Seminar in Minorities and Work (38:578:551:01)  
Spring 2015  
Professor Tamara Lee  
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Thursdays: 12:35p.m. - 3:35p.m. (LEC, Room 130)  
Office Hours: Thursdays 4p.m.- 6p.m. (LEC, Room 107)

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, Latino, Asian-American and female workers, the discussion will be expanded to cover broader issues of inequality and gender identity in the workplace, including discussion of traditionally unprotected categories of minority 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 “minority” workers (e.g. veterans, disabled, religious) that may be of interest to you.

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

Unless otherwise provided, all readings will be made available via Sakai, 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 Sakai 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 potentially 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 class attendance by all participants is absolutely essential and required. You must be in class and prepared promptly at 12:35. Repeated absences and tardiness will not go unnoticed, and might affect your overall attendance grade.

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 accounts 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 door is open and you should walk through it.

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.

- **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.

  ✓ The student is required to research and select up to 3 pieces of scholarly research (i.e. chapters of books, journal articles) to assign to the class for reading/preparation. The articles should represent all sides of the debate over any controversial issue. You may also elect to show a film to the class that elaborates the theme. All readings/films must receive my pre-approval. (*Because the resident experts will be adding readings to the class, I reserve the right to amend the original syllabus to lighten or diversify your readings for any particular week.*)

  ✓ Each student will lead/facilitate the discussion covering the assigned readings and/or film. A formal presentation is not required, but is acceptable as long as you create space for group participation and discussion of the issue(s).

- **Policy Paper**: This is a research project that allows you to investigate a specific policy issue concerning minorities and work. Each of you will assume the role of a specific stakeholder (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 LGBTQ+ 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 26, 2015.

The goal of this project is to (1) propose, research, and analyze a policy matter related to employment and minority 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:

✓ 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.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY (NDWA DOMESTIC WORKER STUDY)

We have a unique occasion for real world application of some of the course themes! Several classes in the department will offer students the opportunity to conduct field research with domestic and homecare workers, including worker outreach, conducting surveys, and preparing a final report. It is a wonderful opportunity to be on the front lines of qualitative research on an important national policy concern, and I strongly encourage you to be involved. If you choose to participate in the project, the following grading options are available:

✓ For Full Substitution of the Policy Paper:
  
  o Submit a Research Journal in which you detail your activity and participation in the project; AND
  
  o Submit a 5-10 pp. Project Report in which you
    
    ▪ Set forth the research question(s) proposed by the study and identify which themes of the course are relevant to the question(s) (e.g. gendered work, class identities, immigrant incorporation, etc.); AND
Reflect on whether you think the methodology employed by the study is useful in answering the specific research question(s) and explain why or why not; AND

Use the evidence/data/experience you have gained during the project to develop a set of policy recommendations for addressing the problems/opportunities that exist for domestic and homecare workers. You may include properly cited outside research in your analysis.

For Extra Credit:

- Submit a research journal in which you detail your activity and participation in the project; AND
- Submit a 1 pp. personal reflection on the research experience as it relates to your understanding of issues facing employers and domestic/homecare workers.

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

- Attendance 25%
- Participation 20%
- Resident Expert 25%
- Policy Paper/Project Report and Research Journal 30%

CLASS SCHEDULE

(*Subject to change. Although I will try to keep Sakai 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 22 (Introduction and Course Description)

- Introductions
- Course information and overview
  - Key Themes and Concepts
  - Rules for Class Engagement: Diversity and Inclusion
- Research Literacy/Library Services (Julie Moscinski, Library Director)
Assignments

Week 2: January 29 (Basic Constructs: Race, Gender and Class Identities in the U.S.)


Week 3: February 5 (Political Economics of Labor Market Discrimination)


Recommended/Optional Reading:

- ASA. 2005. “Race, Ethnicity, and the American Labor Market: What’s at Work?” Available at:
Week 4: February 12 (Race and the U.S. Political Economy: African-American Workers)


➢ Movie: Goin’ to Chicago

Week 5: February 19 (Race and the U.S. Political Economy: Latino Workers)


➢ Ramos-Zayas, Ana. 2001. “All This is Turning White Now: Latino Constructions of ‘White Culture’ and Whiteness in Chicago.” Centro Journal. Vol 13, no. 3, pp. 73.95


➢ Recommended/Optional Reading:

Week 6: February 26 (Race and the U.S. Political Economy: Asian-American Workers)


Week 7: March 5 (The Gendered Workplace: Gender Identity)


Week 8: March 12 (The Gendered Workplace: Female Workers)


Week 9: March 19 SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

Week 10: March 26 (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Inequality)


- Movie: Inequality For All (Reich)

- Deadline for Approval of Policy Paper Topic by Professor Lee
Week 11: April 2  (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Identity, Diversity and Social Justice)


Week 12: April 9 (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Immigrant Incorporation)


Week 13: April 16 (Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in the U.S. Political Economy: Immigrant Incorporation)


Week 14: April 23: (LGBTQ Workers in the U.S.)


Week 15: April 30 (Role of Organizations in Diversity and Inclusion/Wrap Up)


Preliminary Draft: Subject to Change

Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. Vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 270-278. Available at:

Final Exam Week: Wednesday, May 13

- Policy Papers/Project Reports and Journals, and any Extra Credit Submissions, due on, or before(1), 12:00pm. (NOON) via email to Professor Lee.