African Americans Studies W111: Race, Class and Gender in the United States.

Preliminary Syllabus

Course Overview

The goal of this course is to describe, interpret and explain the circumstances of African Americans, with regard to race, class and gender stratification in the contemporary USA. We begin with consideration of key concepts, including racialization, racism and ethnicity; Black nationalism, leadership and identity; wealth, income and inequality; sex, gender and the gender division of labor; intersectionality; feminism and Black feminism; and globalization and international migration. We briefly explore the historical background to contemporary stratification by considering theories of ‘the declining significance of race’ (as argued by William Julius Wilson) and the move from plantation to ghetto, and then from ghetto to penitentiary as controlling institutions used against African Americans (as argued by Loic Wacquant). We also consider how Black women and girls have been left out of the larger debates on these issues (as argued by Nikki Jones), and how consideration of them complicates the analysis. We move on to consider the role of economics, politics, demography, class relations, and racist ideologies in the prevalent patterns of stratification; and the role of black leadership and cultural strategies in reducing inequality. We also consider the principles underlying federal policies for alleviating racial inequality and promoting equal opportunities. Throughout the analysis we consider the impact of gender ideologies on these experiences, and we distinguish the experiences of men and women. We then examine the changing relationship of racist images and racialized structures in the age of Obama and the ‘post-racial’ society; and assess how globalization impacts African Americans. As the course unfolds we will also consider the unique experiences of African Americans in California, as compared with African Americans across the USA in general, to assess what are the common and what are the distinctive patterns. Most of the time we will focus on African Americans; but we will also consider how their experiences compare with those of other Blacks, especially West Indians and Africans born abroad, but whose children are born/raised in the USA.

Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe and apply the key concepts of race and ethnicity, racism and new racism, racialization,
- Described and apply the key concepts of gender, the gender division of labor,
Describe and apply the two theoretical frameworks of color blind and color conscious policies to achieve equal opportunities in the United States.

Describe and apply the theoretical framework of feminism, and of Black feminism.

Understand the main dimensions of violence against Black women, and violence between Black women, including proposed policies for the reduction of violence.

Describe the main contours of mass incarceration in the United States, and the consequences for Black ex-prisoners, and the Black community generally.

Describe and interpret the key dimensions of globalization, including the extent of recent Black immigration.

Identify the key aspects of Black organizations and Black leadership in the contemporary United States.

Understand and interpret the ways in which historical patterns shape contemporary patterns.

List of Lectures

MODULE ONE: INTRODUCTION: RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE AGE OF OBAMA

Lecture 1: Racial and gender inequality in the United States.
Lecture 2: The facts of racial inequality in the age of Obama.
Lecture 3: Gender, Race and the feminization of poverty.
Lecture 4: Mass incarceration and the social tentacles of the prison.

MODULE TWO: RACE AND ETHNICITY – CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES

Lecture 5: Race and ethnicity.
Lecture 6: Racialization
Lecture 7: The New Racism
Lecture 8: Racial projects, racial privilege and the “white habitus”.

intersectionality and the feminization of poverty
MODULE THREE: RACE, GENDER AND FEMINISM – CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES

Lecture 9: Sex, Gender, and the Gender Division of Labor
Lecture 10. Intersectionality and the racial division of gender.
Lecture 11. Feminism: Ideologies, concepts and policies.
Lecture 12. Black Feminism

MODULE FOUR: EVIDENCE AND EXPLANATIONS OF RACIAL INEQUALITY

Lecture 13 Racial realists and the individual.
Lecture 14 Critical theorists and institutional dynamics.

MODULE FIVE: THE PRISON AND ITS SOCIAL TENTACLES

Lecture 17. The facts of mass incarceration.
Lecture 18. The prison’s social tentacles (for ex-prisoners).
Lecture 19. The prison’s social tentacles (for Black communities).
Lecture 20. Plantation and prison as controlling institutions.

MODULE: RACE AND GENDER IN THE INNER CITY

Lecture 21. Black women, poverty and violence
Lecture 22. Violence against Black women in the inner city
Lecture 23. Violence between Black women in the inner city.
Lecture 24. Gender, race and public policies.

MODULE: STRATIFICATION AND GLOBALIZATION

Lecture 25: The Black wealthy and Super wealthy.
Lecture 26: Africans, West Indians, and Hispanic Caribbean immigrants.
Lecture 27. The Nature and impact of globalization in the USA.


MODULE EIGHT: BLACK MOBILIZATION, ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Lecture 29. Black organizations, leaders and activists.

Lecture 30. Black organizations and gender.

Lecture 31. Black California and Final Reflections

Reading

Books


An online course reader including chapters by

Barak Obama – Speech on Race
Stephen Small – Racialisation
Robert Miles and Stephen Small – Racism and Ethnicity
Oliver and Shapiro – Wealth and Income
Loic Wacquant – the New ‘Peculiar Institution’
Kimberlé Crenshaw – Mapping the Margins
Barbara Smith – Black Feminism
Patricia Hill Collins – Black Women’s Community Work
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva – Racism without Racists in Obamamerica
John Logan – African and Caribbean Immigration to the USA