

Intersectionality
Sociology 4210, Spring 2022
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00pm to 3:20pm
Wooten Hall 216

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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 lenses 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 inspired by 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.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In recognition of the history and ongoing processes of colonialism by which the land where our class and the University of North Texas exists, I would like to acknowledge that this space is the occupied/unceded/seized territory of the Wichita, Caddo, Commanche, and Cherokee tribes. These tribes have stewarded this land through several generations and we pay our respects to elders, both past and present.

Note: Land Acknowledgement Statement adapted from the UNT Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity

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 equality, 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) 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 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.

Each class will have an in-class assignment to be completed individually or in groups. These assignments will count for a substantial share of participation.

Throughout the semester, there will likely be instances where some students are unable to attend class for one reason or another. If this happens, you should e-mail me as soon as possible to let me 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 Leaders: 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, **student groups of two** will sign up for a class session where they relate the readings for that class to a pressing social issue. Only one group will present each class. They will do their presentation as a group.. 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 20 minutes.

3) Course Project: Power and Inequality from Then to Now

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.

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: Due March 9

Students will conduct archival analysis to research the history of power, domination, and resistance in a particular community 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 23 and an in-class lab on February 28.

The goal of Part 1 is for students to uncover historical events 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 9**. On this date, all students will submit one PowerPoint slide summarizing key points as well as a one-page word document describing their findings in greater detail. The PowerPoint slide and one-page paper should discuss the event or series of events they uncovered and illustrate how it relates to local systems of race, gender, and class inequality. The assignment should be submitted on canvas.

Half of the class will present on Part 1 of their course project during class time. See the section on presentations below.

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 local communities. 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 April 4 and an in-class lab on April 6.

The goal of Part 2 is for students to uncover present conditions of inequality in a local community that has 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 13**. On this date, all students will submit one PowerPoint slide summarizing key points as well as a one-page word document describing their findings in greater detail. The PowerPoint slide and one-page paper should highlight a key finding gains from analysis of Social Explorer data and discuss how it relates to local systems of race, gender, and class inequality.

Half of the class will present on Part 2 of their course project during class time. See the section on presentations below.

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 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 8 pages long (double space, not counting references) and include at least four references. I encourage students to use images, graphs, and tables in showing evidence that supports their arguments.

The final paper is due on **Wednesday, May 11**.

Presentations: Students will present their papers at different points in the semester.

- Half of the class will give an oral presentation on Part 1 of the course project on March 9.
- The other half will give an oral presentation of Part 2 of the course project on April 13.

Presentations may use one to five PowerPoint slides. They should last five minutes. The aim is to teach the class something new that we can learn from your project about power and inequality.

Roundtable Discussion of Course Paper: At the end of the semester, we will devote one class to informally sharing and discussing our course projects with one another.

GRADES

The course grade will be weighted across the following assignment groups:

Participation and In-Class Activities: 30% of grade

Discussion Leader in Application of Course Materials: 20% of grade

Class Project: 50% of grade, broken down as follows:

Part 1: 10%

Part 2: 10%

Part 3: 20%

Presentation: 7%

Roundtable discussion: 3%

LATE ASSIGNMENT AND GRADE POLICY

If there are extenuating circumstances preventing submission of assignments, please let me know. I will make every effort to accommodate students. Unless otherwise discussed, late assignments will be penalized 20% for every day that they are late.

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.

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 | 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.

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.

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.

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 or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Religious Holidays

If you wish to observe a religious holiday, 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 19, 2022: First Day Introductions

January 24, 2022: Introduction to Intersectionality

Calarco, Jessica. Beyond the Abstract: Reading for Meaning in Academia.

(<http://www.jessicacalarco.com/tips-tricks/2018/9/2/beyond-the-abstract-reading-for-meaning-in-academia>).

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 26, 2020: Defining Intersectionality

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.

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

January 31, 2022: Historical Foundations

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."

February 2, 2022: History of Power & Inequality

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 7, 2022: History of Power & Inequality

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): 56-78.

February 9, 2022: Legacy of Power & Inequality

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

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

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

III. THEORIES OF POWER

February 14, 2022: Intersections of Power

King, Deborah K. 1988. "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology." *Signs* 14(9): 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 16, 2022: Institutional Dimension of Power

Pirtle, Whitney N. Laster, and Tashelle Wright. 2021. "Structural Gendered Racism Revealed in Pandemic Times: Intersectional Approaches to Understanding Race and Gender Health Inequities in COVID-19." *Gender & Society* 35(2): 168-179.

February 21, 2022: 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.

February 23, 2022: Portal to Texas History Workshop

Class meets in Willis Library, Room 130

February 28, 2022: Lab time for using Portal to Texas History

Class meets in Willis Library, Room 130

March 2, 2022: 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 7, 2022: Individual Dimension of Power

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. Chapter 7, "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness." Pgs. 77-91 in *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

March 9, 2022: Presentations for Part 1 of Course Project

All students submit Part 1 of course project to canvas (see instructions above in section on course project).

***Half of class will present Part 1 of course project in class**

March 14, 2022: No Class, Spring Break

March 16, 2022: No Class, Spring Break

IV. SUSTAINING FORCES OF POWER AND INEQUALITY: RACIAL CAPITALISM AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY

March 21, 2022: Racial Capitalism

Robinson, Cedric J. 2005. "Chapter 12: An Ending" in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Third Edition*. University of North Carolina Press.

March 23, 2022: Racial Capitalism

Gurusami, Susila. 2017. "Working for Redemption: Formerly Incarcerated Black Women and Punishment in the Labor Market." *Gender & Society* 31(3): 433-456.

March 28, 2022: Critical Race Theory

Bell, Derrick A. Jr. 1980. "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma." *Harvard Law Review* 93(3): 518-533.

March 30, 2022: Critical Race Theory

Bell, Derrick A. Jr. 2018. "Chapter 1: Racial Symbols: A Limited Legacy." Pgs. 19-38 in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. Basic Books.

April 4, 2022: Social Explorer Workshop

Class meets in Willis Library, Room 130

April 6, 2022: Lab time for Social Explorer Analysis

Class meets in Willis Library, Room 130

April 11, 2022

April 13, 2022: Presentations for Part 2 of Course Project

All students submit Part 2 of course project to canvas (see instructions above in section on course project).

***Half of class will present Part 2 of course project in class**

April 15, 2020: Presentations of Part 2 of Course Project

FUTURITY

April 18, 2022: Social Movements

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2016. "From #Blacklivesmatter to Black Liberation." in From #Blacklivesmatter to Black Liberation. Haymarket Books.

April 20, 2022: Abolition

Kaba, Mariame. 2021. "Part I: So You're Thinking about Becoming an Abolitionist." Pgs. 2-28 in We Do This 'Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice. Haymarket Books

April 25, 2022: Paper Workshop

April 27, 2022: Looking Back and Looking Forward

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

May 2, 2022: Roundtable Discussion of Course Projects

May 4, 2022: Conclusions

FINALS WEEK

Final paper is due by 11:59pm on Wednesday, May 11, 2022.