

COMPARATIVE ETHNIC STUDIES 302: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF PREJUDICE

SYLLABUS: FALL 2008

INSTRUCTOR: Dianne Phillips-Miller, Ph.D. **E-MAIL:** phillips-miller@wsu.edu
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OFFICE: Wilson 104B or 280 Lighty Student Services Building (Counseling and Testing Center)
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12:30-1:25 or by appointment

TEXT: On the Nature of Prejudice; Dovidio, Glick & Budman (Eds.), Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
An Invitation to Social Construction, Kenneth Gergen, Sage Publications, 1999

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This 3-credit course is designed to involve students in an examination of prejudice as a cultural, intrapersonal and interpersonal phenomenon that affects all individuals within a society. The course is a combination of lecture, class discussion, and experiential exercises designed to help students explore, intellectually and emotionally, the nature of human prejudice and strategies for reducing the effects of negative prejudice in their lives.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: As a result of this course, students will be able to

- Define prejudice
- Articulate an understanding of the theory of social construction as it relates to prejudice
- Articulate an understanding of their own experiences with prejudice as well as the impact of these experiences on others
- Articulate an understanding of the cultural and familial influences on their current values, beliefs, and perceptions of those who are different from themselves
- Display an understanding of ways in which they have been both privileged and disadvantaged within society as a result of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance and ability, socioeconomic status, education, family structure, religion, or geographic region in which they live
- Demonstrate an understanding of the range of prejudice from positive to extremely negative
- Demonstrate an ability to use research findings to inform them about the social psychology of prejudice
- Develop a process of communication about differences characterized by mutual respectful influence

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Because of the experiential nature of this class, attendance is required. Each class is worth 5 points (145 points total). There will be no excused absences so save your absences for when you really need them. During discussion, sculptures and other experiential exercises, you are expected to participate by listening attentively to others speaking, making genuine comments when appropriate, sharing your ideas, and treating others with respect. The quality of your participation is more important than the quantity.

PARAGRAPH ON TRANSFORMATION: (5 points) My goal for this class is to work with you to create an environment in which we all feel safe to explore prejudice in our own lives and bear witness to the impact of prejudice on others. If we are successful in our endeavor, this class can be transformational for each of us. This assignment requires you to write a paragraph describing the following: (a) What you are willing to do to create a safe place for the exploration of prejudice in this class; (b) What you would like from others to help you feel safe during class exercises and discussion; (c) What you most hope to learn as a result of your efforts in this class; and

(d) One aspect of your current thinking, feeling and behavior related to negative prejudice towards a group of people different from you that you are willing to work on transforming this semester. This paragraph will be your contract with yourself and with me regarding how you wish to conduct yourself in class this semester and a goal you wish to meet. **NOTE: This paragraph is due Wednesday, September 3.**

STUDY QUESTIONS: (20 points per week, 280 points total) Each week, you will write responses to study questions that cover the readings you are assigned for that week. These questions are designed to guide you to the most important aspects of your reading, assure that you are keeping current on the readings, and that you have given thought to what you have read. Since there are no examinations in this class, the quality of your responses to the study questions is critical to your final grade in the class. **Study questions are due at the beginning of class each Wednesday and no late responses will be accepted.** NOTE: Please type your responses, double-spaced with one-inch margins. Don't forget to put your name on your responses.

BI-WEEKLY JOURNALS: (140 points) Inevitably, this class triggers strong emotions in all who participate, and how we learn to analyze, understand, and utilize our emotions is a critical part of self- understanding and transformation. This requirement involves writing a paragraph or two after each class in which you explore your personal reactions to class discussion, experiential exercises, and others' opinions in the class. Your journal entries will also help me improve the class and get to know you better. I will read and comment on your journal entries but no one else will have access to them. I will not share what you write with anyone unless someone's safety seems to be in danger (for example, you write about feeling suicidal or homicidal). **Journal entries are due on the following Mondays: 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, 12/1.**

PAPER ON PREJUDICE: (75 points) You will write a 5-page paper describing an incident in which you experienced prejudice against you or someone else in which you were involved. Your paper will describe the incident, how it represented prejudice, how it affected you and others involved, some of the outcomes that occurred as a result of the incident, and what you have learned about yourself and the nature of prejudice as a result of having the experience. Your grade on this assignment will depend largely on how well you illustrate your understanding of the incident and yourself in it. NOTE: I will ask for volunteers to present sculpts of the incidents they wrote about in class. A sculpt is an exercise in which the individual asks class members to portray the people involved in the incident in a way that displays what was occurring emotionally at a moment in time. This will be followed by discussion about what it was like for each participant to play his/her part, and class discussion about reactions to the sculpt. We will do sculpts throughout the semester. **NOTE: Due date is Monday, September 22.**

RESEARCH ARTICLES PAPER: (60 points) This assignment requires you to find two research articles about an aspect of prejudice that interests you. You will write a 3-5 page paper indicating why you chose these articles, summarizing the most important findings, and discussing how the findings relate to your readings for class. **NOTE: Due date is Monday, November 17.**

CULTURAL GENOGRAM: (100 points) You are going to prepare a family-tree (as in genealogy) that focuses on the cultural and family influences on your current values, beliefs, biases and stereotypes. You will already know some of this information and I also expect you to interview family members throughout the semester to deepen your understanding of the cultural context in which your grandparents, parents and you have lived and how that context has contributed to the development of prejudice, both positive and negative. You will write an 8-10 page paper to accompany your genogram that describes what you have learned, how it is important to you personally,

and how you have transcended or plan to transcend some of the prejudices you have inherited. **NOTE: Due date is Monday, December 1.**

GRADING

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| Attendance and Participation: | 145 points | A = 720-800 points |
| Paragraph on Transformation | 5 points | B = 640-719 points |
| Weekly Study Questions | 280 points | C = 560-639 points |
| Bi-weekly Journal | 140 points | D = 480-559 points |
| Cultural Genogram and Paper | 100 points | F = 479 and below |
| Paper on Prejudice | 70 points | |
| Research Articles Paper | <u>60 points</u> | |
| Total : | | 800 points |

TOPIC AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

| DATE | TOPIC | READINGS | ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 8/25 | INTRODUCTION | | |
| 8/27 | What is prejudice? | Text: Preface, Chapter 1 | |
| 9/1 | No class. Labor Day | | |
| 9/3 | Social Construction | Gergen: Chapter 1 | Study Questions Paragraph on Transformation |
| 9/8 | Social Construction | Gergen: Chapter 2 | Journal Entries |
| 9/10 | Discourse Mutual Respectful Influence | Gergen: Chapter 3 Gottman Handout | Study Questions |
| 9/15 | Finding out about Things Preferential Thinking | Gergen: Chapter 4 Text: Chapter 2 | |
| 9/17 | | Text: Chapter 3 | Study Questions |
| 9/22 | | Text: Chapter 4 | Prejudice Paper Journal Entries |
| 9/24 | | Text: Chapter 5 | Study Questions |
| 9/29 | | Text: Chapter 6 | |
| 10/1 | | Text: Chapter 7 | Study Questions |
| 10/6 | Group Differences | Gergen: Chapter 5 Text: Chapter 8 | Journal Entries |
| 10/8 | | Text: Chapter 9 | Study Questions |
| 10/13 | | Text: Chapter 10 | |
| 10/15 | Perceiving and Thinking | Text: Chapter 11 | Study Questions |
| 10/20 | | Text: Chapter 12 | Journal Entries |
| 10/22 | | Text: Chapter 13 | Study Questions |
| 10/27 | Sociocultural Factors | Gergen: Chapter 6 Text: Chapter 14 | |
| 10/29 | | Text: Chapter 15 | Study Questions |
| 11/3 | | Text: Chapter 16 | Journal Entries |
| 11/5 | | Text: Chapter 17 | Study Questions |
| 11/10 | Acquiring Prejudice | Gergen: Chapter 8 Text: Chapter 18 | |
| 11/12 | | Text: Chapter 19 | Study Questions |
| 11/17 | | Text: Chapter 20 | Research Article Paper |

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| | | | Journal Entries |
| 11/19 | | Text: Chapter 21 | Study Questions |
| 11/24-26 | No Class. Thanksgiving | | |
| 12/1 | The Dynamics of Prejudice | Text: Chapters 22, 23 | Cultural Genogram Journal Entries |
| 12/3 | Character Structure | Text: Chapter 24 | Study Questions |
| 12/8 | | Text: Chapter 25 | |
| 12/10 | Reducing Group Tensions | Gergen: Chapter 7, 9 Text: Chapter 26 | Study Questions |

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Admin Annex Bldg, Room 205). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.