Overview and Objectives

This seminar analyzes the politics of class, race, and gender. Class, race, and gender serve as axes of social differentiation and mark hierarchies and inequalities. We first consider the meaning of the three concepts. How has the concept of class evolved since Marx? What do we refer to when we speak of “race”? Is gender a synonym for women, a description of social relations, a performance, or a feature of institutions? The next part of the course explores the role of the state in creating and undoing differences by class, race, and gender. How has the state, through the coercive and symbolic power manifest in its bureaucracy, laws, policies, and instruments of organized violence, constructed class, race, and gender? How have states with different intentions - including some liberal, socialist, and revolutionary states - sought to undo the hierarchies and inequalities associated with class, race, and gender? The final part of the course considers the mechanisms by which social differences and hierarchies change and endure. Have state projects to produce equality succeeded? Why or why not? We analyze the respective roles of the state, private organizations, and ordinary human relations, and how they cooperate or compete to reproduce the social order.

Requirements

You are expected to complete the assigned readings for each session, attend course meetings, and participate actively in the discussion. Excessive use of laptops, tablets, and smartphones in class hinders achievement of course objectives.

Each student should choose one of the following for their writing assignment:

- Three short (six- to eight-page) papers on any week’s reading.
  - The papers are due in class the day we will discuss the reading.
  - There are no fixed deadlines for these papers. However, you must turn in your first paper no later than February 22 and your second paper no later than April 12. This is to avoid an end-of-semester backlog and to make sure that later papers benefit from comments made on earlier papers.
– The papers should identify the central issues raised in the assigned reading for the week, locate the various authors’s position on those issues, and comment critically on the debate and the value of each contribution to it.

– When writing your paper, bear in mind some of the following questions. What are the central theoretical issues at stake? What are the principal arguments of each author? How does each author’s contribution relate to other perspectives on class, race, gender, inequality, social difference, and justice? What are the main strengths or weaknesses of each contribution? How valuable, original, and viable is the theory or argument proposed? What is the author’s methodology and is it appropriate to her question?

• One seminar-length paper (20 to 25 pages) due during exam week (exact date will be announced later). If you choose this option, you should submit a short, one-paragraph proposal describing your paper topic to me no later than March 29.

Evaluation

You are expected to arrive to class having completed the assigned reading and ready to sustain a scholarly discussion about it. Class participation will count for 30% of your grade. The short papers will each count for 20%. The long paper will count for 70%.

In addition, you should attend at least two public lectures or panels on topics connected to the course, including a lecture by Joe Soss on Friday, February 2 at 12 pm on race and criminal justice, a panel on sexual misconduct on college campuses at 12.15 pm on Tuesday, February 13, and a lecture by Lilia Cortina on March 2 on sexual harassment in the workplace. Other events TBA.

Accommodation of Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request. If you need more information on the Americans with Disability Act, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at 505-277-5251.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to achieve the following learning objectives:

• Evaluation of theoretical concepts

• Exploration of how concepts apply and relate to empirical data

• Critical analysis of scholarly arguments
• Comparison of different theoretical approaches to the same factual material

• Formulation and expression of original perspectives on scholarly contributions orally and in writing

Course Outline

Theory

Week 1 (January 18): Introduction

• Introduction to objectives, syllabus, and plan.

• Discussion of class, race, and gender; critical theory; “normal” social science.

Week 2 (January 25): Class


Wright, E. O. (1997). *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 1). This book is available online at: https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/wright/selected-published-writings.htm#class%20counts


Week 3 (February 1): Race


Press, Princeton.


**Week 4 (February 8): Gender**


**Week 5 (February 15): Intersectionality**


**Transformative State Projects**

**Week 6 (February 22): Caste Hierarchy in India**

in India. Oxford University Press.


Week 7 (March 1): Institutionalizing Civil Rights in the U.S.


Week 8 (March 8): Racial Inequality in Latin America


Articles on race panels TBD.

Week 9 (March 22): Democratization, Development, and Rights in the Global South


Week 10 (March 29): Welfare States


Social Change?

Week 11 (April 5): Class Inequality


Week 12 (April 12) Discrimination by Gender and Race


- **Before class:** Take Implicit Association Test at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/.

**Week 13 (April 19): Institutional Remedies and Consequences**


**Week 14 (April 26): Reproduction of Inequalities**


**Week 15 (May 3): Conclusion**