PARW 6286: Building Conscious Allyship

Professor Anjali Nath, M.A.
Office hours: by appt. 410 B
anath@ciis.edu or (415) 575-6255
August 29-30, 9:30 AM -5:30 PM
Fall 2015. 1 unit.
1453 Mission St, Room 210 & on Canvas

While there is a lower class, I am in it. While there is a criminal element, I am of it. And while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.

-Eugene V. Debs

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory-level course reviews myriad frameworks that support engagement with both differences and commonalities in socially just and transformative ways. The class provides a space where students can reflect upon their own social/historical location and simultaneously analyze intersections between knowledge, the sacred, and liberation. Using a wide variety of tools and techniques, we will create a forum in which students will deepen their ability to effectively dialogue. We will both problematize the concept of ‘allyship’ and broaden our understanding of connection through collective kinship paradigms. We will, then, be better equipped to build the kinds of meaningful solidarity so urgently needed in this current moment.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and articulate the significance of multiple intersecting axes of social location to the field of Women’s Spirituality.
- Understand and analyze various resources for community building, solidarity, and inter- & intra-group dialogue.
- Demonstrate growth in their understanding of interconnected systems of privilege & oppression as well as practices of social transformation.
- Articulate, orally and in writing, their growth in self-awareness and interpersonal skills, particularly those related to movements for collective liberation.
- Critically reflect upon their own relationship to power and privilege and integrate this reflection with a thoughtful analysis of course texts.
- Apply what they have learned about power and building coalitions to personal, political, & academic contexts.

COURSE TEXT AND MATERIALS: ALL ARTICLES & FILMS AVAILABLE ON CANVAS.
COURSE ASSESSMENT MEASURES (Grade Option: OP)

Class Participation 15%

Since classes will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, regular participation is required. Participation grades will be based on both the quantity and quality of a student’s participation. This includes both verbal participation & active listening. You must come to class ready to participate. This means all course reading should be done in advance of the class. Please arrive to class on time. In the case of late arrivals, your attendance grade will be reduced.

Discussion Questions 20%

Each student will share questions they have about ten of our assigned readings & films. You will post your questions on our PARW 6286 Canvas site under the questions tab in the thread titled by author or reading/film name. On the left side of our Canvas site, click on the “Discussions” link. Then select the “Questions” link. Next choose the appropriate reading & post your questions by the due date. Read the questions that have been posted before yours & make sure that you are not duplicating any questions. You won’t get credit for repeating someone else’s question. Questions should be specific, based on the readings, & should not consist of asking the definitions of terms used. If you aren’t familiar with a term or concept used in a reading or film, it’s part of the assignment for you to look it up. If your questions (or responses) are in need of any kind of revision or tweaking, I’ll check in with you as you’re submitting them over time to ensure you have sufficient time to modify accordingly.

I may select students at random to share discussion questions with the entire class during our 8/29-8/30 sessions. Each of your discussion questions and responses will be worth 2% of your final class grade. This ensures that you read each assignment carefully, prepare to make valuable contributions to our class discussions, and have a firm conceptual grasp of the readings to use when writing your implementation paper.

Discussion Responses 20%

Each student will post a response (one paragraph minimum) to ten class questions of their choice that fellow students have posted. This will be done entirely on Canvas. Please only respond to one question per reading or film. You will not get credit for posting a response to a question that you posed yourself. Also, if any other students have already responded to a question that you also choose to respond to, it is your responsibility to read their response first to ensure you don’t duplicate their responses. Your responses should clearly demonstrate that you’ve completed the assigned reading or film viewing. Make sure your responses critically engage the questions and do not centralize your personal emotions over analysis. Our affective responses are important to observe and develop an awareness of, yet this assignment requires more than solely feeling our feelings.

Implementation Paper 45%

Write an original, thesis-driven paper that addresses one or more course themes through a practical challenge. This assignment is designed to help you integrate what you have learned through the readings, class discussions, and personal reflection. If you were to choose to work in solidarity with a group that you don’t personally belong to, how would you go about
doing this? If you already have a relationship with a particular movement or organization that you’d like to critically analyze, feel free to do this. Engage at least ten course texts in this assignment.

This paper must follow *Chicago* style formatting and include a bibliography. Email to anath@ciis.edu by 10:30 AM on 10/14 at the latest. Subject heading should have “Your Last Name PARW 6286 Final.” Make sure the format is doc.x or a Word doc. No hard copies nor late submissions will be accepted. See the essay rubric posted on Canvas for more details about this assignment and how it will be evaluated. 7-9 pages for BAC and MA students. 10-12 pages for PhD students.

**Class Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings regularly and punctually. Students are assigned an F (Failure) or NP (No Pass) grade if they are absent for more than 20 percent of a course. This maximum includes both excused and unexcused absences. Three instances of tardiness or leaving early are considered equivalent to one absence. Instructors may permit a student to deviate from this rule on the grounds of illness necessitating confinement for 24 hours or more, a death in the family, or other extreme emergencies. The instructor may request verification of these circumstances by a letter from a medical professional, the Dean of Students, or the Academic Vice President as appropriate. Due to the nature of some courses, individual programs, departments, and instructors may enforce stricter policies than these. Check the program handbook and/or the syllabus of a course to see these policies.

**Academic Integrity**

Creative and original scholarly research is at the heart of the Institute’s academic purpose. It is essential that faculty and students pursue their academic work with the utmost integrity. This means that all academic work produced by an individual is the result of the individual’s efforts and that those efforts acknowledge explicitly any contribution by another person. Reproducing another’s work and submitting it as one’s own work or without acknowledging the source is called “plagiarism,” or stealing the intellectual property of another, which is the antithesis of scholarly research. Any use of other ideas or others’ expression in any medium without attribution is a serious violation of academic standards. If confirmed, plagiarism subjects a student to disciplinary action.

**Policy on Incompletes**

Students anticipating being unable to complete a course may request permission from the instructor to receive an “I” (Incomplete) grade; students who have not completed the work required for a course are not to be given a passing grade in the course without completing the required work. CIIS courses are expected to be organized in a way that allows work to be completed during the semester the course is being offered. Below are the policies related to incomplete grades:

1. Permission to be given an “I” grade is given only in the following circumstances:  
   a. medical reasons documented by a health-care professional;  
   b. a family emergency verified with supporting documentation; or  
   c. decision by faculty member based on exceptional pedagogical reasons.
2. The instructor has the right to refuse to grant an “I” grade.

3. The Registrar’s Office does not record an “I” grade without receiving an Incomplete Grade Request Form signed by the student and the instructor by the grade submission deadline. This form stipulates what coursework is remaining and its due date.

4. The instructor, not the student, determines the deadline for the remaining coursework. This deadline cannot exceed two semesters (including summer) from the last day of the semester in which the course took place, and can be earlier. (For example, if the course is in fall 2011, the student has until the last day of summer 2012 to submit the work unless the instructor specifies an earlier deadline.) The maximum deadline for an Incomplete given for exceptional pedagogical reasons is one semester. This deadline is not extended for students who are on a leave of absence, become inactive, or refrain from registering for any semester while the work remains outstanding.

5. If the student does not submit the coursework by this deadline, the “I” grade converts to an “IN” (Permanent Incomplete). An “IN” is irreversible.

6. Students may not graduate with an “I” grade on their record even in an elective course. Students may graduate with an “IN” grade on their record, provided that if the IN was for a required course, the student later successfully repeated the course.

7. The submission of an “I” grade by an instructor does not imply that that instructor will be a CIIS employee in a subsequent semester. It is the student’s responsibility to maintain current contact information for this instructor.

8. Students may not sit in on a subsequent semester’s offering of the same course in order to make up the coursework.

9. When submitting the remaining coursework, the student must include a signed Grade Change Form. The instructor uses this form to notify the Registrar’s Office of the final grade.

**Student Disability Services**
A student with a permanent or temporary disability may request accommodations by contacting Student Disability Services (SDS), a service of the Dean of Students Office, at studentaffairs@ciis.edu. The Student Disability Services Coordinator works with students to provide reasonable accommodations that will allow for full access and participation in the academic environment. The student must provide documentation from a licensed healthcare professional. The Student Disability Services Coordinator will communicate with the student’s faculty only after receiving a written request from the student; the nature of the disability is never disclosed. More information about registering with Student Disability Services can be found in the Student Life tab of MyCIIS, or at https://my.ciis.edu/ICS/Student_Life/Student_Disability_Services.jnz.

**Statement on Diversity**
The Women's Spirituality Program holds diversity as a crucial component to our understanding of integral education. The program acknowledges the power differentials based on the social meanings assigned to gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, immigration status,
Colonization, ability, and disability. We are committed to unlearning oppression, building alliances, and unpacking our various privileges. While we are a program that focuses on the roles, activities, and spiritual practices of individuals and groups characterized as women, the Women's Spirituality program explicitly acknowledges difficulties that arise from heteronormativity in spirituality and from dual or binary gender systems. We welcome individuals of all sexualities and diverse gender identities.

**Course Calendar: Subject to Change**

*Saturday August 29*
9:30-9:40: Prayer & grounding
9:40-11:00: Introduction to class, syllabus review & guidelines, & student introductions
11:00-11:10: Break
11:10-12:30: Defining & problematizing allyship & its relevance to Women's Spirituality
12:30-1:30: Lunch break
1:30-1:35: Song
1:35-3:30: Student discussion questions
3:30-3:40: Break
3:40-5:30: Privilege, oppression, & power

*Sunday August 30*
9:30-9:40: Guided breath work
9:40-11:00: Check-ins & politicizing the personal
11:00-11:10: Break
11:10-12:30: Cultural voyeurism & spiritual appropriation
12:30-1:30: Lunch break
1:30-1:40: Guided movement
1:40-3:20: Student discussion questions
3:20-3:30: Break
3:30-5:30: Building solidarity & closing

9/5: Post your five discussion questions from Reading Group 1 on Canvas by today
9/12: Post your five discussion responses from Reading Group 1 on Canvas by today
9/19: Post your five discussion questions from Reading Group 2 on Canvas by today
9/26: Post your five discussion responses from Reading Group 2 on Canvas by today
10/2: Rough Draft of paper due by noon to anath@ciis.edu
10/16: Critical response paper due by 10:30 AM to anath@ciis.edu

**Reading Assignments & Due Dates:** Please bring copies of reading assignments to class.

*Readings 1 (all due by our August 29 class):*
2. K Petersen-Smith & B Bean “Nothing Short of Liberation”
   https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/black-lives-matter-police-brutality-allies/
3. A Smith “The Problem with Privilege”  
   https://andrea366.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/the-problem-with-privilege-by-andrea-smith/
4. B Reagon “Coalition Politics: Turning the Century”
5. J Scott “The Evidence of Experience”
6. ML King Jr “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
8. A Lorde “The Uses of Anger…”
10. IM Young “Five Faces of Oppression”
11. A Ayvazian “Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression: The Role of Allies as Agents of Change”
15. White Like Me film  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltiXR5m1yAY
16. R DiAngelo “White Fragility”
17. R Jensen “White Privilege Shapes the U.S: Affirmative Action For Whites Is a Fact of Life”
18. PH Collins “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection”
19. Orientalism film:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC8EYd_Zg or transcript
20. D Miranda “What’s Wrong with a Little Fantasy?…”

Readings 2 (please complete as much as possible before our August 29 meeting):
1. M Omi and H Winant “Racial Formations”
2. LM Alcoff Visible Identities: Race, Gender, & the Self (p 5-129)
3. M Kimmel “Masculinity as Homophobia”
4. E Taylor “On the Privileges of Performing Normative Gender”
5. S Stryker “Transgender Liberation”
6. S Seidman “From Outsider to Citizen”
7. L Feinberg “We Are all Works in Progress”
8. DR Samuels “Sounds and Silences of Language: Perpetuating Institutionalized Privilege and Oppression”
10. Leonard-Wright “Why do we need Cross-class Alliances?”
11. P Kivel “Where are You in the Class System?”
15. T Hehir “Toward Ending Ableism in Education”
17. P Markee “What Allies of Elders Can Do”
18. W Echo-Hawk “Five Hundred Years After Columbus”
19. *Why I Stopped Teaching Yoga: My Journey into Spiritual Political Accountability*  
20. *What, Exactly, Is Cultural Appropriation (& Why is it Harmful?)*  
   https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2015/01/04/what-exactly-is-cultural-appropriation-and-how-is-it-harmful/