

Course: WOST 201 Critical Perspectives in Women's Studies

Course Location: Bartlett 212

Course Meeting Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-10:45am

<http://www.oit.umass.edu/webct/index.html>

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Office hrs: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00-12:30 & by appointment

**Course Description:** Women's Studies is a vibrant interdisciplinary field grounded in a commitment to intellectual rigor and transformation---in the world of ideas and the material and spiritual worlds in which we live. This course asks the fundamental questions about the lives of women. What does it mean to be a woman? How is the category "woman" constructed differently across social groups, cultures and historical periods? How do we analyze women's multiple identities and social positions? How can knowledge production result women acting as agents of personal and social change? How do the intersections of commonalities and differences in women's social identities challenge and liberate women's lives?

The course explores multiple methods of analysis and reflection on current issues and controversies in feminist thought within a context inclusive of gender, class, race, age, and sexual power concerns. This course examines global perspectives on women's studies centering women's lived experiences. This analysis uses women's social identities as the primary lenses from which critical knowledge and action emerge. We will review debates in feminist scholarship including contradictions of subjectivity and objectivity and theory versus practice.

**Course Goals:** 1) Critical exploration of the constructions and evolution of feminist theory and praxis 2) Analyze the ways in which women's individual and group social identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, age) intersect 3) Explore how critical perspectives transform individual and systemic oppression into liberation 4) Enhance critical thinking skills by further understanding the complex interactions between institutions, public attitudes and policies toward women, and the intersections of social identities within systems of oppression and liberation.

**Accommodations and Support:** Students with concerns and/or disabilities are strongly encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible regarding accommodations and essential support to ensure success in this course.

**Critical Analysis Papers (CAP) 20%:** One of the major goals of the course is to examine, reflect, and further understand the ways in which women's social identities are constructed, interpreted, and lived. You will be asked to submit via SPARKS 2 CAPs (3pgs) over the course of the semester. You must integrate the course material from our readings, class discussion and exercises. These papers are a way to cultivate your

critical thinking skills and contemplate the course material. Choose two or three key points to help focus your response and critique. I encourage you to take risks; incorporate your ideas about the subject; challenge yourself and me. Comment on the contributions of the author(s), name the author(s) perspective, argument strategy, discuss the limitations and insights of the analysis. I want to know that you have read, understood, and analyzed the readings. Grades will be based on the quality and clarity of your arguments as well as the organization of your ideas. Guidelines are available on SPARKS.

**Critical Autobiography (15%):** You will submit 2 critical autobiographies (3-5 pages) that details how race, gender, class, and sexuality impact and shape your life and perception of the social and cultural world. In particular, you should discuss your conceptions of the intersections of these social identities on the decisions that you make, would like to make, may or may not make regarding your personal and professional goals. The purpose of this paper is to get you thinking about who you are, what you believe and why these things are seemingly “normal” or natural. These papers will be graded on how well they evidence critical thinking about these issues and how well you articulate this thinking. Guidelines are available on SPARKS.

**Attendance and Participation 15%:** Both attendance and participation are essential for success in this course. Each of you will be starting the semester with a grade of “A” in this course. Consistent attendance and participation is the first step to maintain this grade. Two unexcused absences will affect your final grade by at least one letter grade. Please inform me of Religious Observances and keep in mind you are still responsible for the any assignments due.

### **Up to 5%**

Issue: “I keep thinking about what we talked about in class”—WOST 201 Student

Solution: Get credit for participating in a threaded SPARKS discussion. You are required to at least participate in 1 threaded discussion over the course of the semester. I will be online each evening after class to respond to and engage in more discussion. Each theme is posted and ready for you!

**Reflection Paper 15%:** This assignment asks you to articulate your experience and reaction to the literature of Mab Seagrest, Memoir of a Race Traitor and Come Hell or High Water by Michael Eric Dyson. Guidelines are available on SPARKS.

**Group Project 10%:** This will be a collaborative effort in which you (in small groups) will create and execute a final project that relates to activism and social change. We will discuss this specific guidelines in class and we will work on this as a class throughout the semester. Each group will present its project at the end of the semester. Because it is a collaborative effort, you should expect to meet with your group outside of class on a regular basis but I will provide some in-class consult time to work on your projects. I

will also be available to meet with groups as needed. Topics for these projects will be discussed early in the semester and will include a range of activities such as collective art work; a project for change of a contemporary political or social policy; a series of poetry. Guidelines will be posted on SPARKS.

**Final Exam 20%:** There will be one final examination in this course. You will be given two questions to answer in which you will be expected to demonstrate your understanding and application of the course materials. The goal is for you to produce knowledge based on theory and praxis constructed over the course of the semester.

**Event Experience 5%:** You must attend one event in the 5 college system that expresses one or more of your social identities you want to explore, examine, think about it. You will be asked to write a brief reflection on the experience and submit it via SPARKS. Please send me an email prior to attending this event so we may discuss it.

**Assignments & Grading.** You will be able to submit each assignment in SPARKS. I will then grade your work and you will be able to see your grade in LIVE time. Each assignment has a built in “late” date which is generally 48hrs after original due date. If you need to use this option you will not be eligible for an “A” grade on the assignment.

**Academic Honesty and Other Undergraduate Policies:** My assumption is that students are honest and hard working. You are responsible for knowing and following the University of Massachusetts Academic Guidelines. Please read and familiarize yourselves with the University Policy Statement on Academic Honesty, Course Requirements, Attendance, Religious Observances, and other relevant policies, in the *Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities Booklet*. Necessary action in compliance with official guidelines will be taken against students who commit academic dishonesty. Plagiarism of any kind will be detrimental to your tenure at the University. Avoid using written papers from the Internet. Caucus with me about resources for learning needs.

**Required Textbooks:**

- 1) Patricia Hill Collins, Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology. Wadsworth, 2007.
- 2) Kelly Coate, Suki Ali, & Wanguyi Wa Goro, Global Feminist Politics: Identities in a Changing World. Routledge, 2000.
- 3) bell, hooks, Feminist Theory From Margin to Center. South End Press, 1984.
- 4) Mab Segrest, Memoir of a Race Traitor. South End Press, 1994.
- 5) Michael Eric Dyson, Come Hell or High Water. Basic Civitas Books, 2006.

\*Books are available at Food For Thought Books---North Pleasant Street, Amherst and also on reserve in the library.

Our Community: I believe education is a collaborative journey that we undertake together as a class. I expect each of you to come to class prepared to discuss and contemplate the course material. Our most valuable text is our own life experiences, which we each bring to each class discussion. I ask that recognize we are all in different places in our journey and for all of us to move forward we must do it with love. Love comes in many forms and expressions. In our classroom, it will be expressed in our joint agreement to share our experiences, curiosities, beliefs, and values, in the hopes that we learn from and about each other as human beings. This process will enrich us in ways that can help us all become more human and be the change we all want to see in the world.

<b>Week 1</b>
Tuesday January 30 <sup>th</sup> <i>Introduction</i>
Thursday February 1 <sup>st</sup> <i>What is Feminism?</i>
<b>Week 2 Part 1: Critical Perspectives—Oppression and Liberation</b>
Tuesday February 6 <sup>th</sup> <i>bell hooks, <u>Feminist Theory from Margin to Center</u> (pgs. 1-83)</i>
Thursday February 8 <sup>th</sup> <i>bell hooks, <u>Feminist Theory from Margin to Center</u> (pgs. 84-167)</i>
<b>Week 3 Part 1: WHY RACE, CLASS AND GENDER STILL MATTER &amp; PART II: SYSTEMS OF POWER AND INEQUALITY</b>
Tuesday February 13 <sup>th</sup> <b>Theme: <i>Why Race, Class, &amp; Gender Still Matter</i></b> <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Missing People and Others: Joining Together to Expand," Arturo Madrid.</li> <li>2. "La Guera," Cherrie Moraga.</li> <li>3. "Oppression," Marilyn Frye.</li> <li>4. "A Different Mirror," Ronald T. Takaki.</li> <li>5. "From a Native Daughter," Haunani-Kay Trask.</li> <li>6. "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," Audre Lorde</li> </ol>
Thursday February 15 <sup>th</sup> <b>Theme: <i>Race &amp; Racism</i></b> <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. "<i>Racism without Racists</i>," Eduardo Bonilla-Silva.</li> <li>8. "<i>White Privilege and Male Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack</i>," Peggy McIntosh.</li> <li>9. "<i>Of Race and Risk</i>," Patricia Williams</li> <li>10. "Seeing More than Black and White," Elizabeth Martinez.</li> <li>11. "What White Supremacists Taught a Jewish Scholar about Identity," Abby L. Ferber</li> </ol>
<b>Week 4 PART II: SYSTEMS OF POWER AND INEQUALITY</b>

<p>Tuesday February 20<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Class &amp; Inequality</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b></p> <p>12. "Growing Gulf Between Rich and Rest of Us", Holly Sklar.  13. "Tired of Playing Monopoly?" Donna Langston.  14. "The Hidden Cost of Being African American," Thomas M. Shapiro.  15. "Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class," Mary Pattillo-McCoy.  16. "Broken Levees, Unbroken Barriers", Jason De Parle. <i>Gender and Sexism</i>.</p>
<p><b>Theme: Gender &amp; Sexism</b>  Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup></p> <p>17. "Sex and Gender Through the Prism of Difference," Maxine Baca Zinn, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, and Michael Messner.  18. "Ideological Racism and Cultural Resistance: Constructing Our Own Images," Yen Le Espiritu  19. "Masculinities and Athletic Careers," Michael Messner.  20. "A White Woman of Color," Julia Alvarez.  21. "Toward a Theory of Disability and Gender," Thomas J. Gerschick. <i>Ethnicity and Nationality</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CAP #1 Due via SPARKS</b></p>
<p><b>Week 5 PART II: SYSTEMS OF POWER AND INEQUALITY</b></p>
<p>Tuesday February 27<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Ethnicity &amp; Nationality</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b></p> <p>22. "Is This A White Country, or What?," Lillian Rubin.  23. "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?," Mary Waters.  24. "Salsa and Ketchup: Transnational Migrants Straddle Two Worlds," Peggy Levitt.  25. "'Mexicanness' in New York: Migrants Seek New Place in Old Racial Order," Robert Smith.  26. "Migration and Vietnamese American Women: Remaking Ethnicity," Nazlia Kibria. <i>Sexuality and Heterosexism</i>.</p>
<p>Thursday March 1<sup>st</sup>  <b>Theme: Sexuality &amp; Heterosexism</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b></p> <p>27. "You Talkin' to Me?" Jean Kilbourne.  28. "Where Has Gay Liberation Gone: An Interview with Barbara Smith," Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed  29. "Globalizing Sex Workers' Rights," Kamala Kempadoo.  30. "Black Sexuality: The Taboo Subject," Cornel West.  31. "The Invention of Heterosexuality," Jonathan Ned Katz.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Critical Autobiography #1 due via SPARKS</b></p>
<p><b>Week 6 Part III: THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.</b></p>
<p>Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Work &amp; Economic Transformation</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b></p> <p>32. "Race, Class, Gender and Women's Work," Teresa Amott and Julie Mattheai.  33. "The Indignities of Unemployment," Kenneth W. Brown.  34. "'Soft Skills' and Race" Philip Moss and Chris Tilly.  35. "The Invisible Poor" Katherine Newman.  36. "Domestica," Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo</p>
<p>Thursday March 8<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Families</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b></p> <p>37. "Our Mothers' Grief: Racial-ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families," Bonnie Thornton Dill.  38. "Navigating Interracial Borders: Black-White Couples and Their Social Worlds," Erica Chito Childs  39. "Straight is to Gay As Family Is To No Family," Kath Weston  40. "Unequal Childhoods," Annette Lareau</p>

41. "Chappals & Gym Shorts: An Indian Muslim Woman in the Land of Oz"
<b>Week 7</b>
Tuesday March 13 <sup>th</sup> <b>Theme: Media &amp; Culture</b> <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b> 42. "Racist Stereotyping in the English Language" Robert Moore. 43. "Crimes Against Humanity" Ward Churchill. 44. "Media Magic: Making Class Invisible" Gregory Mantsios. 45. "The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria" Judith Ortiz Cofer. 46. "Gladiators, Gazelles, and Groupies: Basketball Love and Loathing" Julianne Malveaux. <i>Health and Social Welfare</i> .
Thursday March 15 <sup>th</sup> <b>Health &amp; Social Welfare</b> <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b> 47. "Can Education Eliminate Race, Class, and Gender Inequality?" Roslyn Arlin Mickelson and Stephen Samuel Smith. 48. "Welfare Reform, Family Hardship and Women of Color," Linda Burnham. 49. "Aid to Dependent Corporations: Exposing Federal Handouts to the Wealthy," Chuck Collins. 50. "Race, Poverty and Disability: Three Strikes and You're Out! Or Are You?" Pamela Black, Fabricio Balcazar and Christopher Keys. 51. "Just Choices": Women of Color, Reproductive Health, and Human Rights," Loretta J. Ross, Sarah L. Brownless, Dazon Dixon Diallo, Luz Rodriguez, and Sistersong Women of Color Reproductive Health Project. <i>State Institutions and Violence</i> .
<b>Week 8 SPRING BREAK ☺</b>
Tuesday March 20 <sup>th</sup> Thursday March 22 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Week 9 Part III: THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.</b>
Tuesday March 27 <sup>th</sup> <b>Memoir of a Race Traitor</b>  <b><i>Memoir of a Race Traitor Reflection due via SPARKS</i></b>
Thursday March 29 <sup>th</sup> <b>NO CLASS</b>
<b>Week 10 Part III: THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS &amp; PART IV: SOCIAL CHANGE AND SITES OF CHANGE</b>
Tuesday April 3 <sup>rd</sup> <b>Theme: State Institutions &amp; Violence</b> <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b> 52. "The First Americans: Americans Indians," C. Matthew Snipp 53. "Policing the National Body: Sex, Race, and Criminalization," Jael Silliman. 54. "Military Mirrors a Working-Class America," David M. Halbinger and Steven A. Holmes. 55. "Rape, Racism, and the Law," Jennifer Wriggins. 56. "How Safe is America," Desiree Taylor.

<p>Thursday April 5<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Sites of Change</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b>            57. "The Starbucks Paradox" Kim Fellner.            58. "Interrupting Historical Patterns: Bridging Race and Gender Gaps between Senior White Men and other Organizational Groups," Nancie Zane.            59. "Women of Color on the Front Line" Celene Krauss.            60. "'Whosoever' Is Welcome Here: An Interview with Reverend Edwin C. Sanders II" Gary David Comstock.            61. "Silent Covenants," Derrick Bell. Processes of Change</p>
<p><b>Week 11 PART IV: SOCIAL CHANGE AND SITES OF CHANGE</b></p>
<p>Tuesday April 10<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Processes of Change</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b>              62. "How the New Working Class Can Transform Urban America" Robin Kelley.            63. "From the Ground Up" Charon Asotoyer.</p>
<p>Thursday April 12<sup>th</sup>  <b>Theme: Processes of Change</b>  <b>Andersen &amp; Collins Text</b>            64. "Manifesta " Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards.            65. "What Does an Ally Do?" Paul Kivel.            66. "Can I Get a Witness? Testimony from a Hip Hop Feminist," Shani Jamila.  <b>CAP #2 DUE VIA SPARKS</b></p>
<p><b>Week 12 Global Feminist Politics and Actions</b></p>
<p>Tuesday April 17<sup>th</sup>  <b>NO CLASS UMASS ON A MONDAY SCHEDULE</b></p>
<p>Thursday April 19<sup>th</sup>  <i>Global Feminist Politics by Suki Ali, Kelly Coate, &amp; Wangui wa Goro (pgs.1-92)</i></p>
<p><b>Week 13 Global Feminist Politics and Actions</b></p>
<p>Tuesday April 24<sup>th</sup>  <i>Global Feminist Politics by Suki Ali, Kelly Coate, &amp; Wangui wa Goro (pgs.1-92)</i></p>
<p>Thursday April 26<sup>th</sup>  <b>NO CLASS—YOU INVITED TO ATTEND THE White Privilege Conference at the University of Colorado at Boulder Springs (student rates available)</b>    <a href="http://www.uccs.edu/~wpc/">http://www.uccs.edu/~wpc/</a></p>
<p><b>Week 14 Part 4: Literature, Narrative, and Voice</b></p>
<p>Tuesday May 1<sup>st</sup>  <b>Come Hell or High Water</b>    <b>Reflection due via SPARKS</b></p>

Thursday May 3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>Comparative Analysis of Come Hell or High Water &amp; Memoir of a Race Traitor</i>
<b>Week 15</b>
Tuesday May 8 <sup>th</sup> Class Presentations  <b><i>Individual Reflections Papers Due on Group Project via SPARKS</i></b>
Thursday May 10 <sup>th</sup> Class Presentations  <b><i>Individual Reflections Papers Due on Group Project via SPARKS</i></b>
<b>Week 16</b>
Tuesday May 15 <sup>th</sup> Last Class  <b><i>CRITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY2 DUE VIA SPARKS</i></b>

