



COURSE: Social Justice and the Common Good (2010) – Laura Stivers

Course Description and Objectives

This course will examine how we should respond to discrepancies between our society's professed values and its actual performance. We will examine the philosophical constructions of difference, and how these social constructed meanings are experienced by different groups of people within the United States. In particular we will examine the following social injustices: racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism. In light of these injustices, we will critically assess the areas of work, poverty/welfare, healthcare, and educational system, and then envision philosophical worldviews and public policies that might promote social justice and a common good.

The objectives of this course are:

1. To be able to critically assess, theorize, and describe structural inequality and societal oppression in the U.S. context.
2. To understand the interconnections between racism, sexism, classism heterosexism, and ableism.
3. To understand the social construction of social injustices to justify both power and privilege for certain groups of people.
4. To be able to apply theoretical understandings of oppression to particular areas of social life, such as work, poverty/welfare, healthcare, and the education system.
5. To be able to envision and articulate a common good in response to the social injustices in our society.
6. To connect theoretical learning in class to a particular area of social life by doing service in a community organization/institution.
7. To develop one's own personal integrity by gaining sensitivity to issues of oppression and injustice and a will to promote social justice in one's community and in the world.

Texts

Rosenblum, Karen E. and Travis, Toni-Michelle C., editors. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race, Sex and Gender, Social Class, and Sexual Orientation*, Fifth edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2008.

hooks, bell. *where we stand: CLASS MATTERS*. New York and London: Routledge, 2000.

Various handouts

Pick one book that coincides with your service placement (not in the bookstore):

1. Work

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002.

Zweig, Michael. *The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Collins, Chuck and Yeskel, Felice. *Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity*. New York: New Press, 2000.

2. Poverty/Welfare

Hays, Sharon. *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Kozol, Jonathan. *Amazing Grace: Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1996.

Poppendieck, Janet. *Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.

Seccombe, Karen. *"So You Think I Drive a Cadillac?"* Second Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2006.

3. Healthcare

Vigen, Aana. *Women, Ethics, & Inequality in US Healthcare: To Count Among the Living*. England: Palgrave, 2006.

Hilfiker, David. *Not All of Us Are Saints: A Doctor's Journey with the Poor*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.

4. School System

Kozol, Jonathan. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown, 2005.

Kailin, Julie. *Antiracist Education: From Theory to Practice*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002.

Course Requirements

1. Reflection on Personal Identity Essay (2 pages, Times New Roman, 12 font, double-spaced, 5% of grade) Students will spend one page giving a narration of their social identity, and a second page reflecting on this identity. To receive an "A" the essay should show depth of philosophical reflection, clarity of writing, and creativity. Late essays will receive a penalty of one letter grade (no essays accepted after one week from due date).

1. Three Philosophical Reflection Essays (3 pages, Times New Roman, 12 font, double-spaced, each one 15% of grade) Students must write the racism reflection paper, and then may pick two of the following papers: sexism, classism, heterosexism, or ableism. I will offer some quotes to structure your writing. To receive an "A" the essay should show depth of philosophical reflection, clarity of writing, creativity, and use of readings and concepts taught in class. Late essays will receive a penalty of one letter grade (no essays accepted after one week from due date). In place of one of the second two essays, students can negotiate with the professor to do a creative art project to be shared with the class.

2. Creative Group Presentation: (20-30 minutes, 10% of grade) In small groups you will pick an issue near the beginning of the semester that you will do a creative presentation about later in the semester, preferably connected to your service learning placement. The topics will be: work, poverty/welfare, healthcare, and education system. I will expect some outside research done on the issue. To receive an "A" the presentation must be innovative and engaging (preferably interactive), while also being comprehensive (concerning the issue) and clear to everyone. All group members must participate in the presentation. A description on what you plan to do is due February 9th.

3. Service in Community and Reflection Essay (3 pages, Times New Roman, 12 font, double-spaced, 15% of grade) Students will be responsible for doing 15 hours of service with a designated local organization that deals with issues of social justice (includes transportation time). I expect service to be done throughout the semester, not all at the end of the semester. Students will be responsible for turning in a service-learning contract and for keeping a log of their activities that is signed by the supervisor at workplace (will be collected periodically). To receive an "A" on the service part of your grade, you must show up at your workplace on time and on the designated days, participate fully in the work, and turn in a periodic log of your activities. To receive an "A" on the paper, you must show depth of philosophical reflection,

clarity of writing, creativity, and a connection of your service work to ideas/readings we have covered in class, especially to the book you read connected to your service placement. Late essays will receive a penalty of one letter grade (no essays accepted after one week from due date).

4. Final Exam: (15% of grade) Take-home essay exam over course material. No late exams allowed.

5. Action Assignments (not graded, but failure to do them will affect your grade). These are fun hands-on assignments to find out information. See handout for description.

6. Class participation (10% of grade) This course will rely heavily on discussion and dialogue. It is a courtesy to the instructor and to your fellow students as well as a responsibility to yourself to finish the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in discussions. I encourage you to ask questions about parts of the readings that you do not understand. Such questions will help everyone to understand the material better. Absences from class will matter: 0-2 = A, 3 = B, 4 = C, 5 = D, and more than 5 = F (grade could be raised slightly higher if you participate a lot). Two times late to the class (more than 4 minutes) constitutes an absence for my attendance policy. Students who are absent for any reason from more than ¼ of the class meetings cannot receive a passing grade from the instructor.

Final Grade Policy (A = 3.75-4.00; A- = 3.50-3.74; B+ = 3.21-3.49; B = 2.85-3.20; B- = 2.50-2.84; C+ = 2.21-2.49; C = 1.85-2.20; C- = 1.50-1.84; D = 1.00-1.49; F= <1.00)

Honor Code

The Honor Code is in effect in this course. This means that all exams and papers must be your own writing and you must give citations for any ideas that are not your own. Plagiarism is a violation of the Honor Code and the fundamental principles of academic integrity. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas as if they were your own, without giving the originator of the idea the appropriate credit. You may use whatever format for citations as long as you are consistent. While the internet provides a wealth of information, you must avoid simply cutting and pasting materials from sources to create a paper. One of the key goals in writing a paper is to synthesize and integrate the material that you have read and to put the synthesis in your own words. An acceptable paper is NOT simply a mosaic of quotations, even if the sources for the quotation are shown. If you have *any* questions, please ask.

Any cell phone interruptions, texting, or use of the internet in the class will be grounds for a lower grade. Computers are to be used only for taking notes in class.

Course Outline

Jan 14	Introduce Syllabus and Service-learning
Jan 19	Oppression Rosenblum/Travis p. 2-39, 363-368
Jan 21	Oppression Rosenblum/Travis p. 334-351 Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression" (handout) Personal Identity Reflection Essay due
Jan 26	Privilege Rosenblum/Travis p. 194-220, 368-372

Service Learning Contract due

Jan 28	What is Race? Rosenblum/Travis p. 40-112
Feb 2	Experiencing Racism Rosenblum/Travis p. 221-257 Southern Poverty Law Center website – http://www.splcenter.org/
Feb 4	Meaning of Race in Society Rosenblum/Travis p. 372-378, 418-434, 459-466
Feb 9	What is Sex? What is Gender? Rosenblum/Travis p. 112-130 Racism Reflection Essay due Creative Presentation Outline due
Feb 11	Experiencing Sexism Rosenblum/Travis p. 260-269, 352-363, 444-449
Feb 16	Feminism bell hooks, “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand,” “Consciousness-Raising: A Constant Change of Heart,” and “Visionary Feminism” (handout)
Feb 18	What is Social Class? Rosenblum/Travis p. 131-155 Sexism Reflection Essay due
Feb 23	Experiencing Classism Rosenblum/Travis p. 286-312 hooks p. 1-69 Service log due (list of hours with supervisor signature)
Feb 25	Class Matters hooks p. 70-141
Mch 2	What is Sexual Orientation? Rosenblum/Travis p. 155-175 Walter Wink, “Homosexuality and the Bible” http://www.soulforce.org/article/homosexuality-bible-walter-wink Classism Reflection Essay due
Mch 4	Experiencing Heterosexism Rosenblum/Travis p. 269-285, 434-441
Spring Break	
Mch 16	What is Disability? Rosenblum/Travis p. 176-191 Heterosexism Reflection Essay due

Mch 18 Experiencing Ableism

Rosenblum/Travis p. 313-332, 442-444, 449-459

Mch 23 Critical Assessment of Work

Arlie Hochschild, "The Second Shift: Employed Women Are Putting in Another Day of Work at Home" (handout)

John Miller, "What's In A Name?" (handout)

Arthur MacEwan, "Inequality, Power, and Ideology" (handout)

Ableism Reflection Essay due

Mch 25 Critical Assessment of Work

hooks p. 142-164

Jon Gertner, "What is a Living Wage?" *New York Times* (handout)

Service log due (list of hours with supervisor signature)

Student Group Presentation

Mch 30 Critical Assessment of Poverty/Welfare

Sharon Hays, *Flat Broke With Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*, ch. 2 & 3 (handout)

Laura Stivers, "Making a Home for All in God's Compassionate Community" (handout)

Student Group Presentation

Apr 1

Critical Assessment of Healthcare – Guest Speaker Dr. Vernease Miller Yele Aluko, "Carolinas Association for Community Health Equity – CACHE" (handout)

Joel A. Harrison, "Paying More, Getting Less: How much is the sick U.S. health care system costing you?" (handout)

Janny Scott, "Life at the Top in America Isn't Just Better, It's Longer," *New York Times* (handout)

Apr 6

Critical Assessment of Healthcare

David Hilfiker, "*Poverty Medicine*" (handout)

Student Group Presentation

Apr 8

Critical Assessment of School System

Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, ch. 1 & 2 (handout)

Student Group Presentation

Apr 13

Critical Assessment of School System – Guest Speaker Dr. Joyce Edwards

Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, ch. 7 and p. 201--214 (handout)

Apr 15

Service-learning Discussion

Service-learning Reflection Essay due

Apr 20

What is the Common Good? Assimilation versus Multiculturalism

Article TBA

Lawrence Blum, "Antiracism, Multiculturalism, and Interracial Community: Three Educational Values for a Multicultural Society" (handout)
Paul Kivel, "Integration and Tokenism" (handout)

Apr 22 Working for Social Justice and the Common Good
 Rosenblum/Travis p. 468-508
 Service log due (list of hours with supervisor signature)
 Final Exam handed out

Apr 27 Time to work on exam

May 1 Exam Day
9 am **Final Exam due**

For Further Reading

Rothenberg, Paula S. *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, Sixth Edition. New York: Worth Publishers, 2004.

Johnson, Allan G. *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, Second Edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.

Kivel, Paul. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Social Justice*, Revised Edition. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2002.

Barndt, Joseph. *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Heldke, Lisa and O'Connor, Peg. *Oppression, Privilege, & Resistance: Theoretical Perspectives on Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Anderson, Jami L. *Race, Gender, and Sexuality: Philosophical Issues of Identity and Justice*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Ore, Tracy E. *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class Gender, and Sexuality*. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000.

Websites:

Poverty and Race Action Council, www.prrac.org
Institute on Race and Poverty, www.irpumn.org/website/
Southern Poverty Law Center, www.splcenter.org/
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, www.cbpp.org
Economic Policy Institute, www.epi.org
Center for Women's Policy Studies, www.centerwomenpolicy.org/programs/poverty
Institute for Women's Policy Research, www.iwpr.org/index.cfm
United for a Fair Economy, www.faireconomy.org
Urban Institute, www.urbaninstitute.org
Joint Center for Poverty Research, www.jcpr.org
Who Rules America?, <http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html>
The Council for Disability Rights, www.disabilityrights.org/
Human Rights Campaign, www.hrc.org/
Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, <http://glrl.org.au/index.php/Home>