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 of 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>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class writing responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Reviews (3)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</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.

In-class writing responses are quick individual writing assignments in response to prompts relating to either the reading or class discussions. They give me a better idea of where everyone is on an issue/topic, and give you a different way to express your ideas.

**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 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
Jan 19 — The class as a community
Jan 21 – 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?
Jan 26: Sociology/Philosophy

Jan 28: Women’s Studies
- Intersectionality 101

Week 3: Identity and Social Constructions. Who are you that you think you know something?
Feb 2: Social Constructionism and Located Knowledge
Continue with Kirk & Rey Social Locations, focus on intersectionality
Feb 4: personal analytical narratives from Women’s Lives: Multicultural Perspectives
- Allen Johnson
- Combahee River Collective
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty
- Minnie Bruce Pratt

Week 4: The Use (and Abuse) of History
Feb 9 & 11
- Popular Ed Timeline. What knowledge is in the room?

Week 5: Review of Concepts
Feb 16: no class
Feb 18: Content Review and Intro to Concept Reviews

Week 6: Structural Racism: the Prison Industrial Complex
Feb 23
Feb 25
- Angela Davis, slavery and the Prison Industrial Complex www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ2cC7LHMxA

******* Feb 25 ******* Concept Review #1 DUE *******
Feb 28: RETREAT 10-2:30 location TBA

Week 7: Gender and the Uses of Patriarchy

March 1:

March 3:

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

Week 8: Open Topic
March 8-10:
TBA

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: Transforming Feminisms

March 22
- blogposts: look at some feminist blogsites and compare. Feministing, Black Girl Dangerous, The Feminist Wire, INCITE!blog, and others.


March 31


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

Week 11: Neoliberalism

March 29-30


Week 12: Eurocentrism and Coloniality

April 5 & 7
**Week 13: Black Lives Matter**

April 12 & 14

TBA

**Week 14: Queer Theory**

April 19: The Wilkins chapters are very accessible and short summaries of theories as they have effected the development of what is described as "queer theory." Kirsch is a wonderfully complex, academic voice that challenges deeper assumptions of these well established ideas -- and is not required!


April 21: Dean Spade: Everyone must read *What's Wrong With Rights*. Then choose one of the other two: the link below on same-sex marriage as a neoliberal project or the text on the prison ind complex.


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

**Week 15: Final Project Presentations**