Course Description

“[I]n the context of a society shaped by intersecting categories--that is, race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on--the dominant logic is to celebrate multicultural differences without explaining how and why those differences came to be.”¹

This course is a critical examination of the social categories of difference and diversity in the United States. We will explore the nature and content of race and gender, two representative categories of difference. Are “race” and “gender” biological categories that we are born with? Are they identities that we “learn”? How have definitions and understandings of “race” and “gender” changed over the past few decades? After examining the nature and content of “race” and “gender,” we will then explore how these definitions inform and influence educational practice and policy.

Course Objectives

1. Examine various perspectives on the nature of “race” and “gender” as categories of difference in the U.S.
2. Understand how these categories are implicated in the unequal statuses of various groups in the United States.
3. Understand how these two categories operate in educational settings.
4. Explore changing possibilities in educational policies and practices that take into account the social nature of racial and gendered differences.

Course Expectations

A successful class depends on each member actively engaging as both a learner and a teacher. Discussion, rather than lecture, will be the primary activity during class meetings. Class meetings will be mainly structured around small and large group discussions of assigned readings. Students are expected to come to every class on time with the assignments read and completed, and to be responsible and

¹ Rationale for American Studies Department, Macalester College, accessed on October 9, 2008 from http://www.macalester.edu/americanstudies/proposal.pdf
active participants in all class activities. I encourage you to think critically and voice your opinions; however, respect for the opinions of others and a willingness to collaborate with others are also essential.

**Guidelines for Participation in a Multicultural Learning Experience (Open for Discussion and Revision).** These guidelines apply to most group learning experiences. However, it may be useful to remind ourselves of these guidelines, as we begin to work together during the course.

1. Maintain respect for all group members through confidentiality of what is discussed in class.
2. Refrain from the use of derogatory language and overt and covert put-downs, even if used as comic relief.
3. Speak from your experience, for example, “I think…” or “In my experience, I have found…” rather than generalizing experiences to others, as in “People say…”
4. Help ensure that all have an equal opportunity to participate in class discussions.
5. Help keep the class on focus.
6. Let me know your concerns and needs.
7. Address your comments to the group, not just to the instructor.
8. Listen closely to others.
10. Maintain an open mind.

**Assignments**

Critical Reading Responses (2): 30 % (1st due January 22nd, 2nd due February 19th)
Movie Critique/Presentation : 20%(Due February 10th)
Final Paper: 30% (Due March 16th)
Reading Response Questions: 10% [A-G last names, post Mondays, H-Z post Wednesdays]
Class participation: 10%

Details of specific assignments will be available on Moodle.

**Policies**

_ILLNESS/Emergencies/ Unforeseeable Absences_: Please let me know (when possible) if an illness/emergency or unforeseeable circumstance arises and you cannot attend class. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a student’s grade being lowered by one-half (i.e. A to A-).

_Late Assignments_: Assignments not turned in during class on the due date will be penalized one-half grade per day late (A to A-, etc.) and will not be accepted after 5 days. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. Please pace yourself so that you turn in your work on time.

_Students with Disabilities_: Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments is required to speak with Disability Services for Students. Although they will send out a letter about accommodations, it would be helpful if you can inform me of any accommodations required, so that we can make the appropriate arrangements for you.
Readings

Required Books:


These books will be available at the Carleton bookstore. There will also be a copy on reserve at the library. All other readings will available on Moodle.

**Week 1: The Difference that Difference Makes**

*January 6th*

Introduction

*January 8th*


**Week 2: Racial History and Legal Codification**

*January 13th*


American Anthropological Association’s Statement on Race (May 1998)

*January 15th*


**Week 3: Perspectives on Race and Racism**

*January 20th*


VIDEO (in class): *Race the power of an illusion*

*January 22nd FIRST CRITICAL RESPONSE DUE*


Week 4: Perspectives on Race and Racism

*January 27th (DECIDE ON MOVIE GROUPS/MOVIES)*


*January 29th*


Week 5: Ethnography of Race in Education

*February 3rd*


*February 5th*


Week 6: Movie Break

*February 10th*

MOVIE CRITIQUE DUE/PRESENTATIONS

*February 12th*

OPEN
Week 7: Perspectives on Gender and Sexism

February 17th


February 19th SECOND CRITICAL READING RESPONSE DUE


[VIDEO (in class): ABC 20/20 special on transgendered children]

Week 8: Intersections and Educational Considerations

February 24th CHOICE FOR FINAL PAPER WITH BIBLIOGRAPHY


February 26th


Week 9: Ethnography of Race & Gender in Education

March 3rd

March 5th

Week 10:

March 10th OPEN

FINAL PAPER DUE: MONDAY, MARCH 16TH 5 pm