

WST 6935: Social Justice Praxis

Asynchronous Online

Optional Live Synchronous Meetings, Mondays 12:50-3:50pm (Periods 6-8)

Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00pm and by appointment

Zoom Room for Office Hours: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/7897322769>

Overview:

The violence and dehumanization that structures our contemporary social, political, and cultural order is intolerable. The colonial logics that organize anti-Blackness, sexism, transphobia, Islamophobia, and Xenophobia, and other loci of oppression require transformation at the root. This course aims to respond to the current socio-cultural climate and explores the connections between the intersectional study of gender and social justice practices. Through feminist engagements with the fields of ethnic studies and Black studies, we will ask questions regarding how particular forms of life are valued and devalued, and interrogate how some populations are viewed as deviant and/or "at risk."

How do we grapple with the tensions between theory and praxis? What visions and practices of freedom are Black communities, women, queers, youth, and trans people developing and working toward? Through discussing scholarship, creative production, and a wide range of social justice initiatives, we will examine the stakes and ethics of engaging communities to address social inequalities and oppression. This entails posing questions around our understandings of subjectivity and representation (particularly of those whose personhood and lives are viewed as abject and/or deviant), differentials of power, and how these are negotiated on the ground in praxis and in the academy.

While we will discuss some of the practical aspects of conducting social justice work, such as grant writing, we will spend most of our time participating in critical and reflective processes that are important to engage when working with communities.

Content Notice:

Some of the required materials in this class include explicit depictions and/or descriptions of nudity, sexual acts, and physical violence. Some materials describe or depict experiences of sexual, gender-based, and race-based trauma. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning on women's lives, gender, and sexuality. If you believe engagement with these materials would likely cause you significant discomfort it may be in your interest to drop the course.

About me, Dr. Hernandez:



*I have been teaching at the university level for over 10 years, working with undergraduate and graduate students at Rutgers University, the University of California-San Diego, and now at UF. I have a Ph.D. in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers University. My book *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment* will be published by Duke University Press in November 2020. My research stems from my practice as a curator of contemporary art, community arts educator, and creative.*

I believe that visual art, music, film, and popular culture are powerful learning tools and I use them frequently to enrich our classroom experiences. My classroom is a space for experimentation. It is a site for dialogue, where students are acknowledged as theorists, artists, and producers of knowledge. While aiming to create a safe space for students to forge connections between course material, larger society, and their own lives, I also encourage them to engage with ideas that challenge them, take productive risks, and maintain space for contradiction and flux as they progress in their intellectual development. I treat my students as whole and complex beings, and create an environment where we can discuss ideas with a mind toward the social, cultural, and ethical implications of knowledge.

I invite you to be yourself, to recognize that you hold knowledge worth sharing, and to acknowledge your creative potential!

I look forward to embarking on this course with you in a spirit of collaboration.

Required Texts and Media

Books:

PARABLE OF THE SOWER
Octavia Butler

EMERGENT STRATEGY: SHAPING CHANGE, CHANGING WORLDS
Adrienne Maree Brown

CARE WORK: DREAMING DISABILITY JUSTICE
Leah Laskshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

THE BLACK UNICORN: POEMS
Audre Lorde

I will place course reserve requests to make books available via the library.

Films:

Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution (2020, James Lebrecht, Nicole Newnham)

Major! (2015, Annalise Ophelian)

All other texts and media are available as PDFs on Canvas or as links listed on the syllabus.

Screening and availability of films TBD.

Grading in this Course:

I calculate grades in this course using a point system. Participation and assignments have corresponding point values that add up to a maximum of 100. Point values for assignments are listed below. I use this scale in determining your final grade.

100-90 points A / 89-85 points B+ / 84-80 points B / 79-75 points C+ / 74-70 points C /

69-65 points D+ / 64-60 points D

Information on UF's grading policy can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

You should expect your work to be graded within 7 days of submission. If I anticipate a delay due to unforeseen circumstances I will inform you.

Course Evaluation

Participation (20 points):

Consistent and engaged participation in asynchronous discussions is required. I expect for you read thoroughly and critically and to prepare questions and comments. We will be supportive and respectful of one another as we engage in debate--good collegiality is a form of politics and our classroom is a community.

Class Facilitation (10 points):

A team of students will facilitate class discussion every week. If we have guest speakers the facilitator will be in charge of co-moderating the conversation with the professor.

Facilitations will provoke dialogue about; 1-the central argument(s)/aims of the scholarship and/or praxis being engaged, 2-the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized and innovated by the scholars/activists, 3-the potential social, cultural, and political stakes of the work, 4-how the work connects to other scholarship and activism we have engaged in the class.

Additionally, facilitators will research social justice projects that relate to the texts for the assigned group meeting and present the class with information about their goals, activities, and practices. I will have listed suggestions in the syllabus but encourage you to also search beyond these for projects I may not be aware of. If participants cannot present synchronously a pre-recorded presentation uploaded to Canvas 48 hours prior to our Zoom discussions can be submitted.

I encourage facilitators to utilize breakout rooms, media (such as short video screenings), group activities (such as free writing or creative writing exercises), and other methods to create a dynamic space. However, these are not required, what is most important is that we have a quality exchange in the seminar.

Self Portrait (10 points):

Self-reflection is an important aspect of engaging in social justice work. Inspired by artist/activist Zanele Muholi's work, you will create a portrait of yourself and share it with the class. The portrait can be in the form of a photograph, drawing, collage, poem, or some other creative format.

Manifesto/Vision Statement (10 points):

What is your vision for social justice and transformation? Manifestos employ a declarative voice to express ideas and calls to action. You will experiment with the manifesto format to articulate your thoughts on social change. Below are some links to manifestos and vision statements for inspiration.

The Combahee River Collective Statement
<http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html>

Manifesto of the Group d'Information sur les prisons
<http://www.critical-theory.com/43-years-ago-today-foucaults-statement-on-french-prisons/>

Jillian Hernandez, The Politics of Pink: A Rococo Manifesto
<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/latinarococopunkhop>

Valerie Solanas, SCUM "Society for Cutting Up Men" Manifesto
<http://www.womynkind.org/scum.htm>

"Manifesto Antropofágico" by Oswald de Andrade
https://events.ccc.de/congress/2009/Fahrplan/attachments/1386_cannibalmanifesto1928.pdf

Grant Letter of Inquiry (10 points)

It is common for funding organizations to request letters of inquiry (LOI) prior to accepting full grant proposals. Think of them as the initial hurdle to receiving a grant. If a funding organization is interested in your LOI they will then invite you to submit a full proposal. Much like research abstracts, LOIs are challenging documents to craft because they condense a lot of information and have to be compelling. You will identify a funding organization that fits with a social justice initiative you are engaged in or would like to engage in and craft an LOI. These will be shared with a fellow student and myself for feedback. The draft will be workshopped in class and then revised.

5 Discussion Prep Worksheets (4 points each; 20 points total)

You will submit five discussion prep worksheets via Canvas on the weeks of your choice. The sheet should reflect all assigned reading for that day, which means you will copy and paste the prompts in your document to accommodate the number of texts. They must be posted 48 hours before synchronous meetings, as I will be drawing from them to craft our asynchronous discussions as well.

Social Justice Praxis Reflection Video (20 points)

You will create a 3-5 minute video in which you will reflect on how the course has affected your understandings of social justice praxis. Alternatively, the video can reflect your research on an area of social justice praxis that we have not engaged in the seminar or explore a topic we have covered in more depth.

Your video can engage an analysis of a particular organization or project, which can include interviews with organizers. If you reach out to an organizer for an interview, tour, or data of any kind, make sure you show appreciation for their time. Perhaps you can share information about their organization or a fundraising campaign on social media, volunteer, or lend some of your expertise as a scholar if it they would find it useful.

Collaborative videos with other students are acceptable, just inform me in advance.

You are not expected to be a filmmaker. Use the tools available via smartphones and campus media labs to craft your project in a DIY fashion. I will provide more information on campus resources.

The video should be informed by some of the artistic approaches we have discussed in seminar and not simply be a Flipgrid style response.

We will screen and discuss the videos during our last two synchronous sessions. They should be made available to the class 48 hours before our synchronous meeting for those students who may not be able to attend.

Course Requirements and Policies

- **Attendance**

Attendance will not be recorded. Asynchronous discussion is what will be quantified for your grade. Synchronous meetings are optional and available as a space for amplifying our asynchronous discussions. They will be recorded and made accessible to all.

- **Course Recording Policy and Privacy Statement:**

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

- **Participation and Discussion Guidelines**

Your participation in this course will necessitate your engagement with course texts and related material. Please be prepared to engage in discussion by having done the assigned reading and work.

This course explores topics that affect people's lives in significant ways. Course topics also relate to contemporary social and cultural issues and as such may result in the sharing of personal perspectives and experiences. We will respect each other's confidentiality and engage one another with consideration. Abusive and harsh language, intimidation and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

- **Communication and Correspondence**

I can answer questions during office hours or via e-mail. Please be aware that I receive a high volume of e-mails, if your query is time sensitive please indicate that in the subject line in bold. *Questions that require substantive engagement, such as commentary on an assignment or a grade you received, would be best addressed during office hours.* I will expect for you to check your UF e-mail once a day in the event that there is a schedule change, or if I need to send you important information. I answer student e-mail within 48 hours of receipt.

- **Academic Integrity**

Whether intentional or inadvertent, plagiarism is a serious violation. All work submitted in this course must be your own. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please ask me. Students who plagiarize, or who cheat on an exam, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.

Students are expected to be familiar with UF's student honor and conduct code:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

- **Late Submission of Assignments**

If you foresee an issue in completing your assignment on time please contact me as soon as possible.

Accessibility:

I am committed to making learning in this course accessible to all. Please contact me to discuss any learning needs that you may have. You can also access the resources listed below.

UF Disability Resource Center celebrates disability identity as a valued aspect of diversity. We champion a universally accessible community that supports the holistic advancement of individuals with disabilities.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>
001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). For information, call 352-392-8565 or email accessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu

UF Counseling and Wellness Center offers individual counseling, wellness counseling, couples counseling, problem solving help, CERC crisis services, and other assistance:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>
3190 Radio Road; (352) 392-1575 (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday)

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual Harassment is unacceptable anywhere on UF's campus. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/sexual_harassment/

Course Evaluation Process:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

CONSIDER ADDING A CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

If you are taking this course, you are likely only 9 credits away from earning a Certificate (12 credits total) that will appear on your transcript and can be listed on your CV. The *Certificate in Women's Studies* (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on interdisciplinary issues related to feminist theory and practice. All graduate students in an MA or PhD program from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in this program. You can also do a Certificate in *Gender and Development*. For more information see: <http://wst.ufl.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-certificates/graduate-certificate-in-womens-studies/> And contact Dr. Broad (klbroad@ufl.edu) with any questions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*subject to change

Although our class is asynchronous you will need to complete the reading/viewing listed below by the dates listed in order to submit your assignments as they will be content-based.

Our optional live Zoom sessions on Mondays will be spaces for us to extend the discussions we have on Canvas.

August 31: Welcome and Course Overview

September 7: Holiday, no class

Where We Are: Part I-Florida

September 14:

Chapter 3: "We are in the Hands of the Devil: Fighting Racial Terrorism" and Chapter 5: "To See That None Suffer: Mutual Aid and Resistance" from *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* by Paul Ortiz

"Black Atlantic Femme Fugitivity : Towards a Cimarrona Method for Florida Cultural Studies", unpublished manuscript under review, Jillian Hernandez (please do not circulate)

Where We Are: Part II-The University

September 21st

“The University and the Undercommons” from *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney

BAR Book Forum: Fred Moten’s “Consent not to be a single being”

<https://www.blackagendareport.com/bar-book-forum-fred-motens-consent-not-be-single-being>

“Diversity Work” section of Sara Ahmed’s *Living a Feminist Life*

Visioning

September 28th

Chapters 1-15 of Octavia E. Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*

Listen to selections from podcast Octavia’s Parables; Trailer and Chapter 1

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9hbmNob3IuZm0vcy8yMjEwMzFIYy9wb2RjYXN0L3Jzcw==>

October 5th

Complete Parable of the Sower

Watch: Monica A. Coleman, Webinar with guest Adrienne Marie Brown: “Octavia Tried to Tell Us: Parable for a Pandemic”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IYFRIo-VWg&feature=youtu.be>

Afrofuturist writer Tananarive Due and womanist process theologian Monica A. Coleman lift up Octavia Butler’s “Parable of the Sower” to discuss themes of prophecy, dystopia, theology and a way forward in times like these. Special guests: adrienne maree brown

October 12th

Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds, adrienne marie brown

Complex Personhood/Rethinking Deviance and Damage

October 19th

Cathy J. Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance: A New Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics" *Du Bois Review* 1:1 (2004) 27-45

Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*

Chapters: *Introduction: The Violence of Value; Conclusion: Racialized Hauntings of the Devalued Dead*

Intro, Avery F. Gordon, "her shape and his hand" from *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press)

Queer and Trans Visibility Politics

October 26th (cluster of short texts)

Zanele Muholi, *Faces and Phases* 2006-14

Watch film "Difficult Love": <https://www.imdb.com/video/vi3128728089>

Grace Dunham, "Out of Obscurity: Trans Resistance, 1969-2017" from *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, edited by Reina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton

Juliana Huxtable, excerpts from *Mucus in my Pineal Gland*

Che Gossett and Juliana Huxtable in Conversation, "Existing in the World: Blackness at the Edge of Trans Visibility" from *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, edited by Reina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton

Theory vs. Praxis

November 2nd

Ruth Nicole Brown, *Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood*

Chapters: *Introduction; When Black Girls Look at You: An Anti-Narrative Photo Poem; Bad Days: "If You Hit Me, I'm Gonna Hit You Back"; Conclusion*

November 9th

Excerpts from *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-profit Industrial Complex* by Incite!

Workshopping Letters of Inquiry

Disability Justice

November 16th

Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution (2020, James Lebrecht, Nicole Newnham)

CARE WORK: DREAMING DISABILITY JUSTICE

Leah Laskshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Continuing the Conversation on Care

November 30th

Major! (2015, Annalise Ophelian)

“The Aesthetics of Healing Love: An Epistemic Genealogy of Jota/o Aesthetic Traditions,”
William A. Calvo-Quirós.

“Shocking Pink Praxis: Race and Gender on the Act Up Frontlines,” Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro

Video Screening part I

December 7th

Audre Lorde: *The Black Unicorn*

Video screening part II