COURSE DESCRIPTION

How do we know someone is a woman or a man, upper or lower class, Hispanic or white? What are the demands of race, class and gender, and how do people transgress them and conform to them? Most importantly, how can we explore societal assumptions through our own lives and document them with photography and narrative accounts?

In this class we will use our own experiences and our own photographs to explore intersections of race, class and gender. Our investigation will cover three broad topics: systems of power, structures of institutions, and performances or displays of race, class and gender identities. We will begin the semester by reading work about the structure of social life and use our “sociological imagination” to connect personal problems to public issues. Or, how we need to consider both the “forest” and the “trees” when understanding social phenomena. As we proceed through the semester, we will turn to Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill-Collins’ Anthology, Race, Class and Gender, reading excerpts from established sociologists studying these important intersections. Our readings will provide us with ideas and tools with which we can conduct our own analysis of the relationship between social structure and social positions. As we develop our own analytical skills, we will conclude the semester by examining two recent ethnographies. Amy Wilkins’ Wannabes, Goths, and Christians, an ethnography that documents her observations of three different subcultures; Goths, wannabe Puerto Rican white girls, and Christians and Dude, You’re a Fag. These academic and scholarly readings will guide your written and photographic assignments concerning your social position within the Brandeis University community.

This course is designed to teach you the basics of academic writing, critical analysis and visual sociology. Through photography and weekly reflection pieces you will learn how to articulate a position and situate your writings within the academic literature. Together we will move beyond what has been said before and use our lives to advance knowledge concerning the intersections of race, class and gender. This course will be challenging, you will be expected to question some taken for granted assumptions and shift your thinking in order to see how all social groups are located in a system of power relationships wherein your social location can shape what you know – and what others know about you. Since you will be asked to apply sociological concepts, we will also cover photographic methods and the ethical dilemmas when social scientists work with human subjects. As a class we will also engage as a community and learn together to become critical readers by visiting and revisiting your reflection pieces and providing constructive feedback. The actual labor of producing a written academic argument involves taking a text through several drafts and together we will research, workshop and edit to prepare your documents and your thinking for academic prime time. This return to your work will transform your weekly photographs and reflection pieces into an empirical research paper and corresponding photo essay to be displayed on campus and if desired on the web. Through two main writing projects and smaller weekly assignments, we will explore how race, class and gender influence social position and possible life outcomes. This course will help you develop skills in articulating and supporting an argument, analyzing theory, conducting visual methods, and directing a critical eye upon even the most taken for granted social positions: our own.

No knowledge of photography is required for this class, but access to a digital camera is necessary.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:
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- Identity, analyze, and critique basic assumptions underlying contemporary American understandings of selfhood and how people become who they are
- Recognize intersecting systems of oppression and domination and articulate more nuanced representations of identity categories and move beyond binary arguments
- Make connections between theory and everyday life
- Share your observations and communicate your findings orally, in writing, and through visual mediums and visual methods
- Work together to create a final photo exhibit for the Brandeis community

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & BASES OF EVALUATION

1. Reading: Complete the reading assignments for a given week BEFORE entering the classroom. We will discuss readings on FRIDAY, and your writing/photography assignments on TUESDAY (unless otherwise noted on your syllabus). Begin doing your work for the week early. Become a compulsive and organized note-taker. Reading in advance of class, taking notes, alert engagement, and asking questions are the not-so-secret ingredients to doing well in the course. You are responsible for the reading even if it has not been covered in class discussions. Readings not found in the RCG anthology can be accessed on Latte.

2. Attendance, Tardiness & Class Citizenship: I take attendance every day. Class sessions are impossible to replicate. Students will be allowed THREE un-penalized absences during the term for any reason. The FOURTH absence negatively impacts your course grade. The more absences accrued, the lower the course grade. SAVE your absences for illness, religious purposes, and the unexpected. GET TO CLASS ON TIME. If I finish taking attendance (I begin 5 minutes before class time) and you have not arrived, that becomes an absence. Three unexcused absences will result in the deduction of a whole letter grade from your overall score (An ‘A’ will be reduced to a ‘B’). Five or more unexcused absences, you fail the course. Please send me an email if you are unable to attend class by 10 AM that morning.

   I expect each student to be alert, engaged, and fully present. Participation is very important for this class. The component parts of your class participation grade are 1- attendance, 2- quantity and quality of student’s interventions (based on clear demonstration of having read the assigned material) and 3- follow-up work with the professor.

3. Writing Assignments: We will have a few different sorts of writing assignments throughout the semester (see below for more detail). Please post your writings and photographs to Google Drive under each week’s heading in the appropriate discussion section. These projects will be evaluated based on your ability to 1- restate the weekly readings 2- note moments of particular interest or difficulty 3- articulate a position based on your own engagement with the world and provide evidence and support for your stance.

   While I will not explicitly grade these essays for style or grammar, please make sure unnecessary mistakes do not distract from your overall argument. Only final drafts will be graded, so please use the revision process to hone your craft and your argument and submit the best possible work.

   **3 Pages and 3 Photos:** Each student is required to submit short well-written and organized essays with corresponding photographs throughout the semester relating to the topics covered during that week. You are also required to read and view the submissions of your fellow classmates.

   **3 Pages:** No photos are required for these assignments. Essays will be evaluated based on the degree to which they (1) accurately and briefly engage with the reading of the week; and (2) raise a thoughtful question or intervention (full sentences that reflect a complete idea).

   **Midterm Exam:** 5 pages and 5 photos, see below.

   **Final Project: Research Paper and Photo Essay:**


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**Research Paper:** In your final research paper you will reflect upon our photo exhibit and analyze the reception based on the work you create and the note cards we will ask attendees to anonymously fill out. You will use your observations from our exhibit (ethnography) and the corresponding notecards from attendees as your data to examine how our event was received. **You have the option to turn in your paper the last day of class, receive feedback and re-write before the final deadline.** The paper is due May 4, **No late papers will be accepted. More to come!**

**Photo essay & exhibit:** Over the course of the semester, students will work on broadening one of their writing prompts (or addressing any other relevant topic) into a larger assignment focused on your experience and an intersection of race, class and gender of your choosing. The photographs are preceded by an introductory commentary of 500 words and they appear with detailed captions. In this format, the introduction and captions frame, illustrate, and advance an analytical argument within which the photographs appear as essential ingredients. We will be presenting our photo essays in an exhibit at the end of the semester. Each student will create a poster board of their photo essay and present their work at our exhibit one evening TBD. **More details to come!**

**Google Drive:** When submitting your assignments.
1. Under each assignment folder create a folder titled your name.
2. Copy all of your photographs and post in your folder (JPG type format)
3. Create a Powerpoint of your photographs (for easy presentation in class)
4. Copy your essay (.doc file), embed photos, and place in folder too!

**BASES OF GRADES**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final</td>
<td>40%</td>
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More on grading: Writing Assignments will be graded based on your ability to address the question posed or discuss and come to terms with the assigned readings in a well-organized and creative manner. I will take into consideration your progress as a writer and a critical thinker when determining your final grade for your writing assignments.

Mid-term and Final Papers and accompanying photo essays: These assignments are designed to give you experience in conducting research for an audience of the general public. This means you will have to do research in the conventional manner which we have been practicing in this course, but then develop strategies to translate your technical findings into clear prose accessible to an educated American adult.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Anderson, Margaret and Patricia Hill-Collins. 2009. *Race, Class & Gender: An Anthology.* Cengage Publishing. 7th EDITION


**Suggested Texts:**


**IMPORTANT & USEFUL REFERENCES**
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-- Purdue Online Writing Lab, Research and Citation Resources, includes information on APA, MLA, and Chicago Manual of Style conventions (notice the links to the left on each page!): http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/ (accessed June 8, 2010).


Photo Specific Help:
Christina Dickinson 5 photo essay tips: http://digital-photography-school.com/5-photo-essay-tips

RESEARCH SOURCES for ALL ASSIGNMENTS
Wikipedia and non-peer reviewed sources can be places to begin but not end the research.

- Those discussed or used in class
- Your wonderful photographs!
- Peer-reviewed academic sources published in the past 10 years, such as journal (not magazine) articles, books, and book chapters; when in doubt about the source, ask. http://lts.brandeis.edu
- Newspaper articles and columns, blogs, political posters, videos, cartoons (we love analysis of visual material!), and so on produced by journalists, activists, and social movement organizations. Again, these should have been published relatively recently and require references. For NEWS and images, the following resources may be useful:
  - http://guides.library.duke.edu/images

HELPFUL LINKS: CITING SOURCES AND PLAGIARISM
http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/
http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY STANDARD

This course adheres to the Brandeis University Community Standard:

As stated in Brandeis University's mission statement, "the University that carries the name of the justice who stood for the rights of individuals must be distinguished by academic excellence, by truth pursued wherever it may lead, and by awareness of the power and responsibilities that come with knowledge."

Every member of the Brandeis University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student is required to submit work that is the result of the student's own effort.¹

Do not plagiarize. This means do not have other people do your work and do not submit other people's work, including world-wide web material, under your own name. All references to reading material, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, must be attributed, with page numbers, in all written products submitted under your name. Attribution is ethically important and makes you look smart and committed to doing your best to find existing knowledge and opinions. All papers must also include full bibliographic information. Come see me during office hours if you need help determining what is or is not plagiarism.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

¹ http://lts.brandeis.edu/courses/instruction/academic-integrity/index.html#Faculty
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Laptops, PDAs, cell phones, headphones, and all other technological distractions MUST BE OFF AND AWAY at all times during class-time.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Federal law and university policy require provision of reasonable accommodation for students with diagnosed learning disabilities that may affect how they participate in the class or meet class requirements. I encourage students who believe they need such accommodation to contact the Dean of Student Services early in the term. Detailed information on policies, procedures, and resources related to learning disabilities can be found at this link: http://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/disabilities/
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1  
1/13 and 1/16  
Does Race, Class and Gender Still Matter?
Agenda:  
Overview of class and intro to semester
Readings:  
Race, Class, Gender: An Anthology:  
Patricia Hill-Collins and Margaret L. Anderson “Why race, Class and Gender Still Matter”
Arturo Madrid “Missing People and Others: Joining Together to Expand the Circle”
Ronald T. Takaki “A Different Mirror”
Assignment:  
3 pages and 3 photos: Write your own personal narrative, what do you carry in your personal backpack? Reflect on your position regarding race, class and gender. Include up to three photographs that help the reader understand your social position and symbolize your experiences. Due:  
Tuesday 1/20

Week 2  
1/20 and 1/23 Learning From Photographs/Seeing the Forrest and the Trees: Individual and Social Structural Conditions
Agenda:  
See “beyond the self” and relate the individual experience to broader issues in society.
Readings:  
Allan Johnson “The Forest, the Trees, and the One Thing”
Allan Johnson “The Structures of Social Life”
Assignment:  
Writing: Revise the first assignment (writing only). As sociologists, we study individuals in groups as a way of revealing the social structures that shape collective experiences. Now that we’ve discussed and read Johnson, relate your experience as a “tree” to the broader “forest” and re-do your first writing assignment. Due Monday January 26 at 10 AM.

Week 3  
1/27 and 1/30 White Privilege
Agenda:  
Start to talk about uncomfortable topics in order to learn to see the world in new ways. Discuss and interrogate whiteness and identify white privilege.
Readings:  
Peggy McIntosh “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

In Latte  
Stephanie Wildman with Adrienne Davis. “Making Systems of Privilege Visible”
Tim Wise. “Membership Has Its Privileges: Thoughts on Acknowledging and Challenging Whiteness”
Harlon Dalton. “Failing to See”
bell hooks. "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination"

Assignment: 3 pages and 3 photos. Interrogate white privilege. How is a “racial imagery” central to the organization of the modern world? Do you agree or disagree? Can you document Dalton’s argument that most white people tend to not think of themselves in racial terms? What does it mean to have the right to control the black gaze? How can you use photography to elaborate on hooks’ claim? Think about a site, an institution, or “things” you use—can you see how privilege operates if you examine these things/actions/locations? Can you think about class or gendered privileges? In his essay, Tim Wise uses the pronoun “we” and “our” frequently. Can you use the visual to express the implications of “we”? DUE FEB 3

Week 4 2/3 and 2/6 Systems of Power and Inequality: Race & Class
Agenda: Begin to explore systemic forms of inequality. Why is social structure so important, and what is a socially constructed category?
Readings: Elizabeth Martinez “Seeing More Than Black and White”
Herbert Gans “Race as Class”
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva “Racism without ‘Racists’” (In Latte)
Abby Ferber “What White Supremacists Taught a Jewish Scholar About Identity”
Janny Scott and David Leonhardt “Shadowy Lines That Still Divide”
Joan Acker “Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?”
Thomas M. Shapiro “The Hidden Cost of Being African American”
Assignment: 3 pages and 3 photos. From your own perspective situate the readings in the context of the course. In three pages explain what you consider to be the most important arguments in these readings with examples and quotations that support your interpretation and then see if you can use photographs (or any image based material) to substantiate your claims. Some questions to ponder and discuss: what is colorblind racism, white privilege, class, the difference between wealth and income? How is white a racial identity? How is class a structure? How do these relate to your life? What are these “new ways of transmitting advantage,” can we photograph them and see them in our lives (think about travel, the Internet, etc.)? How are hegemonic masculinities embedded in collective practices and how can we make them visible? DUE Feb 13

** WEEK 5 CHANGE: READINGS FOR TUESDAY, PHOTOS ON FRIDAY**

Week 5 2/10 and 2/13 Structure of Social Institutions: Education
Agenda: Begin to explore one social institution that intimately affects our life and shapes our daily activities.
Readings: Barbara Jensen “Across the Great Divide: Crossing Classes and Clashing Cultures”
Roslyn Arlin Mickelson and Stephen Samuel Smith “Can Education Eliminate Race, Class and Gender Inequality?”
Gary Orfield “Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality”
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Jeanne Theoharris "I hate it when people treat me like a Fxxx-up"
Sara Goldrick-Rab and Marjorie A.E. Cook “College Students in Changing Contexts” (in Latte)
Eric Hoover “Race and Family Income of Students Influence Guidance Counselors’ Advice, Study Finds” (in Latte)
Stephen Burd “College Choices are Limited for Students from Needy Families, Report Says” (in Latte)

Assignment: 3 pages and 3 photos “Undergraduate education in the twenty-first century means different things depending on how students encounter it” (Goldrick-Rab and Cook 272). The college experience is highly diverse. What does higher education mean to you, and how do you experience it? Write 3 pages from your own perspective, and incorporate 3 photographs that show what your college experience is like. How does your social position and identity shape how you experience college? Reflect on the institution you attend: its campus, structure, location, programs and electives, professors and resources, students, and courses offered. College also involves support and social activities: What is your support system like? Where do you complete your assignments? How have you financed your education? How does/has your family shaped your college experience? How has college shaped your social life? Due Feb 24

FEBRUARY 16-20 BREAK!!

Week 6
Agenda: 2/24 AND 2/27 Gender and Sexuality
Discuss gender and sexuality and systems of power and inequality.
Readings: Maxine Baca Zinn et al. “Sex and Gender Through the Prism of Difference”
Judith Ortiz Cofer “The Myth of the Latin Woman”
Jonathan Ned Katz “The Invention of Heterosexuality”
Patricia Hill Collins. “Prisons for Our Bodies, Closets for Our Minds: Racism, Heterosexism, and Black Sexuality.”
Chong-Suk Han “Darker Shades of Queer: Race and Sexuality at the Margins”
http://www.upworthy.com/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-human-sexuality-but-were-afraid-to-ask?c=ufb1

Assignment: 3 pages and 3 photos. What are gender and sexuality stereotypes that you find yourself grappling with here at Brandeis University? Does your social position have any assumed sexual roles or sexual proclivities associated with it? How do you navigate this world? How do you relate/where are you on the spectrum of sexual and racial hierarchies, how do you know this? What does masculinity/femininity look like? How do you conform or reject hegemonic gender and sexual tropes? Due March 3

Week 7
Agenda: 3/3 and 3/6 Standpoint Theory
Discuss methods again and Standpoint theory. Bring back Johnson.
Readings: Dorothy E. Smith “Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology”
Patricia Hill-Collins “Learning from the Outsider Within: the sociological significance of Black feminist thought”
(all available in Lat)

Crenshaw “The Structural and Political Dimensions of Intersectional Oppression”
Haraway “Situated Knowledges and the Persistence of Vision”

Mid-term Writing
5 pages/ 5 photos

Midterm: Return to the 3-page 3-photo assignment on Education. Read the responses from your fellow classmates and those responses from Professor Better's Kingsborough Community College students. What differences and similarities do you see? Why does this matter? Why are these differences/similarities important? What claims can we make about intersectionality and institutional differences from this data? Use excerpts and 5 photographs from these assignments (as well as course readings) as evidence to support one focused argument. 5 pages.

Week 8
3/10 AND 3/13: Midterm
Agenda: Work in class to fine tune your midterm. Details TBD
Assignment: Midterm DUE MARCH 16.

Week 9
3/17 and 3/20 Style and Subculture
Agenda: Examination of Style and Subculture
Assignment: How are styles and subcultures, raced, gendered and classed? What style do you adopt? 3 photos and 3 pages. How do you perform your race, class and gender? 3 photos and 3 pages, March 20, come to class dressed in your favorite subculture or style. 3 pages and 3 photos Due March 20.

Week 10
3/24 and 3/27 The Structure of Social Institutions: Families and Work
Agenda: Discuss the Family & Labor
Kath Weston "Straight Is to Gay As Family Is to No Family."
Annette Lareau “Unequal Childhoods”

Teresa Amott and Julie Matthaepi "Race, Class, Gender, and Women's Works,"
Kenneth W. Brown "The Indignities of Unemployment."
Philip Moss and Chris Tilly. "'Soft' Skills and Race"
Katherine S. Newman “The Invisible Poor”

Assignment: 3 pages and 3 photos: Discuss your family structure. What parenting technique was used in your home? How is that related to your race, class and gender? How does it relate to where you are today/who you are today? Do your parents adopt traditional gendered roles? Are your grandparents
involved in your life—to what extent? Look through some old family photos, can you analyze them to determine familial roles, why do these differential roles matter? Think about the job or career you envision after college, do you expect your race, class and gender to influence your success? Women who work outside the home often face a “second shift” of housework when they get home. How do men avoid doing their hare of this work? Have you ever noticed someone—perhaps even yourself—adopting these tactics? Due March 31

Week 11 3/31 The Structure of Institutions: Media & Pop Culture
Agenda: Discuss Media and Popular Culture and Education
Readings: Rebecca Brasfield."Re-Reading 'Sex and the City': Exposing the Hegemonic Feminist Narrative
Robert B. Moore "Racist Stereotyping in the English Language,"
Gregory Mantsios “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible”
danah Boyd "White Flight in Networked Publics?: How Race and Class Shaped American Teen Engagement with MySpace and Facebook (in latte)

Passover and Spring Recess!!

WORK ON EXHIBIT


Pascoe talks about how ‘fag’ is rarely if ever directed at someone who is actually homosexual—what is your experience with this word? Why do girls rarely use the word ‘fag’—is this consistent with your own experiences, how can we photograph this?