Course Description:

Mickey: Think her family's gonna be okay that you're a white guy?
Cliff: They think any woman over 30 who isn't married is a lesbian. She figures, they'll be so relieved that I'm a man...
Mickey: Yeah, it's always heartwarming to see a prejudice defeated by a deeper prejudice.

Movie dialogue from *Lonestar*

Yo it's 6 Million Ways to Die, from the seven deadly thrills
Eight year olds gettin found with 9 mils…
When the average minimum wage is $5.15
You best believe you gotta find a new grind to get cream
The white unemployment rate, is nearly more than triple for black
so frontliners got they gun in your back
Bubblin crack, jewel theft and robbery to combat poverty
and end up in the global jail economy

Lyrics from “Mathematics” by Mos Def

You think you know who you are. You have no idea.
Moving at the speed of life, we are bound to collide with each other.

*Crash* taglines

During the election campaign for President Barack Obama, our forty fourth President and our first African American President, one of candidate Obama’s famous campaign mantras was “Yes We Can!” Soon the catch-phrase, reminiscent of other calls to action such as “we shall overcome” and “*si se puede*” for underserved populations and populations of color in U.S. history facing issues of social inequality, became a popular music video released by hip-hop musician and rapper Will.i.am. This wedding of issues of social inequality in U.S. politics and society with popular culture media such as music and film is the central focus of this course. It seems fitting, then, to begin this course with a movie dialogue, song lyrics, and a few taglines from two films and a song that resonate with issues of social inequality in U.S. society.

Fundamentally, this course is an historical, theoretical, and ultimately, sociological exploration of race, ethnicity, class, and gender as axes of inequality in the United States, through the lens of music and film media. Materials examine the interaction between personal experiences and social structures as students explore how individuals carry varying degrees of penalty and privilege depending on their position within a complex matrix along axes of race, ethnicity, class, and gender that affects everyone in society. Students will be invited to explore the ways that people experience and respond to the matrix, that is, structures of racial/ethnic, class, and gender inequality, through the lens of various media, and the ways that people help to reinforce and reshape those structures.

I would like you to leave this course with 1) an understanding of sociological theory as it pertains to race/ethnicity/class/gender relations in the United States; 2) an expanded knowledge of the issues of race/ethnicity, class, and gender in America particularly through the lens of music and film; 3) an expanded knowledge of the effect of the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender on real human lives through historical, empirical, and music and film media analysis of issues such as education, employment, family, the criminal justice system, and the media itself; and 4) a basis for critical thinking about the matrix of race/ethnicity/class/gender relations in our country largely in terms of its future ramifications.
Grading:

Your grade will be based on one sociobiography, one critical analysis paper, two exams, and any quizzes or assignments that are given in class. The due dates for the sociobiography and paper and the dates for the exams will be "written in stone" unless you have been informed otherwise by me. Late assignments will not be accepted, nor can exams be rescheduled unless you inform me before the dates in question. If I don't hear from you before the due dates of the sociobiography, the paper, or before the dates of the exams you will be out of luck.

Exams

Exams will include both multiple-choice and essay questions. Each exam will entail no less than 50 and up to 100 multiple-choice questions and a choice of one essay question out of four. The final exam is NOT cumulative. There will be no review for either exam; your exam grades will stand or fall based on your notes and your reading. This means you had better take thorough notes. Sometimes an optional final may be offered. This means a student can opt to keep the grade they are getting so far in the class or choose to take the final to better their grade. If they take the final, it will count toward their final grade. If an optional final is offered, qualifying students can opt to take the final or remain for a discussion; they can not simply leave. All students should, of course, prepare to take a final exam in any case.

Sociobiography (3-5 pages, TYPED Double-spaced)

Writing a sociobiography entails writing about your life from a specific perspective. This course is focused on issues social inequality, particularly issues of race, class, and gender and the complexity of their intersection. In this assignment you will write a brief biography focused on how your race, class, and gender have affected your life. Remember that each of us has a race, class, and gender even though we might not consciously realize their effects. For example, African Americans may be more conscious of their racial status than a white person. A white woman may be more conscious of her gender than a white man. A poor white man may be more conscious of his class status than a middle class Asian man. You all experience these aspects of your life sometimes invisibly. If you focus, you will be able to see their effects whether positive or negative. Remember they can have positive, negative, and otherwise very complex effects on you as an individual. In addition, it is important to start thinking about yourself as a part of a large and complex society that both influences and is influenced by your actions and about how you are situated within a matrix of race, class, and gender in U.S. society and what that really means in concrete terms. I especially want you to start thinking about how you are or are not privileged in this society with regard to your race, class, and gender.

Critical Analysis Paper (4-5 pages, TYPED Double-spaced)

The critical analysis paper consists of a theoretical analysis which covers either two films or four song lyrics to be chosen by the student and approved by the professor. The paper should cover three things: 1. a thesis section [no more than a page and a half]—introducing me to the films or songs you have chosen for your paper as well as the theory(ies) you will use to analyze them. This section can be as dramatic as you’d like or include personal insight; 2. an analysis section [three to five pages]—this entails a one-to-one correspondence between the theory(ies) and the films or song lyrics, starting with a brief definition of the theory in your own words, followed by your choice of a corresponding aspect, character, or scene from the films or lyrics that serves as a clear illustration of the theory (you may find more than one). You may use quotes to enhance your point but make them very brief, indented, and single-spaced. You must use one sociological theory to write the paper from a race, class, and gender perspective—Patricia Hill Collins’ Theory of the Matrix of Domination. However, you may use one other theory described in class to help analyze your films/song lyrics with regard to race, class, and gender and media literacy.
The theory section should look something like this:

Definition (of the theory in your own words)
Proof (illustration from the films/song lyrics)
Tie back (refer back to the theory you are using at the end of the proof, coming full circle on your analysis)

This sequence should happen at least twice or more in the short space of 4-5 pages.

Remember to keep referring back to theory. This is, after all, a theoretical analysis; and 3. a critique or evaluation section [no more than a page]--this section can be as dramatic as you choose to make it and must entail a personal opinion of the book, the task, or both--it is not meant to be a summary of what you have already written. Remember that everyone is writing under the same analytical framework; creativity and the use of intersections will be the key to the best essays. Please DO NOT use plastic folders, cover pages, or bibliography pages unless you are citing sources other than your book(s) and lectures. PROOFREAD!! Poor grammar, spelling, etc... will suffer grade reduction. Also watch font and margin space. Keep font to no more than 12pt (as long as it is not Courier New) and margins to no more than 1 inch on each side. Your grade will be reduced for large font and margins.

Other Quizzes, Assignments, and Miscellaneous Information...

I reserve the right to give quizzes and/or assignments as needed when I feel discussion of reading and general discussion is diminishing and/or when attendance drops. For example, students who don’t complete readings may be asked to turn in an essay assignment. If assignments are given, they will count toward your final grade. Attendance will be taken regularly, and class participation is also considered significant to your grade.

Required Reading:

Reserve readings can be found using the Marriott Library website which is http://www.lib.utah.edu/. When you get to this site, look to the right hand side on the bottom and you will find the My.Utah.edu Student Portal. Login using your uNID and your password. Once you are logged in, on the left hand menu, click on the Academics option that has a little symbol of a graduation cap. Then, in the middle column under My Courses, you should see all the courses for which you have registered for the current semester. You should find Sociology 3381-001. Underneath that you should find Course Reserves. You can click on Course Reserves and it will bring up all the readings for the course.

Information about the Center for Disability Services:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. All printed information for this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Dates You Should Know:
29 Sep: Sociobiography due
29 Oct: Exam #1
19 Nov: Critical Analysis Paper due
13 Dec: Final Exam

Course Outline and Reading List:

| AUG  |   25   | Introduction       |
| SEPT |   1    | Developing a Critical Media Literacy continued |

Reserve Reading: bell hooks
Reserve Reading: Ellen Seiter, Jackson Katz
3-10 Race/Ethnicity and the Crash of Cultures

Reserve Reading: James Loewen

7 Labor Day Holiday

15-22 Social Class on the Titanic and other Stories

Reserve Reading: Jason DeParle

24-29 Doing Gender in the Birdcage

Reserve Reading: Marilyn Frye

29 Sociobiography Due

OCT 1-8 Theory Along the Matrix of Race/Ethnicity, Class, and Gender

Reserve Reading: Patricia Hill Collins

12-17 Fall Break

20-27 Bread and Roses: Living and Working in American Society

Reserve Reading: William Julius Wilson, Barbara Ehrenreich

29 Exam #1

NOV 3-10 A View of Criminal Justice on the Farm

Reserve Reading: Dennis Rome

12-24 The School Years: To Stand and Deliver in the Face of Inequity

Reserve Reading: Jonathan Kozol

19 Critical Analysis Paper Due

26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday

DEC 1-8 Family, Relationships, and Daddy's Little Girls

Reserve Reading: Lois Weis, Michelle Fine, and Rukiyaa Morton-Christmas

10 What's in the Distance

Reserve Reading: Cornell West

14 Final Exam – 8:00-10:00am
RESERVE READING LIST

Critical Media Literacy

Race, Class, and Gender

Theory Along the Matrix of Race/Ethnicity, Class, and Gender

Bread and Roses: Living and Working in American Society

A View of Criminal Justice from The Farm

The School Years: To Stand and Deliver in the Face of Inequity

Family, Relationships, and Daddy’s Little Girls

What’s in the Distance?