**American Pluralism**

**UGC 211 FIFB (The “BIG Class”)**

**TU/TH 3:30-4:50 NSC 201**

**Professor: Dr. Jill Peters-Gradwell**

**Contact Information:** [**jpeters4@buffalo.edu**](mailto:jpeters4@buffalo.edu)

**Office Hours: Tu/Th 12:30- 1:30 & by appointment (613 Clemens Hall) ☺**

**Teaching Assistants: Dawn Gott & Traci Gott**

**So, what is American Pluralism?**

What an opportunity to take American Pluralism at this moment in your life and this historic moment in American history! The American Pluralism course examines the multicultural, multi-ethnic nature of American society. It introduces students to important areas of American experience and culture, including race, class, and gender. We will critically examine American current affairs, contemporary history, and popular culture. Writings by and about Americans of color, women, and people from diverse ethnic, class, and religious groups provide background and context for discussions of contemporary issues.

**Why Do I Have to Take this Course?**

* This course provides opportunities for you and challenges you to speak, read, and write about controversial issues related to race, class, and gender in contemporary American life, but the course does not push any particular ideology or philosophical position.
* This course examines the history of oppression in the United States and how historical events have affected contemporary issues and *your* life.
* This course emphasizes active, participatory, empowering education that will challenge you to think critically about cultural myths, our society’s core values, and *your* own existing beliefs and prejudices.

**What Do I have to Do?**

**\*\* You will do poorly in this class if you do not read and actively participate.**

**\*\* Please drop this class if you feel ill equipped to read and participate…a lot.**

1. ***Reading:***

Much has been written about students’ lack of interest in reading. However true this may be, when considering the education of the mind, there is one principle that simply cannot be overlooked—reading is absolutely essential to learning. How well you perform this task will speak to how successful you will be in this class. You are required to read and think critically about the assigned readings. With that said, I have tried diligently to introduce you to interesting readings that I hope you will enjoy.

2. ***Attendance &*** ***Participation:***

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE ARE REWARDED! Lateness is not tolerated. It disrupts class, disturbs other students, and frankly, really frustrates me. Participation is key to this class. It makes this class fun & interesting. *We are all teachers* and we all have many things to learn and many things to share with each other. I understand shyness, but I also know from personal experience that in the real world...you have to overcome shyness.

3. ***Tests:***

There will be three tests this semester. There are no make-up tests without an official documented written excuse. Make-up tests need to be taken within the week. If you miss a test on a Tuesday, you will make it up on Thursday. If you miss a test on a Thursday, you will make it up on Tuesday. Warning: Make-up tests tend to be more difficult.

4. ***Quizzes:***

We will have quizzes in the class based on readings, films, discussion. Quizzes will be scored and included in your final grade.

*5.* ***Films:***

We watch documentary & cinematic films in class to serve as a launching pad for class discussion. These films work symbiotically with our readings & will be included in our discussions and tests.

6. ***Professionalism:***

When you graduate you want to get a job. It is my job to prepare you. In the professional world, you can’t be late; you have to hand things in on time; and come to work prepared. You can’t “tune out” during meetings, sulk, slouch, and make faces, and you can’t keep your cell phone on during a meeting, listen to music, play games, text your friends, or just decide to sleep in rather than going to work. Likewise, you can’t do these things in this class. Arrive on time; pay attention; contribute to the class; respect your classmates, professor, & guest speakers; and please clean up after yourself.

**What Textbooks do I need?**

* *Race, Class, & Gender: An Anthology*, CUSTOM EDITION edited by Margaret L. Anderson and Patricia Hill Collins (this book can be purchased in the UB Bookstore)

*OR*

*Race, Class, & Gender: An Anthology*, 8th Edition

* Some readings will be on UB Learns or can be downloaded through the UB Libraries, as noted on the course calendar

**How will you contact us outside of class?**

*UB Learns:* We will be using UB Learns for announcements & discussion. Please check UB Learns frequently for announcements, assignments, quizzes, etc.

*E-mail:* I will e-mail you occasionally, please enable and use your UB e-mail address or you will fall behind in this class.

**What’s a “Housekeeping Session”?**

There are over 250 students in this class. In order to effectively process tests and papers twice this semester we will have official housekeeping sessions to hand back papers, discuss progress, etc.Tests will be handed back and reviewed on housekeeping days.

**What if the weather is bad?**

Eeks. If the weather is really bad, I will cancel class even if UB has not because your safety comes first. Please refer to our UB Learns “Announcements” and your UB e-mail for any cancellations.

**What are your Academic Policies & Procedures?**

I follow UB’s guidelines for policies and procedures, including UB policies on academic dishonesty and classroom behavior.This website is a great resource:

[http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/undergraduateeducation/studentrights/integrity.shtm](http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/undergraduateeducation/studentrights/integrity.shtml)

**Do you accommodate students with disabilities?**

Absolutely. If you have a learning or physical disability, please see me within the first two weeks of classes with proper documentation.

**What if I play a university sport?**

Go you! Please see me within the first two weeks of class with the proper documentation. You are fully responsible for making up all missed work due to athletic absences. All notes must be on official university athletic stationary.

**What if I enroll in this class late?**

You are responsible for making up all missed work and readings. If we have had in-class group work assignments or quizzes, you *cannot* make up that missed work.

**How am I Being Graded?**

Tests 75%

Quizzes 25%

\*Points will be added or deducted based on participation & professionalism

A = 100-93 points; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-84; B-= 83-80;

C+ = 79-77; C = 76-74; C- = 73-70; D = 69-60; F = 59-0

**What Are We Going to Do This Semester?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week & Topic** | **Tuesday** | **Thursday** |
| **Week 1:**  **Introduction** | 8/27: **Welcome & Introduction** | 8/29**: Class Set Up** |
| **Week 2:**  **Theory** | 9/3: **Why RCG Still Matter**  *Read for this day:*pp. 1-15 | 9/5: No Class |
| **Week 3:**  **Theory** | 9/10: **Defining Oppression**  *Read:* Frye (UB Learns), Article 5 | 9/12: **Power Placing**  *Read:* Article 6, Moore (UBL) |
| **Week 4:**  **Theory** | 9/17: **Class & Inequality**  *Read:* Article 9, Williams (UBL) | 9/19: **Interlocking Oppression**  Film Screening |
| **Week 5:**  **Test 1!** | 9/24: **Interlocking Oppression**  Film& Discussion | 9/26:  Test 1 |
| **Week 6:**  **Hot Topic: Immigration** | 10/1*:* **We are Americans**  **(just not legally)**  *Read:* Article26,Vargas (UBL or *Time* June 25, 2012) | 10/3: **Immigration Part 2** |
| **Week 7:**  **Hot Topic: Immigration** | 10/8:  Film Screening Part I | 10/10:  *Housekeeping Session* |
| **Week 8:**  **Test 2!** | 10/15:  Film Screening Part II & Discussion | 10/17:  Test 2 |
| **Week 9:**  **Hot Topic: Healthcare & Food** | 10/22: **Inequality in Healthcare**  *Read*: Article15,Gamble (UB Libraries)[[1]](#endnote-1) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1381160/?page=1> | 10/24: **We are what we eat?!?**  Film Screening |
| **Week 10:**  **Hot Topic: Healthcare & Food** | 10/29: **I’m a Hormonal Pesticide!**  Film Screening & Discussion | 10/31: **To GMO or to not GMO?**  *Read:* Hellmich, Miller (both in UB Libraries)[[2]](#endnote-2)  *(Housekeeping Session too)* |
| **Week 11:**  **Hot Topics:**  **Gun Control &**  **Economic Crisis** | 11/5: **Gun Violence in America** | 11/7: **Economic Crisis**  Film Screening  *Read:* Articles 16, Williams (UBL) |
| **Week 12:**  **Hot Topic:**  **Economic Crisis** | 11/12: **Economic Crisis**  Film Screening & Discussion | 11/14: **WTF?****Could You Speak my Language?!**  (Economics for the non-major) |
| **Week 13:**  **Hot Topic:**  **Rethinking Family** | 11/19: **Abortion, Birth Control, Gay Marriage**  *Read:* Articles *38, 39, 40* | 11/2: **Guest Speaker!**  Mary Travers Murphy from  The Family Justice Center  *Read:* Birmingham (UB Libraries)3 |
| **Week 14:**  **Fall Break** | 11/26:  No Class | 11/28:  No Class |
| **Week 15:**  **Hot Topic:**  **You **  **Making a Difference**  **Test 3!** | 12/3: **Creating an Action Plan**  *Read:* Baumgardner, Kivel (UBL) | 12/5:  Test 3  No Final Exam During Exam Week |

**Info to find articles in UB Libraries (all articles can be downloaded)**

1. “Under the Shadow of Tuskegee: African-Americans and Health Care” by Vanessa Northin Gamble, *American Journal of Public Health*, Nov 97, Vol. 87, issue 11, pg 1773-1778. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Better Neighborhood Lowers Obesity Risk” By Nancy Hellmich, *USA Today*, 20 Oct 2011, pg 6A; AND “”Divided We Eat” By Lisa Miller, *Newsweek*, 29 Nov 2010, pg 43, Vol 156, No 22.

   3 “Domestic Violence: Behaviors and Causes” by Rachel Birmingham*, Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Social Issues.*  [↑](#endnote-ref-2)