

WS220—Power, Privilege and Gender, Fall 2003

Professor Tamara Berg

Office: Minne 326

Office Hours:

TR 10:00-11:00 am
12:30 - 2:00 pm
M 1:00-3:00 pm
W 1:00-3:00 pm
and by appointment

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Required Texts

Each of the following books is available at the WSU bookstore. You may be able to get *Nickel and Dimed* at a cheaper price at area new or used bookstores or on the Web.

The Meaning of Difference. Third Edition. By Karen E. Rosenblum and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Nickel and Dimed By Barbara Ehrenreich. 2001.

General Course Information

This course is a University Studies Course in the Unity and Diversity Core that satisfies 3 credits of the Multicultural Perspectives University Studies requirement. The outcomes listed for the University Studies Social Science Requirement specify that the course include requirements and learning activities that promote students' abilities to...

- (a) demonstrate knowledge of diverse patterns and similarities of thought, values, and beliefs as manifest in different cultures;
- (b) understand the extent to which cultural differences influence the interpretation and expression of events, ideas, and experiences;
- (c) understand the extent to which cultural differences influence the interactions between individuals and/or groups.

Requirements and learning activities that facilitate these outcomes are highlighted in bold underline script throughout this syllabus.

Course Description

How do human beings in contemporary cultures contend with difference? Differences in race, class, gender, and sexual orientation surround us in our daily lives. In what ways do we benefit from those differences? In what ways are we limited by them? How do categories of difference relate to power and privilege? Through directed readings, novels, films, and discussion, this class examines the *meaning of difference*. **(b, c)** Students will become familiar with several central categories of difference—race, class, gender, and sexual orientation (among others)—and begin to develop critical analyses of these categories in their own lives and in the wider cultures which overlap in our contemporary world.

Race, class, gender, and sexual orientation are significant variables by which human societies make distinctions among their members. Such distinctions often lead to an inequitable distribution of political power, social well-being, and the resources available to individual members of the society. In this course we seek to increase our

awareness and understanding of the inequities in our society and the consequences those inequities have for us as individuals as well as for the different communities and individuals within our society.

Course Requirements

Class Participation: While lecture presentations take up a portion of most of our class meetings, the lecture style will be an interactive one in which students participate. The primary teaching and learning method for this course is discussion, both as a class and in small groups. Participation in discussion constitutes a major portion of your grade and is an excellent way for me to follow the development of your thinking and learning in this course. The three aspects of your *daily* contributions to class discussions are:

1. **Daily preparation for class.** This means not only completing the scheduled reading assignment for that day, but also writing down an outline or general notes that will facilitate your contribution to class discussions. **(a,b,c)** I strongly suggest that you record your immediate questions as a way to prepare for these discussions. Brief written responses (1-2 paragraphs) will begin most class periods and will contribute to your participation grade. If you are absent or late, these reader responses cannot be made up.
2. **Active daily contributions to class discussion. (a,b,c)** This means sharing your questions, thoughts, and interpretations with others. Remember that everyone is in the same position as you. Making that first leap and speaking your thoughts is a big hurdle but the semester's discussions will flourish for you after that. If you choose not to participate in discussion on a regular basis, the highest grade you can earn for this course (assuming all other work is of highest quality) is a "B."
3. **Consistent contributions to small group discussions. (a,b,c)** We will meet in small groups nearly every week. You will have the opportunity to develop your listening skills, organize the group's thoughts into coherent notes, and really hear a diverse range of perspectives. Remember to listen and hear with respect even when encountering views that oppose or even threaten your own perspective.

Team Teaching: Together with 2-3 of your classmates, you will be responsible for presenting and discussing two of the assigned articles for a given class period. Your group will decide how you want the class to deal with the material, and your group will conduct discussion of the material on your given date (your group will have approximately 30 minutes to address the articles).

In-Class Midterm Exam: (a,b,c) There will be a midterm exam composed of short answer and essay questions distributed in class.

Quizzes: (a,b,c) There will be several un-scheduled in-class quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will test your reading comprehension as well as your ability to respond and think critically about the key issues of this course. If you are absent on the day of a quiz, it cannot be made up.

Group Projects: (a,b,c) You will have the opportunity to work with 3 or 4 of your classmates to examine the issue of difference through an analysis of class, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Each group will choose a topic from section III of the reader for a research project that will define and analyze an aspect of the issue. Your project will include:

- **Definition** of the problem, **discussion** of its historical and social context, and **analysis** of its significance in the particular area (law, media, etc.)
- Specific reference to a variety of source materials and information relating to the issue, **which may include** essays from the text.
- **Final product** will be an essay of 8-10 pages including a comprehensive bibliography in either APA or MLA style. Results will be **summarized** in a 15-20 minute group presentation to the class during the last week of class and during the final exam time scheduled for this class. Essays are due at the time of your presentation.

Your grade on this project will be based on the following criteria: 60% on the **quality** of the presentation/product and 40% on an evaluation by the other members of your group of **your contribution** to the process. (All group

members will receive the same evaluation for the product but may receive differing evaluations for the process, resulting in a variety of grades for the project as a whole.)

Gender Role Violation and Analysis: (a,b,c) You will conceive of and carry out a “gender role violation.” You will write a short essay (approx 3 pages) explaining and analyzing your experience. You should reflect on what your experience suggests about gender roles/rules. Some examples of “violations” that have been done in the past include:

- Women spitting in public
- Men wearing make-up, nail polish, or women’s clothing (or just feminine clothing)
- Men carrying a purse
- Women opening doors for men
- A woman carrying a heavy box across campus with a man walking along next to her offering no assistance.

Creativity and imagination in carrying out this assignment will earn you the highest grade!!!!!! You will also present your experience to the class during one of three class periods.

Grading		Grading Scale	
Class Participation	15%	92%-100%	= A
Team Teaching	10%	82%-91%	= B
Group Presentation	25%	72%-81%	= C
Midterm Exam	25%	62%-71%	= D
Gender Role Violation	15%	<62%	=F
Quizzes	15%		

Attendance

Attendance is crucial for a discussion-based course. If you miss more than two classes, you will not receive credit for the participation portion of this course. If you miss more than three class periods, you will receive an “F” for the class.

Course Schedule

The following readings must be completed *before* the class meeting date listed. Our primary textbook, *The Meaning of Difference*, will be referred to as “MOD” below.

9/3 **Introduction**

What is difference? What is sameness (identity)? What is power? What is privilege? How are you different?

- Select cases for 1/29
- Select dates for Gender Role Violation/Team Teaching

9/10 **Constructing Difference**

MOD “Framework Essay” pp. 1-37
 MOD “Oppression” pp. 204-208
 MOD “Similarity and Difference” pp. 117-123 (assignment due at the beginning of class)

9/17 **What is Race?**

MOD “Who is Black? One Nation’s Definition?” pp. 38-46
 MOD “Driving While Black” pp. 260-263

MOD "A Day in the Life of Two Americas" pp.263-271
MOD "Group Rights" 351-366*
MOD "The Cost of Whiteness" pp. 254-260*
MOD "Ask Me Who, Not 'What' I Am" pp. 221-222
MOD "What Are You?" 203

What is Race?

Read for 10/1: MOD "Twelve Key Supreme Court Cases" 325-351 (assign cases)

Team teachers: _____

9/24 **No Class (Do reading/response + John Hockenberry Lecture on October 8)**

What is Disability?

MOD "How Long Must We Wait?" pp. 216-221
MOD "Disability Definitions" pp. 451-454
MOD "Toward a Poetics of the Disabled Body" pp. 471-480

10/1 **What is Race?**

MOD "Strangers Among Us" pp. 410-419*
MOD "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness" pp. 398-409*
MOD "Whiteness as an 'Unmarked' Cultural Category" pp. 92-97
MOD "Diversity and Its Discontents" pp. 233-240
MOD "Our Classroom Barrios" pp. 240-243
MOD "What Americans Don't Know About Indians" pp. 487-492

Team teachers: _____

10/8 **ATTEND JOHN HOCKENBERRY LECTURE**

Identity, Race, and Language

MOD "Federal Indian Identification Policy" pp. 60-72*
MOD "La Raza and the Melting Pot" pp. 73-80*
MOD "Asian American Panethnicity" pp. 81-91*
MOD "Racism in the English Language" pp. 502-509

Team teachers: _____

Gender Role Violations: Group 1

10/15 **Experiencing Difference**

MOD "Framework Essay" pp. 176-200*

What is Sex? What is Gender?

MOD "The Five Sexes" pp. 98-103
MOD "The Five Sexes Revisited" pp. 103-108
MOD "The Berdache Tradition" pp. 109-117

Team teachers: _____

10/22 **What is Sex? What is Gender?**

MOD "Sex, Race, and Ethnic Inequality in the United States Workplaces" pp. 420-431*

MOD “Gender Stereotyping in the English Language” pp. 509-514*
MOD “Women-Becoming-Men” pp. 465-470*

Team teachers: _____

10/29 **What is Social Class?**

MOD “Reading America” pp. 127-134*
MOD “Why is Class Important?” pp. 135-143*
Nickel and Dimed, Chapters 1-2

Team teachers: _____

Gender Role Violations: Group 2

11/5 **What is Social Class?**

MOD “Why are Doves of Unqualified, Unprepared Kids...” pp. 300-305*
MOD “The Shape of the River” 366-371*
MOD “Getting Ahead” pp. 144-150
Nickel and Dimed, Chapter 3

Team teachers: _____

11/12 **What is Social Class?**

MOD “All Souls’ Night” pp. 276-279*
MOD “A Question of Class” pp. 280-290*
MOD “At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die” 291-300*
Finish *Nickel and Dimed*

Team teachers: _____

11/19 **The Meaning of Difference**

MOD “Framework Essay” pp. 308-323

What is Sexual Orientation?

MOD “The Invention of Heterosexuality” pp. 152-154
MOD “Homosexuality: A Social Phenomenon” pp. 155-164
MOD “The Development of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Identities” pp. 165-173

Team teachers: _____ (please
choose to lead discussion either on the framework essay OR on the three articles assigned)

12/3 **What is Sexual Orientation?**

MOD “Media, Science, and Sexual Ideology” pp. 441-449*
MOD “Anti-gay Slurs Common at School” pp. 273-275*
MOD “To Be and Be Seen: The Politics of Reality” pp. 516-521*

Team teachers: _____

12/10 **Working for Change**

MOD “Social Movements and the Politics of Difference” 371-385

MOD “Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication” pp. 243-252

Gender Role Violations: Group 3

Group Presentations (To be continued during the final exam time scheduled for this class.
Attendance is mandatory.)