

## **WS 150: 80 RACISM AND SEXISM IN CONTEMPORARY U.S. WINTER 2009**

Dr. Elena Sabogal  
Department of Women's Studies  
Office: Hunziker Tower  
Phone: 973-720-3404  
E-mail: [sabogale@wpunj.edu](mailto:sabogale@wpunj.edu)  
Office Hours: by appointment only

Department Administrator: Ms. Stephanie Quackenbush  
Telephone: 973-720-3545  
E-mail: [quackenbushs@wpunj.edu](mailto:quackenbushs@wpunj.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course examines how race and gender are socially constructed and systematically maintained, and how they intersect and affect every member of society. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism are the major issues addressed. In studying the systems of oppression, we will use texts, news stories, films, self reflective writing, and most of all engage in dialogue with each other as a community of learners.

### **Required Text**

Rothenberg, Paula S., ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, Seventh Edition. Worth Publishers: New York, NY

### **Course Objectives**

Clarify and analyze the nature of historical and contemporary racist, sexist, heterosexist, and classist practices and attitudes in the U.S.

- Critically consider a variety of theoretical explanations for institutional racism, sexism, and heterosexism, and explore the differences between individual differences and institutionalized systems of oppression.
- Explore the connections among all forms of oppressions.
- Investigate several options to significantly reduce racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and other “isms” that undermine the vitality and collective power of a multicultural society
- Engage in written and oral presentations which demonstrate critical thinking
- Encourage cooperative work in small and large groups

### **Student learning outcomes**

At the close of the semester, students will be able to:

- Show knowledge of past and present racist, sexist, heterosexist, and classist practices and attitudes in the U.S. in their writing
- Explain several theoretical explanations for racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism and explain the difference between individual prejudices and systems of oppression in an essay or exam

- Discuss some of the legal and social realities that have determined the status of women and minorities in an essay or exam
- Articulate the connection between the systems of oppression in an essay or exam
- Demonstrate some solutions for ending the social problems caused by systems of oppression in a classroom presentation
- Work cooperatively with others in small class discussion groups and on a collaborative project

## **Course Requirements and Grading Policy**

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and percentages:

### **Reading Summaries (40% of overall grade)**

Every four days you must submit a summary of the assigned reading. This summary should be between 200 and 300 words, and must include a question for further inquiry into the topic. Please pose a question that can possibly be answered, not a rhetorical question or one that would require several books to answer such as “How can we stop racism?” Formulating this question will help you think critically about issues of race, gender, sexuality and class as they affect U.S. society today.

There will be four of these responses, which must be submitted through Blackboard no later than 11PM on the following days: December 30<sup>th</sup>, January 3, January 7 and January 11. When submitting these responses, please label your document with your first initial and last name, and paper number. Example: E Sabogal Reading Response 1.

**Please note that if the assignment is not submitted on time, this section of Blackboard will close and you will not be able to submit your assignment. I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS OR PAPERS SENT TO ME VIA EMAIL. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

### **Forum/Discussion Boards (40% of overall grade)**

There will be two discussion board assignments:

#### **1) Online Discussion Board (20%)**

You are required to post an answer to the discussion question that I will post by 6PM on the following days: December 29, January 2, January 6 and January 10. The questions will come from the readings due the next day.

After you have posted a response to my original question, you must then respond thoughtfully to at least one of the answers posted by a fellow student. You must post your first and second responses no later than December 31 (Discussion Board 1), January 4 (Discussion Board 2), January 8 (Discussion Board 3), and January 12 (Discussion Board 4) by 11PM.

Responses must be well thought out. Don't submit work that is rushed or in an “instant message” or “chat room” format. For more information, see the instruction sheet of online discussion assignment in the Syllabus folder of the Blackboard site.

#### **2) Responses to links and videos posted about the four main topics discussed in this class: Racism, Sexism, Heterosexism, and Classism (20%)**

You are also required to watch videos, go to websites and/or take quizzes. These materials are posted in the “Course Documents” section of Blackboard. You will need to post your reactions’ to four assignments by 11PM on the following days: December 31 (Racism response), January 4 (Sexism response), January 3 (Heterosexism response), and January 12 (Classism response).

**Please note that you must keep up with the stipulated deadlines. Your responses to the online discussions must be submitted on time. No exceptions.**

### **Reviews of Films (20% of overall grade)**

As part of the course you will also be required to watch two movies and write a short review of each. These movies are available through the WPU library, and through most public libraries. They are also available through Netflix.

The instructions and format for viewing and responding to the films will be posted on Blackboard. The first film review will be due on January 6 and the second film review will be due on January 13 by 11PM.

### **Plagiarism and cheating in any form will not be tolerated.**

#### **Grading Scale and Criteria:**

A = 94 – 100	A- = 90 – 93	B+ = 87 – 89
B = 84 – 86	B- = 80 – 83	C+ = 77 – 79
C = 74 – 76	C- = 70 – 73	D+ = 65 – 69
D = 60 – 64	F = below 60	

A: Unusually outstanding performance in all areas of the class

B: Exceeds description of assignments

C: Satisfactorily meets assignments and overall class performance

D: Work submitted and class performance fall below class description and expectations

F: Incomplete or unacceptable work and class performance.

### **Student Responsibilities**

I expect that every member of the class will respect the views, opinions and beliefs of the other members. We may not always agree, but we must always respect the right of others to differ in their thoughts. It is possible, that in a class of this nature, the discussion may at times go to areas where people would want their privacy of disclosed information respected. I would hope that this is something that we can all adhere to and keep issues of a confidential manner between ourselves as a class.

#### **WPUNJ Student Email:**

The class will communicate through the university email account. All students are to check this account daily.

#### **Turning in Late Assignments**

**Late assignments will not be accepted. No exceptions.**

#### **Student Conduct & Plagiarism**

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will include, but not be limited to the following examples:

Plagiarism is the copying from a book, article, notebook, video or other source, material whether published or unpublished, without proper credit through the use of quotation marks, footnotes and other customary means of identifying sources, or passing off as one's own, the ideas, words, writings, programs and experiments of another, whether or not such actions are intentional or unintentional. Plagiarism also includes submitting, without the consent of the professor, an assignment already tendered for academic credit in another course.

Academic Support Services:

Students can receive free tutoring in most general education subjects and participate in study skills workshops through the Academic Support Center (973-720-3324) located in Hunziker Wing 218.

Students can also receive help in analytical writing, preparing research papers, and developing work processing skills by contacting the Writing Center (973-720-2633) located in the Atrium.

**Important:** Please remember: if you are having difficulties, talking with me is the best way to resolve them. I can't help you if I don't know what is going on.