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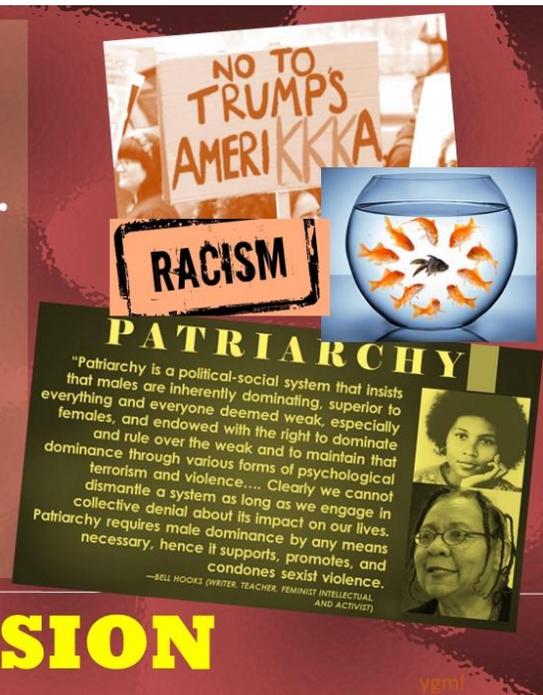
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AAS 355/ Fall 2020/ Department of Transnational Studies

RACE, CLASS, AND SOCIETY (SYLLABUS FOR ONLINE COURSE)

“Human beings are sufficiently altruistic, intelligent, and rational to preclude oppression solely for the sake of oppression. In other words, at the root of **all** forms of oppression (classism, disablism, ethnicism, racism, sexism, etc.) is **exploitation** for purposes that range from material aggrandizement to scapegoating to empire-building.

OPPRESSION



SECTION ONE

Introduction

Folks/People/Guys,

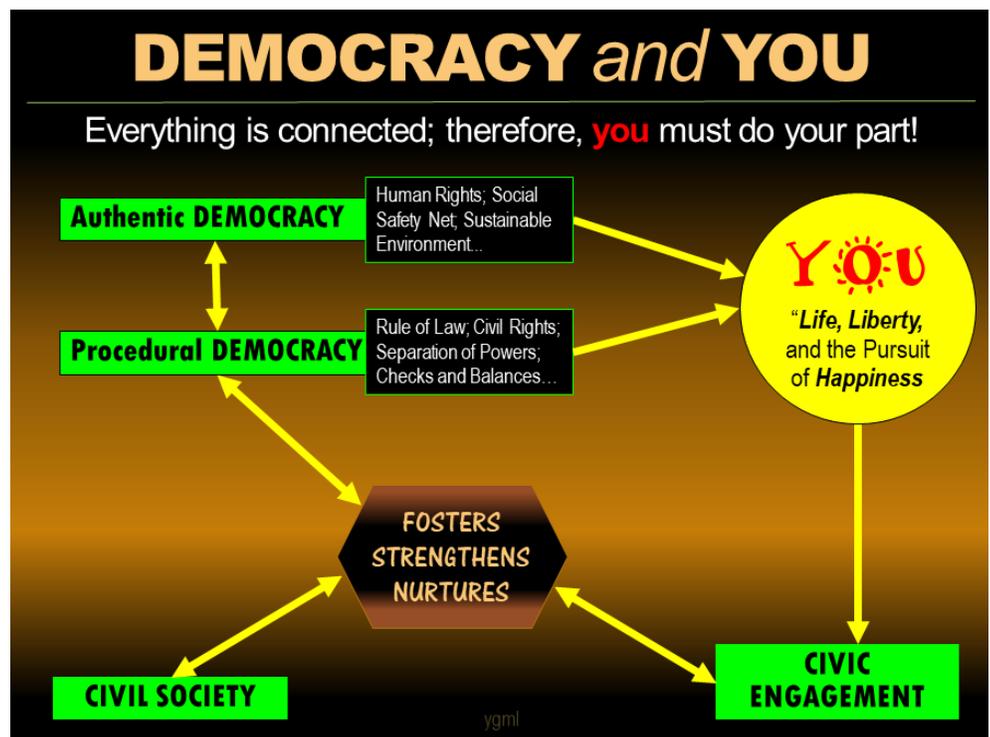
Welcome, welcome, to this Fall 2020, AAS 355 online class—in the tragic year of the Cv-19 pandemic (and in the year of a controversial presidential election).

Below, is a detailed description of this course, together with an indication of the basic requirements . Before you go through them, I want to emphasize some key points about this course:

(a) This online course will be taught asynchronously, and *not* synchronously. What is the difference? A *synchronous* online course is where the course is taught live at set times/days via, for example, Webex or Zoom. On the other hand, an *asynchronous* online course is the opposite, where students learn at times and on days of their own choosing on their own. Therefore, as an asynchronous online course it will require from you, first, a lot of self-motivation and *self-discipline*,¹ and second, it will be mainly test/quizzes driven.

(b) The principal purpose

of this 4-credit hour course is to learn about how the **social structure** functions—in



¹A good example of self-discipline is always keeping up with class announcements and homework assignments. (In fact, regularly viewing and digesting class announcements on a timely basis is mandatory.) If you lack self-discipline, this course may not be the right one for you.

terms of, first, race/ethnicity, and class, and second, gender, and disability. As we explore this topic, we will cover a range of issues that have helped to shape and continue to shape this country as a whole, for good (or ill). And regardless of your major, and regardless of who you are in terms of your racial/ethnic/gender identity, your lives are impacted by what this country is today and where it is going from the social structural perspectives of race/ethnicity, class, and gender—on which hangs everything else: democracy, peace and security, harmony, and prosperity.

- (c) It has always been my practice to introduce you to the workings of a research university, and how to succeed in such a university. Therefore, this topic will also be part of this course.²
- (d) Because I am dealing with a lot of students, responses to e-mails will take place mainly on Mondays and Thursdays. (Note: I access my e-mails only through a desktop computer and not through any mobile device.) To encourage *professionalism*, please do not send me e-mails that do not begin with this proper salutation (Dear Instructor...) and closure (Sincerely,...), *otherwise you may not get a response*.
- (e) When an instructor devotes time to produce material specifically for a class, then that material takes precedence over anything else that is assigned. Man, you have to be super-intelligent not to know this!
- (f) The course workload, in terms of homework assignments, will require—*on average*—about 8–9 hours per week.³ NOTE: If you are taking more than 15 credit hours, rearrange



² A research university is different from a teaching university. Compared to a teaching university, the responsibility for learning falls heavily on your own shoulders because faculty are expected to spend only 40% of their time teaching; they are required to devote the rest of their time to *research* and service.

³ Based, roughly, on this formula: 40 hour work-week, divided by 15 (credit hours), multiplied by 3 (credit hours).

your class schedule by dropping one of your other classes. Homework may also include AV material, such as feature films and documentaries. If an entire film is assigned, then it must be seen in its entirety. (Additionally, you are required to watch the films TWICE—leaving a couple of days in between.)

- (g) Regardless of which race you believe you belong to, please do NOT racialize the epistemology on which this course rests. What does this mean in practice? The view that since this course deals with knowledge by and/or about black people it is not important enough to require *diligence*. ←-- What does this word mean?
- (h) If you are still registered in this class after the last day for drop/add then it will be taken to mean that you have *contractually* agreed to abide by all the requirements and instructions concerning this course. ← Read this sentence again! In exceptional circumstances, course requirements may be subject to change, but with prior notice.

SECTION TWO

Basic Course Information

1. Course Requirements (may be subject to change, at instructor's discretion, *but with prior notice*)

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

- (a) The two required textbooks, indicated below, are now *optional*—that is, you do **not** have to purchase them. Instead, you will be assigned online readings (plus AV material).
- (b) Instead of textbooks, you are **required** to purchase a USB flash drive (if you do not have one already) for your computer. Cost of this drive is usually less than ten dollars, and definitely much less than that of textbooks. The purpose of this USB drive is

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so that you can download and save required online homework, which will include, besides readings, AV materials (films, documentaries, videos, etc.). Note: Films assigned for this class will be available for download. *Streaming is totally discouraged.* To do well on the tests/quizzes, you will be expected to view a film twice with absolutely no distractions of any kind (texting, gossiping, etc.)

- (c) **80%** of course grade will be based on written and/or multiple-choice quizzes; tests; extra credit quizzes; etc. Missed tests/quizzes cannot be made up, unless, with rare exception, you have an excuse backed up by written documentation. ← Read this sentence again.
- (d) **20%** of course grade will come from a test-based term paper *project*. (More about this requirement later.)
- (e) There is no final exam in this course.
- (f) Your final course grade, therefore, will be computed by using this formula: $C*0.8 + D*0.2$
- (g) Letter grade equivalents of percentage points: A =97-100 A- =93-96 B+ =90-92 B =85-89 B- =80-84 C+ =73-79 C =66-72 C- =60-65 D+ =55-59 D =51-54 F =0-50

Extra Credit

In light of frequent requests every semester for an extra credit assignment, from time to time, you may be assigned additional course-relevant material. Quizzes on this material will count toward extra credit earning you bonus points. However, note that since this is a favor, an individual may forfeit such bonus points for unprofessional behavior. ← Read this sentence again.

Policy on Incompletes

Incompletes will NOT be assigned in this course. Note that university policy is that incompletes are assigned at the discretion of the instructor. ← *Read this sentence again.*

2. Course Description (What this course is about)

This course is one of the most important classes you will ever take in this school. Yes, I know. Probably all teachers say that about their classes. Be that as it may, I am sure you are aware that the United States is truly one of the most pluralistic countries in the world today. In addition to the obvious diversity in terms of gender, class, and religion, the U.S. has a diversity of races and ethnic groups that are representative of almost the entire hu-

manity. Therefore, it should not be surprising that these major dimensions of society have historically shaped, *and continue to shape*, the lived experiences of all peoples in this country (politically, economically, and socially). Our purpose then will be to explore the processes behind these determinants. Our focus will be on, *both*, empirical manifestations of these dimensions in the evolution and



current circumstances of a multiracial capitalist democracy that the United States claims to be, *and* on obtaining a generic grounding in the theoretical underpinnings of class, race, etc. as *heuristic* concepts—considered, it must be emphasized, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and where possible *from a broader historical and global context*.

3. Pedagogy (How this course will be taught)

1. Given that for most of you, because of your major, this course will probably be the only one of its kind you will ever take in this school, you will be expected to do some work in

this class, even though it's a Gen Ed class. Really? Yes. ☺ Therefore, if you are on probation and/or you are working more than 20 hours at a job, and you are carrying more than 15 credit hours, you are strongly, strongly urged to rearrange your course schedule by dropping one of your other class(es).

2. This course will be taught from an *inter-disciplinary* perspective. That is, it will introduce you to whatever insights, concepts, and theories relevant to the study of a given topic, regardless of their disciplinary location.
3. From a **structural** point of view, the course has two parts to it: (a) films and other audio-visual material; and (b) course readings/class notes.
4. Please note that the course will also briefly introduce you, as the course progresses, to what may be called “the ways of a *research* university” (research, publication, service, tenure, governance, and so on). A research university is different from a teaching university. Compared to a teaching university, the responsibility for learning falls heavily on your own shoulders because faculty are contractually required to spend only about 40% of their time teaching; they must devote the rest of their time to research and service. If you haven't already figured it out, this is the reason why, unlike say a community college, this is not a “hold-my-hand-and--pamper-me” type of educational institution.
5. Given that most of you are doing majors/minors in business, STEM, health sciences and other similar

fields, and therefore, you, most likely, will never take another course that deals with similar subject matter as this one, my effort will be directed toward teaching you, both, *con-*
cepts (as tools of analysis), as well as *factual* information. You should also note that



some of the assigned readings will be written by the instructor, and since they will constitute extensions of class-lectures, you will be well advised to pay special attention to them.

SECTION THREE

Learning Outcomes

(What you are expected to learn in this course)

See separate document, available via the class home page..

SECTION FOUR

Textbooks (Optional)

As indicated above, the required textbooks are now optional—you do **not** have to purchase them. However, for those of you who may desire to go more deeply into some of the topics that will be covered in the course, then these are the original textbooks:

- (a) *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study—Eleventh Edition*, by Paula S. Rothenberg and Christina Hsu Accomando. ISBN: 978-1319143657 (Price: about \$100.00)

- (b) *Privilege, Power, and Difference—Third Edition*, by Allan G. Johnson. ISBN: 978-0073404226. (Price: about \$70.00)

NOTE

To encourage *professionalism*, please do not send me e-mails that do not begin with this proper salutation (Dear Instructor...) and closure (Sincerely,...), otherwise you may not get a response!

SECTION FIVE

Course Proceedings Schedule

The course proceedings schedule that specifies course assignments, test dates, etc. is available as an interactive document; and you can access it via the class home page.

SECTION SIX

General Course Administrative Policies

(a) You are reminded that the University's "Student Responsibility Statement" (available [here](#)) specifies as follows: "By accepting responsibility for their education, students enhance the development of their academic, social and career goals. As a condition of enrollment, students are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and abiding by the university's regulations, procedures, requirements and deadlines as described in official publications, including the university's undergraduate catalog, UB websites, and official university email communications. In addition, all students are required to positively affirm their knowledge of UB's Student Conduct Rules, University Standards and Administrative Regulations (available [here](#)) prior to their inaugural semester at UB. Asserting a lack of knowledge of university regulations will not be accepted as a basis for an exception to these regulations." ← Folks, read this last sentence again.

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(Note: the student code of conduct, and administrative rules and regulations, just mentioned are available [here](#), and [here](#).) In other words: this course strictly abides by university policies on (a) academic honesty (available [here](#)); (b) disability (available

[here](#)); (c) discrimination (available [here](#)) ; (d) sexual harassment (available [here](#)); (e) academic freedom (see below); and (f) classroom etiquette (available [here](#)).

(b) **Special Note on Disability:** Reasonable accommodations for equal access to this course because of disability should be requested through Accessibility Resources in Capen 60. However, providing me with a note from the disability office is not enough. You must also indicate how I can best accommodate your needs.

(c) As already noted, to encourage *professionalism*, please do not send me e-mails that do not begin with this proper salutation (Dear Instructor...) and closure (Sincerely,...), *otherwise you may not get a response*.

SECTION SEVEN

Academic Freedom

People, because of the kinds of topics we will be covering in this course (relating to race, gender, class, democracy, the rule of law, etc., etc.) which may sometimes provoke controversy among some of you, it is really important that you understand the university's policy on academic freedom *as it relates to faculty*. This policy reads in part:

The University supports the principle of academic freedom as a concept intrinsic to the achievement of its institutional goals. This principle implies a trust in the integrity and responsibility of the members of the academic community. Samuel P. Capen, former Chancellor of the University of Buffalo, who is remembered for the tradition of academic freedom he implemented during his leadership of the University, said in 1935:

“Acceptance by an institution of the principles of academic freedom implies that teachers in that institution are free to investigate any subject, no matter how much it may be hedged about by taboos; that they are free to make known the results of their investigation and their reflection by word of mouth or in writing, before their classes or elsewhere; that they are free as citizens to take part in any public controversy outside the institution; that no repressive measures, direct or indirect, will be

applied to them no matter how unpopular they may become through opposing powerful interests or jostling established prejudices, and no matter how mistaken they may appear to be in the eyes of members and friends of the institution; that their continuance in office will be in all instances governed by the prevailing rules of tenure and that their academic advancement will be dependent on their scientific competence and will be in no way affected by the popularity or unpopularity of their opinions or utterances....”

(The full policy is available via the student code of conduct, available [here](#).)

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

It is the rigorous interdisciplinary intellectual practice of critically, skillfully, and consistently investigating, problematizing, conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing, theorizing, evaluating, and applying information against the backdrop of cognitive behavior characterized by, among other things:

- the scrupulous application of moral reasoning to ethical questions;
- professionalism (defined here as a web of interlinked behavioral habits, that include dedication, dependability, diligence, compassion, dignity, competence, civility, impartiality, honesty, and so on);
- a fiery passion for truth;
- a relentless commitment to fairness and justice (in one’s own personal life, and in social terms);
- a profound belief in the value of honest research;
- intellectual humility;
- patience and open-mindedness to take seriously the views of peers;
- a deep commitment to the acquisition of knowledge and information on a variety of issues, both, personal as well as public;
- uncompromising honesty in confronting personal biases, prejudices, stereotypes, etc.;
- possession of limitless curiosity regarding all kinds of intellectual subject matter; and
- a refusal to make judgments that are not based on reasoned reflection.

