

**Sociology 450 Race, Gender, Sexuality and Identity**  
**Oberlin College**

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Fall 2004  
Wednesday 2:30-4:20 pm.  
Room Rice 016

**Course Description:** This course challenges how we conceive of some major identities in our culture, namely racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as the intersections between these. What are the meanings of these identities and how are they created? How do people choose among identities? How do we manage conflicting identities? The subject matter consists of the workplace, global music, individuals' attitudes, social movements, and everyday actions. We will read sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and history, and view film. The course will be mostly discussion, with students taking a leading role.

**Required Readings:**

- Espiritu, Y. 1992. *Asian American Pan-Ethnicity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Stein, A. 1997. *Sex and Sensibility*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Waters, M. 1990. *Ethnic Options*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Also, readings are on electronic reserve, Blackboard, or distributed in class. The password for eres is SOCI450.

**Office hours:** Tuesday, 4:30-4:30; Wednesday, 4:30-5:30. Email is also a convenient way to ask me questions.

**Course Requirements:**

Student responsibilities:

(Note: By enrolling and remaining in this class, you have agreed to these responsibilities.)

1) Regular attendance at each class. Random attendance checks will be taken throughout the semester. Students anticipating lengthy absences should contact me in advance. You should arrive on time for class and remain for the entire period unless you make arrangements with me prior to class. You should not disrupt the class with conversations not related to the coursework. Finally, if you have a cell phone or pager, you must turn it off before class each day.

3) Completion of each week's readings by the beginning of class. Some weeks have more reading than others. You will not be able to successfully complete this class without

reading the assignments in a timely manner. Additionally, you will not be able to contribute to class discussion if you have not read the assignments.

4) Completion of all required assignments. If you anticipate that you may miss a due date because of illness or a personal emergency, I require a doctor's note or some other documentation *before the assignment is due*. If you do not supply this documentation, your assignments will be penalized one third of a grade (for example, an A will slip to an A-, a B+ to a B, etc.) starting the day of the assignment and for every calendar date past the due date.

Participation: While participation is often important in all classes, it is especially crucial in this class. As a seminar, the class is student run. You are expected to have done the readings and bring questions and critiques to class. Also, you are not just speaking to me, but to the entire class. *Discussion is worth 25% of your final grade.*

Blackboard Reading Responses: you are to post reading responses to Blackboard discussion board, about a page long which summarizes the author's main argument and at least one aspect of your reaction to it. Your response needs to refer to each reading but can concentrate on one or more. All posts are due by 10am on Wednesday. This will allow each of us to read over others' postings. You are expected to refer to others' comments as class begins. You are graded by how well you critique the readings and connect them to other readings and discussions. *Blackboard responses are worth 15% of your final grade.*

Paper on Oberlin Images: As a means to use concepts learned in class to better understand our own setting, the first paper will have you analyze images and discourse on race, gender and sexuality at Oberlin College, in order to ascertain the varying, potentially conflicting perspectives here that shape our experiences, and why they exist. This will also involve a chance to experiment with popular methods of empirical inquiry. *The 5 page paper is worth 20% of your final grade.*

Annotated Bibliography of Research Paper: One of the goals of the course is the final research paper. In preparation for that, you will turn in an annotated bibliography. This will have at least 4 references for the paper, with an explanation of the argument of each reference and how it contributes to what you think will be your paper's main thesis. You will be graded by how well-thought out the argument is and how robust your list of references seems to be. *The annotated bibliography is worth 10% of your final grade.*

Research Paper: The ultimate goal of the course is to provide you with the tools to help you in your own research. You will write a 15 page research paper on a topic of your choice. You are to make an argument regarding race, ethnic, gender, and/or sexuality and identity. You have multiple options. You should talk to me about your paper ideas. Since the paper is the ultimate goal of the course, you will

have opportunities to talk about in class. You should tie your research to the class readings during discussion. *The final paper is worth 30% of your final grade.*

Instructor responsibilities:

- 1) To present discussion material in clearly understandable language and presentation.
- 2) To assist students in thinking critically about concepts and ideas.
- 3) To respect student opinion and value each student's contributions equally.
- 4) To give feedback on student progress; to be accessible during office hours and after class, and to return all course materials, graded, in a timely fashion.

Other notes:

- 1) You are assumed to follow the Honors Code. This pertains to how you write papers, read materials, talk with other students in and outside of the class, and other modes of behavior. Please consult your student handbook or see me for details.
- 2) If you have a learning disability or other disability you are entitled to assistance and accommodations through the university. Please register with the Jane Boomer , Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, in Room G 27 Peters Hall, ext. 5-8467, for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. Please do this *at the beginning of the semester*. Please notify me as well.
- 3) If you would like extra assistance in writing the paper, I strongly suggest contacting the writing center. I am also available to discuss writing and paper assignments during my office hours.

***Tentative Course schedule:***

**Sept. 8: Introduction to course and to each other.**

**Part I. Understanding Race, Gender, Sexuality and Identity**

**Sept. 15: Major Concepts**

- "Mapping the Terrain" and "A Constructionist Approach," Cornell, S. and D. Hartmann. 1998. *Ethnicity and Race*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- "Theorizing Identity," Esterberg, K. 1997. *Lesbian and Bisexual Identities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- "Doing Difference," C. West and S. Fenstermaker. 1995. *Gender and Society*, v.9, n.1:8-37.

## **Part II. Representing Identities and Meaning.**

### **Sept. 22: The Political Economy of Gender and Body Images**

- “Motherhood: Identities, meanings and myths,” Woodward, K. 1997. *Identity and Difference* (K. Woodward, ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- “The Body, Health, and Eating Disorders,” Benson, S. 1997. *Identity and Difference* (K. Woodward, ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- “Wimps, Winners and Weekend Warriors: The Contemporary Crisis of Masculinity and Beyond,” Kimmel, M. 1996. *Manhood in America*. New York: Free Press.

### **Sept. 29. The Sexuality of Race**

- “Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images,” Collins, P. H. 1998. *Black Feminist Thought*. New York: Routledge.
- “Sex and Conquest,” Nagel, J. 2003. *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality*. New York : Oxford University Press.
- “Third Sex,” Lee, R. 1999. *Orientalists*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

### **Oct 6. (Re) Introduction to Methods**

- “Operationalization,” “Field Research,” and “Unobtrusive Research.” Babbie, E. 1992. *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

NOTE: No Blackboard post due this week. Instead, come prepared to discuss first paper. Details will be explained previously in class.

## **Part III. Creating and Choosing Group Identities**

### **Oct. 13. Identities Take Work**

- “Identity Work among the Homeless,” Snow, D. and Anderson 1987. *American Journal of Sociology*. p.1336-1371
- “Tinkerbelle and Pinups.” Epstein, C. 1992. *Cultivating Differences*. M. Lamont and M. Fournier (eds.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

NOTE: 5 PAGE PAPER DUE.

### **Oct. 20. Fall Break**

### **Oct. 27. Choosing a Heritage**

- Waters, *Ethnic Options*

### **Nov. 3. Creating a Race**

- Espiritu, *Asian American Pan-Ethnicity*, ch. 1, 2, 4, 6.

## **Part. IV. Dealing with Multiple Identities in Daily Life**

### **Nov. 10. Women and Work**

- “The Bicultural Life experience of career-oriented black women,” Bell, E. 1990. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, v.11:459-477.
- “Cultural Constructions of Family Schemas,” Blair-Loy, M. 2001. *Gender and Society*, v.15, 5:687-709.
- “Status Inconsistency and Role Conflict,” Stryker, S. and A. Macke. 1978. *Annual Review of Sociology*, v.4:57-90. Focus on section “Role Conflict,” p.70-81.

### **Nov. 17. How to be a Straight Lesbian**

- Stein, *Sex and Sensibility*, ch. Intro, 1, 3, 4, 6.

### **Nov. 24. Viewing Ethnicity and Sexuality through Film**

*Chutney Popcorn* - viewed in class.

NOTE: Annotated bibliographies due.

### **Dec. 1. Being Gay in Non-Gay Settings.**

- “Gay and Greek: The identity paradox of gay fraternities,” K. Yeung and M. Strombler. 2000. *Social Problems*, v. 47, 1:134-152.
- “Backlash, the matrix of domination, and Log Cabin Republicans,” M. Rogers and P. Lott. 1997. *The Sociological Quarterly*, v.38, 3:497-511
- “Biyuti in Everyday Life: Performance, Citizenship, and Survival among Filipinos in the United States,” Manalansan, M. 2001. *Orientations*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

### **Dec. 8. Constructing New, Hybrid Identities:**

- “Arab Noise and Ramadan Nights: *Rai*, Rap, and Franco-Maghrebi Identities,” J. Gross, D. McMurray, and T. Swedenburg. 1996. *Displacement, diaspora, and geographies of identity*. (Lavie, S. and T. Swedenburg, eds). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- “The Gospel Hour: Liminality, identity, and religion in a gay bar,” E. Gray and S. Thumma. *Contemporary American Religion: an ethnographic reader*. (P. Becker and N. Eiesland, eds.) Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press
- “To Be Young, Brown, and Hip,” Maira, S. 2002. *Desis in the House*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

NOTE: DRAFT OF PAPER DUE.

Final paper due during finals week.