

Theorizing Intersectionality (GWS 547)
Department of Gender and Women's Studies

Spring 2016
T 2:25 pm – 4:45 pm
Educ Sci 301

Professor Keisha Lindsay
Room 3311-Sterling Hall
263-2763
knlindsay@wisc.edu
Office Hours
T 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm
TH 9:45 am - 10:45 am

Course Description and Objectives:

The aim of this course is to critically examine important issues, questions, and debates regarding intersectionality or the notion that race, gender, sexuality, and other terrains of difference gain meaning from each other. GWS 547 is interdisciplinary in its approach. Course materials include texts, films, and other multimedia resources drawn from an array of disciplines including sociology, critical race theory, history, political theory, and cultural studies.

Section one of the course explores classic conceptualizations of intersectionality including how scholars understand the relationship between intersectionality, on the one hand, and feminist theory and practice, on the other. We move on to analyze specific tensions and debates in intersectional theorizing regarding: 1) who qualifies as an intersectional subject; 2) the strengths and limitations of examining intersectional privilege and 3) whether intersectionality can be used for anti-feminist ends. The second section of the course contextualizes intersectionality. Our goal is to explore how scholars use intersectionality to understand disadvantage within specific social, economic, and political spheres including the family, the state, and the labor force. In this section and throughout the course, we pay particular attention to the notion that intersectionality is both an analytical tool and a distinct form of subjectivity.

Course Readings

The course pack/reader is available at the L & S Social Science Copy Center, 6120 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, Tel: 262-5396

The following text is available for purchase at A Room of One's Own Bookstore (315 W. Gorham St., 257-7888) and on reserve at the Undergraduate Library, Helen C. White Building: Michele Tracy Berger and Kathleen Guidroz (Eds). ***The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy through Race, Class, and Gender (2010).***

Course Requirements:

1. *Attending Class/Participating in Class Discussion (10%)*

You must sign the sign-in sheet at the beginning of every class. **You are allowed 1 absence without explanation.** Any absences greater than this number, without an acceptable excuse and appropriate documentation, will drop your participation grade by one full letter grade regardless of the extent to which you participate in class discussions

when present. If you miss more than half of all of the class meetings without a satisfactory explanation you will receive a failing grade for course. Finally, please note that this is a **reading intensive course** in which close reading of the assigned texts is key to successfully participating in class discussions.

2. Discussion Questions (10%)

You will submit a total of three discussion questions throughout the semester. Use each question to comment on anything that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in one or more of the readings. Your question may seek to clarify particular terms or ideas; it may challenge the author's presumptions; it may interrogate the implications of an author's claims; or it may attempt to relate assigned readings to materials beyond the course. A discussion question is **open ended. It cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."** You **must be present** in class to solicit responses to and **receive credit** for your discussion question.

We will use Learn@UW for discussion questions. You can access Learn@UW from the University of Wisconsin's home page. Discussion questions are **due at noon via learn@uw** on the **morning** before class. Please come to class with a copy of your question in hand.

3. In-Class Presentation (15%)

Each student is required to make an in class presentation on specific course readings. Students will work in groups to do the following:

- a) Summarize key themes in the assigned readings
- b) Identify what kind of theoretical assumptions unite the assigned readings
- c) Provide a visual or performative representation of a theme derived from the reading. This representation may include a film clip, song, collage, poem, or anything that captures some aspect of the reading in a creative way.
- d) Provide 4 specific questions to prompt or facilitate discussion of assigned readings. At least two of these questions should reflect concerns about the readings' potential limitations or weaknesses.

You must submit a two-page individual report that: 1) summarizes the main points of your specific presentation and 2) assesses your group's overall performance. This summary is **due, in class, one week after your presentation.** Group members must work together to prepare for the presentation, but each group member will be graded individually according to the following criteria: 1) preparation/organization of individual presentation and 2) clarity and thoughtfulness of individual written report.

4. Mid-Term Essay (30%)

You are required to write a five page paper in which you critically analyze an advertising image that appears in a magazine/newspaper or on a website. Your mid-term essay (hard copy only) is **due in my office on March 11 at 2:00 PM.**

5. Final Essay/Project (35%)

You are required to write: 1) a seven to eight page manifesto outlining why feminist activists working in a particular arena (reproductive rights, sexual violence, affirmative action, workplace discrimination, subsidized childcare for working mothers, etc) can and should embrace intersectionality **OR** 2) a seven to eight page essay in which you use intersectionality to analyze a major (post 1960) socio-economic or political change (more single parent families, rising rate of criminal incarceration, implementation of “Don’t ask, Don’t Tell,” etc.). Your final essay/project (hard copy only) is **due in my office on May 10 at 10:00 AM.**

Classroom Conduct: Cell phones, laptops, and their accompanying earpieces are NOT allowed during class in order to facilitate a non-distracting and intellectually productive learning environment. If you are found using any of these devices your attendance will be “zeroed” for the day in question.

Grade Related Questions and Appeals:

I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment - not over email or before/after class. If you would like to challenge your grade, please wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before contacting me. Final grades will be determined according to the following official UW grading scale: A 93-100; AB 88-92; B 83-87; BC 78-82; C 70-77; D 60-69; F below 60.

Late Paper Policy: Papers and exams turned in late will be penalized by **ten (10) percentage points** for each 24-hour period after the due date.

Accessibility: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Section I: Theorizing Intersectionality

Introduction

January 19:

- Syllabus Review
- Meet and Greet
- Interactive Exercise

Intersectionality's Past and Present

January 26:

- Anna Julia Cooper. "Woman vs. the Indian"
- The Combahee River Collective. *Combahee River Collective Statement*
- Elizabeth Spelman. "Gender & Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought"
- (BOOK) M. Berger and K. Guidroz. "Introduction" (pp. 1-8 only)

Who Qualifies as an Intersectional Subject?

February 2:

- Ange Marie Hancock. "Intersectionality as a Normative and Empirical Paradigm"
- Nikol Floyd-Alexander. "Disappearing Acts: Reclaiming Intersectionality in the Social Sciences in a Post-Black Feminist Era"
- Jennifer C. Nash. "Rethinking Intersectionality"

The Who, What, and Why of Intersectional Privilege

February 9:

- Peggy McIntosh. "White Privilege and Male Privilege"
- Michael Kimmel. "Masculinity and Homophobia"
- Karen Sacks. "How Jews Became White"
- (BOOK) Jessica Sherwood. "View from the Country Club"

Anti-Progressive Intersectionality?

February 16:

- Nancy Wadsworth. "Intersectionality in California's Same-Sex Marriage Battles: A Complex Proposition"
- Crunk Feminist Collective. "My Brother's Keeper & the Co-Optation of Intersectionality"
- (BOOK) Rachel Luft. "Intersectionality and the Risk of Flattening Differences"
- (BOOK) K. Guidroz and M. Berger. "A Conversation with Founding Scholars of Intersectionality"

Intersectionality and/as Identity Politics

February 23:

- Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"
- Jasbir Puar. "I'd Rather Be a Cyborg Than a Goddess: Becoming Intersectional in Assemblage Theory"
- Rita Dhamoon. "Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality"

Section II – Contextualizing Intersectionality

Media

March 1:

- Viviana Rojas "The Gender of Latinidad: Latinas Speak About Hispanic Television"
 - Pamela Block. "Sexuality, Fertility, and Danger: Twentieth-Century Images of Women with Cognitive Disabilities"
- In Class Film Clip - Beyond Beats and Rhymes

Classroom/In-Class Midterm Review

March 8:

- Lance McReady. "Project 10" and "The African Dance Program"
- (BOOK) Mako Fitts. "Institutionalizing Intersectionality"
- (BOOK) Naomi Andre. "Teaching Opera in Prison"

MARCH 11 at 2:00 PM: MID TERM ESSAY DUE

Bodies

March 15:

- Dorothy E. Roberts. "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?"
- Ellen Samuels. "Examining Millie and Christine McKoy: Where Enslavement and Enfreakment Meet"
- (BOOK) E. Cole and N. Sabik. "Repairing a Broken Mirror"

Family and State – Part I

March 29:

In Class Film: "Precious"

Family and State – Part II

April 5:

- (BOOK). Linda Anchisi. "One, No One, and a Hundred Thousand"
- Patricia Hill Collins. "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation"
- Ange Marie Hancock. "Political Culture and the Public Identity of the 'Welfare Queen'"

Work

April 12:

- Evelyn N. Glenn. "Neoliberalism and Globalization"
- Mary Hawkesworth – "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions"
- J. Mc. Mullen - Gendered Ageism/Age(ed) Sexism: The Case of Unemployed Older Workers"
- Recommended - (BOOK) Gary Perry. "Exploring Occupational Stereotyping"

Law – Part I

April 19:

- *-Michele Goodwin. "Gender, Race, and Mental illness: The Case of Wanda Jean Allen"
- Toni Williams. "Intersectional Analysis in the Sentencing of Aboriginal Women in Canada"
- D. Rosenblum. "Queer Intersectionality and the Failure of Recent Lesbian and Gay 'Victories'"

Law – Part II

April 26:

- Kimberlé Crenshaw – “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex”
- Joanne Conaghan. “Intersectionality and the Feminist Project in Law”
- Suzanne Goldberg. “Intersectionality in Theory and Practice”

Conclusion/Final Essay Review

May 3:

- (BOOK) Anne Russo. “The Future of Intersectionality”

MAY 10 at 10:00 AM: FINAL ESSAY DUE