

Spring 2006

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*Prejudice, Stigma, and Intergroup Relations* (IDIS/PS 390)

Spring 2006 – Moral Life Course (U2) for LinC Curriculum

Monday and Wednesday – Period 1B (7:30 – 8:40am) – Hurd 235

*Description of the course:* Race, religion, gender, sexuality, age, social class, and disability are all social and emotional flashpoints in our society. Prejudice affects individuals and groups, and one's identity within a group can be stigmatizing. Moral issues abound here, beginning with how we perceive and treat others, and how we are perceived and treated by others. Arguably, prejudice is largely a function of ignorance—but is this ignorance motivational (i.e., need-based) or grounded in how we think about others (a by-product of cognition)? Getting along with one another—understanding one another—depends upon being exposed to different perspectives and ways of living. The goal of this class is to promote each student's awareness and understanding of prejudice and stigma while identifying ways to promote constructive intergroup relations. Students will come to grips with their own moral values and positions where thinking about and interacting with others is concerned.

*Required Books*

Whitley, B. E., & Kite, M. E. (2006). *The psychology of prejudice and discrimination*. Thompson/Wadsworth.

Plous, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Understanding prejudice and discrimination*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Roth, P. (2004). *The plot against America*. New York: Vintage.

Reserve Readings will be available in Reeves Library.

## Course Requirements

*Class participation and attendance.* This class requires constant attendance, active participation, and critical discussions of the readings. I expect that you will attend each and every class, and that you will come prepared to talk about—and question—what you read. I also assume that you are in this class because you have a serious interest in the topic. As a result, I assume that you are willing to share your opinions with the class and that you are open to the possibility of changing your opinions.

Please note that I **will** be taking role, thus your absence from class will affect your participation grade (i.e., if you are not in class, you cannot contribute to discussion). If you miss a class, you are responsible for any material covered, notes given, announcements, etc. If you are absent, please see one of your classmates regarding that day's assignments.

*Classroom decorum and courtesy.* Please arrive to class on time, that is, when class is to begin or before—not once the class is well underway. A late arrival is not only rude, it is disruptive to the flow of discussion. I realize that there are all kinds of reasons for late arrivals, many of them entirely legitimate. I also realize that you will do your best to be in class on time. It is not reasonable to arrive late to class because you were finishing writing a paper (work is technically late once class begins and will be down-graded accordingly, even if you submit it 10 mins after class begins—plan ahead and get your work done on time).

*Exams.* There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final. Each exam will be comprised of essay questions based upon class readings, films, and discussions. We will discuss exam formats in some detail during class. The midterm exam date is noted in the course schedule. The final exam date will be announced once it is determined by the Registrar's Office. A missed exam will be recorded as a zero (0) grade. Make-up exams will be given at my discretion, and valid evidence for the absence will be required (e.g., emergency, documented medical excuse).

*Short papers.* There are five short paper assignments noted in the course schedule. These are meant to be thought, opinion, or reaction papers—not formal research papers. Each short paper should be somewhere between 3 and 5 pages (more if need be), typed and double-spaced, as well as spell-checked. The goal is to “do something” with the readings and your opinions about them. Be prepared to share your (written) thoughts in class with your peers. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day (the penalty begins once the class in which a paper is due begins). Topics are provided on the last page of this syllabus.

*Late Paper Policy.* You have five written assignments for this class. Hard copies of all paper assignments are due at the beginning of class or in advance of the dates listed in the

syllabus. Papers submitted later than this time—**for any reason**—will be penalized by 20% (i.e., an paper that would have earned a 95 on time receives a 75) on the first day and 10% each day thereafter (including weekends), up to 50%. Practically speaking, an A paper that is 5 days late receives a grade of 50 once it is turned in—if it is never submitted, then it receives a grade of 0. I will not accept electronic copies of papers sent via email, only hard copies. Plan accordingly by working ahead and consistently on your papers.

*Submitting work early.* I am happy to accept your papers before they are due.

*Final course grade.* The final course grade will be based upon the following percentage weights:

Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	15%
Class participation	20%
Five (5) short papers	50%

*Office Hours.*

Monday	10:15-11:15am
Wednesday	2-3pm
Friday	8:30-10:30am

When necessary appointments for other times may be scheduled.

*Syllabus.* I reserve the right to alter the syllabus if I decide change is necessary.

## Course Schedule and Assignments

### *Week One* - Jan 16 (M) and Jan 18 (W) – Identifying Difference

Overview and introduction to course. Being sensitive, becoming sensitive, and discussing difficult issues. *Class exercise*.

Film: *In Whose Honor?*

### *Week Two* – Jan 23 (M) and Jan 25 (W) – Understanding the Origins of Prejudice

Discussion of *In Whose Honor?* Plous pp. 360-368

Whitley & Kite chapters 1 and 2 - **(Paper 1 due)**

### *Week Three* – Jan 30 (M) and Feb 1 (W) - Stereotypes

1. Whitley & Kite chapters 3 and 4
2. Whitley & Kite chapter 5 and 6

### *Week Four* – Feb 6 (M) and Feb 8 (W). Stereotypes and Stereotype Threat

1. Plous pps. 49-62; Steele, C. M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52, 613-629
2. Plous pps. 98 – 110; Aronson, J., Lustinia, M. J., Good, C., Keough, K., Steele, C. M., & Brown, J. (1999). When white men can't do math: Necessary and sufficient factors in stereotype threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 35, 29-46.

### *Week Five* – Feb 13 (M) and Feb 15 (W) – Social Context of Prejudice

1. Whitley & Kite chapter 7
2. Whitley & Kite chapter 8 – **(Paper 2 due)**

### *Week Six* – Feb 20 (M) and Feb 22 (W) - Personality and Motivational Issues

Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, K., & Malle, B. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attributes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 741-763.

Fein, S., & Spencer, S. (1997). Prejudice as self-image maintenance: Affirming the self through derogating others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*,

73, 31-44.

## 2. Midterm Exam

*Week Seven* – Feb 27 (M) and Mar 1 (W) – Discrimination

Whitley & Kite chapter 10; Film: *Crash*

Whitley & Kite chapter 11; Film: *Crash*

### ***Spring Break – March 4 thru 12***

*Week Eight* – Mar 13 (M) and Mar 15 (W) - Stigma and Disability

Plous pps. 64 – 83; Johnson, H. M. (2003, February 16). Unspeakable conversations or how I spent one day as a token cripple at Princeton University. *New York Times Magazine*, 50-55, 74, 78-79.

Plous 84 – 96; Fine, M., & Asch, A. (1988). Disability beyond stigma: Social interaction, discrimination, and activism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 44, 3-22.

### **(Paper 3 due)**

*Week Nine* – Mar 20 (M) and Mar 22 (W) – Racism Then and Now

Plous pps. 113 - 164

Plous pps. 165 - 206

*Week Ten* – Mar 20 (M) and Mar 22 (W) – Anti-Semitism and a *What If?* Novel

Plous pps. 273 - 326

Roth pp. 1 - 121

*Week Eleven* – Mar 27 (M) and Mar 29 (W) – *The Plot Against America* continued

Roth pp. 122 - 236

### 2. Finish the Roth book

*Week Twelve* – Apr 3 (M) Sexism and Apr 5 (W) Heterosexism

Whitley & Kite chapter 9 (pp. 344 – 370); Plous pps. 215 - 271 – **(Paper 4 due)**

### 2. Plous pps. 375 – 423; Film: *A Question of Gender*

*Week Thirteen* – Apr 10 (M) & Apr 12 (W) – Art as a Reaction to Prejudice

Angels in America

Angels in America

**(Paper 5 due)**

**Easter Recess – Apr 14 (F) thru Apr 19 (M)**

*Week Fourteen* – Apr 19 (W) - Art as a Reaction to Prejudice

Angels in America discussion

*Week Fifteen* - Apr 24 (M) and Apr 26 (W) - Reducing Prejudice

Whitley & Kite chapter 12; Plous pps. 481 – 506

Conclusions

\* Date of the Final Exam to be announced

## Paper Topic Assignments

Note: Students are required to write five 3 to 5 page thought papers. Possible topics are noted below. Due dates for the papers are indicated earlier in the course schedule.

*Paper 1* – What is your reaction to the controversy surrounding the issue of team mascots as portrayed in the film *In Whose Honor*? Is this a problem of prejudice? Why or why not? In your opinion, what should be done about it?

Paper 2 – Examine and critique the way Moravian College, a place you work, or another institution treats minorities. What are the strengths and weaknesses? How can things be improved?

Paper 3 – You are a Film Critic for *The New York Times*. Write a critical review of the film *Crash*. What does the film teach viewers, if anything, about the nature of contemporary prejudice and discrimination in America? In your opinion, does it succeed or fail in its mission? Why? How would you change the film?

*Paper 4* – Does Philip Roth's book portray a world that could have been or could still be? Is the book believable, that is, should we consider America's embrace of minority groups—here, Jews, but any group might suffice—tenuous and potentially fragile? Consider America's current direction where the rights of minority groups are concerned in light of Roth's fiction: Are there things we can learn from the book?

*Paper 5* – Describe your reactions to the individual portrayed in the documentary *A Question of Gender*. Does the fact that this individual is a Moravian College alum have any impact on your opinion? Why or why not?