

Theorizing Intersectionality

Department of Gender and Women's Studies (547)

Spring 2018
T 2:25 pm – 4:45 pm
Sterling 3315

Professor Keisha Lindsay

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Office Hours:

T 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

TH 8:25 am – 9:25 am

-Credit Hours: 3 via Traditional Carnegie Definition
-Course Level: Advanced
-Course Prerequisite: One of the following: GEN&WS 333, GEN&WS 441, GEN&WS 445, GEN&WS 545, GEN&WS 477, POLI SCI 517, POLI SCI 519 or consent of instructor
-Course Breadth: Letters & Sciences (LAS) and Either Humanities or Social Science (Z)
-Instructional Mode: Face to Face
-Learn@UW/Canvas URL:
<https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/d2l/home/4017542>

Course Description and Learning 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 **four** texts are 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:

-Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)*. Polity Press. ISBN-10: 0745684491

-Karma Chavez. *Queer Migration Politics*. University of Illinois Press. ISBN-10: 0252079582

-Shatema Threadcraft. *Intimate Justice*. Oxford University Press. ISBN-10: 0190251638

-Dean Spade. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Duke University Press. ISBN-10: 0822360403

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 two 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 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 to six 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 12 at 1:00 PM.**

5. *Final Essay/Project (35%)*

You are required to write: 1) an eight to ten 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) an eight to ten 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 8 at 9:00 AM.**

Email Communication: I aim to respond to student emails within a 24-hour period Monday to Friday.

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.

Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism and Cheating): By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Statement 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.

If you have questions about a grade, please speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Aili Tripp, who will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally. I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment - not over email or before/after class. 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 23:

- Syllabus Review
- Meet and Greet
- Interactive Exercise

Intersectionality's Past and Present

January 30:

- Sojourner Truth. When Woman Gets Her Rights Man will be Right
- Laverne Cox Talks about Intersectionality at Harvard
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY3F1plxHMA>
- (BOOK) Bilge and Collins. What is Intersectionality **and** Getting the History of Intersectionality Straight?

Who Qualifies as an Intersectional Subject?

February 6:

- Ange Marie Hancock. "Intersectionality as a Normative and Empirical Paradigm" **and** Intersectionality: Intellectual Property or Meme?
- 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 13:

- Peggy McIntosh. "White Privilege and Male Privilege"
- Michael Kimmel. "Masculinity and Homophobia"
- Karen Sacks. "How Jews Became White"
- Phoebe Maltz Bovy. "Checking Privilege Checking"

Anti-Progressive Intersectionality?

February 20:

- 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
- Guidroz and Berger. A Conversation with Founding Scholars of Intersectionality
- (BOOK) Bilge and Collins. Intersectionality as Critical Inquiry and Practice

Intersectionality and/as Identity Politics

February 27:

- Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"
- Combahee River Collective Statement
- Jasbir Puar. "I'd Rather Be a Cyborg Than a Goddess: Becoming Intersectional in Assemblage Theory"
- (BOOK) Bilge and Collins. Intersectionality and Identity

Section II – Contextualizing Intersectionality

Media

March 6:

- Pamela Block. "Sexuality, Fertility, and Danger: Twentieth-Century Images of Women with Cognitive Disabilities"
- Amber Johnson. "Antoine Dodson and the (Mis)Appropriation of the Homo Coon: An Intersectional Approach to the Performative Possibilities of Social Media"
- Writing Center Workshop/Mid-Term Essay Preparation*

MARCH 12 at 1:00 PM - MID-TERM ESSAY DUE

Education

March 13:

- Lance McReady. Project 10 **and** The African Dance Program
- Mako Fitts. Institutionalizing Intersectionality
- (BOOK) Bilge and Collins. Intersectionality and Critical Media

Bodies

March 20:

- (BOOK) Shatema Threadcraft. *Intimate Justice*

Family and State

April 3:

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

Immigration

April 10:

- (BOOK) Karma Chavez. *Queer Migration Politics*

Work

April 17:

- 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"

Law

April 24:

- (BOOK) Dean Spade. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*

Conclusion/Final Project Consultations/Course Evaluations

May 1:

- (BOOK) Bilge and Collins. Intersectionality Revisited
- Anne Russo. The Future of Intersectionality

MAY 8 at 9:00 AM - FINAL ESSAY DUE