Identity & Discrimination at Work and in the U.S. Labor Market (38:578:551)  
Spring 2022

Professor Tamara Lee  
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Tuesdays: 3:50 p.m. to 6:50 p.m.

Office hours: via Zoom by appointment at Professor Lee’s Personal Room:  
https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/tl466?pwd=ZHBvaHRRSlkJVTJWVtOdTZLdE1tZz09

COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

This course examines traditional social constructs such as race, gender and ethnicity, and their relationship with the workplace, society and its formal and informal governing institutions. Although there will be specific multi-disciplinary focus on the experiences of African-American, Latin@, Asian-American and women workers, the discussion will be expanded to cover broader issues of inequality, gender identity, and the politics of identity in the workplace, including discussion of traditionally unprotected categories of marginalized workers, such as those in the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, I encourage you to take advantage of the assignments in class to explore other categories of legally protected or unprotected groups of workers (e.g. veterans, disabled, religious minorities).

Although I reserve the right to the occasional lecture, it is my hope that the class format will naturally lend itself to a more relaxed- though vigorous and informed- exchange of ideas around important concepts. We will take advantage of the small group seminar setting to fit the syllabus and its contents to the personal, professional and academic interests of the class participants. To meet this goal, it is imperative that we create and maintain a culture of engagement that celebrates diversity and inclusion, and is enhanced by honest and provocative questions, opinions and beliefs. In other words, we will recognize and give voice to the difficulties in achieving a meaningful discussion about sensitive topics, and we will strive to confront and conquer those obstacles in a professional and scholarly way, which is not to say without passion.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this course. Unless otherwise provided, all in-person and on-line course materials will be made available via the course Canvas portal but are also accessible electronically via the university library system.

*Please note that there are likely to be frequent changes to the reading list. I will update Canvas to the best of my ability. However, given the structure of the class (as will be clearer from the discussion in the Assignments section of this syllabus), please contact me or your classmates for confirmation of the week’s reading assignments.
CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION

The sensitive nature of our subject matter necessitates a class environment and culture that establishes and guarantees trust and confidence. Further, as a general rule of American life, professionalism requires timely attendance. That is certainly the case in my classroom. Therefore, consistent and prompt in-class attendance by all participants is absolutely essential and required. You should strive to be in class and prepared promptly at 3:50 p.m.

With regard to preparation, as masters-level graduate students, you should be motivated by your love for knowledge and your respect for your classmates to keep up with the reading and fully contribute to the class discussion. However, having been a graduate student, I understand that this is not always true, and that sometimes life rearranges our priorities. (Un)fortunately for you, my job is to make sure you walk away from this class a little more knowledgeable than when you came in. For this reason, attendance and participation combined account for 45% of your grade.

Participation is measured by how frequently you engage your classmates in discussion, not whether you agree with the prevailing view in the class. In fact, I encourage everyone to advance the minority view, even if it is not your own. It will make the discussion, and thus your learning, more robust. If you feel inhibited from engaging in classroom discussion for any reason, my virtual door is open and you should enter.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to the completion of your weekly reading assignments designed to stimulate class discussion, there are two (2) major assignments in the course.
1. **Resident Expert**: Each student will pick one of the major themes of the course for which they are passionate or have some interest or curiosity. Students signing up for the same theme may comprise a group, or present as individuals.

The group/individual is required to research and select up to 2 pieces of scholarly research (i.e. chapters of peer-reviewed books, journal articles) to assign to the class for reading/preparation. The articles should represent all sides of the debate over any controversial issue.

The group/individual will lead/facilitate the discussion covering the assigned readings, including those selected by the professor. A formal presentation is not required but is acceptable as long as you create space for group participation and discussion of the issue(s). I encourage creativity and the use of multi-media, such as social media and other popular forms of communication in your lives (e.g. video clips, podcasts, etc.).

2. **Policy Paper**: This is a research project that allows you to investigate a specific policy issue concerning identity politics in the labor market. Each of you will assume the role of a specific stakeholder of your choosing (e.g. H.R. manager, community organizer, union leader, congressional staffer, etc.) dealing with a specific issue concerning a protected or unprotected class of workers either in the workplace or in society at large. For example, in the role of human resources manager, you might be concerned with creating a diverse and inclusive organizational culture, and therefore you might draft a report on best practices for LGTBQ+ inclusion. Or, as an opponent of affirmative action, you might research and draft a policy brief on behalf of a think tank or political party arguing against such programs as unconstitutional or unwarranted. You have complete freedom over the issue, the stakeholder you wish to represent, as well as the stakeholder to whom you are writing. However, I would like you to get “approval” from me on your topic by informing me of your issue and stakeholders by no later than **March 24, 2022**.

The goal of this project is to (1) propose, research, and analyze a policy matter related to employment and marginalized workers, (2) determine and cite to relevant and reliable data sources, and (3) develop a set of recommendations for addressing the problem/opportunity based on your research. The paper requirements are:

- Max 15 pp., including an executive summary and any supporting materials and documentation.
- Any citation style is acceptable, as long as it exists and is consistently employed throughout your paper.

**GRADING**
Your final grade in the course will be distributed as follows:

- **Attendance**: 25%
- **Participation**: 20%
- **Resident Expert**: 25%
- **Policy Paper**: 30%

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

(*Subject to change. Although I will try to keep Canvas updated with content changes, please check with me or your colleagues if you miss a class and are unsure of the reading assignments.)*

**Week 1: January 18 (Introduction and Course Description)**

- **Introductions**
- **Course information and overview**
  - Key Themes and Concepts
  - Rules for Class Engagement: Diversity and Inclusion
  - Assignments
- **Overview: The U.S. Political Economy**
- **Research Literacy/Library Services (Julie Peters, Library Director)**

**Week 2: January 25 (Basic Constructs: Race, Gender and Class Identities in the U.S.)**

Week 3: February 1 (Political Economics of Labor Market Discrimination)

- Film: The Eugenics Crusade


- Recommended/Optional Reading:

Week 4: February 8 Cornell Keynote

Week 5: February 15 (Race and the U.S. Political Economy: African-American Workers)


Lee, Tamara. 2020. “Big labor’s structural racism is bigger than the problem with police unions.” NJ.com (July 6, 2020).

Recommended/Optional Reading:


Film: Goin’ to Chicago

Week 6: February 22 (Race and the U.S. Political Economy: Latin@ Workers)


Recommended/Optional Reading:


Film: Dolores

Week 7: Feb 29 (Race and the U.S. Political Economy: Asian-American Workers)


Recommended/Optional Reading:


• Holland, K. “A history of Chinese immigration in the United States and Canada.” American Review of Canadian Studies

Film: The Chinese Exclusion Act

Week 8: March 8 (The Gendered Workplace: Gender Identity)

• Lorber, Judith. 1994. “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender.” Available at:


**Week 9: March 15 (Spring Break: No Class)**

**Week 10: March 22 (The Gendered Workplace: Women Workers)**


Recommended/Optional Reading:


Film: Miss Representation

Week 11: March 29 (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Inequality)


➢ Recommended/Optional Reading:


➢ EndTimesPepTalk Podcast: The Women's March: A Conversation with Brenna O'Brien and Tamara Lee

➢ Deadline for Approval of Policy Paper Topic by Professor Lee

Week 12: April 5 (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Identity, Diversity and Social Justice)


Recommended/Optional Reading:


Week 13: April 12 (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Immigrant Incorporation)


Week 14: April 19 (LGBTQ Workers in the U.S.)


Bilimoria and Stewart. 2009. “‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell:’ The Academic Climate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Faculty in Science and Engineering.” *NWSA Journal*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 85-103.

Recommended/Optional Reading:


**Film: Stonewall Uprising**

Week 15: April 26: (Role of Organizations in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)


Crumpacker and Crumpacker. 2007. “Succession Planning and Generational Stereotypes: Should HR Consider Age-Based Values and Attitudes a Relevant Factor or a Passing Fad?” *Public Personnel Management*. Vol 36, no. 4, pp. 349-369.

Final Exam Week: **Tuesday, May 3**

- Policy Papers and any Extra Credit Submissions, due by 11:59pm. (NOON) via upload to Sakai. The EARLIER, the better