Black Oppression in Portland

Sociology 410

Spring 2018

M/W 4:40 - 6:30

Cramer Hall 382

Julius McGee

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00

Course description: In this course, we will explore the legacy of black oppression in the city of Portland as well as resistance to oppression using sociological theories on race. This class will cover: 1.) The early forms of racial segregation that were instituted in the city of Portland and the effects it has had on the black community. 2.) How the process of gentrification has specifically effected the black community. 3.) The various types of environmental injustice in Portland and its effect on the black community. 4.) The resistance efforts toward each of these forms of inequality both presently and historically.

Course Policies:

D2L: The instructor will post the syllabus on D2L. Students will submit journal entries via D2L. The instructor will also post comments on response papers and grades for all assignments on D2L.

Email: The instructor regularly communicates with the class via PSU email so be sure that you are receiving my emails. It is your responsibility to check your email daily during the school week and respond in a timely manner. In emails to the instructor, please put the title of the course in the subject line and sign your emails using your first and last name. Use the email addresses on the first page of the syllabus. The instructor will generally respond to email within 24 hours. Emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday will generally be answered by 5:00pm on Monday.

Academic honesty: You are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU policies. Cheating or plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

Plagiarism: If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else’s words), you must include it in quotation marks and cite the source, including author(s) name(s), the date of publication, and the page number. If you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source, including author(s) name(s) and the date of publication. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

Cancelled classes: In the case of inclement weather or other emergencies, please refer to the PSU web page: http://www.pdx.edu/. In the event that the instructor has to cancel class, they will email
the class as soon as possible. If the instructor has not arrived to class 10 minutes after the scheduled start time, consider class cancelled for the day.

**Access and inclusion for students with disabilities:** If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the DRC to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, http://www.pdx.edu/drc. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and to discuss your accommodations.

**Title IX reporting:** As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals at http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672.

**Required texts**

- Burke, Lucas & Judson Jefferies. *The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City*

**Other texts used in course (**indicates books that can be used for final paper)**

- Newton, Huey. *Revolutionary Suicide* *
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race & Class* *

**Recommended text**

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
- Shakur, Assata. *Assata: An Autobiography*
- Wells, Ida. *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*
- Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation 1st Edition*
- Jackson, George. *Blood in My Eye*
Course Assignments:

Weekly journals (60%): Throughout this course, you will be asked to keep a weekly journal. The journal are due on Fridays at the end of each week by 5:00 PM on D2L. You are expected to write about the course readings, class discussions, in class videos, and guest speakers. There is no required page length for these journals. You should write as much as you think is necessary. Journals will be graded based on how well they engage with course content and your critical reflections. A strong journal entry will engage critically with readings and other course materials and make connections between the readings and/or other course material.

Final Paper: Engage further/Know your city (40%): The final paper in for this course will ask you to expand on the various themes explored in this course. There are a number of ways that you can do this. 1.) You may choose from one of the books above and write an essay about how this book connects to the historical legacy of oppression in Portland, the history of radical movements in Portland, or one or more of the theories discussed in the course. 2.) Participate/volunteer at an organization that directly supports the black community in Portland. This can be going a few NAACP meetings, participating in events held by other organizations that support the black community (Mudbone Grown, The Urban League of Portland, OPAL, etc.). You are also allowed to write about an event you have attended within the last year that fits these stipulations (please speak to me first if this is the case). Your paper should be no less than 2,000 words and will be due Wednesday June 6 by 5 PM.

Course Schedule:

Part 1: The History of Black Oppression in Portland

Week 1: Introduction to Marxism and black radical thought/Portland’s first black communities

Required readings: Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem” (D2L); Robinson, “Preface to the 2000 edition” & Chapter 1 “Racial Capitalism”

Week 2: America’s Ghettos

Required readings: Massy and Denton, “The construction of the Ghetto”

In class film, OPB’s Vanport.

Week 3: Black Women’s Suffrage
Required readings: Jensen, “Neither Head nor Tail to the Campaign”: Esther Pohl Lovejoy and the Oregon Woman Suffrage Victory of 1912; Davis, “Racism in the Women’s Suffrage Movement”.

In class film, Free Angela and other Political Prisoners

**Week 4: Constructing Portland’s Ghetto**

Required readings: Robinson, pp. 185-208; Burke and Jefferies, Chapter 1 “Making and Remaking Albina”

In class Film, Reconstruction, Slavery by another Name.

**Week 5: Constructing Portland’s Ghetto cont.**


In class film, Inside the Battle for Fair Housing in 1960s Chicago; A Matter of Place

**Part 2: Black Radicalism**

**Week 6: Introduction to Black Radicalism**

Required reading: Burke and Jefferies, Chapter 2 “Claiming Albina in the Era of the Model Cities and the National Committee to Combat Fascism”; Robinson pp. 228-240; 278-286


**Week 7: Portland’s Black Panthers**


In class film, Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution

**Week 8: Police Surveillance and the New Jim Crow**

Required reading: Serbulo and Gibson, Black and Blue: Police-Community Relations in Portland’s Albina District, 1964-1985; Coates, “The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration”

In class film, 13th

**Part 3: The Persistence of Black Oppression**

**Week 9: Gentrification**


In class film, Priced Out: Gentrification in PDX. (Class Divide?)
Week 10: Environmental inequality

Required reading: Pellow, David “Towards a Critical Environmental Justice Studies”; Lubitow and Miller “Contesting Sustainability: Bikes, Race, and Politics in Portlandia”

In Class film, *Come Hell or High Water*