COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar was developed to foster a deeper understanding of our social situatedness as psychologists, our critical and cultural reflection-in-context, and implications of a critical psychology of gender, ‘race’, class, and disabilities for transformative praxis. We will draw on critical, cultural, feminist, and liberation psychologies as well as intersectional theories to explore how to "think culturally and critically" about subjectivities and social contexts. We will critically examine selected social issues and/or problems (e.g., structural or organized violence; sexual violence against women; forced migration; humanitarian crises) drawing on an intersectional critical cultural lens. Narratives, life stories, testimonies, ethnographies, the creative arts, activist scholarship, and post-positivist social scientific and educational research will constitute the resources through which we will seek to understand contemporary theorizing about these themes. We will pay particular attention to underlying assumptions, subject positionalities, implicit or explicit definitions of culture, and strategies for making meaning of psychosocial and sociocultural processes. We will be resourced by our own experiences, the assigned readings, guest speakers, outside lectures, and media. The literature reviewed will help us approximate a process of theorizing subjectivity, sociality, and activisms. Finally, implications for transformative research, clinical, educational or community practice, and activism will be explored.

MetaQuestions: The following questions provide an anchor for the weekly discussions and the connections needed to interrelate the themes as we move forward.

- Do psychology and higher education perpetuate structures of oppression or structural-isms? IF so, how do we move beyond or “undo” them? IF not, why is it important to develop a critical understanding of gender, ‘race’, class and disabilities within psychology and higher education?
- Do psychology and higher education perpetuate binaries (e.g., Black/White; man/woman; adult/child, abled/disabled, etc.) and what are the implications of moving beyond them? What resources within and beyond the disciplines might contribute to “moving beyond binaries”?
- How does this week's theme become “complexified” by the relationship of interconnected systems of oppression?
- Also, keep in mind: How does it work?; What does it mean?;-Who benefits and where do the resources to support/sustain it come from?

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Specify how values, assumptions, priorities, and resources affect their personal and professional understanding of and engagement with social oppression and transformative praxis.
• Articulate an understanding of intersectional theory and situate or position themselves at the intersections of social privilege and oppression.
• Analyze how oppression and privilege have operated within psychology and/or education as a discipline and how they engage in efforts to redress the effects of social oppression on individuals, groups and communities.
• Identify and hone tools for partnering with groups/communities marginalized from power and resources as a co-learner/co-teacher.
• Demonstrate an understanding of how to design and/or enact policies that seek transformative change that benefits your constituency (patients, clients, students, community members, etc.) as a psychologist, educator, etc.
• Explore and hone tools for partnering with constituents (patients, clients, students, community members, etc.) towards collaborative praxis for change
• Identify and perform the virtues necessary to engage and sustain the above—e.g., humility, love, solidarity

GOALS and REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE

DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHING-LEARNING COMMUNITY. This course is designed as a seminar and it is expected that everyone will actively participate in the teaching-learning process. This goal requires informed contributions from all of us and, therefore, requires that students will have read the relevant materials and completed the relevant assignments BEFORE the class in which they will be discussed. All assignments have been organized to maximize meaningful class participation. It is expected that all students will complete assignments by their due dates.

To that end, these are the REQUIREMENTS in brief:

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION & FACILITATION (25 %)
2. CRIT BOOK REVIEW or POPULAR PIECE (op-ed; brief report) (25%)
3. CRITICAL ESSAY ON SOCIAL ISSUE (25%)
4. GROUP ACTION PLAN, PRESENTATION & WRITE-UP (25%)

REQUIREMENTS in detail (also see HANDOUTS on BlackBoard Vista):

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION and FACILITATION (25% of final grade). It is assumed that all students will attend all classes and actively participate in each class. In addition, each student will introduce the discussion of the assigned readings for ONE class session. You must sign up for this session during our first class and you are expected to post a 1-2 page (double-spaced, 250-500 words) critical reflection on the readings and conclude that essay with 1-2 questions that cut across the readings and will focus our class discussion. You must post this no later than 5 pm on the Sunday preceding the Tuesday on which you will make a class presentation.
At the beginning of class the student presenter has between 10-20 minutes to initiate the discussion. You should NOT read us what you have previously written but rather use popular education techniques, video, and/or the creative arts in facilitating a presentation and/or initial discussion of the readings for the week. Please forward me via email (lykes@bc.edu) your ideas for the presentation no later than Sunday evening prior to your presentation and we can be in contact to coordinate as needed.

All students are expected to have read the discussion paper PRIOR to class and come prepared to engage in a discussion of the questions and the readings. (Overall class participation and presentation, 25% of final grade).

2. **A CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW or an OP-ED or BRIEF REPORT** which will be submitted for publication in a journal, newsletter, respected popular journal, or newspaper. **CHOOSE A or B (see Handout CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW OR OP-ED/BRIEF REPORT OVERVIEW in HANDOUTS AND ASSIGNMENTS folder on BlackVista for details and resources)** (25% of final grade). DEADLINE: no later than class time on Tuesday, FEBRUARY 19 via email lykes@bc.edu.

   **A.** Critical Book Review (12 pt, double-spaced, 5-8 typed pages) of any book that is listed in the *Books for Book Review* posted on BlackBoard Vista under ASSIGNMENTS— or a book which you identify that is approved, in advance, by the professor. [See guidelines posted in HANDOUTS AND ASSIGNMENTS folder on Blackboard Vista for suggestions on how to write a Critical Book Review if you are not familiar with this format.]

   **OR**

   **B.** An OP-ED for a newspaper or a BRIEF REPORT for publication in a newsletter, popular journal, or newspaper (12 pt, double spaced, 5-8 typed pages, depending on the publication and type of article proposed). [See samples posted in HANDOUTS AND ASSIGNMENTS folder on Blackboard Vista for suggestions on how to write an OP-ED or popular piece if you are not familiar with this format.]

3. **CRITICAL ESSAY ON SOCIAL ISSUE.** Choose ONE social issue or social problem that directly affects the constituency (patients, clients, students, community members, etc.) with whom you are currently working as an educator, counselor, etc. (in a job, field placement, volunteer activity, etc.) **at the micro or individual level.** Write a 5-8 page CRITICAL ESSAY through which you: (1) situate and then analyze this issue or problem through an intersectional lens, that is, at the intersection of gender, ‘race’, class or disability; (2) critically review the psychological and/or educational literature (at least 5-8 theoretical or empirical published articles that are not part of the required readings) about your issue to support your analysis; and, conclude with 2-3 researchable questions that can contribute to identifying relevant policy or action to respond to the issue or problem. **DEADLINE: no later than class time on Tuesday, MARCH 19 via email lykes@bc.edu.**

4. Each student will participate in a small group of 3-5 peers to design an ACTION PLAN or ACTION RESPONSE to address a social issue, problem, or challenge **at the meso or macro level** (in contrast to a micro- or individual level response). The group’s ACTION PLAN or
RESPONSE will be presented to the class as a whole. The presentation can be “poster style” or the group can use media or other creative resources. Each member of the group must also submit a 3-5 page “PROCESS SUMMARY” which describes her or his experiences within the group, how the group process contributed to or impeded the development of the ACTION PLAN or RESPONSE, and how she or he envisions using this proposed plan in her or his practice as a psychologist, educator, etc. (See Handout ACTION PLAN or RESPONSE in HANDOUTS AND ASSIGNMENTS folder on BlackBoard Vista for details and suggested guidelines.) (Presentation and write-up: 25% of final grade). The WRITE UP is due no later than Friday, May 10 at 5 pm.

NB: STUDENTS MAY NOT SUBMIT PAPERS THEY HAVE COMPLETED FOR OTHER CLASSES OR THAT ARE BEING DESIGNED FOR OTHER CURRENT COURSES IN WHICH THEY ARE ENROLLED. IF YOU WANT TO COMBINE WORK IN THIS CLASS WITH ANOTHER PROJECT, E.G., YOUR THESIS, ETC. YOU MUST RECEIVE EXPLICIT PERMISSION FROM THE INSTRUCTOR PRIOR TO SO DOING.

DEADLINES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. THEY MAY BE RENEGOTIATED BEFORE THE DUE DATE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, IF NECESSARY, BUT NOT AFTER THE DUE DATE.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Students should consult the university policies on ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (see http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity) and that of the Lynch School of Education for a discussion of academic integrity http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/academics/phd_policies.html#integrity. There will be no exceptions to these policies. Please also note specific additional www resources on the Responsible Conduct of Research (http://www.bc.edu/research/oric/rcr.html) as well as those within the American Psychological Association and/or the American Educational Research Association.

Boston College students who need SPECIAL RESOURCES TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC LEARNING CHALLENGES should visit the Connors Family Learning Center www.bc.edu/connors or, for other special needs, one of the other offices at the university - for a list and email links see http://www.bc.edu/offices/odsd/disabilityservices/resources.html. If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Kathy Duggan (kathleen.duggan@bc.edu) Associate Director, Academic Support Services, the Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities and ADHD) or Paulette Durrett (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS

January 15: Introduction and Overview

**Intersectionality and Psychological and Educational Theory and Practices**

**January 22: Narrating experiences/Situating ourselves**


**January 29: The complexities of intersectionality**


**February 5: Rethinking gender, ‘race’, class, and …: Challenges for psychology**


**Intersectionality and Immigrants/Migrants**

**February 12: Racism and Immigration**


**OPTIONAL:**


**PLEASE ADD Position Statements and/or Policy Recommendations from other Professional Organizations**

**February 19: Detention and Deportation and Transnational Contexts**


PLEASE ADD Position Statements and/or Policy Recommendations from other Professional Organizations

Thinking about and Responding to Human Rights Violations and Humanitarian Disasters

February 26: Sexual violence against women in war and beyond


March 5: NO CLASS, Boston College Spring Break

March 12: Human rights violations, truth and justice


March 19: Humanitarian Crises/UnNatural Disasters: Katrina, Rita and Beyond (New Orleans and the Gulf South)


Nelson, G. and Prilleltensky, I. Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Wellbeing (2nd edition) Chapters 2; Chapter 24


Critical and Cultural Perspectives on Health and Mental Health

March 26: Critically theorizing mental health and psychosocial trauma


April 2: Liberating psychologies towards liberation


Towards transformative praxis

April 9: Engaging in liberatory re-membering and praxis – GUEST DISCUSSANT: Gillian Straker, PhD, South Africa & Australia


Straker, Gillian (work in progress) Title Pending – focus on continuing versus post-traumatic stress


April 16: Transnational challenges, local activisms


Disability Activism on the Web – see handout and visit www sites prior to class.

*April 23: WORKING ON GROUP PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS*

*April 30, May 7 (as needed): Student Presentations and Posters*

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