

Culture, Identity and Conflict

CONF 302

Spring 2015

Thursdays 1:30pm-4:10pm

Robinson Hall A249

Dr. Lopez Bunyasi

Email address: tlopezbu@gmu.edu

Office hours: Thursdays after class until 5:00pm

If you cannot meet during regular office hours, you may schedule an appointment.

Course Description:

This course is designed to explore deeply rooted, intractable and protracted social conflicts around core issues of identity. Course materials invite students to think critically about how identities based upon nationality, race, gender, class, and ability animate inter-personal and structural conflict, and they challenge students to consider how various contexts and conflicts, in turn, shape and re-shape social identities. In-class analysis of the readings and documentaries will be integrated with group-based activities during class time, as well as individual exploratory assignments outside of class. Throughout the semester, we will weave in and out of conversation about our own identities as we work to take account of our relationships to various conflicts both as people who have been impacted by them, and as people who (have) contribute(d) to them. By the end of the semester, students should be more adept at communicating their understanding of culture, identity and conflict, and they should have acquired a more sophisticated set of skills with which to explore dynamics of and potential remediation of identity-based conflicts.

Expectations for Participation

Although the professor will often begin each class with brief comments and some points of clarification, much of the course will consist of dialogue between students. A successful, productive class will require that you **come prepared, read all of the relevant material, participate responsibly** in the discussions, and **respectfully listen** to the views and ideas of other students. Regular attendance is expected; if one does not attend, one cannot participate.

Each day you will be expected to come to class prepared to express your ideas and to ask whatever questions you may have. During class discussions (of which there will be many), the professor will be expecting people to raise their hands so that they may be called upon. When raised hands are not forthcoming, she will call on people at random. The discussion generated in class will provide much food for thought—the more people who are willing to speak, the greater the “feast” will be.

Hopefully, the diversity of thought in our classroom will help you hone your own understandings and analyses of culture, identity, and conflict.

This course will explore controversial and sensitive subject matter; it is, therefore, expected that students will engage with one another in a respectful manner even when they do not agree with one another. Learning in community is a special experience, and it is one that is enhanced with a compassionate disposition.

Technology Policy

Cell phones must be silenced while in class. Text messaging and communicating via social media is not allowed. You are expected to neither make nor receive calls during our class unless the matter is an urgent one. Please let the professor know if you anticipate such a call. Failure to comply with these codes of conduct will negatively affect your participation grade.

The professor will occasionally communicate with students over email, so please be attentive to your accounts.

Student Resources

George Mason has a terrific Writing Center where you can access tutoring (face-to-face, online and e-mail), writing workshops and helpful online resources.

To find out how you can take advantage of the WC, visit their website at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

Any student who suspects s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss the student's specific needs, and provide written documentation from Disability Services. If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, s/he can contact Disability Services. For more information, view the office's website at <http://ods.gmu.edu>

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the faculty or staff. For more information, please visit their website at <http://eli.gmu.edu>

Academic Conduct & Honor Code

The professor shares and upholds the expectations of academic conduct explicitly stated by the Office for Academic Integrity. As student members of the George Mason University community, and as student members of this course, you are accountable to the following Honor Code:

"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work."

In this course, students are also prohibited from (a) knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, and (b) submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the professor.

Should you have any questions about what it means to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie, please consult the following website:

<http://oai.gmu.edu/understanding-the-honor-code/>

All students are encouraged to review the "Student Strategies for Preventing Violations" link on the Office for Academic Integrity's website:

<http://oai.gmu.edu/preventing-violations/student-strategies-for-preventing-violations/>

Any student found violating the tenets of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

Course Requirements:

CONF 302 is a writing-intensive course. You will have five writing assignments, including one revision of previously graded work. You will find the prompts for these papers on Blackboard under the "Assignments" tab. You will also have one group presentation to make on the last day of class. The professor will form the groups and assign topics. Participation in class will also count for a significant portion of your grade; this mark will be determined by one's commitment to in-class discussion and activities as someone who communicates, listens, acts, and observes.

Papers

All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and stapled with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman size 12 font. Double-sided printing is preferred, though not required. Your name, name of the course, semester, professor's name, and assignment title must be placed as a heading in one of the top corners of the paper (single-spaced): this heading constitutes five lines total. There may only be three spaces between the end of the heading and the body of the paper. All papers must include page numbers and proper citation. A template for proper paper formatting can be found on Blackboard under the "Assignments" tab. Papers that do not follow this format will be deducted one-third of a letter grade (A to A-). Late papers will be deducted one-third of a letter grade (A to A-) for each day it is late. You may turn in a late paper over e-mail, but you must turn in a hard copy at your earliest convenience. The professor will not grade a paper electronically; she will only grade a hard-copy paper. She will, however, grade the paper keeping in mind the day that you turned it in electronically. Do yourself a favor and proofread each paper by reading it out loud to yourself before turning it in to the professor.

Basis for Grading:

- In-class participation 15%
- Educational Conflict paper (6-7 pages) **Due 3/5** 25%
- Gender and Domination response papers (2-3 pages each)
Pick two: Due 3/26; 4/2; 4/9 (worth 10% each) 20%
- Revision (either the Education Parallels paper **or** one of the three Gender and Domination response papers) **Due 4/23** 10%
**your choice as to whether the grade for the revision is averaged into the grade of the original paper*
- Group Presentation **Due 4/30** 10%
- Autobiographical Narrative (5 page minimum) **Due 5/7 at 1:30pm** 20%

Required Texts

Book

- Adams, David Wallace. 1995. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875-1928*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Articles/Chapters (located on Blackboard under the "Course Contents" tab and/or through the library; those with an asterisk (*) can be found under the "e-Reserves" tab)

- Cohen, Dara Kay. 2013. "Female Combatants and the Perpetuation of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War." *World Politics* 65, 3 pp. 383-415.
- *Cohn, Carol. 1993. "War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War." In *The Gendered Society Reader*, ed. Kimmel, Michael and Amy Aronson, pp. 448-457. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Excerpts from DeSantis, Alan. 2007. *Inside Greek U: Fraternities, Sororities and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- *Excerpts from Johnson, Allan G. 2006. *Privilege, Power and Difference, 2nd Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Lopez Bunyasi, Tehama. 2014. "Breathing Difference, Sharing Empowerment." *Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review* 32, 2 pp. 67-80.
- Luke, Katherine P. 2009. "Sexual Violence Prevention and Technologies of Gender among Heavy-Drinking College Women." *Social Service Review* 83, 1 pp. 79-109.
- Nagel, Joane. 1998. "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, 2 pp. 242-269.
- Pascoe, C.J. 2005. "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse." *Sexualities* 8, 3 pp. 329-346.
- Phillips, Debby A. 2007. "Punking and Bullying: Strategies in Middle School, High School, and Beyond." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 22, 2 pp. 158-178.
- Ringrose, Jessica and Emma Renold. 2010. "Normative Cruelties and Gender Deviants: The Performative Effects of Bully Discourses for Girls and Boys in School." *British Educational Research Journal* 36, 4 pp. 573-596.
- Weitsman, Patricia A. 2008. "The Politics of Identity and Sexual Violence: A Review of Bosnia and Rwanda." *Human Rights Quarterly* 30, 3 pp. 561-578.

*The following schedule is subject to change according to the learning needs of the class.

Course Schedule

January 22. Introductions

- ❖ Introductions and networking
- ❖ Categories of identity
- ❖ Identity mapping
- ❖ Class expectations: forming norms, identifying triggers

January 29. Privilege and Oppression, Advantage and Disadvantage

- ❖ In-class activity

Readings to be completed for January 29:

- *Johnson "Privilege, Oppression, and Difference" pp. 12-40
- Lopez Bunyasi "Breathing Difference, Sharing Empowerment" pp. 67-80.

February 5. Education for Extinction

Readings to be completed for February 5:

- Adams *Education for Extinction* pp. 1-163

February 12. Education for Extinction

Readings to be completed for February 12:

- Adams *Education for Extinction* pp. 164-337

February 19. Current Conflicts in Curriculum

- ❖ Overview of ethnic studies
- ❖ Documentary: *Precious Knowledge*

February 26. Education for Future Generations

- ❖ In-class activity

March 5. Gender and Dominance: What We Know

- ❖ Educational Conflict paper due today
- ❖ In-class activities

March 12. Spring Break

March 19. Gender and Domination: Childhood and Adolescence

Readings to be completed for March 19:

- Phillips “Punking and Bullying: Strategies in Middle School, High School, and Beyond” pp. 158-178.
- Ringrose and Renold “Normative Cruelties and Gender Deviants: The Performative Effects of Bully Discourses for Girls and Boys in School” pp. 573-596.
- Pascoe “‘Dude, You’re a Fag’: Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse” pp. 329-346.

March 26. Gender and Domination: University Life

- ❖ Childhood and Adolescence paper due today

Readings to be completed for March 26:

- Luke “Sexual Violence Prevention and Technologies of Gender among Heavy-Drinking College Women” pp. 79-109.
- DeSantis “Introduction: Life at Greek University” pp. 1-18
- DeSantis “Understanding Gender” pp. 19-42
- DeSantis “The Tough Guy and His Date (Rape)” pp. 77-113
- Suggested, but not required reading: DeSantis “Studs and Virgins” pp. 43-75

April 2. Gender and Dominance: War

- ❖ University Life paper due today

Readings to be completed for April 2:

- *Cohn “War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War” pp. 448-457
- Nagel “Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations” pp. 242-269
- Weitsman “The Politics of Identity and Sexual Violence: A Review of Bosnia and Rwanda” pp. 561-578
- Cohen “Female Combatants and the Perpetuation of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War” pp. 383-415

April 9. Class

- ❖ War paper due today
- ❖ In-class activities
- ❖ Documentary: *Poor Kids*
- ❖ Assign groups

Readings to be completed for April 9:

- TBD

April 16. Dis/Ability

- ❖ Documentary: *Through Deaf Eyes*

Readings to be completed for April 16:

- TBD

April 23. Presentation Prep

- ❖ Revision due today (to be turned in with original)
- ❖ Preparing for group presentations

April 30. Last Day of Class

- ❖ In-class presentations

May 7 at 1:30pm sharp.

- ❖ Autobiographical narrative due today

Instructor’s Intellectual Property

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