgets during class.** (Your cell phone is not considered “off” when it is on vibrate). If a student's cellular phone rings during class hours, she/he will be penalized with an absence. Cell phones must not be placed

on your desks or in front of you during class. In other words, anything that beeps, vibrates, flashes... (you get the point) must be turned off during class hours.

* Please do not begin to pack your things at the end of class before I have let the class go. I will never keep you beyond the class time, but I expect this common courtesy.

*** If I see you texting or using any electronic device during class hours, (this includes during film screenings), you will be marked absent. I may also ask you to leave the class which will count as one of your absences.**

* You do not have permission to record class lectures or discussions on your phone or any other device.

* Please do not use your cell phone even to look at the time.

* Please do not use laptops during class hours. If you wish to use your laptop to take notes, you must take special permission from me and always sit in the front row.

* If you miss class, I cannot go over the lecture/discussion over with you during my office hours, nor can I provide you with notes. Please ask one of your classmates to share their notes or update you about any important announcements or deadlines you might have missed.

* While healthy disagreement and difference in opinion is expected and encouraged, I do expect that discussions should be conducted in a respectful and civil manner. If I interpret any of your comments as verbal harassment, I will ask you to leave the class.

* If you want feedback on your writing or class performance, please visit my office hours or make an appointment to see me. **I do not give feedback on your papers via email. All email correspondence must be limited to questions for which I can give you a quick response.**

* Unless specified by me, all your assignments must be turned in as hard copies. Electronic submissions or attachments via email are not acceptable. Visit my office hours for feedback on assignments.

*** Please do not get up and leave the class during class hours unless it's a genuine emergency since this distracts your classmates and the instructor.**

* Do not use class hours as breakfast/lunch time. You must not be eating during class hours.

* If I see you engaged in any activity that does not pertain to classroom pre-occupations (reading newspapers, doing homework for another class) I reserve the right to give you an absence for that day even though you are technically present in class.

* If I interpret any of your behavior to be disruptive, unprofessional, or rude, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class (which will then be counted towards your absences)

* **Please maintain appropriate email etiquette** when communicating with me (or any instructor). All emails should have appropriate greetings (It is not appropriate to email instructors with "Hey" "Hi there," or with no greeting at all). Similarly, use appropriate communication when signing off. Most professional etiquette guides recommend "Sincerely." Please do not email for information you will find on the syllabus or in hand-outs that I give you in class.

Academic Integrity

Washington State University's Student Handbook on Academic Dishonesty provides specific definitions (WAC 504-26-010) of "dishonesty" and "cheating,"

(<http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338>). Cheating includes, "submitting a false excuse for absence or tardiness or a false explanation for failing to complete a class requirement or scheduled examination at the appointed date and time." Plagiarism, a form

of cheating, is “presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgement of the source. This includes submitting a commercially prepared paper or research project or submitting for academic credit any work done by someone else.” At the least, students guilty of cheating in this course will receive a zero for the work in question, but the consequence of cheating may include failure of the course. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the University’s definitions and policies on Academic Integrity to understand your rights and responsibilities. (<http://academicintegrity.wsu.edu/>).

Campus Safety Information

WSU has made an **emergency notification system** available for faculty, students and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes. Please refer to the University emergency management website <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> as well WSU ALERT <http://alert.wsu.edu> for information on WSU’s communication resources WSU will use to provide warning and notification for emergencies. The entire WSU safety plan can be found at <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>.

Course Schedule:

Note: You are expected to have read the assignments *by* the date indicated on the schedule. Come to class prepared with commentary and notes for the day’s reading. I reserve the right to make changes, which I will announce in advance. All readings (with the exception of the films and Lahiri and the online links) are in the Course Packet.

Week 1

Jan 10 Tues: Introduction to Class policies and syllabus discussion
Jan 12 Thurs: Introductions and In-class writing assignment

Week 2

Jan 17 Tues: Lecture
Jan 19 Thurs: Group discussion of lecture concepts

Week 3

Jan 24 Tues: Judith Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender”
Jan 26 Thurs: Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “Racial Formations”; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “Racism without Racists”

Week 4

Jan 31 Tues: Jonathan Katz, “The Genealogy of a Sex Concept;” Chris Finley, “Decolonizing the Queer Native Body”
Feb 2 Thurs: Eli Clare, “Freaks and Queers”

Week 5

Feb 7: Patricia Hill Collins, “Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images,” Winona La Duke, “Masks in the New Millennium”

Feb 9: Julia Serano, "Skirt Chasers: Why the Media Depicts the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and Heels"

Week 6

Feb 14 Tues: Pop Culture discussion

Feb 16 Thurs: Contd.

Week 7

Feb 21 Tues: Michelle Alexander, "The Lockdown"

Feb 23 Thurs: Michelle Alexander, "The New Jim Crow"

Week 8

Feb 28 Tues: "What happened to Sandra Bland?" <https://www.thenation.com/article/what-happened-to-sandra-bland/>

"When Design Kills" <http://grist.org/infrastructure/2011-07-20-when-design-kills-the-criminalization-of-walking/>

"Alton Sterling, Eric Garner, and the Double Standard of Side Hustle"

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/07/07/alton-sterling-eric-garner-and-the-double-standard-of-the-side-hustle/?utm_term=.18872107b9fd

March 2 Thurs: Discussion of *Fruitvale Station*, (make sure you have watched the film before class); Roxane Gay, "The Last Day of a Young Black Man"

Week 9

March 7 Tues: Cathy Cohen, "#DoBlackLivesMatter? From Michael Brown to CeCe McDonald"

March 9 Thurs: Dean Spade, "What's Wrong with Rights?"

Week 10

March 14 Tues: Screening: *Fire in the Blood* (film)

March 16 Thurs: Discussion of film, "Pharma Bro is the Face of US Health Care"

Week 11

March 21 Tues Spring Break

March 23 Thurs Spring Break

Week 12

March 28: Saskia Sassen, "America's Immigration 'Problem' "

March 30: Screening: *The Transformation*

Week 13

April 4 Tues: Discussion

April 6 Thurs : Jumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*

Week 14

April 11 Tues Discussion Contd

April 13 Discussion of Thesis topics

Week 15

April 18 Tues: Exam

April 20 Thurs : Presentations

Week 16

April 25 Tues : Presentations

April 27 Thurs : Presentations