

WST 6935: Social Justice Praxis

Thursdays, 12:50-3:50pm (Periods 6-8)
Ustler Hall, Room 308

Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:00am-12:30pm and by appointment

Office Location: Ustler Hall 304

Overview:

This course explores the rich 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." What drives our desire for intervention in the lives of others and what assumptions are these desires based on? How do we grapple with the tensions between theory and praxis? What visions and practices of freedom are 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.

Throughout the course we will place pressure on the notion of resistance, and consider some of its unexpected and unorthodox manifestations. 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.

Required Texts and Media

Push by Sapphire

The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study, by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney

Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law by Dean Spade

Living a Feminist Life by Sara Ahmed

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

Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship by Aimee Meredith Cox

Freedom is a Constant Struggle by Angela Y. Davis

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

Course Evaluation

Participation:

Consistent and engaged participation in seminar discussions is required. I expect for you read thoroughly and critically and come to seminar prepared with 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. Missing more than one class meeting will negatively affect your standing in the course.

Class Facilitation:

A student (or 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.

I encourage facilitators to utilize 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:

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:

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

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.

Response Papers (5)

You will submit five 2-3 page response papers as hard copies during the course of the seminar on the weeks of your choice. Response papers are due on the date we are discussing the readings. Response papers are tools for working through the material and thinking about how the work can expand (or not) your scholarly, artistic, and social justice interests. The papers can be critical, open-ended, and/or personal. What I am looking for is an earnest engagement with the work. Make sure that your papers engage with all of the readings assigned for the week you choose, although more emphasis on one or two within that context is acceptable.

Social Justice Praxis Paper

You will conduct research on an area of social justice praxis that we have not engaged in the seminar (reproductive justice/sexual violence/environmental racism/Native struggles, etc.), or explore a topic we have covered in more depth. You will discuss your findings in a 10-12 page paper (double-spaced). Your paper 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. The paper should be informed by what we have read and explored in class, but also has to move beyond it to engage

other literatures and social justice activists. A works cited page is required in whatever format is relevant to your sub-field within Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies.

You will present this work in a class mini-conference and submit your papers to me on Thursday, December 13th.

Course Requirements and Policies

- **Attendance**

You may miss 1 class without influencing your grade. Every unexcused or undocumented absence thereafter will affect your final grade. In order to be counted as present you must arrive on time and stay until class concludes. If you encounter a situation that will hinder you from making it to class it is your best interest to inform me about this right away, do not wait until after you have missed several classes to address your absences and participation grade.

- **Participation and Discussion Guidelines**

Class participation means you have done the assigned reading thoroughly and come to each meeting prepared with questions and comments for the discussion. I will document your engagement in class discussion when you make comments and pose questions.

- You are required to bring course texts to class in either hard copy form, or on your laptop/tablet, as we will often read extensive excerpts of texts together. Failure to come to class with the reading will decrease your participation grade.
- You are required to bring a notebook and writing utensil to class, as we will journal and sometimes conduct creative writing exercises during class.

Please engage one another in discussion with respect and 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/>

- **Electronic Devices and Laptops**

Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent in the classroom. If you must take an urgent call or send an important message please quietly exit the room. Excessive disruption of class for use of cell phones will negatively impact your participation grade.

Laptops and tablets can be utilized solely for the purpose of taking notes. This privilege is contingent upon responsible use of these devices. If I notice or am informed that students are being distracted by improper use of such technology they will no longer be allowed in class.

- **Late Submission of Assignments**

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

Student Resources:

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/cwc/Default.aspx>
3190 Radio Road; (352) 392-1575 (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday)

UF Disability Resource Center strives to provide quality services to students with physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities, to educate them about their legal rights and responsibilities so that they can make informed decisions, and to foster a sense of empowerment so that they can engage in critical thinking and self-determination.

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>
001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). For information, call 352-392-8565 or email accessuf@dso.ufl.edu

If you have a documented disability, please set up a confidential discussion with me before week three to discuss how this may impact your performance and how I can best accommodate your needs.

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then

provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. For more information, see: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/families/applicant-information>

Sexual Harassment:

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

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

Sexual Content Notice:

Some of the required materials in this class include explicit depictions and/or descriptions of sexual acts. Some materials describe or depict experiences of sexual trauma. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning on social justice praxis. If you believe engagement with these materials would likely cause you significant discomfort it may be in your interest to drop the course

COURSE SCHEDULE

*subject to change

August 23: Syllabus Overview, Crafting of Collaborative Course Agreement, Assigning facilitators

Blackness, Deviance, & Complex Personhood

August 30:

Push by Sapphire

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

Roderick Ferguson, Intro from *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*

*Related social justice projects: *The Anarcha Project*, *Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*

September 6:

Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship by Aimee Meredith Cox (Duke University Press)

*Related social justice project: *Radical Brownies*

September 13:

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

Christina Carney, Jillian Hernandez, and Anya Wallace, "Sexual Knowledge and Practiced Feminisms: On Moral Panic, Black Girlhoods, and Hip Hop," *Journal of Popular Music Culture Studies*

View: "PTAF Detail Crazy Fight Stories & Group Origin"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H56tHDMcZ_U

*Related social justice project: *Saving Our Lives, Hear Our Truths (SOLHOT) and Complex Movements* (<http://emergencemedia.org/pages/complex-movements>)

September 20:

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.blackagenda.com/bar-book-forum-fred-motens-consent-not-be-single-being>

*Related social justice project: *Black Lives Matter*

Reframing the Object

September 27:

Lisa Marie Cacho, "Introduction: The Violence of Value" and "Conclusion: Racialized Hauntings of the Devalued Dead" from *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*

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

"Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," Eve Tuck

Excerpt from *Vanessa del Rio: Fifty Years of Slightly Slutty Behavior* (2010, Taschen)

Juana Maria Rodriguez, "Pornographic Encounters and Interpretive Interventions: Vanessa del Rio, Fifty Years of Slightly Slutty Behavior," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 25 (3): 315-335.

Excerpt from Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé, *Queer Latino Testimonio, Keith Haring, And Juanito Xtravaganza* (2007, Palgrave Macmillan)

Feminist/Queer Praxis & Carcerality

October 4:

Mary E. Odem, Chapter 1: “White Slaves” and “Vicious Men”: The Age-of-Consent Campaign, from *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*

Anne Meis Knupfer. 2001. “To Become Good, Self-Supporting Women”: The State Industrial School for Delinquent Girls at Geneva, Illinois, 1900-1935” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (4): 420-446.

Jerry Flores, “Staff Here Let You Down: The Cultivation and Co-optation of Violence in a California Juvenile Detention Center,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 39 (1): 221-241.

Nicole Fleetwood, “Posing in Prison: Family Photographs, Emotional Labor, and Carceral Intimacy,” *Public Culture* 27 (3): 487-511.

October 11:

Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law by Dean Spade, Intro-Chapter 2

Elizabeth Bernstein, “The Sexual Politics of the ‘New Abolitionism’”

*Maynthe L. Fernando “Save the Muslim Woman, Save the Republic: Putes Ni Soumises and the Ruse of Neoliberal Sovereignty”

October 11:

Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law by Dean Spade, Chapter 3-Afterword

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

October 18th:

Zanele Muholi, *Faces and Phases* 2006-14

Cindy Cruz, “LGBTQ Street Youth Doing Resistance in Infrapolitical Worlds”

Pedro Noguera “Organizing Resistance Into Social Movements”

Lisa (Leigh) Patel and Rocío Sánchez Ares “The Politics of Coming Out of Documented”

Selections from *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*, edited by Eric A. Stanley and Nat Smith

October 25th:

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

November 1:

Angela Y. Davis: *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*

Leslie Quintanilla and Jennifer Mogannam, “Borders Are Obsolete: Relations beyond the borderlands of Palestine and US-Mexico”

November 8: No class, will be at NWSA,

November 15:

Texts on revolutionary aesthetics TBD

November 29:

Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*

December 13th: Social Justice Mini-Conference and Papers Due