UWS 38A- 1: A View From the Margins: Understanding Inequality in America

“If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you don’t see.”

–James Baldwin

Room: Olin Sang- Room 104
Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays- 2:00-4:40PM
Instructor: Marisa Carey
Office Hours: Tuesdays from 12-1:30 and by appointment (Please always email me if you plan to come to my office hours)
Email: mgcarey23@brandeis.edu
Office: Rabb 364

Introduction:

Although, many of us have had the words “all men are created equal” inscribed into our understanding of the United States, systemic inequality has remained an integral part of the American experience for many. In this class, we will look into the how’s and why’s of United States hierarchy by focusing on individual and systemic racism, sexism, classism and discrimination based on gender and sexuality. We will take an approach that provides a historical view, beginning after the Civil War. We will seek to explore both the impact and the function of inequality on marginalized populations with a particular focus on racism. These
questions will serve as the backdrop to a semester-long exploration of academic research and writing. This course will also foster the development of incisive analysis and sophisticated academic writing as a way to explore the way inequality functions in American society. Structured assignments, class discussions, peer group workshops, and conferences will direct us as we explore different writing tasks. Although this will not be a complete history, it will provide us the tools to deeply engage with these topics and write critically and thoughtfully to understand an essential aspect of American life and history.

**Required Course Texts**

There are no required courses texts that you need to purchase. Instead, I will be posting all readings on Latte. Although, I know that printing large texts does cost money, it does cost significantly less than purchasing texts.

While I prefer that you print your readings, I will allow you to bring laptops and tablets for the purpose of accessing your readings in class.

**Course Requirements**

**Latte Posts:** For some short, low-stakes practice, the class will write posts on Latte in response to readings and films. Note: For those who participate less, this works out as an opportunity to help your participation grades.

**In-Class Writing:** Because of the nature of a summer course, we will write some short writing, in class, in the form of thesis-statements, revisions, and paragraph editing.

**Close-Reading:** We will practice essay writing with a close-reading assignment of one of our early reading assignments. For this assignment you will practice your concepts of introductory paragraphs, thesis writing, and persuasive body paragraphs.

**Lens:** For this topic, we will utilize Kimberle Crenshaw’s seminal essay, “Mapping the Margins” as a way to understand how to apply a text as an analytical lens. In this case, we will apply Crenshaw’s concept of “intersectionality” to texts, images, and a short film.

**Research paper:** The researched argument. For this assignment you will choose a case study and make an argument about a topic you select. Each topic will center on racial, gender, and/or social inequality; you will formulate your own research question that relates, complicates or expands on the suggested research topics.

**Drafting:**

Four steps lead up to the final draft of your research essay:

**Pre-draft assignments.** The research paper will be preceded by two pre-draft assignments—short pieces of writing designed to help you develop ideas. These assignments will receive either a check or a note telling you to redo the work and
will count as part of your overall grade. You can re-submit any work until the end of the unit.

**First draft.** You are required to turn in a first 6 pages of your final research paper. These drafts are important opportunities for you to receive feedback from me and your classmates in peer review. I do not expect these drafts to be polished, but a more complete draft gives me a better opportunity to give extensive feedback.

**Conferences.** Each student will have to meet with me for at least one twenty-minute conference in the final two weeks of the class. I will post sign up sheets in the week before. Attendance is required; missing a conference is the equivalent of missing a class.

**Class participation:** Your consistent participation in class sessions constitutes a significant portion of your grade and is the most critical component of a successful course. Class participation includes:

- Your prompt, prepared, alert, consistent attendance
- The completion of reading assignments by the dates listed in the syllabus
- Your thoughtful contributions to class discussions

**Grades**

Close reading/viewing assignments (including Latte posts): 20%
Lens assignments: 20%
Researched argument: 40%
Class participation and in-class work: 20%

**Formatting**

All essays will be submitted to me and your peers electronically. Essays must use 1-inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman font. Do not enlarge your punctuation or expand your margins—I can tell. Essays must have a title and be double-spaced. Pre-drafts will be submitted in hard copy in class and must be typed and stapled.

**Late Work, Extensions and Minimum Page Requirements**

I am usually willing to offer extensions, given legitimate reasons. **If a catastrophe happens and you are afraid your work will not be completed in time, contact me MORE THAN 24 HOURS before the due date and arrange for an extension.** Otherwise, late work, including first drafts, will be penalized by a third of a grade per day (B+ → B → B- and so on) on the final paper. If a paper is due electronically at 11:59 PM and you submit it at 12:00 AM, it is late. In addition, final papers that do not meet minimum page requirements will be penalized by a third of a grade for each page that the paper falls short.
Attendance
Missing classes is strongly discouraged. You are allowed two absences. For each additional absence your final grade will be penalized by a third of a grade. If you miss 5 or more classes, you will automatically receive a failing grade.

Laptops
Laptops are allowed in this class. Please keep in mind that laptop use in class is only for access to course materials. If I notice you using your laptops for other purposes, I will give you a zero in participation for that class. If it becomes a recurring issue, I will rethink the policy.

Academic Honesty
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually in section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

Accommodations
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in class, please see me right away.

Email Etiquette
When you write to me or another professor or professional, please include a greeting (“Dear Ms. Carey”, “Dear Marisa”), full sentences, proper punctuation, and your name at the bottom of the email. Always include a brief note with an attachment.

UWS Outcomes

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

- Use writing and discussion to work through and interpret complex ideas from readings and other texts (e.g., visual, musical, verbal)
- Critically analyze your own and others’ choices regarding language and form (e.g., in student texts or formally published texts)
- Engage in multiple modes of inquiry using text (e.g., field research, library-based inquiry, web searching)
- Incorporate significant research (as above) into writing that engages a question and/or topic and uses it as a central theme for a substantive, research-based essay
• Use writing to support interpretations of text, and understand that there are multiple interpretations of text
• Consider and express the relationship of your own ideas to the ideas of others

Processes

• Use written, visual, and/or experience-based texts as tools to develop ideas for writing
• Understand that writing takes place through recurring processes of invention, revision, and editing
• Develop successful, flexible strategies for your own writing through the processes of invention, revision, and editing
• Experience and understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
• Learn to critique your own and others' work
• Be reflective about your writing processes

Knowledge of Conventions

• Understand the conventions of particular genres of writing
• Use conventions associated with a range of dialects, particularly standardized written English (but not necessarily limited to it)
• Recognize and address patterns in your writing that unintentionally diverge from patterns expected by their audience/s
• Practice using academic citational systems (Chicago-style) for documenting work

Four-Credit Course

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1

Mon. July 8th

Read: Sample essay (In-class)
Write: Index cards, introductory “assignment”
In-Class: Introductions, close readings of syllabus, discussion of inequality today, and a look a thesis statements and motivated writing.

Tues. July 9th

Read: “Love, Sex, Slavery, and Sally Hemmings” by Mia Bay (21 pages); “Reconstructing Reconstruction” from Carol Anderson’s White Rage (31 pages)
Write: Latte post response by class time (2PM)
In-Class: Discussion on the readings, Lecture- Race and Inequality in American History

Thurs. July 11th

Read: Ida B. Wells’ The Red Record
Write: Choose a close reading passage on Ida B. Wells. Prepare your text with a two sentences on the important of that text and why you chose it. In Class- Prepare a thesis statement on any of the three readings thus far for a close-reading essay. After Class, post your thesis statement on Latte.
In-Class: Close reading sample paragraph, Passive/Active voice, Revisiting Thesis, Opening Paragraph overview

Week 2

Mon. July 15th

Read: “A Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates
Write: Work on Close Reading assignment
In-Class:Discussion on Ta-Nehisi Coates, Watch 13th, a film by Ava Duvernay

Tues, July 16th

Read: None
Write: Work on Close Reading Assignment
In-Class: lecture on racial hierarchy, the racialization of other races, American Anti-semitism, and Close-look at Japanese Internment during WWII

Close-Reading Paper Due 11:59PM via Email.

Wednesday, July 17th by 11:59PM, Email Laura Hibbler at lhibbler@brandeis.edu with a topic you’re considering researching.

This is a preliminary topic that you can always change later. You do not have to have a full idea. You can be specific or vague.
Thurs. July 18th

Read: Research Assignment Sequence on Latte  
Write: None  
In-Class: Library Instruction Class, in-class research, Discussion on Lens and a look at the remainder of the summer, Peer discussion on close reading assignments

Week 3

Mon. July 22nd

Read: Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color by Kimberle Crenshaw (20 pages)  
Write: By Class time, Please post on forum to answer the question, “What is intersectionality?” Base this post on what you have now read and not what you knew about intersectionality prior to this class.  
In-Class: Mapping the Margins, Intersectionality- A Close Look, Using Mapping the Margins as a Lens, Sample Lens Essays

Tues. July 23rd

Read: None  
Write: By 11:59PM, Post one paragraph where you use “Mapping the Margins” to analyze/argue about a scene, a plot, or a character interaction in Moonlight.  
In-Class Moonlight, a film by Barry Jenkins, discussion, application of Intersectionality in new ways, First part of Gender and Sexuality lecture

Thurs. July 25th

Read: 3 Chapters from Janet Mock’s Redefining Realness  
Write: None  
In-Class: In Class discussion on Redefining Realness and gender and sexuality, Continuing lecture on the history of Gender and Sexuality in American history. Watching one Episode of FX Series, Pose.

Friday, July 26th, by 11:59PM- Submit Lens assignment

Week 4

Mon. July 29th
Read: Individual research
Write: By 11:59PM Submit Research Plan for Research Paper
In-Class: Research Paper sample essay, Secondary Sources, Primary Sources, Citations, In-Class Research day

Tues. July 30th

Read: None
Write: by 11:59PM- Submit an annotated bibliography for research paper
In-Class: Inequality Today, Income Inequality, and American Capitalism in Crisis?, In-class Writing Day

Thurs. August 1st

Individual Conferences Day- Sign up Online to meet in my office

Friday, August 2nd by 11:59PM- Submit first draft of Research Paper

Week 5

Mon. August 5th

In-Class: Editing, Improving Readability, Peer Review, When They See Us

Tues. Aug. 6

In-Class: When They See Us, Extended Office Hours

Th. Aug. 8th

In-Class: Short Presentations on Research Paper, Final thoughts

Friday, August 9th- Final Essay due with cover letter electronically by 11:59 PM