

Spring 2012 - Final Syllabus
POL 150: Politics of Difference:
Race/Ethnicity, Class, Gender, and Sexualities

Lectures: Mon and Wed 1:00 - 1:50 pm in Arch 103
Discussion Sections A-F meet at various times and places on Friday
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Office hours for the Professor and TAs are posted on our D2L coursepage
Log in to our D2L coursepage at: <http://d2l.arizona.edu>

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 privilege members of some groups at the expense of members of other groups). We will focus on four key structures of difference and their interaction: ethnicity/race, class, gender, and sexualities. Additional structures of difference (along the dimensions of religion, physical ability, age, etc.) will be acknowledged and integrated into our discussion whenever possible.

Course Objectives

The course has three purposes. The first is **informative**: students will become familiar with historical and empirical indicators of how individuals' lives are materially and symbolically marked by difference. This evidence substantiates the asymmetrical power, that is, politics, of these markers. Historical-empirical studies help us to understand how social hierarchies are *made* in specific contexts, not simply 'found' in nature. In particular, we will examine how *power* and *privilege* function to perpetuate inequalities among groups. The second is **analytic**: we will study 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 obscured (by being ignored or made to appear natural or inevitable). We will develop *critical thinking* abilities as essential for evaluating information, media, and socio-cultural activities and for participating as informed citizens in democratic processes. 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 the social hierarchies of racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism (homophobia) to enable a more just, equitable, and sustainable world?'

Classroom policies

'Learning is not a spectator sport.'

Students are expected to arrive for class **on time** and not to exit before class is concluded. Turn off all cell phones and other noise-making devices during class. Students are expected to attend all lecture and discussion group 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.

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, personal experiences and feelings are 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 must read the material attentively, be aware of its points and argumentation, and be able to discuss it knowledgeably.

Plagiarism: all work submitted must be the student’s own. You are responsible for being familiar with the University’s policies regarding plagiarism and the UA Student Code of Academic Integrity:

<http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/>

Threatening behavior is not permitted at any time. You are responsible for being familiar with the University’s policies in this regard:

<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threatening.pdf>

I welcome students with special needs and ask that those who are registered with the S.A.L.T. Center (<http://www.salt.arizona.edu/>) or the Disability Resource Center (<http://drc.arizona.edu/>) please *provide their documentation* to me ASAP so that we can make appropriate accommodations/arrangements. You are responsible for making sure that I know what accommodations are necessary; for this I need to see your documentation.

Note: once you have chosen to remain enrolled in this class, I will assume that you are aware of and have accepted these ‘ground rules’ for the course. *To remain enrolled you are required to sign the ‘agreement’* on the last page of this syllabus, tear it off, and turn it in to your TA by Jan 28; failure to do so may cause you to be administratively dropped from enrollment in the course.

Course requirements/evaluation

Attendance: Your attendance is expected and will be recorded in all classes and discussion sections. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean’s designee) will be honored. Excused absences (illness with a doctor’s note, documented family emergency, religious observance, Dean’s approval) will not be counted against you. Unexcused absences *will* have a negative effect on your course grade. If you are not in class, for whatever reason, it is **your* responsibility to provide your TA as soon as possible with appropriate documentation for ‘excusing’ an absence* (this includes indicating your absence was to observe a religious holiday), and to find out what you missed, including any new assignments. If you are having difficulties, speak to the professor or your TA as soon as possible; we are less able to help and (not surprisingly!) less sympathetic if you wait until late in the semester.

Journal Assignment: The goal of the journals is to help **develop critical thinking about the politics of difference by encouraging media awareness.** Using your assigned hierarchy as a focus [see D2L webpage], once every two weeks you must select some ‘item’ – a media image, article, advertisement, billboard, performance, TV program, video, film, song, etc. -- and analyze its ‘message’ (what it says or conveys, what the intended meaning is) in terms of our course: the *politics of difference* [defined at the beginning of the syllabus]. Your analysis is expected to show familiarity with the readings, lectures and class discussions and your ability to think critically about the ‘message’ that the item conveys. **One journal entry is due every two weeks and must be submitted (in a WORD file) via our course’s D2L dropbox.** You can submit your entry any time before but no later than 5 pm on the following dates: Jan 23, Feb 6 and 20, Mar 5 and 19, Apr 2, 16 and 30 = total of 8 entries for the semester. **Detailed instructions are posted on D2L,** with some examples to help you get started.

Grade: The semester grade will be comprised of the following: 1) attendance and participation, with *participation especially important in discussion groups*; and ‘journal’ entries [15%]; 2) unannounced ‘pop’ quizzes covering readings, videos, and lectures [20%]; 3) three short answer and essay exams - including the final exam) [20%, 20% and 25%]. Again: attendance and quality of in-class participation (especially in discussion sections) are significant factors in determining your course grade. **Extra credit** may be earned for attending events relevant to course themes and preparing a short report (details provided in class and on D2L webpage).

Reading materials

We will begin the course reading Allen G. Johnson. 2006. *Power, Privilege, and Difference*. 2nd Edition. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing. This is a required text and is available at UA Bookstore and elsewhere (used copies are OK but make sure that you have the correct - 2nd - edition, published in 2006).

Additional books may be required (we will advise you ASAP), but most of our readings will be posted on D2L and electronically available. These are **required** readings and will be covered in lectures, quizzes, and exams, so make sure that you access these readings. [For those who are interested, full citations for some of these will be posted on the D2L website.]

Course Topics/Reading Assignments (for Mon and Wed lecture sessions only)

Jan 11: Introduction to course; orientation and paperwork. Registering ‘clickers.’
No reading assignment.

Jan 16: Martin Luther King Holiday. **No class.**

Jan 18: The problem; privilege, oppression and difference
AJ book: 1-11; 12-40. (Important background material for the entire course)

Jan 23: Difference matters
Allen, Brenda. 2011. Ch 1. *Difference Matters*. Pp. 1-22.

Jan 25: Privilege, oppression and difference

Wildman and Davis. Making Systems of Privilege Visible. [Pp. 89-96 in Rothenberg 2002]
Frye, Marilyn. Oppression. [Pp. 194-198 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]
Newman, David. Manufacturing difference... [Pp.30-39 in Newman 2007]

Jan 30: Economic power and inequalities

AJ 41-53

Mantsios, Gregory. Media invisibility of class... [Pp. 89-97 in Ore 2006]

Feb 1: Media politics and democracy

Media politics A [from websites]

Media politics B [from websites]

Scheuer. Media Literacy, and Democratic Citizenship. [Pp. 178-188 in Ford and Ford 2001]

Feb 6: Institutionalizing inequalities

AJ 54-67

Lui. Racial wealth gap... [Pp. 98-105 in Ore 2006]

Jensen. White Privilege Shapes the U.S. [Pp. 514-517 in Ore 2003]

Burke, Martha. 2005. Power plays... [Pp. 436-438 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Sirota, David. 2011. The legend of the persecuted white guy. *Salon*

http://www.salon.com/2011/04/18/legend_of_persecuted_white_guy/ Accessed 19 Apr 2011

Feb 8: Trouble, privilege, denial and power

AJ 68-75; 76-89

Rhode. Denials of inequality. [Pp. 55-57 in Shaw and Lee 2004]

Lipsitz. Investments in whiteness [Pp. 402-413 in Ore 2006]

Feb 13: Systems of privilege, denial, resistance

AJ 90-107; 108-124.

Feb 15: EXAM/PAPER

Feb 20: Constructing and 'othering' difference

Newman, David. Stereotyping... [Pp. 151-157 in Newman 2007]

Omi and Winant. Racial formation... [Pp. 19-29 in Ore 2006]

Brodkin. How Jews became white... [Pp. 57-69 in Ore 2006]

Feb 22: Constructing and 'othering' difference

Madrid. Missing People and Others. [Pp. 17-21 in Anderson and Collins 2010]

Snipp. The First Americans. [Pp. 463-469 in Anderson and Collins 2010]

Shaw and Lee. Gender hierarchy... [Pp. 10-22 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Feb 27: Politics of economics

Yeskel, Felice. 2007. Pandora's box... [Pp. 86-90 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Zweig, Michael. 2004. What's class got to do with it? [Pp. 115-118 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]

Excerpts from *Field Guide to the U.S. Economy*, ed. Jonathan Teller-Elsbert, Nancy Folbre, James Heintz with the Center for Popular Economics. New York: The New Press. 2006.

Feb 29: Politics of economics

Scott and Leonhardt. 2005. Shadowy dividing lines... [Pp. 115-122 in Anderson and Collins 2010]

Disch. Paid work and unemployment [Pp. 413-420 in Disch 2009]

Pharr (economics, homophobia, sexism) in Ore 550-559

Mar 5: Politics of symbols and language

Newman. Power of symbols... [Pp. 71-78 in Newman 2007]

Martin, Emily. 'The Egg and the Sperm.' [Pp. 10-15 in Grewal and Kaplan 2006]

Churchill. Sports symbols... [Pp. 458-460 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]

Richardson. Gender stereotyping in the English language. [Pp. 89-93 in Richardson et al, 2004]

Mar 7: Body politics: Disability or different abilities?

Omansky, Beth. Legally blind... [Page 295 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]

Wendell, Susan. 1996. Constructing disability... [Pp. 91-99 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Oliver, Michael. Definitions... [Pp. 418-421 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]

Mullins, Aimee. 2009. Prosthetic Power. [Pp. 239-240 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Mar 12-16: Spring break. **No class.**

Mar 19: Constructing gender and sexuality

Richardson, Taylor and Whittier. 'Introduction.' [Pp. 1-3 in Richardson, Taylor and Whittier 2007]

Richardson, Taylor and Whittier. 'Introduction.' [Pp. 95-96 and 191-192 in Richardson, Taylor and Whittier 2007]

Shaw and Lee. Learning Gender. [Pp. 105-11 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Harding, Kate. 2010. The power of pink. *Salon*

http://www.salon.com/2010/02/22/power_of_pink_singleton/ Accessed 23 Feb 2010

Steinem, Gloria. 'If Men Could Menstruate.' *Ms.* 1978, reprinted in 'The Best of 30 Years.' *Ms.* Spring 2002 [One page].

Bordo. Pills and Power Tools. [Pp. 149-152 in Ore 2003]

Mar 21: Constructing sex difference via science and religion

Fine, Cordelia. 2010. Unraveling hardwiring. [Pp. 129-134 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Shaw and Lee. Religion and spirituality... [Excerpts from pp. 516-526 in Shaw and Lee 2004]

Mar 26: Constructing sex, gender and sexuality

Newman, Catherine. 2005. Pretty Baby. [Pp. 165-167 in Taylor et al 2012]

Kimmel. Masculinity and homophobia... [Pp. 133-150 in Ore 2006]

Smith, Andrea. 'Dismantling Hierarchy, Queering Society.' [Pp. 205-207 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Mar 28: Politics of sexuality and marriage

Graff. 2004. What is marriage for? [Pp. 345-350 in Disch 2009]
Mainardi. Politics of housework... [Pp. 414-417 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Essig and Owens. 2009. If marriage is bad for us... [Pp. 258-260 in Taylor et al 2012]
'Letter to Laura: Homosexuality and the Bible.' From email circulating Aug 2004
Anonymous: Heterosexual questionnaire [one page]
Anonymous: Ten Reasons Why Gay Marriage is Wrong [one page]

Apr 2: Politics of difference in sports

Nelson. Boys will be boys and girls will not. [Pp. 142-147 in Shaw and Lee 2004]
Malveaux, Julianne. 2000. Basketball love and loathing... [Pp. 188-193 in Anderson and Collins 2010]

Apr 4: Politics of difference in sports

Sabo. Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain. [Pp. 373-376 Rothenberg 2001].
Messner. Becoming 100% Straight. [Pp. 327-331 in Richardson et al]

Apr 9: EXAM/PAPER

Apr 11: Body politics

Shaw and Lee. 'Inscribing Gender on the Body.' [Pp. 220, 222-229 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Grossman, Marni. 2010. Anorexia... [Pp. 241-243 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Eating Disorder Danger Signs [P. 199 in Sapiro 2003]
Cognard-Black cosmetic surgery *Ms* 2007
Shaw and Lee. Love your body... [Pp. 233 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Apr 16: Body politics of gender, sex, race and class

HIV risk behavior on campuses [Pp. 319-326 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Shaw and Lee. Health and reproduction... [Pp. 279-287 and 300-304 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Reuss. Death from inequality... [Pp. 362-366 in Ore 2006]
Cool Minority women and healthcare... [Pp. 269-270 in Shaw and Lee 2004]

Apr 18: Costs of current conditions

Martin, Courtney E. 2008. Sizeism... [Pp. 265-268 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Wu, Frank. Model minority not... [Pp. 404-412 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]
Roth, Rachel. 2004. 'How Women Pay for Fetal Rights.' [Pp. 282-285 in Shaw and Lee 2004]

Apr 23: Masculinity, homophobia and violence

Herbert. 2009. 'Women at Risk.' *NYT* 8 August.
Kaufman. Masculinity and violence... [Pp. 533-550 in Ore 2006]
Steinem. Supremacy Crimes. [Pp. 401-403 in Richardson et al, 2004]
Kimmel. Gender, Class and Terrorism. [Pp. 154-159 in Zinn et al 2005]

Apr 25: Indirect and direct violence

Sapiro, Virginia. 2003. Gender-based violence... [Pp. 385, 388-395 and 402-409 in Sapiro 2003]
Shaw and Lee. Sexual harassment... [Pp. 401-402 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

St. George, Donna. 2010. Textual harassment [Pp. 540-542 in Shaw and Lee 2012]
Zia. Racism, hate crimes, pornography... [Pp. 515-518 in Ore 2006]
Smith, Andrea. 2004. Human Rights beyond inclusion politics... [Pp. 525-527 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Apr 30: What can we do?

Science Daily. 2009. Social scientists build case for ‘survival of the kindest.’
AJ 125-153

May 2: What can we do?

Collins. Analysis and new vision... [Pp.641-656 in Ore 2006]
Rosenblum and Travis. Bridging Differences... [Pp. 468-475 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]
Kivel, Paul. Promoting racial justice... [Pp. 494-499 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]
Allen and Kivel. Men changing men... [Pp. 426-428 in Richardson, Taylor and Whittier 2007]
Ten questions to ask politicians about media...
Key question to always ask: ‘*Who benefits?*’

May 7: FINAL EXAM/PAPER 1-3pm