

AAS 355  
(Registration no. 20964)  
**RACE, CLASS, AND SOCIETY**  
Spring 2018

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## **PART ONE**

### **Basic Course Information**

**Credits:** 4

**Date, Place, and Time:** Mondays / Wednesdays: Clemens 103 / 12:30 pm to 1:50 pm.

#### **Course Description** (What this course is about)

The purpose of this course is to explore how a number of key dimensions of the social structure—race/ethnicity, gender, and class—impacts politics, economics, culture, and so on in United States in terms of power, conflict, and stability. In doing so, we will draw many of our examples from the current and historical experiences of African Americans (and other similarly placed racial/ethnic minorities).

#### **Pedagogy** (How this course will be taught)

1. This course will be taught from the perspective of a “foundational course,” meaning it will also seek to provide you with a firm grounding in the analytical theories and concepts that lie behind the study of the social structure in societies such as the United States.
2. Organizationally, the course is divided into four sections: In Part One our focus will be race/ethnicity; followed by class in Part Two, and gender in Part Three. Part Four will explore the connections between race/ethnicity, gender and class as they are played out in practice. Please note, however, that the course will be taught from an *inter-disciplinary* perspective (combining primarily political science, history, sociology, and law). 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. Additionally, we will also consider the comparative dimension in the study of the social structure (for example, race/racism is not uniquely relevant only to United States).
3. From a structural point of view, the course has three parts to it: class lectures, course readings, and audio-visual material. While each of these three parts will, of course, be related, they, however, will not have identical content. For example: class lectures will not always be a repetition of material in course readings. In fact, my primary concern during class lectures/discussions will be to highlight *macro-societal* processes and events (leaving the rest of the heavy lifting to assignments). Therefore, attendance in this course is absolutely mandatory. Missing the audio-visual material, for instance, will have severe repercussions on test-performance. (NOTE: Audio-visual material screened in class will not always be available outside class.)
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).

## Course Requirements

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

### Basic Course Requirements and Grading Policy

- (a) **Textbook.** Given the wide range of topics this course will cover, there is no required text in this course. Instead, all assigned readings will be available online.
- (b) **60%** of course grade: written and/or multiple choice quizzes; tests; extra credit quizzes; etc. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, unless, with rare exception, you have an excuse backed up by written documentation. ← Read this sentence again.
- (c) **20%** of course grade: final exam during *exam week*. NOTE: Your exam schedule is available now via your “MYUB” page.
- (d) **20%** of course grade: a writing *project* (made up of two parts: a test + written assignment).

### Supplementary Course Requirements (may have an impact on your final course grade):

- (a) Class attendance is mandatory (may be taken into consideration in the final computation of your course grade).<sup>1</sup>
- (b) Participation, *reflecting completion of assigned readings*, is mandatory (may be taken into consideration in the final computation of your course grade); therefore, I may call on you in class. However, note that as explained above, class participation does not include being a class clown and/or a class jerk.
- (c) If I sense that you are not doing your readings, I may also, at my own discretion, give you “pop quizzes” from time to time. By definition a pop quiz cannot be made up if you miss one.
- (d) It is mandatory for you to take notes in this class. (I may call upon you at any time to submit your notebook for inspection.)
- (e) It is mandatory that you have access to your *own* copy of each of the two required textbooks. Years of teaching experience have taught me that students who do not have access to their *own* copies of the required textbooks seldom, if at all, complete their reading assignments.
- (f) Keeping up with current affairs. A lot of material we will be covering in this course will have relevance for comprehending what is going on outside the classroom (locally, nationally, and internationally) and vice versa; therefore, you are required to be current with national and international news by visiting these three websites on a regular basis: [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org); [www.pbs.org/newshour](http://www.pbs.org/newshour); and [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)

### Extra Credit

In light of frequent requests every semester for an extra credit assignment, from time to time, you may be assigned course-relevant material from current news sources or other sources. Quizzes on this material will count toward extra credit earning you bonus points.

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<sup>1</sup> University policy on attendance specified in the *Undergraduate Catalog* states: “Students may be justifiably absent from classes due to religious observances, illness documented by a physician or other appropriate health care professional, conflicts with university-sanctioned activities documented by an appropriate university administrator, public emergencies, and documented personal or family emergencies. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor in writing with as much advance notice as possible. Instructors may determine a reasonable amount of coursework that should be completed in order to make up the student's absence. Students are responsible for the prompt completion of any alternative assignments.”

## *Policy on Incompletes*

Incompletes will be assigned in the rarest of cases. Note that university policy is that incompletes are assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Moreover, incompletes can only be assigned if the student has maintained a passing grade in the course, and there is a well-defined pathway to meeting the incomplete course assignment(s).

# **PART TWO**

## **Course Administrative Policies**

### **1. Policy on Disability**

The policies of the school on disability arrangements apply in this course. Visit the web page of the Accessibility Resources Office to determine what the policies are here: <http://www.ub-disability.buffalo.edu/>

### **2. Policy Concerning Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment**

This course subscribes to the University's policy on discrimination, and sexual harassment, which states in part:

Pursuant to University policy, the University at Buffalo is committed to ensuring equal employment, educational opportunity, and equal access to services, programs, and activities without regard to an individual's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, gender, pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, predisposing genetic characteristics, marital status, veteran status, military status, domestic violence victim status, or ex-offender status. Employees, students, applicants or other members of the University community (including but not limited to vendors, visitors, and guests) may not be subjected to harassment that is prohibited by law or treated adversely based upon a protected characteristic.

The University's policy is in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and harassment. These laws include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as Amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and the New York State Human Rights Law. These laws prohibit discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

(The full policy is available here: <http://policy.business.buffalo.edu/Policy%20Library/Discrimination%20and%20Harassment.pdf>)

### **3. Policy on Electronic Devices (phones, computers, etc.)**

(a) Once class has begun, all your electronic communication devices must be switched off AND completely out of sight; that is they must be in your book bag at all times. Each time I have to tell you to put a device away (regardless of whether you are using it or not) I may assign penalty points to your final course grade. See also the "Policy on Student Responsibility and Classroom Conduct" in this document.

(b) Use of portable computers are not permitted in my courses without obtaining prior permission from me (which usually will be denied).

## 4. Policy on Complaints

If you feel you have a *legitimate* complaint(s) about this course then you are welcome to talk to the instructor. If, thereafter, you are still dissatisfied, then you can ask to speak to the Chair of his department (*Department of Transnational Studies*) by visiting the departmental office. For information about the department, check out its website by looking it up at the university's website. (Have you ever visited the university's website? Why not?)

## 5. Policy on Academic Freedom

This course subscribes to the University's policy regarding academic freedom, which 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 here: <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/judicial/12rulesp.pdf>)

## 6. Policy Concerning Academic Dishonesty

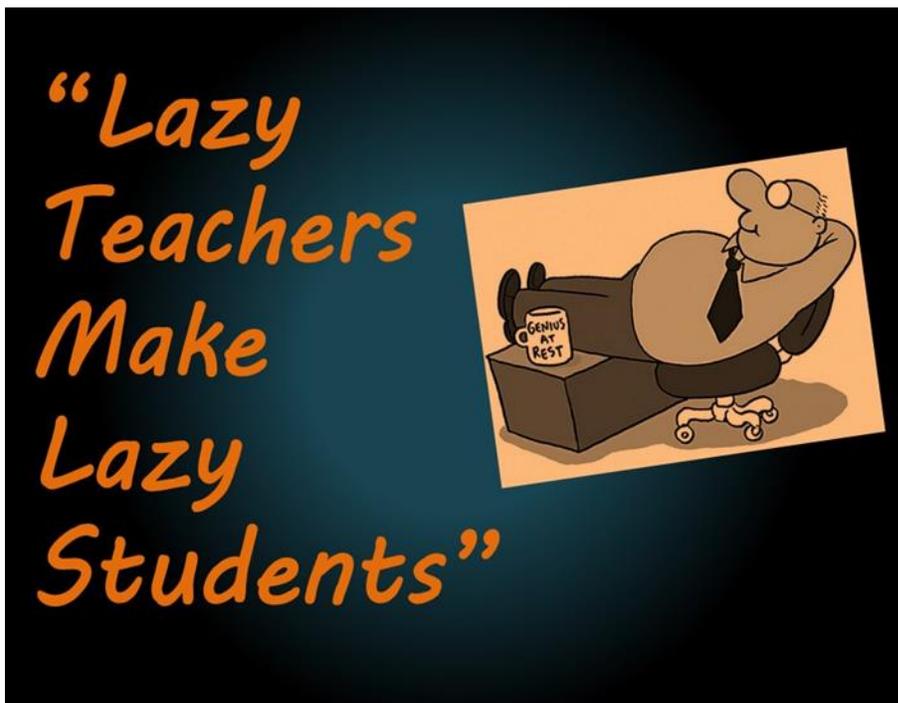
This course subscribes to the University's policy regarding academic dishonesty. This policy, *which has been modified slightly* by the instructor (so as to take into consideration the potential to cheat via the internet), reads in part:

Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas....

Academic dishonesty IN THIS COURSE includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- *Previously submitted work.* Submitting academically required material that has been previously submitted—in whole or in substantial part—in another course, without prior and expressed consent of the instructor.
- *Plagiarism.* Copying or receiving material from any source and submitting that material as one's own, without acknowledging and citing the particular debts to the source (quotations, phrases, basic ideas), or in any other manner representing the work of another as one's own.
- *Cheating.* Soliciting and/or receiving information from, or providing information to, another student or any other unauthorized source (including electronic sources such as cellular phones and PDAs), with the intent to deceive while completing an examination or individual assignment.
- *Falsification of academic materials.* Fabricating laboratory materials, notes, reports, or any forms of computer data; forging an instructor's name or initials; resubmitting an examination or assignment for reevaluation which has been altered without the instructor's authorization; or submitting a report, paper, materials, computer data, or examination (or any considerable part thereof) prepared by any person other than the student responsible for the assignment.
- *Misrepresentation of documents.* Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University or Official document, record, or instrument of identification.
- *Confidential academic materials.* Procurement, distribution or acceptance of examinations or laboratory results without prior and expressed consent of the instructor.
- *Selling / distributing academic assignments.* No student is allowed to sell or offer for sale (or even simply distribute without receiving anything in return) to any person/website any academic assignment, or any inappropriate assistance in the preparation, research, or writing of any assignment, which the person knows, or has reason to believe, is intended for submission in fulfillment of any course or academic program requirement here at U.B. or elsewhere.
- *Purchasing/acquiring academic assignments.* No student is allowed to purchase or acquire an academic assignment intended for submission in fulfillment of any course or academic program requirement here at U.B.

(For your reference, the full university policy is available here: <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>)



## 7. Policy on Student Responsibility and Classroom Conduct

1. If you do not already know, this is a *research* university; the implication of which is that you are responsible for your own learning to a much greater extent than, say, at a “hold-my-hand-and-pamper-me” institution (such as a two-year college). This fact also means that this course subscribes to the University’s policy on student responsibility, which states in part:

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 publi-

cations, 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, and adherence to, UB's Student Conduct Rules, University Standards and Administrative Regulations 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.

(The full policy is available here: <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/need.shtml>)

2. Additionally, this course fully subscribes to the policy on "Behavioral Expectations in the Classroom" spelled out in the *Undergraduate Degree and Course Catalog* here: <https://catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/obstruction.html> and which reads in part:

The university recognizes that faculty members are responsible for effective management of the classroom environment to promote conditions that will enhance student learning. Accordingly, instructors should set reasonable rules for classroom behavior and must articulate these rules, in writing, in materials provided to the students at the start of the semester....

Classroom "etiquette" expectations should include:

- Attending classes and paying attention. Students should not ask an instructor in class to go over material they missed by skipping a class or not concentrating.
- Not coming to class late or leaving early. If a student has to enter a class late, he or she should do so quietly and should not disrupt the class by walking between the class and the instructor. Students should not leave class unless it is an absolute necessity.
- Not talking with other classmates while the instructor or another student is speaking. If a student has a question or comment, he or she should raise a hand, rather than starting a conversation about it with a neighbor.
- Showing respect and concern for others by not monopolizing class discussion. Students must allow others time to give their input and ask questions. Students should not stray from the topic of class discussion.
- Not eating and drinking during class time.
- Turning off electronic devices including cell phones, pagers, and beeper watches.
- Avoiding audible and visible signs of restlessness. These are both rude and disruptive to the rest of the class.
- Focusing on class material during class time. Sleeping, talking to others, doing work for another class, reading the newspaper, checking e-mail, and exploring the Internet are unacceptable and can be disruptive.
- Not packing bookbags or backpacks to leave until the instructor has dismissed class.

Note: failure to comply with any of these expectations together with any of the other requirements specified in this document or on the class home page may entail, at my discretion, not only lawfully permissible sanctions but the withdrawal—*both retroactively and prospectively*—of any privileges extended to students in this course (such as bonus points from extra-credit work, and the like).

## 8. Other Course Administrative Policies

**Policy on E-mails:** See Appendix to the Syllabus

**Policy on Class Notes:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Class Participation:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Classroom Sitting Arrangement:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Attendance and Missed Work:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Reading Assignments:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

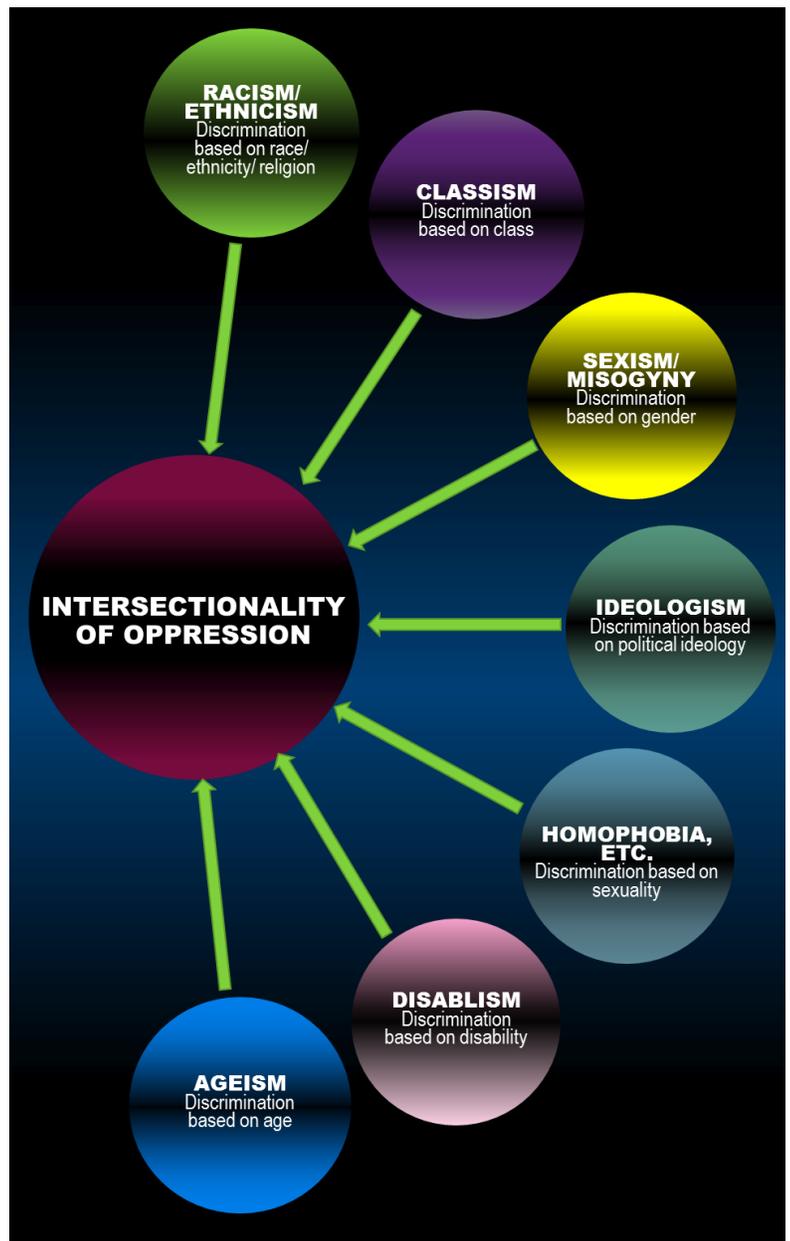
**Policy on AV Materials:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Current Affairs:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Requests for Letters of Recommendation:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Policy on Coverage of Course Content:** See Appendix to the Syllabus.

**Miscellaneous Matters:** See Appendix to the Syllabus



## **PART THREE**

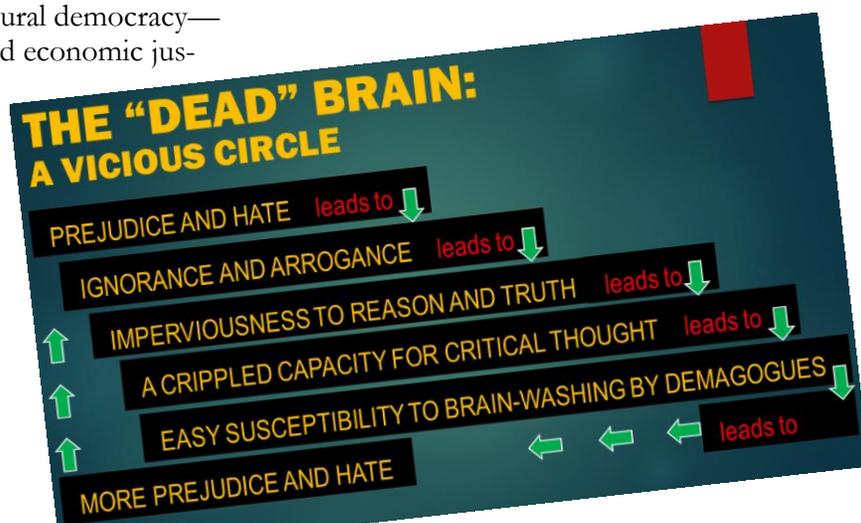
### **Learning Outcomes**

See separate document

## **PART FOUR**

## Instructor Biography

I have been living in this country *longer than most of you*, and I have been engaged in researching, writing, teaching, and activism on issues of authentic and procedural democracy—including human rights, civil rights, political and economic justice—for many years; therefore, I want you to consider yourself privileged to be taking a course with me. Why? Because I will bring to class not only my expertise and passion as an instructor but analytical perspectives that can only come from the kind of geographically diverse educational and lived experiences I have had. Specifically, I have degrees from universities in Africa, England, Canada, and here in the United States—four different countries, three different continents.



ACKNOWLEDGING

## RACIALIZATION

“Race continues to play a defining role in one’s life trajectory and outcomes. A complex system of racial bias and inequities is at play, deeply rooted in our country’s history, culture and institutions. This system of racialization — which routinely confers advantage and disadvantage based on skin color and other characteristics — must be clearly understood, directly challenged and fundamentally transformed. If our nation is to live up to its democratic ideals — that all people are created equal and treated fairly — then racial equity and inclusion must be at the forefront of how we shape our institutions, policies and culture.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, United States. *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*, 2014, p. 2.