

SOC 3251W: Sociological Perspectives on Race, Class, and Gender

Fall 2016

Hanson Hall, Room 1-108

Tuesday 5:30pm-8:00pm

Instructor: Aisha A. Upton (she/her/hers)

Office: 1160 Social Sciences

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00am-2:00pm and by appointment

Email: upton042@umn.edu

Twitter: @AishaUpton

TA: Ethan Johnson (he/him/his)

Office: 1058 Social Sciences

Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday 12:30pm-2:00pm and by appointment

Email: joh07820@umn.edu

Course Description:

In the midst of social unrest, it is important for us to understand social inequality. In this course we will analyze the impact of three major forms of inequality in the United States: race, class, and gender. Through taking an intersectional approach at these topics, we will examine the ways these social forces work institutionally, conceptually, and in terms of our everyday realities. We will focus on these inequalities as intertwined and deeply embedded in the history of the country. Along with race, class, and gender we will focus on other axes of inequality including sexuality, citizenship, and dis/ability. We will analyze the meanings and values attached to these social categories, and the ways in which these social constructions help rationalize, justify, and reproduce social inequality. Using in-class discussions, readings, and multimedia, we will also explore how individuals and groups have used these social categories to form and re-imagine identities and push for new ways of understanding the social world while pushing for social transformation.

This course meets the Council on Liberal Education's Diversity and Social Justice in the U.S. theme, the Social Sciences Core, and the Writing Intensive core. This course contributes to the acquisition of a liberal education, helping students gain a broad understanding of the subject, including factual knowledge, the theoretical foundations of that knowledge, and its associated key modes of inquiry.

Because this is a writing intensive course, writing plays a critical role in this course. As such, writing is a significant part of the course grade.

Learning Objectives:

The main objective of this course is for you to gain an understanding of how race, class and gender intersect. Moving beyond thinking of these categories of inequality as autonomous, you will learn how to focus on these inequalities as interconnected and as deeply embedded and intertwined. You will learn how to examine these power relations critically through the use of the sociological imagination. By the end of this course you should have a handle on the social

constructions of race, class, and gender, and the ways that these constructions have real material consequences for people's everyday lives -

The second objective of this course is for you to refine your writing skills.

Course Requirements:

Readings:

There is no traditional textbook for the course. The following books are required for class:

Halberstam, J. Jack. 2012. *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal*.

Boston. Beacon Press.

Moraga, Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. 2015. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York. State University of New York Press.

Wray, Matt. 2006. *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*.

Durham. Duke University Press.

These books will be supplemented by readings placed on Moodle. One of the best ways to do well in this course is to complete the assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.

How you will be graded:

Participation (two-page weekly response papers): 60 points (12%)

Five-page response papers: 40 points (8%)

Take-home Exam: 100 points (20%)

Final Course Paper: 300 points (60%)

Total Points Possible: 500

Class Participation

Your participation in this course is crucial. Participation includes, (1) *coming to class*. At no point will I take formal attendance. You are adults and the decision to participate in this course is yours. However, if you are not here to participate, your grade will suffer. In my experience, students who regularly attend classes have a better experience in courses, get the most out of those experiences, and tend to get better grades. I guarantee that you will get out of this course what you put into it. (2) *Reading the required texts*. Again, you will get out of this course what you put into it. Because we meet only once a week, the readings for each week may seem daunting – but it would behoove you to not get behind on the reading. (3) *Regularly contributing to class discussions (talking in class)*. Please note that your ability to contribute to class discussions is directly related to your class attendance **and** your complete reading of the assigned texts. Not every comment/question must be brilliant and insightful; questions and “thinking aloud” are important to the learning process. I **cannot** stress enough how important contributing to class discussions will be to you, other students, and me as the instructor. Speak up!

Weekly Two Page Response Papers

Each class meeting (with the exception of two days when 5 page responses are due: see below), you will turn in a two-page informal writing response. These writing responses are **not** formal

papers. The purpose of these weekly two-page responses is for you to reflect on the readings/discussions. Do you have any burning questions? Is there anything that you adamantly disagree with? Is there something that you really like? Do you see a connection between something we've covered in class and your own life or a cultural artifact (movie, music, TV show, etc.)? Do you have course feedback? These are what the two-page informal responses are for. On the days that they are due, bring some of your thoughts to class for our discussion.

Five-Page Writing Responses

On two class meetings there will be a five-page semi-formal response paper due. In these five-page papers, I expect you to connect your ideas directly to the readings that we have covered thus far. Do you feel like any of the authors are in conversation with each other? Do you recognize an overarching theme from the readings? These two short papers are great places to start thinking through what may grow into your final paper.

Take-Home Exam

You will have one exam for this course. The exam format will be **take home** and **short answer/essay**. The exam will be designed to help you wrap your mind around concepts for the final paper. Because the exam is take-home, barring any unforeseen emergencies, **there will be no make-up exam**.

Tip: if you know that you are going to miss class the day before an assignment is due, you must find a way to get the assignment to me before/on the deadline.

There is no extra-credit
I will not accept late assignments¹
I will not accept written assignments/exams via email².

Additionally: If you are concerned about your performance in the class, the best course of action is to **talk to me or your TA** immediately so we can discuss strategies for improvement. Do not wait until the end of the term.

Also: if you would like to dispute a grade, please wait **24 hours** before contacting me or your TA about it. From there we can meet and discuss the grade.

Final Paper

You will be expected to write an 8-10 page term paper on a specific sociohistorical experience or theoretical point related to the course material. The details of, and a rubric for, this assignment will be discussed in further detail in class. The final paper will be done in steps. First you will propose your final paper topic, then you will draft your paper and have it read by a peer. Finally, **you will turn in your final paper by noon on December 20**.

¹ Please contact me if you experience a personal or family emergency/ I am strict about late

² Life Happens. If you have to miss class (for any reason), you can turn in one of the two-page responses in to **me** via email.

Other Important Things You Should Know:

Technology Policy:

I do not mind if you use technology in the classroom with the exception of cell phones. Again, I do not permit the use of cell phones. Texting, GroupMe, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, and any other app/site that exists to talk to people outside of the classroom have no place in the classroom unless specifically directed. Other technology such as laptops and tablets for **note-taking** are allowed as long as they do not become a distraction to you or other students (again, don't use social media/social networking sites/apps). It's important that we pay attention to each other. In class discussions we need to be respectful of other people while they are talking. I do not want to ban the use of technology, but I will if I need to.

In-Class Discussion Policy:

In this class we **will** have conversations about race, class, and gender (among many other topics). These can be difficult and sometimes controversial topics which we may not all agree. You are welcome to share your own opinions about these topics and are expected to listen to others when they share their opinions, even if you do not agree. Everyone in the class is expected to be respectful of others. With that said, derogatory remarks and epithets have no place in the classroom. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, fatphobia, and ableism will not be tolerated. We all need to work together to create a space where students feel safe learning.

Academic Dishonesty:

Absolutely no incidents of academic dishonesty or academic misconduct will be tolerated.

Tentative Schedule: The schedule for the course will be available on Moodle.

College of Liberal Arts Policies:

Grades: University academic achievement is graded under two systems: A-F (with pluses and minuses) and S-N. Choice of grading system and course level (1xxx/3xxx/4xxx) is indicated on the registration website; changes in grade scale may not be made after the second week of the semester. Some courses may be taken under only one system; limitations are identified in the course listings. The department of sociology requires A-F registration in courses required for the major/minor. University regulations prescribe the grades that will be reported on your transcript.

A Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements (4.00 grade points)

A- 3.67 grade points B+ 3.33 grade points

B Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements (3.00 grade points) B- 2.67 grade points

C+ 2.33 grade points

C Achievement that meets the basic course requirements in every respect (2.00 grade points)

C- 1.67 grade points

D+ 1.33 grade points D Achievement worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements (1.00 grade point)

F Performance that fails to meet the basic course requirements (0 grade points)

S Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.

N No credit. Its use is now restricted to students not earning an S on the S-N grade base

I Incomplete, a temporary symbol assigned when the instructor has a "reasonable expectation" that you 1) can successfully complete unfinished work on your own no later than one year from the last day of classes and 2) believes that legitimate reasons exist to justify extending the deadline for course completion. The instructor may set date conditions for make-up work. If a course is not completed as prescribed or not made up as agreed within the year, the I will lapse to an F if registered on the A-F grade base or an N if registered on the S-N grade base.

W Official withdrawal from a course after the end of the second week of the semester. You must file a course cancellation request before the end of the sixth week of the semester to ensure that the W, rather than the F, will be formerly entered on your record.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS (see schedule on the Calendar web site at

<http://onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Calendars/FinalExams.html>): You are required to take final examinations at the scheduled times. Under certain circumstances, however, you may request final examination schedule adjustment in your college office. Instructors are obligated to schedule make-up examinations within the final examination period for students who have three final examinations within a 16-hour period. Instructors also are encouraged to reschedule examinations for students with religious objections to taking an examination on a given day. You must submit your request for an adjustment in your schedule at least two weeks before the examination period begins. For assistance in resolving conflicts, call the CLA Student Information Office at 625-2020. If you miss a final, an F or N is recorded. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make up the examination. Final examinations may be rescheduled by the instructor only through the official procedure for that purpose (as noted on the above web page). Final examinations may not be scheduled for the last day of class or earlier or for Study Day. If an examination is rescheduled at the instructor's request, and you have an examination conflict because of it, you are entitled to be given the final examination at an alternative time within the regularly scheduled examination period for that semester.

CLASS ATTENDANCE: As a CLA student, you are responsible for attending class and for ascertaining the particular attendance requirements for each class or department. You should also learn each instructor's policies concerning make-up of work for absences. Instructors and students may consult the CLA Classroom, Grading, and Examination Procedures Handbook for more information on these policies (<http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/>).

COURSE PERFORMANCE AND GRADING: Instructors establish ground rules for their courses in conformity with their department policies and are expected to explain them at the first course meeting. This includes announcement of office hours and location, the kind of help to be expected from the instructor and teaching assistants, and tutorial services, if available. The instructor also describes the general nature of the course, the work expected, dates for examinations and paper submissions, and expectations for classroom participation and attendance. Instructors determine the standards for grading in their classes and will describe expectations, methods of evaluation, and factors that enter into grade determination. The special conditions under which an incomplete (I) might be awarded also should be established. The college does not permit you to submit extra work to raise your grade unless all students in the class are afforded the same opportunity.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: You are entitled to a good learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students will be asked to leave (the policies regarding student conduct are outlined in the CLA Classroom, Grading, and Examination Procedures on-line at <http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/>).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: University instructors may restrict or prohibit the use of personal electronic devices in his or her classroom, lab, or any other instructional setting. For the complete policy, visit:

<http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>

SCHOLASTIC CONDUCT: The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows: Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. Students cannot evade (intentionally or unintentionally) a grade sanction by withdrawing from a course before or after the misconduct charge is reported. This also applies to late withdrawals, including discretionary late cancellation (also known as the "one-time-only drop"). For the complete policy, visit:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS MANAGEMENT: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/>.

A REMINDER OF RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

*** SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES ***

GRADE INFORMATION: Grades are due in the Office the Registrar within 3 business days after the final examination. No information regarding grades will be released by the department office staff to anyone except designated personnel in Records and college offices. Students may access their own grades through their computer account. They may do this by following the directions on the One Stop web site at <http://onestop.umn.edu/>.

INCOMPLETES: It is the instructor's responsibility to specify conditions under which an Incomplete (I) grade is assigned. Students should refer to the course syllabus and talk with the instructor as early as possible if they anticipate not completing the course work. Coursework submitted after the final examination will generally be evaluated down unless prior arrangements are made in writing by the instructor. University policy states that if completion of the work requires the student to attend class in substantial part a second time, assigning an "I" grade is NOT appropriate. Incompletes are appropriate only if the student can make up the coursework independently with the same professor.

MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS: Arrangements for special examinations must be made directly with the instructor who taught the course and who is responsible for approving and supervising the examination or making individual arrangements. Circumstances for missing an exam include, but are not necessarily limited to: verified illness, participation in athletic events or other group activities sponsored by the University, serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty,

military service, and religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to notify faculty members of such circumstances as far in advance as possible.

GRADE CHANGES: Grades properly arrived at are not subject to renegotiation unless all students in the class have similar opportunities. Students have the right to check for possible clerical errors in the assignment of grades by checking with the instructor and/or teaching assistant.

Students with justifiable complaints about grades or classroom procedures have recourse through well-established grievance procedures. You are expected to confer first with the course instructor. If no satisfactory solution is reached, the complaint should be presented in writing to the department Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Coordinator of Undergraduate Advising (909 Soc Sci). If these informal processes fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, other formal procedures for hearing and appeal can be invoked. See the departmental advisor in 923 Social Sciences to explore options.

DISABILITY SERVICES: Students with disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in class or to meet all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. For more info contact Disability Resource Center in 180 McNamara.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the December 1998 policy statement, available at the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Questions or concerns about sexual harassment should be directed to this office in 419 Morrill Hall.

SOCIOLOGY PROGRAMS INFORMATION: The Sociology Department offers two options for the Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science degree. We also have an Honors Program. Students interested in majoring in Sociology should view the online-information session about the major. Further information can be obtained from the following persons and offices or online at <http://cla.umn.edu/sociology>

General information, Sociology Department, 909 Social Sciences - 624-4300
Coordinator of Undergraduate Advising, Bobby Bryant, 923 Social Sciences – 624-4300
Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Kathy Hull, 1131 Social Sciences - 624-4339
Sociology Honors Advisor, Professor Joachim Savelsberg, 1144 Social Sciences - 624-0273
Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Jeylan Mortimer, 1014B Social Sciences – 624-4064 and/or
Graduate Program Associate, Becky Drasin, 927 Social Sciences - 624-2093

Undergraduate jobs, internships, volunteer and research opportunities, scholarships, and much more can be found in the Undergraduate Resources site - <https://sociologyundergrad.wordpress.com/>