

**Intersectionality**  
Sociology 4260, Spring 2020  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00pm to 3:20pm  
Art 226

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to introduce students to the theories, epistemologies, methods, and the general paradigm of intersectionality. The aim will be on applying intersectionality to better understand the processes contributing to patterns of inequality. Throughout the course we will discuss and interrogate contemporary social problems. We will engage with social theory in order to adopt lens by which we can view social issues in useful ways. We will also conduct research, analyzing data to generate new knowledge on patterns of inequality and their determinants.

In the spirit of intersectionality, I also aim for the course to have social relevance and engage with pressing issues of inequality in our local community and society more generally. We will relate readings to contemporary issues. The course assignments are also designed to have practical relevance to students’ professional, personal, and/or academic goals. I hope that we can translate our academic study to positive social outcomes.

Much intersectional theorizing was born from the lived experience of individuals whose voices were not represented in predominant canons. With this wisdom in mind, I encourage students to draw from their lived experience in engaging with texts and theories we cover. In contradiction to the critique that these narratives are “anecdotal”, we will engage deeply with the structural conditions that contribute to our varying histories and standpoints. No student will be required to share anything from their personal lives. Those who do will be respected and encouraged to use their standpoint to build from the theories outlined in the course. At the same time, we must remember that our individual perspectives provide only partial vision, and a clearer view may emerge by engaging with others through text, conversation, and dialogue.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- 1) Students will gain an understanding of the complex and dynamic ways that systems of power interact and intersect to generate patterns of inequality across social categories such as race, gender, and class.
- 2) Students will apply intersectional theory to contemporary social problems facing society.
- 3) Students will gain skills in data analysis to uncover systems of power and patterns of inequality in society.

## **GUEST POLICY**

Children and dependents are welcome in class. Please do not hesitate if you need to bring your loved ones to class.

## **SUGGESTED READINGS**

All readings listed in the syllabus may be accessed through the UNT library website. All other materials will be posted online (on canvas) or distributed through e-mail.

Students are not required to purchase any books for this course. However, if you plan on attending graduate school in a social science field, or pursuing a career in fields related to social equity, the following books may serve as valuable references.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment 2nd Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Moraga, Cherríe and Gloria Anzaldúa (editors). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

There are three major assignments for the course.

### **1) Attendance and Participation**

This is a discussion-based course. It is designed so that we not only learn from the readings and instruction, but also from each other. Therefore, it is crucial that students attend and participate in each class. Students should make an effort to contribute their thoughts at least once every class. If, for some reason, you are unable to participate in our class discussions, please let me know.

Attendance will be taken each class. If students attend each class but do not contribute to discussion or are disrespectful toward others, they will not receive full credit for attendance.

Quizzes and in-class assignments will also be assigned periodically throughout the semester. These will count towards attendance/participation grades.

Throughout the semester, there will likely be instances where some students are unable to attend class or one reason or another. If this happens, you should e-mail me as soon as possible to let them know. Ideally, you will e-mail me prior to class. While it is impossible to list all the possible reasons a student may have for missing class, some of the common reasons include being sick (mental or physical health), having issues with transportation, and family responsibilities. There are probably other things that I have not listed or thought of that may be legitimate reasons for missing class. If you are unsure whether your reason for missing class is

legitimate or not, please feel free to ask me. If it is a legitimate reason, your grade will not be penalized and we will make a plan to be sure you do not fall behind.

## **2) Discussion Leader: Application of Course Readings to Contemporary Issues:**

A major aim of this course is to apply sociological concepts and theories to contemporary social problems. In pursuit of this goal, each student will sign up for a class session where they relate the readings for that class to a pressing social issue. Only one student will present each class. Ideally, students will identify a video, newspaper article, blog post, poem, art piece, or some other expression that deals with the topics pertaining to that week's reading. In their presentation, the student should give an overview of their application. Then, they should facilitate a class discussion. The discussion should cover how the application relates to course concepts, how it advances or challenges the theories or cover in the class, and/or how it provides new insight to our understanding of intersecting systems of inequality.

Discussion leaders will be graded on the following criteria:

- The application was clearly related to course material for that week
- The discussion expanded our understanding of course concepts by applying them to a contemporary social issue
- The presenter provided guiding discussion questions that engaged students in the class
- The presentation and discussion lasted between 15 and 25 minutes.

## **3) Course Project: Power and Inequality in Denton County, TX**

A major principle of intersectionality is that knowledge should have practical implications that address existing forms of inequality and improve social wellbeing. The course project for this class will take place throughout the semester and is intended for students to investigate the historical foundations of racism, sexism, and classism as well as identify present inequities across race, class, and gender in Denton County, TX (home to UNT).

Students may complete course projects on their own or in groups of two.

The course project has three parts:

### ***Part 1: Historical Foundations of Inequality in Denton County***

Students will conduct archival analysis to research the history of power, domination, and resistance in Denton County through examining historical newspaper articles. We will use the Portal to Texas History (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/>). Our aim is to shed light on parts of local history that receive less attention, but have had major consequences on present conditions.

We will have a workshop on how to use the Portal to Texas History on February 17 and further opportunity for follow-up on March 4.

The goal of Part 1 is for students to uncover events in the history of Denton County that were consequential in shaping local patterns of inequality across race, gender, class, or other social axes.

Part 1 of the course project will be **due on March 16** when students will present their findings from the archival analysis. Presentations will consist of **one PowerPoint slide**. Presentations should discuss the event or series of events that they uncovered and illustrate how it relates to local systems of race, gender, and class inequality in Denton County, TX. In addition to presenting, students will submit their PowerPoint slide on canvas.

### ***Part 2: Contemporary Patterns of Inequality in Denton County***

In the second part of the project, students will use Social Explorer (<https://www.socialexplorer.com/>) to access data from the U.S. Census Bureau and uncover contemporary patterns of inequality in Denton County, TX. The aim of this part of the project is to identify present disparities across race, gender, and class so that we may both bring greater visibility to these issues and be better positioned to address them.

We will have a workshop on how to use Social Explorer on March 30 with further opportunities for follow ups on April 13.

The goal of Part 2 is for students to uncover present conditions of inequality in Denton County that have received less public attention and, therefore, many individuals may not be aware of and/or able to address.

Part 2 of the course project will be **due on April 15** when students will present their findings from the archival analysis. Presentations will consist of **one PowerPoint slide**. Presentations should highlight a key finding gained from analysis of Social Explorer data and discuss how it relates to local systems of race, gender, and class inequality in Denton County, TX. In addition to presenting, students will submit their PowerPoint slide on canvas.

### ***Part 3: Final Paper***

Students will combine their findings from Parts 1 and 2 of the course project into a final paper. The aim of the paper is to relate historical conditions to present social patterns. The final paper should answer the following question:

*How are historical conditions in Denton County, TX related to present patterns of inequality across race, gender, and class?*

To answer this question, students should draw on data obtained in Parts 1 and 2 of their paper. They should summarize historical conditions using archival data from the Portal to Texas History, and relate these to contemporary trends with data from Social Explorer.

Papers should be at least 6 pages long. I encourage students to use images, graphs, and tables in showing evidence that supports their arguments.

Students will give 10 minute presentations of their final papers on April 27 and April 29.

The final paper is due on Monday, May 4 by end of official examination time, 3:30pm on canvas.

## **GRADES**

The course grade will be calculated based on the percentage of points obtained according to following breakdown:

Attendance and Participation: 30 points

Discussion Leader in Application of Course Materials: 20 points

Class Project: 50 points

Part 1: 10 points [5 points presentation, 5 points slide]

Part 2: 10 points [5 points presentation, 5 points slide]

Part 3: 30 points [10 points presentation, 20 points paper]

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if they are not able to attend class. Unless there are legitimate reasons, students should attend every class session. Missing a class without approval may result in a reduction in course grade. Emergencies happen, and I will be understanding if/when they occur.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENT AND GRADE POLICY**

Assignments will be docked 25 percentage points for each day that they are late, starting the minute after it is due. Accommodations will be made for extenuating circumstances.

### *Incomplete Grades*

Incomplete grades may only be assigned when the student is making satisfactory progress until the request for an incomplete is made. Incompletes will only be offered with medical documentation or other documentation that a highly unusual circumstance beyond the student's control (e.g. the death of a loved one) has made finishing the semester impossible. All requests for incompletes must be made prior to the final examination.

### *Make-ups*

Other than documented medical emergencies and religious observations, no make-ups will be given for any of the assignments.

## **ADDITIONAL DETAILS**

### **Visit the UNT Learning Center**

The UNT Learning Center provides a variety of free academic support programs from tutoring and supplemental-instruction services to academic skills workshops and coaching. **Contact Information:** Phone: 940-369-7006 | Email: [Learning.Center@unt.edu](mailto:Learning.Center@unt.edu) | In-person: Monday through Friday, from 8a - 5p, Sage Hall, Room 170. For more information about the services provided, visit the LC online: [learningcenter.unt.edu](http://learningcenter.unt.edu).

### **Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences.**

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may

result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Students who engage in academic dishonesty will receive a zero in the assignment and potentially a zero in the course and administrative action from the university.

### **ADA Accommodation Statement**

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at [disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu).

### **Emergency Notification & Procedures**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

### **Acceptable Student Behavior**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct).

### **Sexual Assault Prevention**

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

### **Religious Holidays**

If you wish to observe a religious holidays, notify me by the tenth day of the semester of the date when you will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, you should notify me at least five days in advance of the date when you will be absent. I will make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize you for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give you an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Note: Readings are subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and through e-mail with advanced notice.

### **I. INTRODUCTION: DEFINING INTERSECTIONALITY**

**January 13, 2020: First Day Introductions**

**January 15, 2020:**

The Top 3 Most Effective Ways to Take Notes While Reading:

(<https://fs.blog/2013/11/taking-notes-while-reading/>)

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2015. Why Intersectionality Can't Wait. *The Washington Post*.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/>

Landry, Bart. 2007. "The Theory of Intersectional Analysis." Pgs. 1-15 in *Race, Gender, and Class: Theory and Methods of Analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**January 20, 2020: No class in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

**January 22, 2020:**

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-167.

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### **II. EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INTERSECTIONALITY AND HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO U.S. SYSTEMS OF INEQUALITY**

**January 27, 2020:**

Cultural Awareness Workshop from Office of Diversity and Inclusion

**January 29, 2020: No class, students catch up on outstanding requirements**

**February 3, 2020**

Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. 2016. Chapter 3, "Getting the History of Intersectionality Straight?." Pgs. 63-87 in *Intersectionality*. New York, NY: Polity.

Combahee River Collective. 1977. "A Black Feminist Statement. Available on-line at <http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/Black-Feminist-Statement.html>

**February 5, 2020**

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2019. "The Idea of America." *The 1619 Project*, New York Times.

Teague, Hollie A. 2018. "Bullets and Ballots: Destruction, Resistance, and Reaction in 1920s Texas and Oklahoma." *Great Plains Quarterly* 39(2): 159-177.

**February 10, 2020**

Davis, Angela. 1983. "Chapter 1: The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood." Pgs. 3-29 in *Women, Race, & Class*. New York: Vintage Books.

**February 12, 2020**

Ida Wells-Barnett. 1895. *The Red Record*. Chapter 1: The Case Stated. Page 3-7.

Teague, Hollie A. 2018. "Black and Blue in North Texas: The Long Neglected History of Anti-Black Police Violence in North Texas, 1880-1930." *Journal of Black Studies* 49(8): 56-781.

**February 17, 2020: Portal to Texas History workshop**

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**III. THEORIES OF POWER**

**February 19, 2020: Intersections of Power**

King, Deborah K. 1988. "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology." *Signs* 1409(1): 42-72.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2012. "Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection." Chapter 19 in *On Intellectual Activism* by Patricia Hill Collins. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

**February 24, 2020: Institutional Dimension of Power**

Richie, Beth. 2012. "Chapter 4: Black Women, Male Violence, and the Buildup of a Prison Nation." Pages 99 to 124 in *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: NYU Press.

Rothstein, Richard. 2017. "Chapter 1: If San Francisco, Then Everywhere?" Pgs. 3-16 in *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our government Segregated America*. New York, NY: Liveright.

**February 26, 2020: Symbolic Dimension of Power**

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. "Chapter 4: Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images." Pgs. 69-96 in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment 2nd Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

**March 2, 2020: Symbolic Dimension of Power**

Hamilton, Laura T., Elizabeth A. Armstrong, J. Lotus Seeley, and Elizabeth M. Armstrong. 2019. "Hegemonic Femininities and Intersectional Domination." *Sociological Theory*. 37(4): 315-341.

**March 4, 2020: Lab time for using Portal to Texas History**

**March 9, 2020: No Class, Spring Break**

**March 11, 2020: No Class, Spring Break**

**March 16, 2020: Presentation of Part 1 of Course Project**

**March 18, 2020: Individual Dimension of Power**

Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. 2016. Chapter 5, "Intersectionality and Identity." Pgs. 114-135 in *Intersectionality*. New York, NY: Polity.

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#### **IV. THE REPRODUCTION OF POWER AND INEQUALITY**

**March 23, 2020**

Desmond. 2019. "Capitalism." *The 1619 Project*, New York Times.

Lee, Trymaine. 2019. "The Wealth Gap." *The 1619 Project*, New York Times.

Kevin M. Kruse. 2019. "Traffic." *The 1619 Project*, New York Times.

**March 25, 2020**

Dallas Equity Indicators: Measuring Change Toward Greater Equity in Dallas. 2019. City of Dallas. (<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/office-of-equity/DCH%20Documents/equality-indicators-booklet-2019.pdf>)

**March 30, 2020: Social Explorer Training**

**April 1, 2020: No class, students catch up on outstanding requirements**

**April 6, 2020:**

Choo, Hae Yeon and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010. "Tracking Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities." *Sociological Theory* 23(2): 129-149.

**April 8, 2020: Lab time for Social Explorer analysis**

**April 13, 2020: Presentations of Part 2 of Course Project**

**April 15, 2020:**

Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. 2016. Chapter 2, "Intersectionality as Critical Inquiry and Praxis." Pgs. 31-62 in *Intersectionality*. New York, NY: Polity.

**April 20, 2020**

Coates, Ta-Nahisi. Pgs. 1-71 in *Between the World and Me*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau.

**April 22, 2020: Paper Workshop**

**April 27, 2020: Final Presentations**

**April 29, 2020: Final Presentations**

**FINALS WEEK**

**Monday, May 4: Final paper is due by end of official examination time, 3:30pm.**