Course Overview and Structure

Welcome to STPEC 101. This course will familiarize new students with the program and its intellectual vision. STPEC is a rigorous, democratically run, interdisciplinary academic program. It is also a community of students, staff, instructors, alumni, and friends that will help you navigate your time at UMass. Ideally this course will also familiarize us with each other.

The content of this course is organized around concepts students will encounter in subsequent STPEC courses, as well as in the STPEC community and the greater world. It will provide an introduction to social theory, political economy, globalization and inequality in the Global North and the Global South. We will spend some time identifying how social power works in the context race and whiteness, gender and patriarchy, sexuality and queerness, and other sites of struggle. Assignments facilitate exploration of these and related topics. Students will have the opportunity to learn the value of social theory, how to make an argument, and how to communicate for effective dialogue.

Attendance Policy

STPEC 101, like STPEC’s other core classes, is seminar-style, emphasizing discussion and reflection. Therefore, you are expected to attend every class session. Make every effort to come to class.

Excused Absences: If you will be forced to miss all or part of a class period due to a known conflict, please contact me in advance. If you are forced to miss a class due to an emergency (illness, family crisis, etc.), contact me as soon as possible.

Unexcused Absences: You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. Additional unexcused absences will effect the participation portion of your final grade.

Lateness: Arriving to class late is disruptive to the instructor and to other students, and puts you at a disadvantage during the class. Unless you have cleared it with an instructor, each 2 classes you are late will count as an unexcused absence. Arriving to class more than 30 minutes late also counts as an absence.

Students with Disabilities

STPEC is committed to providing successful learning opportunities for every student. If you have a documented physical, psychological or learning disability on file with one of the university disability service offices, you may be eligible for academic accommodations to help you succeed at UMass. Please talk to one of us immediately so we can make appropriate arrangements to support your learning and success.

We also understand that there can be barriers to receiving documentation, or that psychological or learning disabilities may present themselves in the course of adapting to the college environment and heightened academic expectations. Students are urged to be proactive and meet with me if they feel they are experiencing such barriers to their success in this course.

Inclusion and Respect

We expect students to engage in class discussions respectfully, thinking critically about your own perspective and maintaining openness to ideas and experiences that are in conflict with your own. The intention of discussion and dialogue in this class is to
build understanding, not to “win” as one would in a debate. Students are expected to engage in these conversations sensitively and with openness to critique. If you prefer, you can speak to me privately after class and we’ll find strategies to address the issue.

**Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concept Reviews (3)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take Home Final</td>
<td>25%</td>
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*Attendance and Participation:* This includes thoughtful comments and questions during class time to support discussion, contribution to small groups, and attendance.

*Concept Reviews:* Students will be expected to write THREE 3-5 page concept reviews. I will supply a list of concepts from the readings, along with short prompts or quotes. Students will then be asked to define and contextualize each concept and apply these concepts to a news story, cultural artifact, or a story from their own lives, supporting their analysis with references to the relevant readings. Students are encouraged to take a creative approach to their concept reviews while prioritizing significant analysis and references to the readings. More information about the concept reviews will be given prior to when the first one is due.

*Note On Lateness:* If you feel you are unable to meet a deadline, please talk to me. I can help figure out the best way to prioritize and meet deadlines. **You can RE-WRITE any concept review you hand in as many times as necessary to improve your work.** If you don’t talk to us and don’t hand anything in, you’re out of luck.

**Retreat**

We will have a one day weekend retreat as a class, to be scheduled on the first day of class. Participation is REQUIRED. Details will follow.

**Technology Policy**

There are no books for this course. You will either be provided a link to all readings, whether in Moodle or otherwise. I encourage you to print out all the readings. Take a few minutes to print out all or a chunk of the readings ahead of time. This eliminates a regular annoyance, and having the readings on hand allows you to highlight, make notes in the margins, and follow along in class. Paying to print is a drag, but it’s much cheaper than buying a textbook. Printing 1,000 pages costs less than $50. I strongly discourage the use of Laptops; they should ONLY be used for taking notes or keeping readings handy. There will be NO USE OF CELL PHONES in class.

**Academic Honesty**

DO NOT PLAGIARISE. That means no copy and pasting, no direct paraphrasing. We will go over proper citation protocol in class before the first concept review is due. Students are welcome to do their own research and incorporate material from outside the class, but you MUST RESPECT ANY SOURCE YOU REFERENCE! Even if it’s a mere mention or indirect paraphrase—you must cite it. Now and forever.

I am obligated to report academic dishonesty to your Academic Dean, a very unpleasant affair for all involved. And be advised, university policy demands that I fail any student who plagiarizes. This is **NO JOKE.** If you are not sure about a citation, contact me.

**Course Calendar**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Class**

*Sept 8 –* The class as a community  
*Sept 10 –* Continued introductions. Why are you here? What do you know and what do want to know? And Why?
Week 2: What is Social Theory? How do you know what you think you know?
Sept 15

Sept 17

Week 3: Black Lives Matter
Sept 22 & 24
For a brief summary:
Hampshire college panel:
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpfKo10rDmA
then try these:
- http://www.orchestratedpulse.com/2015/08/black-lives-matter-leadership/
Patrisse McCullors on intersectional politics:
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=mplwbQPOu70

Week 4: Identity and Social Constructions. Who are you that you think you know something?
Sept 29

Oct 1

Week 5: Structural Racism
Oct 6

Oct 8
- Angela Davis, slavery and the Prison Industrial Complex www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ2cC7LHMxA

******* Oct 1 ******* Concept Review #1 DUE *******

Week 6: The Use (and Abuse) of History
Oct 13 no class  Monday schedule
Oct 15
Course Retreat ************ 10am – 3pm, Oct 18 ************
Location TBA
• Richard Reich – film *Inequality for All*

**Week 7: Neoliberalism**
Oct 20 & 22

******* Final Project Abstract Due *******

**Week 8: Eurocentrism and Colonality**
Oct 27 & 29

**Week 9: Gender and the Uses of Patriarchy**
Nov 3
• Anzaldua, Gloria. 1980. Selections from *Borderlands, the New Mestiza*.
  **Skin:**

Nov 5

******* Concept Review #2 DUE *******

**Week 10: Racing Feminisms**
Nov 10
• blogposts: look at some feminist blogsites and compare. Feministing, Black Girl Dangerous, The Feminist Wire, INCITE!blog, and others.

Nov 12
• Judith Butler, video, How behavior creates Gender

Optional:


**Week 11: Queer Theory**

Nov 17 & 19

Readings TBA

**Week 12: OPEN TOPIC**

Dec 1 & 3

Global trade and US Immigration, issues in queer theory, the prison ind complex, war and the US, global displacement (Syria), human trafficking, disability studies, transformative justice, etc……

****** Concept Review #3 DUE ******

**Week 13: Student Presentations and wrap up**

Final Projects are due Dec 10.

Take home final will be given out. They are due by Friday, Dec 18, 5pm.