

# WMST 113

# GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS

## Class Description

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Section 021, Tu/Th 10a - 11:20p (WRI C311)  
Section 023, Tu/Th 11:30a - 12:50p (WRI C311)

Professor Dustin M. Wax  
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Office Hours: Tu/Th 1p - 1:45p, HOU 101  
or by appointment

Our lives, our identities, and our society are fundamentally affected by the complex interaction of gender, race, and class. In this class we will explore how these categories are constructed by, and function in, society and the ways they shape and are shaped by both the institutions that make up society as well as our individual lives and experiences. Often operating unconsciously and invisibly, race, gender, and class nevertheless profoundly influence our perspective on and actions in the world, and provide channels through which power flows in society, creating privileged and unprivileged categories and working to make those categories seem “natural” and “unchangeable”. In this class we will seek to make visible and understand the workings of these categories, from the perspective of academics trying to accurately represent the world around us as well as from the perspective of individuals whose experience of our own lives exists at the intersection of race, class, and gender. Through the reading of and reflection on an assortment of theoretical, historical, legal, autobiographical, and artistic documents, you will become able to:

1. Discuss and explain the key concepts in the academic study of gender, class, and race.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how race, class, and gender intersect with each other as well as with other categories of social experience such as sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, ability, and age.
3. Show how social categories function to create and justify systems of advantage and disadvantage in society.
4. Comprehend the diversity and complexity of American society, and your own place in it.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking skills including writing, speaking, and listening with clarity and purpose.

## Required Text

*Race, Class, and Gender in the United States* (7th edition) by Paula S. Rothenberg, available at the UNLV bookstore

## Assignments and Grading

- 1. Response Papers:** A short (1-2 page) personal response to one of the articles assigned for each week (except when another assignment is due). Response papers are ungraded – you get 10 points for handing it in. [8 X 10 pts]
- 2. Oral Presentation:** One week you will give a short, 5-10 minute presentation on one of that week's readings in addition to your response paper. Your job will be to present the main ideas of the reading, present the class with questions, and lead the classroom discussion of the article you've chosen. This is also an ungraded assignment – you get your points for doing it. [20 pts]
- 3. Tests:** There will be 2 take-home tests, a mid-term and a final, consisting of a short, 3-4 page answer to an essay question given out one week prior. [2 X 50 pts]
- 4. Essay Projects:** See project description in this packet. [2 X 50 pts]
- 5. Participation:** Your participation is crucial to the success of this class. At the middle and end of this class, you will be asked to write a 1-page assessment of your own participation explaining whether you deserve a low, middle, or high score. I will evaluate your argument and assign you up to 25 points each time to reflect your attendance and contribution to the class. Students who attend regularly and take an active part in classroom discussion should have no problem earning full points for participation. [2 X 25 pts]
- 6. Extra Credit:** Attend a cultural event that relates in some way to the topics discussed in this class and write a 1-2 page summary of what you experienced for 5 points extra credit (ungraded). Or, bring in to class a story or image clipped from a newspaper or magazine, or some other “show and tell” piece, and explain the significance of your find, also for a flat 5 points. You may do up to 3 extra credit assignments over the course of the semester. [up to 3 X 5 pts]

The total for all assignments is 350 pts (plus extra credit). Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	315 - 350	D	210 - 244
B	280 - 314	F	209 or lower
C	245 - 279		

Some of the things said or shown in this class may and should offend you. Films, if shown, as well as written material may contain violence, nudity, and/or coarse language. I or your fellow students may say things that shock or disturb you. I expect students to exercise their own discretion and judgment when faced with such potentially offensive material. I also expect students to deal with their classmates with courtesy, respect, and decorum, even when a classmate has said or done something you find offensive (although this is not a license to be offensive, and abusive behavior or harassment will not be tolerated at any time). If the material covered in this class brings into question matters relating to your own faith, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, or any other feature of your identity, please take the time to examine your reactions and their bases and reflect on the nature of your discomfort.

# Tentative Class Schedule

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## *Week 1 (Jan 16 - 18): Class Introduction*

Syllabus and introduction

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## *Week 2 (Jan 23 - 25): The Social Construction of Difference*

**23** Part I, Introduction (7)  
"Racial Formations", Omi and Winant (13)  
"Constructing Race, Creating White Privilege", Buck (33)

**25** "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow", Wright (23)  
"How Jews Became White Folks", Brodtkin (38)

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## *\*Week 3 (Jan 30 - Feb 1)*

**30** "Night to his Day", Lorber (54)  
"Social Construction of Sexuality", Hubbard (65)

**01** "The Invention of Heterosexuality", Katz (68)  
"Masculinity as Homophobia", Kimmel (80)

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## *\*Week 4 (Feb 6 - 8)*

**06** "Disability & the Just. of Inequality", Baynton (92)  
"Deconstructing the Underclass", Gans (102)

**08** "Domination and Subordination, Miller (108)  
"C.P. Ellis", Turkel (508)

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## *Week 5 (Feb 13 - 15): Understanding Racism, Sexism, Heterosexism, and Class Privilege*

**13** "Defining Racism", Tatum (123)  
"Color-Blind-Racism" (131)

**15** "Internalized Racism", Osajima (138)  
"Smells Like Racism", Sethi (143)  
"Homophobia as a Weapon of Sexism", Pharr (168)  
☛ **First Interpretive Project due**

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## *\*Week 6 (Feb 20 - 22)*

**20** "Oppression", Frye (154)  
"Patriarchy", Johnson (158)

**22** "Unpacking the Invisible Backpack", McIntosh (177)

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## *\*Week 7 (Feb 27 - Mar 1): Beyond Black and White*

**27** "Census Bureau Predicts..." , Armas (203)  
"A New Century", MPI (205)  
"Los Intersticios", Alsultany (212)

**01** "Hispanics in Census Pick 'Other'", Navarro (214)  
"Shades of Belonging", Tafoya (218)

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## *\*Week 8 (Mar 6 - 8)*

**06** "Asian-American?", Shah (221)  
"Myth of the Model Minority", Thrupkeuw (224)  
"Personal Voices", Ching (246)

**08** "Racial Relations... More Complex", Tilove (230)  
"Inside the Jail Wars", Hutchison (235)  
"Is This a White Country", Rubin (238)  
☛ **Mid-term handed out**

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## *Spring Break (Mar 12 - 18): No Class*

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## *Week 9 (Mar 20 - 22): Discrimination in Everyday Life*

**20** "My Black Skin..." , Lumumba-Kasongo (294)  
"Hospital Apologizes" (296)  
"Closing Doors on Housing", Turner and Herbig (297)  
"Segregated Classrooms", Gettleman (299)  
"College Choices Limited", Burd (302)  
"Wealthy Often Win Race", Mathews (303)  
☛ **Mid-term due**

**22** "Refusal to Fire Unattractive..." , Greenhouse (267)  
"Best Buy Faces Allegations..." , Liedtke (269)  
"Dismissing 'Sexist Opinions'..." , Dean (305)  
"Lesbian Sues School District..." , Peet (317)  
"Boy Punished for Talking About Gay Mom" , (319)

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## *\*Week 10 (Mar 27 - 29): The Economics of Race, Class, and Gender in the US*

**27** "US Poverty Rate Was up Last Year", Leonhardt (339)  
"Wealth Gap Between Races Widens", Armas (341)  
"Billionaires R Us", Collins and yeskel (343)  
"Shhh, Don't Say 'Poverty'", Herbert (345)  
"Still at the Periphery", Malveaux (347)

**29** "Being Black, Living in the Red", Conley (350)  
"Economic Reality of Being Latino/a", Lui (358)  
"Economic Reality of Being Asian-American", Lui (362)  
"Women's Pay" (370)  
"The Wage Gap and Its Costs" (373)

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## *\*Week 11 (Apr 3 - 5): Many Voices, Many Lives*

**03** "Civilize Them with a Stick", Brave Bird (403)  
"Then Came the War", Kochiyama (407)  
"Yellow", Wu (415)  
"Myth of the Latin Woman", Cofer (418)

**05** "Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain", Sabo (451)  
"The Slave Side of Sunday", Zirin (455)  
"How to Sell Humvees to Men", Beckman (457)  
"He Defies You Still", Avicollo (458)

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## *Week 12 (Apr 10 - 12)*

**10** "The Politics of Parenting", Mayhew (469)  
"Myth of the Opt-Out Mom", Coontz (473)

**12** "More and More Young Women Chose..." , Gerhart (480)  
"Finding my Eye-identity", Chung (485)  
"...The Anorexic Challenge", Williams (487)  
"Am I Thin Enough Yet", Hesse-Biber (613)  
☛ **Second Interpretive Project due**

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## *\*Week 13 (Apr 17 - 19): Maintaining Hierarchies, Reproducing Reality*

**17** "Self-Fulfilling Stereotypes", Snyder (597)  
"Anti-Gay Stereotypes", Mohr (603)  
"Blaming the Victim", Ryan (698)

**19** "Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse", Jhally (621)  
"Plutocratic Culture", Parenti (629)  
"Still Separate, Still Unequal", Kozol (644)

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## *\*Week 14 (Apr 24 - 26): Social Change*

**24** "Age, Race, Class, and Sex", Lorde (703)  
"Feminism, A Transformational Politic", hooks (710)  
"New Vision of Masculinity", Thompson (717)

**26** "Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression", Ayvazian (724)  
"Rethinking Volunteerism", Leonard (730)  
"Combatting Bigotry & Racist Acts", Blanchard (734)

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## *Week 15 (May 1 - 3)*

**01** "Confronting Anti-Gay Violence", Bronski (738)  
"Rice Shirts... Fashion Statement", Nissimov (741)  
"Communities Unite", Woodard (743)  
☛ **Final handed out**

**03** "The Fire This Time", Hearn (744)  
"Students Confront Sweatshops", Appelbaum & Dreier (748)  
"Narrowing the Income Gap", Hout and Lucas (750)  
"Here. Now. Do Something." Rivers Pitt (755)

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## *Final Week (May 7 - 11)*

Sec. 21 meets **Tuesday, May 8 at 10:10 am - 12:10 pm**  
Sec. 24 meets **Thursday, May 10 at 10:10 am - 12:10 pm**  
☛ **Final due**

\* indicates weeks response papers are due. Remember, you do **NOT** have a response paper due the week you give your presentation.

## Interpretive Projects

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*Each project should be a **3-4 page paper** based on your own observations and reflection. You may choose each project topic **once** only over the course of the semester. Since many of these assignments require making observations in public places, be careful to be as unobtrusive as possible. It is a good idea to find an out of the way place to take notes from, or to sit down in your car after leaving and recording as much as possible of what you remember. Remember, these essays are meant to show your growing command of the class material; **be sure to relate your analysis to relevant class readings, discussions, films, etc.***

#1. Select a place on campus where students regularly gather and socialize, and describe the groups that form. Who associates with whom? Are groups composed largely of similar types of people or of different types of people? What similarities or differences seem to matter the most? (Note: For this assignment, you will be called on to categorize people according to criteria that are, as we've seen in class, often subjective and misleading. Pay special attention to how you categorize the people you observe and be sure to report this.)

#2. Write a letter to the editor of a paper, magazine, or other new source responding to an article or piece relating to the themes of this class. Alternately, write a letter to a Congressperson, Senator, Governor, or other elected official advocating a position related to this class. For this assignment, you will hand in two copies along with a stamped envelope addressed to the letter's recipient. I will put one copy in the mail and write my comments on the other.

#3. Go to a toy store and describe what you see. Which toys are marketed to which groups of children? How can you tell? What are the colors and images used on the packaging? What personality characteristics do the toys claim to promote? What roles and activities do the toys represent? Are toys for infants identified the same way as toys for older children? If not, why not?

#4. Visit a restaurant, store, or other place of business where most of the employees are visible to the public. What kind of people do which jobs? Who are the supervisors, maintenance workers, warehouse workers, "front-line" employees (tellers, checkers, waiters/waitresses, stockers, greeters, etc.)? What kind of people make up the clientele? How does the establishment gear itself to its clients? Do you feel comfortable there? How are you made to feel comfortable or uncomfortable?

#5. Create an artistic piece (painting, poem, short story, collage, sculpture, video, song, etc.) that expresses one of the themes of this class. Accompany this with a page or two describing how your work relates to the class and/or to specific articles.

# Classroom Policies

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School can be overwhelming, for lots of reasons. You are overworked, broke, stressed out -- and it doesn't help that your future hangs in the balance! Throughout the course, I will be making an effort to provide you with tips, tricks, and information that relates not so much to the subject of this class but to the art and science of being a student.

For more of this sort of thing, check out my website, "Being Better Students", at <http://www.dwax.org/students>. It's pretty new, so there's not a ton of stuff posted yet, but I will be adding to it throughout the semester and beyond. If you have particular issues you'd like me to address, or if you have hard-earned knowledge you'd like to share with your fellow students, let me know and we'll see what we can do.

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## *Attendance*

This class relies heavily on your participation. Regular attendance is expected, and will factor into your participation grade. All material covered in the class, whether in the books or in lecture, is considered "fair game" for exams. However, as college students and adults you have the right to determine what and how much you want to gain from your classes. You will have to decide if the missed lecture and discussion, and the point or so that skipping class might cost you, are a fair trade. If you know that you will be absent, arriving late, or coming early, for whatever reason, please let me know ahead of time, for courtesy's sake and so we can make arrangements regarding missed material and/or assignments.

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## *Policy Regarding Student Absences for Observance of Religious Holidays*

It is the university's policy that any student missing classes, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor -- no later than the last day of late registration -- of their intention to participate in religious holidays that do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess.

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## *Late Assignments*

Late assignments are generally not accepted except in dire emergency. If you know you will be unable to meet one of the due dates for a good reason (surgical recovery is a good reason, taking a vacation is not), talk to me as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements to hand the assignment in early.

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## *In-Class Behavior*

Disruptive behavior, including but not restricted to abusive argumentation (with me or your fellow students), creating a disturbance in class, repeated tardiness or early departure, practical jokes, excessive use of cell phones or pagers, or any other disturbance will be dealt with in conjunction with university regulations. If you know that there is a possibility of creating a disturbance for a good reason (for instance, leaving a cell phone on to receive updates on a sick relative), please inform me before class begins.

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## *Academic Honesty*

Academic honesty is a cornerstone of the academic system. Submitting others' work as your own -- whether an entire paper or a single unreferenced quote, even an unreferenced paraphrase -- is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Aside from violating copyright laws and policy, aside from the ethical violation and the loss of a learning opportunity (which are yours to live with), plagiarism of any sort short circuits the academic process by making it impossible to locate the sources of your data and/or analyses. Evidence of cheating on any assignment will result in a "zero" for that assignment; repeat offenses will result in expulsion from my class with a failing grade and, depending on the severity of the offense, may result in additional disciplinary action as outlined in the University and Community College System of Nevada document, Rule and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community. For additional information regarding UNLV's policies on academic dishonesty, see page 56 of the 2002-2004 UNLV Undergraduate Catalog for clarification and the complete policy. For information on citing sources, see <http://www.iss.stthomas.edu/citation.htm>

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## *Withdrawal*

If you wish to drop the class for any reason, you must officially withdraw from the class or you will receive an "F" on your transcript. I will not give administrative withdrawals at the end of the semester unless there are compelling and extraordinary circumstances (e.g. you were unexpectedly dead for 3 weeks) to do so. The responsibility for withdrawing correctly is the student's, not the professor's.

# Classroom Policies (Cont'd)

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## *Learning Enhancement Services*

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Learning Enhancement Services (LES) provides Disability Services, Tutoring Services, and Learning Strategies. If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact LES for coordination in your academic accommodations. I am fully committed to making whatever accommodations I can reasonably make in order to provide an adequate learning environment. LES is located in the Reynolds Student Services Complex, room 137. The phone number is (702) 895-0866 (TDD 895-0652). The web address for Disability Services is [www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les/](http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les/).

## *Grading Standards*

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Assignments will be graded on a combination of two factors: your understanding of the material covered in class and your ability to express that understanding clearly. Unless it becomes an impediment to understanding what you are trying to say, a spelling or grammar error here and there will not negatively affect your grade (but, please do spellcheck and proof-read your work before handing it in). Excessive and distracting errors, however, cannot help but get in the way of your ideas, and most likely will negatively affect your grade.

## *Writing Center*

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This course relies heavily on written assignments. The UNLV writing center offers a variety of services to aid students at any stage of the writing process. These services are free and open to all UNLV students. The writing center is located in the Flora Dungan Humanities Building, room 240. The phone number is (702) 895-3908, or access on the Web at [http://liberalarts.unlv.edu/English/Writing\\_Center/](http://liberalarts.unlv.edu/English/Writing_Center/).

For a list of all campus organizations offering student's assistance with academic matters, check out [http://tlc.unlv.edu/resources/resources\\_student.html](http://tlc.unlv.edu/resources/resources_student.html).

## *Assignment Format*

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All assignments except work done in class should be typed and clearly printed on normal 8 1/2" X 11" paper. Essays should be double-spaced in 12-point type in some standard font (Times, Arial, Garamond, Helvetica, etc.--nothing ornate or oversized, in other words), and should have 1" margins all around. All assignments must be typed. Do spell-check and proofread your work.

## *Rebel Service Council*

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A major tenet of Women's Studies, and the feminist pedagogy that informs it, is the idea of transforming your knowledge into practice. While not formally required, you may want to consider volunteering your time to help your community. The Rebel Service Council offers UNLV students a wide range of service opportunities. Some can be quite intensive, while others require very little commitment of time. If you are interested or want more information, please contact Namita Arora at [namita.arora@ccmail.nevada.edu](mailto:namita.arora@ccmail.nevada.edu) or 895-2047 or check out their web site at <http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/sia/service/rsc.html>

## *Office Hours*

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I am available in my office a couple hours a week, or by appointment. Use that time! Office hours are not just a requirement of the job, they are a primary means of extending your education beyond lectures and readings. If you have questions about the class, problems that are affecting your school work, or just want to chat, please do come by.