

Sample syllabus adapted from a course taught in 2024

Race, Class, and Gender: Theories of Intersectionality & Justice

Lecture Times: T/Th 2:30-3:45 PM

Instructor: Sara Gia Trongone, Lecturer (trongone@wisc.edu) (she/her)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM CST or by appointment

Course Description: What is social science and why might it be useful to us—not just as a set of academic disciplines but also as a tool for making sense of the world around us and helping us transform it? This course is a primer on critical theory in the social sciences, specifically theories of race, class, and gender. Some of the texts we will read together are challenging, but we will read them in digestible chunks of no more than 15 pages and learn what we can from them together. You will also have the opportunity to “put the theory to work” and apply core themes and concepts to small ethnographic and oral history projects. No prior background in or exposure to social science theory or research methods is needed; I will encourage you to bring other disciplinary perspectives or interests to bear on class discussion, especially if this is your first time engaging with social science texts.

Learning Objectives: Beyond the specific content we will cover in this course, I hope we will achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

- Foster critical thinking about society and social processes.
- Identify some of the structural, cultural, and historical factors that shape our daily lives.
- Develop your own ideas about how race, class, and gender operate in America and ground those ideas in key concepts and debates in theory.
- Critically engage with canonical texts: From DuBois to Marx, social science has no shortage of brilliant (and sometimes dense) theorists. You might love these texts, or you might find them dull and dusty. However you feel about them, I will ask you to connect them to your own lives and see how well they hold up. What is useful about these texts, and why do they have staying power? How might we critique or expand upon them through further research?
- Conduct self-directed research and reflection through two small projects. Practice applying academic themes and concepts to your own experiences.

Required Reading: There is *no textbook* required for this course, and I will not ask you to purchase any books. I will provide PDF copies of all readings. Electronic copies of these readings will be posted on *Perusall*, a free collaborative digital reader integrated with Canvas (more on this below).

Course Expectations: This is a 3-credit course. The standard expectation for 3 credits is that students will work on course learning activities (i.e. reading, writing, conducting research, etc.) for about three hours of the classroom for every class period.

Grading & Course Requirements: There are no quizzes or exams in this course. Instead, you will complete one ethnographic essay, one oral history assignment, and provide annotations on the required readings.

1. Participation (25%): Classroom participation is an act of solidarity with your classmates. Research shows that participating actively will help you learn more—not only from the assigned texts but also from each other. We will develop a community agreement on our first day of class for how we want to engage with each other and review it periodically. Graded participation points are determined as follows:

- Showing up and demonstrating active listening and reflection: Life happens, and sometimes you won't be able to come to class—that's OK! **You may miss up to 3 classes** without any penalty to your participation grade. (However, you will still be expected to complete a reading annotation for any days you miss.)
- Signing up once during the term to **generate three (3) small group discussion questions and facilitate discussion.** I will provide more information on this assignment (including a primer on what makes for a good discussion question) on the sign-up sheet.
 - **You will not have to do a Perusall annotation on the days you sign up to generate discussion questions.**

2. Perusall Reading Annotations (25%): Students are expected to post comments or questions on course readings and interact with their classmates on Perusall, a free collaborative digital reader and annotation tool.

- **Every day that we have a reading assignment, please post two (2) thoughtful comments or questions before class at 2:00 PM.** You may receive partial credit for annotations made by 11:59 PM on the evening of class. I will post a detailed rubric to Canvas.
- If there is more than one assigned reading, please try not to make both annotations on the same reading. If there is only one reading assigned, please try not to make both annotations on the same page.
- The final score for each reading assignment will be between 0 and 2. (One point for each annotation.)
- We will do a trial run on the first day we have a reading assignment so that you can see how it works. The first annotation scores will not count.

3. Ethnographic Essay (25%): Students will conduct ethnographic observations of a social setting (e.g., a student organization, fraternity/sorority, classroom, place of work, etc.) and apply course content to what they observe. *Please visit the same site twice for at least 30 minutes and take detailed notes.* In your final reflective essay, **draw on at least two readings** to explain what is happening in this space, what is taken for granted as “normal,” and how power, oppression, and resistance operate in this setting.

- **Complete online ethics certification (3%)** (<https://research.wisc.edu/compliancepolicy/human-research-protection-program/hrpp-training/citi-human-subjectsprotections-hsp-training-instructions/>). More information is available in the assignment section of Canvas.
- **Site selection and rationale (5%)**
 - You will write a brief memo stating where you plan to conduct your ethnographic observations. What is interesting about the setting you chose? Are you an insider or outsider in this community? How does that shape what you might see?
- **Fieldnotes and preliminary observations (5%)**

- Please provide the notes you took during your ethnographic observations and some preliminary analysis of what it tells us about how race, class, and/or gender operate in everyday life.
- **Final reflective essay (12%)**
 - You will write a short essay of 5-7 pages, double-spaced, that: a) summarizes what you saw and experienced, b) defines two course readings and/or concepts, c) connects those course readings/concepts to your observations.

4. **Oral History Assignment (25%)**: Students will interview two people of their choice (e.g., family members, friends, colleagues, etc.) about how their gender identity, class position, and/or racial identity affects their lives. Students will prepare a semi-structured interview guide of at least 5 questions and write a reflective essay drawing on **at least two readings or course concepts**.
Please do not use the same two readings or concepts you used in your ethnographic essay assignment.

- **Project plan (3%)**
 - You will write a brief memo stating which two people you plan to interview. How are these two people similar or different in terms of their lived experiences and identities?
- **Interview questions (5%)**
 - Please submit a draft interview guide of at least 5 questions.
- **Oral history transcript (2%)**
 - Please upload a copy of one of your interview transcripts to Canvas. This assignment is designed to familiarize you with free transcription software.
- **Final reflective essay (15%)**
 - You will write a short report of 5-7 pages, double-spaced, that: a) describes who you interviewed and why, b) discusses what was similar and different across both interviews, c) defines two course readings and/or concepts, and d) connects those course readings/concepts to key themes that emerge from your interviews.

Grading for Essay Projects: I will use a modified version of contract grading for all components of your essay projects. This means that when you turn in your assignment, you will receive a preliminary grade and suggestions for how to improve it. If you wish, you may revise the assignment for a higher grade. Please keep in mind that I will need at least 24 hours to read and re-grade your assignments.

Final grades will be calculated as follows: A=93-100, AB=86-92, B=80-85, BC=74-79, C=66-73, D=56-65, F=< 55.

Classroom Discussion Policy: Our classroom is a learning community. Everyone's learning trajectory is different. We are here to learn from and with each other. Please adhere to these basic principles for discussion:

- Please do not assume what other individuals are thinking or what groups they represent. That does not build trust or make for good science.
- We are all colleagues; please treat each other as such. Disagreement and critique are healthy and normal, but animosity and disrespect will not be tolerated.

- “Ouch”-“Oops”: Expressing hurt and discomfort is important so that we can take stock of what happened and continue to learn together. If I say something stupid or harmful as an instructor—or if one of your peers does—I hope we can create an environment where someone feels comfortable saying so, either for themselves or out of concern for the dignity of others. “Ouch” is a great place to start. If someone says “ouch” to you, please respond from a position of respect and openness (“oops”), not dismissiveness or defensiveness.

Accommodations & Accessibility: I encourage all students to contact me about any life events, health conditions, or responsibilities outside of the classroom that may affect performance in the course if that's something you'd like to share. I am happy to make a plan with you that accommodates your needs. Students with formal accommodation requests: *please present your accommodations to the instructor within two weeks of the first day of class.*

Parking Lot & Feedback Box: I genuinely want to know what you're taking away from the class, how I can better support you, and what ideas you have to make our time together more valuable. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email or after class. There is also a box on our Canvas homepage labeled, “Parking Lot & Feedback Box” with a link to a Google Form. You're welcome to submit comments, resource requests, and/or feedback to me any time (anonymously, if you prefer) using the Parking Lot link, which will be open and available all term.

Grading & Late Policy: If you have an emergency that requires an extension, please consult with me *before* the due date.

Instructor Contact: I will try to answer all emails within 24-48 hours. If I do not respond to your email within that time, please send me a gentle “bump” reminder to put your email back at the front of my inbox.

Academic Integrity: As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students at <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>.

Weekly Schedule (subject to change, based on the class's needs and interests)

Week 1 – Course Introductions and Theories of Class I

Tuesday, September 3 rd	Introductions; Review syllabus and Canvas page The Sociological Imagination No assigned reading, we will read an excerpt together in class In class: How do we want to be in this space together?
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Thursday, September 5 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Practice Annotations (make two annotations, these grades will not count):</p> <p>Karl Marx, “Estranged Labour” from <i>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844</i></p> <p>Kathleen M. Millar, <i>Reclaiming the Discarded: Life and Labor on Rio’s Garbage Dump</i>, pp. 1-10</p>
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Week 2- Class II

Tuesday, September 10 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations (<u>graded annotations begin</u>):</p> <p>W.E.B. Du Bois, <i>Black Reconstruction</i>, pp. 10-16</p> <p>David Roediger, <i>The Wages of Whiteness</i>, pp.1-15</p>
Thursday, September 12 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations</p> <p>Erik Olin Wright, <i>Class Counts</i>, pp. 1-19</p> <p>In class: Hadas Their on the middle class</p>

Week 3- Race

Tuesday, September 17 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations:</p> <p>W.E.B. Du Bois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>, pp. 3-8</p> <p>Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, <i>Racism Without Racists (6th edition)</i>, pp. 1-2; 19-26</p> <p>In class: Barbara Fields and Ta-Nehisi Coates on Racecraft</p>
Thursday, September 19 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations:</p> <p>Noel Ignatiev, <i>How the Irish Became White</i>, pp. 119; 34-42</p> <p>Cheryl I. Harris, “Whiteness as Property”, pp. 1715-1745</p> <p><u>Ethics Training Assignment due by Friday, September 20th at 11:59 PM</u></p>

Week 4 – Gender

Tuesday, September 24 th	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Lisa Wade and Myra Marx Ferree, <i>Gender</i> (2 nd edition) pp. 3-7; 11-16 Claire Ainsworth, “Sex Redefined” in <i>Nature</i>
Thursday, September 26 th	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Patricia Hill Collins, <i>Black Feminist Thought</i> , pp. 1-8 Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?” bell hooks, <i>Black Looks</i> , “Reconstructing Black Masculinity”, pp. 87-93; 100-109 In class: The Combahee River Collective Statement <u>Site Selection Assignment due by Friday, September 27th at 11:59 PM</u>

Week 5- Low-Wage and “Women’s” Work

Tuesday, October 1 st	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Barbara Ehrenreich, <i>Nickel and Dimed</i> , pp. 8-16; 106-111 Arlie Hochschild, <i>The Managed Heart</i> , pp. 3-16.
Thursday, October 3 rd	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Ashley Mears, <i>Very Important People</i> , pp. xi-xv; 1-7; bottom of 15-24 In class: The pay and productivity gap

Week 6- Power, Violence, and the State

Tuesday, October 8 th	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Michel Foucault, “Panopticism” in <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i> , pp. 1-12. Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” <i>Essays in Sociology</i> (excerpt), pp. 1&2. In class: Celtics’ Jaylen Brown on Panopticism
Thursday, October 10 th	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Watch at home: <i>Borderland: The Line Within</i>

Week 7- Institutions: Education and Incarceration

Tuesday, October 15 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Ruth Wilson Gilmore, <i>Golden Gulag</i>, pp. 5-26</p> <p>In class: <u>States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2024</u> report</p>
Thursday, October 17 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Paulo Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>, pp. 44; 47-48; 71-75 bell hooks, <i>Teaching to Transgress</i>, pp. 13-16</p> <p>In class: What does education mean to you? What is its purpose? and <i>Pushout</i></p> <p><u>Field Notes and Preliminary Observations Assignment due by Friday, October 18th at 11:59 PM</u></p>

Week 8- Racial Capitalism

Tuesday, October 22 nd	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: <u>Watch:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ruth Wilson Gilmore: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CS627aKrJI• Angela Davis: https://www.dwherstories.com/timeline/what-is-racial-capitalism <p><u>Read:</u> Robin D.G. Kelley, “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?”</p>
Thursday, October 24 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Linda Villarosa, “Pollution is Killing Black Americans”, <i>The New York Times</i></p> <p><u>Final Reflective Essay for Ethnographic Project due by Friday, October 25th at 11:59 PM</u></p>

Week 9- Social Reproduction Theory

Tuesday, October 29 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Arlie Hochschild, <i>The Second Shift</i>, “Afterward”, pp. 263-269 Allison Daminger, “The Cognitive Dimension of Household Labor”</p>
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	In class: Wages for Housework Campaign
Thursday, October 31 st	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Tithi Bhattacharya, <i>Social Reproduction Theory</i>, pp. 1-4; 8-9 Tera Hunter, <i>To 'Joy My Freedom</i>, pp. 74-82; 88-91; 97</p> <p>In class: The Atlanta Washerwoman's Strike</p>

Week 10- Black Power and the Civil Rights Movement

Tuesday, November 5 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Donna Murch, <i>Assata Taught Me: State Violence, Racial Capitalism, and the Movement for Black Lives</i>, Chapter 1, “The Campus and the Street” Barbara Ransby, <i>Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement</i>, pp. 18-20; 284-290</p>
Thursday, November 7 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Aldon Morris, <i>The Origins of the Black Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change</i> (selections TBD, depending on class interests)</p> <p><u>Project Plan for Oral History Assignment due by Friday, November 8th at 11:59 PM</u></p>

Week 11- Latinx and AAPI Movements

Tuesday, November 12 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Mario T. Garcia, <i>The Chicano Movement: Perspectives from the Twenty-First Century</i> pp. 1-15</p>
Thursday, November 14 th	<p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: Daryl Maeda, <i>Rethinking the Asian American Movement</i>, Chapter 3, “Community Activism in Cities and the Countryside,” pp. 52-66; 80-84</p>

Week 12- Indigenous Movements and Welfare Rights

Tuesday, November 19 th	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Nick Estes, <i>Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance</i> , pp. 1-23.
Thursday, November 21 st	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Poor People's Movements, "Introduction," pp. xix-xxiv, and selections from Chapter 5 <u>Interview Questions Assignment due by Friday, November 22nd at 11:59 PM</u>

Week 13- Labor and Racial Justice

Tuesday, November 26 th	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Frank Bardacke, <i>Trampling Out the Vintage</i> (selections TBD, depending on class interests)
Thursday, November 28 th	No class- Thanksgiving Break

Week 14- Abolition and Your Choice

Tuesday, December 3 rd	Perusall Reading and Annotations: Mariame Kaba, <i>We Do This 'Til We Free Us</i> , pp. 70-81; 132-138 Populate reading ideas for ranked-choice voting
Thursday, December 5 th	What Should We Dive Deeper Into? Your Choice (By Ranked-Choice Vote) Perusall Reading and Annotations: TBD <u>Oral History Transcript Assignment due by Friday, December 6th at 11:59 PM</u>

Week 15- Your Choice

Tuesday, December 10 th	<p>What Should We Dive Deeper Into? Your Choice (By Ranked-Choice Vote)</p> <p>Perusall Reading and Annotations: TBD</p> <p><u>Final Reflective Essay for Oral History Project due by Friday, December 13th at 11:59 PM</u></p>
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University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus Resources

	<p>Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (GSCC), Supporting LGBTQ+ students and their communities: You are always welcome to come by the office, 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday and Friday, 10:00am-7:00pm Tues/Weds/Thursday, to relax, study, nap, print documents, and play board games. Come by anytime to talk with student staff in our casual open space or drop in any of the professional staff offices for some confidential conversation and advising.</p>
	<p>UHS Survivor Services provides free, confidential support services to UW-Madison student survivors of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and/or stalking. Contact University Health Services: 333 East Campus Mall, 7th Floor, (608) 265-5600 (option 3), http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/survivor-services.</p>
	<p>The Neighborhood Law Clinic (NLC) has provided a broad range of legal services based on community need. For the past 15 years, the NLC has focused primarily on rental housing and employment law issues. Call to schedule a meeting at 608-890-0678.</p> <p>The Immigrant Justice Clinic (IJC) provides legal services to Wisconsin's immigrant community. You may contact IJC at any time by calling 608-890-3753.</p>
	<p>McBurney Disability Resource Center: For students with disabilities, visible and invisible, who would like additional support, contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, located at 702 W Johnson St #2104, (608) 263-2741. Webpage: www.mcburney.wisc.edu.</p>
 Multicultural Student Center	<p>Multicultural Student Center: The Multicultural Student Center provides support, advocacy, and co-curricular experiences that center, affirm, and celebrate the diverse and intersectional identities of students of color https://msc.wisc.edu/about-the-msc/</p>
	<p>University Mental Health Services: School (and life) can be stressful! For an open, safe, and confidential environment to discuss all aspects of student life and your personal/professional development, contact University Health Services: 333 East Campus Mall, 7th Floor, (608) 265-5600 (option 2), www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health.</p>
	<p>Tom Durkin, Social Science Librarian: Tom is a truly wonderful resource when it comes time to find sources for social science research. He can help you navigate the library's online databases to find relevant, peer-reviewed sources. You can email him at ssrlib@library.wisc.edu. Visit his website for more information.</p>
	<p>UW-Madison Writing Center: For course papers and general writing guidance, students may wish to visit the campus writing center, located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall, (608) 263-1992. Webpage: www.writing.wisc.edu. Even the best writers always have room for improvement!</p>