**English 2760: Gender and Cultural Studies**

**Text**

Rothenberg, Paula S., Race, Class and Gender in the United States,

8th ed. Additional readings will be available on the course Canvas website

**Course Description**

This course will examine the way language is used to construct gender and gender expectations. We will analyze the power of language to define gender as well as to maintain power structures and to oppress. To accomplish this, we will read and discuss issues related to gender and gender-linked behavior found in contemporary texts. We will explore how these issues affect men and women in U.S. society and discuss their lived experience. We will discuss how these texts have identified sites of cultural struggle and look at the way women and men have defined their roles in contemporary society. We will also analyze how these texts have called attention to different forms of oppression and injustices in America and unpack issues of privilege and stereotyping based upon gender.

We will also explore and challenge assumptions about gender roles and expectations. Some of the questions we will explore are: How is gender constructed? What historical forces have defined gender and gender expectations? What are the societal expectations based upon gender? How is language used to discriminate based upon gender? How can attitudes be impacted to create a more all inclusive society?

We will learn to recognize the interaction between gender theories and contemporary texts. We will also investigate the connections between race, class, age, etc. as they interface with gender and gender linked behavior.

We will view films dealing with issues of discrimination based upon race, class and gender in the U.S. and write about how these films help you come to a greater understanding of the lived experience of those who feel oppressed by society.

One of the major aims of the course is to emphasize the worth of the individual with the aim of fostering international understanding and peace. We will attempt to achieve this by challenging assumptions, stereotypes, personal beliefs and biases.

**Course Activities and Practices**

We will become a community of thinkers, readers, writers, and learners engaged in a mutual endeavor that I hope will be interesting and profitable for you. The work of this course is best done together, with every member of the community fully present and participating. I would like to offer the following as guidelines for such a community: Come prepared; don't miss class casually; respect one another's opinions by responding to them intelligently and consider the lived experience of those we will read about.

We will often work in small groups, to make discussion more fruitful. Therefore, the work of the class cannot be done well without a significant level of preparation before class and full participation during class. Working in groups benefits each member of the group. The more fully participating you are as an individual member of the group, the more profitable the group will be for you. The discussion from the small group will then benefit the whole class as you share the ideas gleaned from the small group discussions.

The course is an open forum for the expression of ideas. You are expected to support your views with class readings or other credible sources you are familiar with as the course is based upon critical analysis, rather than opinion. You are expected to be tolerant of differing views and polite to fellow students in class with the aim of fostering a tolerant society and learning of the views of others.

You will be asked to explore your biases and assumptions and consider how you can apply what you learn to your own life and explore opportunities for social activism in a democratic society.

**General Education**

This course is part of the General Education Program at Salt Lake Community College. It is designed not only to teach the information and skills required by the discipline, but also to develop vital workplace skills and to teach strategies and skills that can be used for life-long learning.

While the subject of each course is important and useful, we become truly educated through making connections of such varied information with the different methods of organizing human experience that are practiced by different disciplines. Therefore, this course, when combined with other General Education courses, will enable you to develop broader perspectives and deeper understandings of your community and the world, as well as challenge previously held assumptions about the world and its inhabitants. You will also explore a wide variety of topics with an eye toward discovering new interests and uncovering new talents.

General Education courses teach basic skills as well as broaden a student’s knowledge of a wide range of subjects. Education is much more than the acquisition of facts; it is being able to use information in meaningful ways in order to enrich one’s life. General Education courses focus on communication, creativity, and critical thinking skills and along with the substance of the course’s information, an appreciation of the esthetics of the area of study and its connection to the larger social web.

This course fulfills two General Education categories: Diversity and Humanities. Diversity is the study of certain differences (race, ethnicity, social class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc.) and how those differences translate throughout U.S. history into disparities of power, privilege, and access to opportunity. This course will identify and challenge your assumptions and encourage you to consider multiple perspectives so that you can become a more responsible and effective citizen in this multicultural society.

This course will invite engaged discussion and authentic personal reflection. Because we will often express contrasting views it will be essential to be respectful by listening and asking questions of those with whom we disagree.

**Course Objectives:**

Students will:

* Understand major gender theories—new historicism, psychoanalysis and postcolonial
* Recognize the interaction between gender theories and contemporary historical contexts
* Investigate the interrelation of race, class, sexual orientation, age, and ability as those classifications influence gender identity and gender-linked behavior
* Understand how particular popular American texts represent the concepts of pluralism or diversity
* Understand how constructions of written texts translate into very real differences in power and access to opportunity
* Be aware of different models of American identity embodied in particular texts
* Be able to explain different models of pluralism in America
* Examine multiculturalism, privilege and stereotyping
* Understand how particular historical moments affected the construction of gender and gender expectations
* Be able to provide a close reading of a text that includes an argument about its meaning and cites evidence from the text to support the argument.
* Be able to analyze and synthesize gender theories and contemporary texts
* Analyze films and relate them to course discussions and contemporary issues
* Explore and challenge personal biases and beliefs
* Explore opportunities for social activism

**Analysis Essay**: You will write an analysis essay relating to race, class and/or gender. You will relate the topic you choose to readings in the text. See assignment for specifics.

**Film Analyses:** You will view five films on hold at the SLCC Markosian Library or local video stores and write a one page summary and response of their commentary on current issues related to gender, race and class. A list of approved films is available in Canvas.

**News Article Analyses:** You will look for current issues related to gender, race and class represented in the news and write a one page summary and response for each. Ten news articles are due for the semester.

**Grading (Roughly)**

Analysis Essay 25%

Film and News Articles Analyses 25%

Group Project 25%

Participation in Class Discussions 25%

**Participation:** Attendance will be taken daily (in the classroom for Technology Enhanced classes). You will be expected to be in class and fully participating in group and full class discussions unless unusual circumstances arise. Online discussions are an important part of class. You will receive up to 10 points per discussion for posting your own response to the readings and responding to at least two of your peers. For posting your own initial response you will receive up to 3 points, and up to 6 points for responding to one peer. For full credit, a thoughtful, well-developed response is required.

**Group Project:** You will work with a group to create a group project in which you promote social justice and consider how you might make a difference.

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring accommodations or services under ADA, should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of these accommodations and services for the college. Please contact the DRC at the Student Center, Suite 244, Redwood Campus, 4600 So. Redwood Rd, 84123. Phone: 801-957-4659, TTY: 801-957-4646, Fax: 801-957-4947 or by email: linda.bennett@slcc.edu.