Women of Color

“White privilege is your history being part of the core curriculum and mine being taught as an elective”

This course is an introduction to the historical and contemporary experiences of women of color in the United States. We will analyze interacting inequalities of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation to understand how structures of oppression deprivilege and marginalize women of color. We will also look at some amazing women and groups as they have resisted dominant cultures to document their history, incite social change, and live out their lives with meaning and integrity.

Like many social science courses, this class is not about providing hard and fast answers. It is about raising productive questions about women, men, and racial ethnic identity in a modern world, and equipping you to articulate your own views in a compelling and thoughtful manner. No prerequisites are necessary other than an interest in the subject, a willingness to consider new ideas, and a respect for views other than your own.

Required Texts:

Octavia Butler, Kindred (Beacon Press, 2004) $15
All other readings are available on Canvas. Please print out each reading and keep in a notebook or folder. You must bring weekly readings to class for discussion. For inexpensive copies, I recommend San Jose Copy (6¢ ea) at 109 E. Santa Clara Street (next to Chevron), (408) 297-6698.

Assignments and Evaluation

25% Participation (includes in-class discussion, PM meeting, in-class writing assignments, etc)
25% Midterm
25% Final Research Project & Presentation
25% Final

GE Learning Outcomes - Area D2 (Social Sciences – Human Behavior; no prerequisites)

At the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts;
2. identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them; and
3. evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.
4. Students will be able to compare and contrast two or more ethnic groups, cultures, regions, nations, or social systems.
   Students will meet the 1500-word writing requirement by writing a final research project and exam essays.

Course Objectives
After this course you will be able to:
1. Understand how U.S. inequalities of race, gender, sexuality and nation interact to restrict and deprivilege women of color and their experiences.
2. Understand the relationship of women of color to feminism, and explain how women of color feminisms are unique.
3. Gain a familiarity with the diversity of experiences and expression of women of color, and their interaction with dominant norms.
4. Explain how women of color as a group have been excluded from and marginalized in mainstream histories, white women’s histories, and racial/ethnic histories.
5. Recount specific histories of women of color as individuals and groups as they use various strategies and tactics to resist dominant cultures, document their history, and live out their lives with meaning and integrity.
6. Understand power and oppression as structural forces shaping individual lives in the U.S.
7. Recognize how movements led by women of color in the U.S. are interconnected with social movements around the world, particularly in the global South.

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at [http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf).

Classroom Protocol
You will receive more details about all of these assignments during the semester, but generally:
- **Due Dates** - All assigned work is due at the beginning of class, whether turned in online or in hard copy. Printing problems are *not* an excuse. **LATE work will be downgraded a full grade the first day it is late, and half-grade every day thereafter.** I strongly suggest you invest now in an inexpensive printer ($50-100) of your own if you do not have one already.
- **Exams** – **You may not make up a missed exam unless you have a documented illness or emergency. No exceptions.** If you have a documented illness or emergency, you will take the make-up exam on the day of the final. The make-up exam may be essay or multiple-choice, at my discretion.
- **Format** - Unless otherwise noted, all work must be typed and double-spaced in a plain 12 point font with one-inch margins all the way around the page. Except for formal essays, **EVERYTHING** you turn in should have your full name at the top right of the page, along with date, topic, and Course/Section number. Handwritten work is *not* acceptable, unless specifically stated in class.
• Grade checks – If you require a midterm grade check of any kind (athletic, EOP, fraternity/sorority, etc., personal), you must come to my office hours. I cannot guess your grade in class, or email your request. Come to my posted office hours for a quick discussion and I will sign off on your request. No exceptions.

• Office hours - My office is in Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH), 238A. DMH is on San Fernando Street, just two buildings down from the MLK Library. Please come by and see me during office hours at least once during the semester. Seeing your professor during office hours is an excellent habit to establish – you can ask a question, clarify your understanding of lecture material, we can just chat about how you are doing in class, or you can ask about my little girl. Office hours are part of our job as professors, and you absolutely have the right to take advantage of our time.

• And finally, I assume you are adult and are in this class because you want an education. You do not need to ask my permission to leave early, go to the bathroom, etc. This also means that if you are chattering with a friend, texting, playing videogames, or are in any way disruptive to me or other students, I will ask you to leave.

**Participation**

The strength of this course depends largely on the strength of your contributions as individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives. In addition to regular class participation, you will follow online news on any one of the racial/ethnic communities we are studying—see the list of suggested sources on Canvas. You are expected to either browse the online site or sign up for an RSS or Twitter feed, so that you will be regularly following current news for that community. All students must post regularly to the class twitter feed at #woms20.

I encourage you to choose a community other than your own, but it’s up to you.

And of course, participation also means:

• coming to class on time. If you come in late, enter quietly and sit near the door, minimizing distraction to the class.

• bringing the necessary materials—pen or pencil, notebook or notepad, your course syllabus, and the reading for the day.

• interacting respectfully with your peers, paying attention, listening carefully, encouraging others’ contribution, and contributing when you can.

• NOT texting or surfing or facebooking. I will give you my full attention for the class period, and I expect the same in return. If I see you texting or surfing, I will ask you to leave class for the day.

• checking Canvas regularly

• you must have a good email account that you check regularly. You respond (reasonably) promptly to your teammates' messages. I strongly recommend either your sjsu account, or gmail or yahoo -- I specifically discourage hotmail or aol addresses (they are more likely to be caught in spam filters). If you do use hotmail or aol, you are responsible for ensuring that any message you send is received.

*Reading Quizzes*

Roughly every other week students will complete a brief quiz on the week’s reading. Quizzes begin at the start of class and conclude within seven minutes. *Do not be late.* You can not makeup missed quizzes.
Grading Policy

Grades are assigned on the following scale:

- 98-100 A+
- 93-97 A
- 90-92 A-
- 88-89 B+
- 83-87 B
- 80-82 B-
- 78-79 C+
- 73-77 C
- 70-72 C-
- 68-69 D+
- 63-67 D
- 60-62 D-
- 59- F

University Policy & Resources

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises (S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf). In general, students should always seek clarification or address concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes. Information on add/drop deadlines is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/. Information about late drops is available at: http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/.

Peer Connections Center

The Peer Connections Center offers free tutoring and advising in a variety of subjects at three locations: 1) on the 1st floor of Clark Hall, 2) in room 600 of the Student Services Center Building, and 3) in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village B. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/

University Policy - Campus policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the AEC (Accessible Education Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/) to establish a record of their disability. For more info call (408) 924-6000 (v) or (408) 924-5990 (TTY).

University Policy - Academic Integrity Statement (From Office of Judicial Affairs):

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at: http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in
all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.  http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

**Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

**Videos**

Videos are regularly scheduled during class time, but can also be seen independently at the IRC, in the southeast end of Dudley Moorhead Hall. They are generally open from 8am to 9pm, but call to check at 4-2888.