

Bellevue Community College



SOC 264A (5867), Intersections of Race, Class, & Gender, 5 Credits

Spring 2008: March 31st – June 10th

Tu-Th 12:30 – 2:40 pm, B-101

Sara Sutler-Cohen, Ph.D. ssutler@bcc.ctc.edu 425-564-5722

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 – 2:30 & Fridays, 12:30 – 1:30, D110-I

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides an historic and contemporary perspective on the intersections of race, class, and gender, highlighting the social, political, and cultural issues in the United States as demonstrated through the lens of popular culture. You will be exposed to an overview of U.S. life, placing intersections of race, class, and gender at the center. We will pay close attention to the way in which our lives are intersected by *the matrix of domination* and how people may subvert the dominant discourse in which they are shaped through a variety of popular culture mediums. In addition, we will use sociological tools to interrogate the relationship between mass culture and society, with a goal of understanding popular culture's role in strengthening (or eroding) identities. Course concepts will be demonstrated through lectures, readings, multi-media presentations, and library research.

“The reality is it’s up to you guys to figure out how the media works and break through.”

– Claudia Dreifus

A NOTE ABOUT COURSE CONTENT: Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we sometimes talk about provocative material. Please be advised that, when we explore controversial topics, they will always be framed within an academic context. Topics run the gamut in sociology and at times there may be material that makes people uncomfortable. Keep in mind that when we find ourselves in a space outside of our comfort zone, it’s an opportunity for learning. You may be confronted with subject matter that is difficult to watch, see, discuss, or listen to. Please know, however, that you will be responsible for any course material you miss if

you choose not to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about content or classroom climate, feel free to speak with me about it right away.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have medical information to share with me in the event of an emergency, please contact me via email or come to see me during office hours. Emergency preparedness is important! If you need course modifications, adaptations, or accommodations because of a disability, I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). If you prefer, you may contact them directly by going to B132 or by calling 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110. Information is also available on their website at <http://bellevuecollege.edu/drc/>

EXPLORE THE LMC! BCC's Library and Media Center is at your fingertips! I *strongly* encourage you to visit the Library at least once a week, but you can also access it via the web. Talk to a Reference Librarian at the Library (D-126), by calling (425)564-6161, or by email bccref@bcc.ctc.edu.

Main Library Media Center: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/>
For the LMC online catalog: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/catalogs.html>
For article databases: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/periodicals.html>

READING REQUIREMENTS:

- *Race, Class, & Gender: An Anthology*, 6th edition. Edited by Margaret L. Anderson and Patricia Hill Collins
- Any current pocket Dictionary of the English Language
- Handouts and articles

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Any current Sociology Dictionary
- *A Writer's Reference*, 6th Ed. By Diana Hacker. See the companion website here: <http://www.dianahacker.com/>

LEARNING AND COURSE OUTCOMES: Upon your dedicated participation and subsequent completion of this course, you will:

- Demonstrate a general knowledge and comprehension of how our experiences in the U.S. vary from one another, and of how some folks perceive those experiences.
- Examine how we have been socially constructed as well as examine the social construction of "difference" itself. Along with the exploration of "race" issues, we will also study institutionalized discrimination in the United States today. Approaches to gender will consider the ways in which males and females are socialized to become boys and girls, as well as men and women. Issues of class and sexuality are also fully integrated throughout as the course examines how economic status has affected identity and power structures.
- Gain a general understanding of the dominant representations and identity constructions of race, class, and gender in historical and contemporary analyses of dominant US popular culture. We will also look at the ways in which dominant representations of marginalized people are culturally subverted and contrasted.

GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS:

- Attend all class meetings.
- Complete readings and homework assignments *on time*.
- More than *four* unexcused absences or late attendances will lower your grade, and continue to do so as you miss more classes. To have an absence or tardy considered excused, you must discuss it with me *prior to* the absence or tardy, unless in an emergency. Excused absences included doctor's visits, family emergencies, and sometimes work-related issues.
- *All* electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom at *all* times. This includes cell phones, blackberries, laptops, etc. If you need a laptop to take notes, I will need verification.
- Emailed assignments are not accepted, unless you arrange it with me prior to the assignment deadline.
- Late work is accepted, but 10% of the grade is taken off for each day your work is late *under all circumstances*. Make-up quizzes are not allowed, unless your absence is excused. Exceptions sometimes happen, but you need to discuss that with me privately.
- I expect that your behavior in class be respectful. Side-talking and whispering is disruptive to the class as a whole as well as to individual students. This is not acceptable in my classroom, so I insist that you refrain from it. Continued disrespectful behavior in class may result in your being asked to leave and will result in your participation credit lowering.
- You are responsible for your own learning in the classroom. If you miss class, please connect with your colleagues to find out what you missed.
- There are *no extra credit assignments* for this class. Please turn in your work on time and ask questions when you have them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Coursework consists of weekly homework assignments, exams (no Final Exam), and one major group research assignment, which will culminate into a presentation at the end of the course. There are job assignments for students uncomfortable with public speaking.

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

<u>Participation:</u>	150
<u>Homework:</u>	400
<u>Exams:</u>	200
<u>Research & Presentation:</u>	250
<u>Total:</u>	1000

The Fine Print (or, what I really mean by that table above):

Participation:

- Come to class and be *on time*
- Provoke energetic discussion, speak out, and listen actively
- Work diligently and respectfully in your groups
- *Always* bring your readings to class with notes for discussion
- Look up words you don't understand or know
- Ask lots of questions
- Think critically about the world around you

Exams, randomly delivered and randomly scored: Exams cover everything up through the week of the test and will usually include multiple choice and short-answer questions (either or both). Your responses should be clear and concise. Your short-answer responses must range from no less than one full (four-sentence) paragraph, to three full paragraphs. Questions are based on readings, in-class discussion, and lecture material. Information about point distribution will be on each exam.

Research Project and Group Presentation: Your project will include research, short papers (1 – 2 pages), and a final Group Presentation. You will be asked to take up an issue intersecting Race, Class, and Gender (the presidential election, for example) and present your findings at the end of the course. I will provide a folder for this project so that when you turn it in, all notes and reports remain in one place. I will ask for the folders at random points throughout the quarter, so be sure to keep it up to date and always bring it to class. We'll go over some ideas in the second week of classes.

For *all* of your written work:

Please submit proofread work *only*. Sloppy writing will be returned for a rewrite once and docked 10%. Rewritten work is expected by the following class meeting. Your font should be Times, 12 pts, double-spaced with a 1" margin all around. Your work *must* be cited using either MLA style, and you must always, *always* give proper credit to the texts from which you draw and formulate your ideas. Even when you don't quote directly, give credit where credit is due. Title pages are not counted as page numbers due. Similarly with bibliographies, these are not counted as page numbers due. If you decide to place your personal and class information on the first page of your paper instead (which is fine), please do not take up more than for single-spaced lines at the top right or left corner of the page.

Written work is evaluated on:

- 1) Content
 - a. Fulfilling the assignment.
 - b. Developing your argument and making use of examples and evidence to support your argument.
 - c. Flow of thought throughout the paper, with strong analyses and conclusions.
- 2) Writing Style
 - a. Excellent command of the written English language. In other words, most excellent grammar. **NOTE: If you struggle with grammar and spelling or are an ESL student, *please* let me know! I'm happy to work with you and point you in the right direction.**
 - b. Clarity of thought.
 - c. Good organization and attention to detail.
 - d. Persuasiveness of your argument/s.
 - e. Creativity. Make it an interesting read!
 - f. **PROOFREAD** your work. Please do a spell/grammar check before you hand it in.
 - g. Dude, like totally don't write **colloquially**. A conversation is a conversation. A paper is an entirely different set of discussions. ☺



Grading:

90-100 = A. The A paper is coveted. It's a paper that shows me you're engaged with the readings, the media, and the lectures in class. It's a paper free from grammar and spelling errors, and a paper that demonstrates your command not only of the English language, but of the form and flow of a solid piece of written work. I also like to see/read/hear your "writing voice." That is, I want your style to come through! Your arguments should be solid and backed up with intellectual ammunition. You should demonstrate a strong understanding of our readings and the in-class media and how they intersect with one another.

80-89 = B. The B tells me you're doing very good work. You may have a few grammar issues, but your paper is still tidy and the writing is still strong. You have a relatively firm grasp on the themes in the course but you may not be as well-versed in the readings and/or media and/or lecture material as you could be. I should see that you're being challenged and that you're struggling with the course issues and themes, and what they represent to you in an interconnected way. Your understandings of some of the course materials are stronger than others.

70-79 = C. The C paper means that you're not as invested in the class as I'd like to see. Your writing is relatively weaker than it could be and you're not thinking as critically as I'd like you to. Some of what you point out I may not follow logically, and your use of the course materials may not be as solid as it could be. You omit some of the important points raised in class.

60-69 = D. Ah, the D. D is for "Don't be Discouraged." I will work closely with each of you as much as time allows, getting you up to speed in class. Your struggles should not be with writing so much at this point but if they are please see me immediately. A D paper is not proofread, nor does it deal critically with the themes in the course. It responds, perhaps, to one part of one of the readings but there is no integration of material and there you're not responding to the questions raised in class. Demonstrated understanding of the course materials is not presented clearly, or at all. (NOTE: A D and below may be resubmitted once during the quarter. I enter the better grade.)

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY: We will set the rhythm of the class in the first couple of weeks. I envision a learning community, one in which I am a participant as well. I am a firm believer in being a lifelong learner and to that end I often carry away a lot more information from students than I ever expect. I am most interested, for the purposes of this class, to see how well we can all wrap our minds around the idea of thinking critically about the various issues and themes presented about the social world in which we live. You should expect to be exposed to new and various ways of thinking and knowing. As a learning community, we will be helping one another think through all of the ideas that connect back to course themes.

When you don't see your own images through the media or in books, you start thinking you're weird, and your self-esteem gets bruised.

- Francisco Alarcón, poet and director of Spanish for Native Speakers, UC Davis



COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

WEEK: DATES AND THEMES (MOST TUESDAYS WE'LL BE SCREENING FILMS)	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS: READINGS ALWAYS DUE TUESDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
ONE April 1, 3 No class 4 th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Introduction to the course The Sociological Imagination Shifting the Center How To Read A Film	<u>Readings (please have your reading done by Friday this week only):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Race, Class, Gender (RCG)</i>: Readings 1 – 4 <u>Film:</u> “Girl Fight” (2000) by Karyn Kusama <u>Assignments:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the syllabus and write a 1-2 page commentary on what you think the three most important points are, and why. • Write a 1-2 page commentary on an assigned reading of your choice <u>Quote of the Week:</u> “Without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible. <div style="text-align: right;">- Frank Zappa</div>
TWO April 8, 10 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Race and Privilege Risky Identities On the idea of Whiteness On humor	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCG</i> Part II, “Race and Racism” <u>Film:</u> “SNL” & “MadTV” clips, “History of White People in America” (1985) Harry Shearer <u>Assignments:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a critical analysis on the films for this week, using the “How To Read A Film” guide. 2-3 pages • Visit the White Privilege Website (see MyBCC) and come up with one discussion question for Thursday’s class <u>Quote of the Week:</u> “Humor is widely used by Indians to deal with life. Indian gatherings are marked by laughter and jokes, many directed at the horrors of history, at the continuing impact of colonization, and at the biting knowledge that living as an exile in one's own land necessitates. ” <div style="text-align: right;">- Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna and Sioux)</div>

<p>WEEK: DATES AND THEMES (MOST TUESDAYS WE'LL BE SCREENING FILMS)</p>	<p>READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS: READINGS ALWAYS DUE TUESDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS</p>
<p>THREE April 15, 17 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Class Gender and Sexism Integrating Race, Class, and Gender: Shifting The Center</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select an article from <i>Indian Country Today's</i> News From The Nation Section located in the BCC LMC • <i>RCG</i> Part II, "Class and Inequality" and "Gender and Sexism" <p><u>Film:</u> "GirlsTown" (1996, Dir. Jim McKay)</p> <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a 1-2 page commentary on your <i>ICT</i> readings. Choose only one article • Write a 2-3 page reflection paper on "GirlsTown" <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "Yeah, well it's just too bad those stories don't tell us how to keep our reservations from turning into sewers." - A. Martinez as Buddy Red Bow in "Pow Wow Highway" (1989)</p>
<p>FOUR April 22, 24 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Notions of Ethnicities Diasporic Identities Sexuality and Sexism</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCG</i> Part II: "Ethnicity and Nationality" and "Sexuality and Heterosexism" <p><u>Films:</u> "March Point" and "SuperFly" (Longhouse Media)</p> <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: Bibliography and Annotations • Write a 2-3 page reflection paper on "March Point" <i>or</i> "SuperFly" <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "Leave it to a girl to take all the fun out of sex discrimination." -- Calvin, <i>The Essential Calvin and Hobbes</i></p>
<p>FIVE April 29, May 1 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Social Institutions Institutionalized Discrimination</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCG</i> Part III, "Work and Economic Transformation" and "Families" <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up from each group member on progress • Website Evaluation (see handout) <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions which have been hidden by the answers." - James Baldwin</p>

<p><u>WEEK:</u> DATES AND THEMES (MOST TUESDAYS WE'LL BE SCREENING FILMS)</p>	<p><u>READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:</u> READINGS ALWAYS DUE TUESDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS</p>
<p>SIX May 6, 8 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Cultural Studies Popular Culture Mass Media</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCG</i> Part III, "Media and Culture" <p><u>Film:</u> TBA</p> <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on readings and films so far, come up with three discussion questions <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "I am a feminist, and what that means to me is much the same as the meaning of the fact that I am Black: it means that I must undertake to love myself and to respect myself as though my very life depends upon self-love and self-respect."</p> <p>- June Jordan</p>
<p>SEVEN May 13, 15 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Group project discussion Article discussion Research Tips and Resources Midterm preparation Mid-Quarter catch-up</p>	<p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Exam Thursday • Using Ebsco Host via the LMC database (use Academic Search Premier), locate and read: "Myths and Stereotypes about Native Americans" by Walter C. Fleming. Write a review <i>and</i> an analysis (see handout) • Write up from each group member on progress <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "It's impossible to write about Native life without humor—that's how people maintain sanity."</p> <p>-- Louise Erdrich (Ojibway)</p>
<p>EIGHT May 20, 22 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Public Health Prison Industrial Complex Dis/Ability</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCG</i> Part III, "Health and Social Welfare" and "State Institutions and Violence" <p><u>Film:</u> Student Choice!</p> <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments this week! ☺ <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "College isn't the place to go for ideas."</p> <p>- Helen Keller</p>
<p>NINE May 27, 29 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Social change and you Cultural Citizenship</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCG</i> Part IV, "Sites of Change" <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's in the news? See handout <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "You think you're so clever and classless and free."</p> <p>- John Lennon</p>

<p><u>WEEK:</u> DATES AND THEMES (MOST TUESDAYS WE'LL BE SCREENING FILMS)</p>	<p><u>READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:</u> READINGS ALWAYS DUE TUESDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS</p>
<p>TEN June 3, 5 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Social change and you Cultural Citizenship cont'd</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RCCG</i>, Part IV: "Processes of Change" <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentations! <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "Our people once were warriors. But unlike you, Jake, they were people with mana, pride; people with spirit. If my spirit can survive living with you for eighteen years, then I can survive anything." - Rena Owen (Maori) as Beth Heke in "Once Were Warriors" (1994)</p>
<p>ELEVEN: June 10 <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Closure</p>	<p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentations! <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." - Marcus Garvey</p>

EMAILING ME: When you email me, ALWAYS put in the SUBJECT LINE the following, in this order: SOC 110 – YOUR NAME – SUBJECT
For example: **SOC122 – Jane Doe – Question about Exam #5.**
Your emails will be answered much faster this way. For ease of communication, it is ESSENTIAL that you stick to this mode of emailing me.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR: I am of Tsalagi (Cherokee), Irish, Romany/Gypsy, and Russian Jewish descent. I received my Ph.D. in Sociology (with a parenthetical notation in American Studies) from UC Santa Cruz. I received my first MA in Sociology from Humboldt State University and my second MA in Sociology from UCSC, my BA in Sociology and Journalism from Mills College, and my AA in English and Creative Writing from Vista Community College. This is my second year here at BCC. I am Editor-In-Chief for *Native Realities*, the journal for Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers and the Native American/Indigenous Studies Area Chair for the Popular Culture and American Culture Association's SW/Texas Regional Conferences. I love to write and am currently working on a memoir. I'm an avid Scrabble player, tattoo enthusiast, and I definitely drink too much coffee. I probably work too much as well, but who's counting? I live in Central Seattle with my thirteen-year-old son.

Thank you for a wonderful term! ☺