

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Critical Race Theory

Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

Lawmakers in 16 states have introduced or passed legislation this year seeking to limit the teaching of critical race theory within public institutions. Local school District 49 recently banned the teaching of critical race theory in its schools, even though the state of Colorado does not demand the inclusion of CRT (Critical Race Theory). But what exactly is CRT? Critical race theory is not a new curriculum, or a new brand, or a new racist ideology. "Critical race theory" is just the new name given to old things students have been learning and reading and watching for years. When we learn about Frederick Douglass's struggle to become a free man, we are studying CRT. When we talk about the US Civil War, we are studying CRT. Scarlett O'Hara teaches us about CRT. When we learn about the Pilgrims' first interactions with Native Americans, we are studying CRT. The history of our country, the lure that pulled us West, this is all CRT. CRT remains embedded in our educational discourse so much so that it is difficult to pinpoint, and even more difficult to remove.

I think the language of "critical" and "theory" is as much to blame for the current fear around CRT as much as the word "race." I like to ask the critics of CRT: with what other critical theories do they agree or disagree? Critical theory exists in all kinds of disciplines: critical criminology theory; critical economic theory; critical film theory; critical ecological theory, etc. Critical theory examines states of things that exist along all spectrums of possible knowledge, we just don't call it that in middle school. The basis of knowledge is thinking about things as they exist, and this is all that theory wants to do—the theory of why something is the way that it is. To think critically. To ask why. Nothing new—critical theory is another name for curiosity, the main component driving human progress and knowledge. You use critical thinking everyday: critical spatial theory when you decide when to safely turn left; critical sexuality theory when you swipe right; and critical race theory when you ask yourself, why is there so much racial tension in this country?

One critique I hear about CRT is the onus placed on the individual: (continued on page 6)

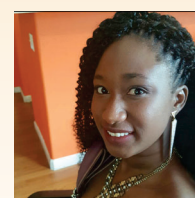
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NEWSLETTER EDITORS

DR. TRE WENTLING

IRINA AMOUZOU ('22)



NEW Civics in WEST & Sociology Undergraduate Studies Certificate

By: Nick Lee

On behalf of the WEST Program and Sociology Department, I am happy to announce a new Civics Certificate in WEST and Sociology! In recent years the Regents of the CU system have put an emphasis on civics education and urged departments to create opportunities for students to engage with civics-related topics in the classroom.

The faculty of WEST and Sociology

believe that critical thinking about race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other socio-cultural hierarchies and the relationships between the U.S. Government and marginalized populations within American society are crucial aspects of a well-rounded civics education. The Civics Certificate in WEST & Sociology encourages a broader understanding of citizenship,

democracy, obligations, participation, protest, and social justice.

Exciting courses included in the certificate range from WEST 2020: WAP: Women and Protests to SOC 4600: Critical Analysis of Capitalism. All undergraduate students are eligible for this certificate. Anyone interested in the certificate can reach out to me, Nick Lee, directly at nlee2@uccs.edu.



Dr. Abby Ferber



Dr. Stephen Suh



Dr. Julie Torres

Dr. Abby Ferber

Right now I am very excited about my Spring break travel course, Racial Storytelling. I guarantee this will be a life-changing experience. Travelling to Montgomery, Alabama may not be on your bucket list, but I have had students ask me if they can take the class again! This class provides a unique opportunity to learn about the events and history too often erased from our textbooks, and learn to ask critical questions such as whose stories get told? Whose perspectives are represented? Whose voices are left out? Who benefits? And why?

Montgomery is a microcosm of our histories of institutionalized racism and resistance. At one point it was the largest slave trading port in the country, the seat of the Confederacy and later a key location in the Civil Rights movement. Home to not only Jefferson Davis but Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., this is a city that has played a central role in the history of both white supremacist and anti-racist movements. We will visit iconic sites including the auction site where enslaved Africans were sold and examine the ways the

city was designed around the “business of slavery.” We will visit the first White House of the Confederacy as well as Martin Luther King’s Dexter Ave church and home. We will walk the final leg of the Selma to Montgomery march, learning about the history from people who lived it. We will also visit the Rosa Parks Museum, the Civil Rights Memorial, and the new Legacy Museum and Peace and Justice Memorial. We will ask: how have the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow, as well as the resistance of the Freedom Riders and the organizers of the bus boycotts been mis/represented in Montgomery, and well beyond? And what are the consequences? Email me to learn more aferber@uccs.edu.

I am so excited that the second edition of my co-authored textbook has just been published! [*The Matrix of Race: Social Construction, Intersectionality and Inequality*](#). We are a multi-racial team of authors and integrate our own personal stories of race throughout the text and invite students to connect their own lives directly with the subject matter.

Dr. Stephen Suh

Hi all! Professor Suh here.

Thanks to many of you, I’m excited to report that my Asian American Communities has its highest enrollment ever this Fall! Woohoo! Unfortunately, I am teaching remotely this semester, so I haven’t been able to interact with any of you in person. This is set to change in the Spring, however, as Dr. Wentling and I will be co-teaching the new-and-improved WEST 4950: WEST Methods & Capstone for the first time together and in person! We are both very excited with what this new version of WEST Capstone has to offer, so please consider enrolling in it!

In other news, I will be presenting my research on Korean American culinary entrepreneurs in Seoul as part of the [*Global Intercultural Research Center \(GLINT\)*](#) Brownbag series this Oct 27 at noon. This will be a hybrid event, with both a virtual location and a space on campus where you can join. If you’re a foodie, or are interested in Asian American celebrity chefs, or you’re just fascinated by Korea, this talk is for you! More information about the event should be sent via UCCS email soon. Thanks for reading! I hope to see you all in person soon!

Dr. Julie Torres

Hi WEST family! It is hard to believe that I have been at UCCS for a year and am just now beginning to meet so many of you in-person for the first time. I look forward to getting to know each of you and hope you are having a happy and safe semester back.

I have been busy working on my first book, which centers Puerto Rican women’s activism in Florida, and I was recently awarded the Virginia Sánchez Korrol Dissertation Award for the dissertation on which the book is based. You can read more about my research and professional trajectory in this [interview for the Anthropology at Teachers College, Columbia University blog](#).

I also have a new publication out in CENTRO Journal, titled, [*“Los hijos ausentes: Citizenship, Activism, and Recovery in Post-Hurricane Maria Orlando.”*](#) Check it out, if you are interested in the topics of activism, migration, and disaster.

Finally, as you prepare to register for classes, consider signing up for one of my Spring 2022 courses. I will be teaching WEST 3060 Multi-Racial Identities, WEST 3370 Boricua Crossings: Puerto Rico and its Diaspora, and WEST 1010 Introduction to Social Justice. Feel free to e-mail me at jtorre14@uccs.edu, if you have any questions about these courses.

Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

Two Upcoming Fall Speaking Events featuring Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

October 11th, at 5pm, location TBA: Please join the UCCS History Club in celebrating National Indigenous Day, formerly known as Columbus Day, in a speech that invites the History Club to question and interrogate what we call "History." Dr. Tua'one will present on her research in the archives and the Pacific Ocean, tracing the journey from a present-day nautical history book, to the primary documents of a historical moment captured in time by the writing of a single sailor. This talk will show students what it means to question, interrogate, re-search, re-write, and re-vision History.

November 4th, at 6pm, Heller Center for the Arts & Humanities: Please join Dr. Tua'one in the first Heller Center Salon Series of 2021. Dr. Tua'one will be presenting the article "Nocturnal Reveling: HMS Dolphin, The Story of the Ship that Lost its Integrity," appearing in a special issue of Eighteenth-Century Studies in 2022. This research follows the trajectory of one story "The Myth of the Nail," and its appearance in popular erotica of the 1770s and into the nautical history books of the 21st century—a story of sailors trading nails for sex with Tahitians.



Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

Dr. Tre Wentling

And just like that – it's fall semester 2021! But the days leading up to it were jam-packed. My research collaborators on the "Transgender Social Life, Family, and Health" project and I submitted our chapter, "Gender Transition and Same-Sex Marriage: A Qualitative Consideration," to The Social Science of Same-Sex Marriage: LGBT People and Their Relationships in the Era of Marriage Equality. I also contributed to multiple pedagogical institutes and conferences: The Knapsack Institute, Colorado Online Learning and Teaching with Technology, and Educator Institute for Equity and Justice.

This semester I am teaching remote synchronous: WEST 1010 Introduction to Social Justice Studies, WEST 3080

Trans Studies, and WEST 3620 Media and Consumption. I look forward to the final projects that students will design and implement. In some cases, like that of Ally Moseley ('20) and Irina Amouzou ('22), course projects evolve into independent research supported by the LAS Student-Faculty Research Grant and the Undergraduate Research Academy, respectively. Never underestimate the value of course projects!

Looking ahead to next semester, I will teach WEST 3090: Peep Show and Dr. Suh and I are teaming-up to offer the first-ever, 6-credit combo course, WEST 4950: WEST Methods & Capstone. We are excited to offer a capstone that supports both independent research and applied internships.



Dr. Tre Wentling

Linda Smith, M.A.

Greeting all! Questions for thought?

1. Why are so many in this great nation, one of the leading nations in the world, unable to openly to discuss race without tension? 2. How about Critical Race Theory (CRT)? Can we?

Thinking about CRT, I have even more questions: 1. How did the narrative and study of U.S. history and racism become an unofficial buzz word, "Critical Race Theory", and shift the attention from the historical impact of racial inequalities in our current society? 2. Might CRT be used as a distraction from our elementary, secondary, and college students learning factual U.S. history? 3. Why is this an uncomfortable topic for so many? 4. How can I participate in these conversations?

My course, WEST 1010 Intro to Social Justice Studies: Leadership, Inclusion & Engagement, introduces students to the interdisciplinary fields of race and gender studies. In this course, we examine contemporary instances of inequality within a historical context. Our socially constructed identities, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc., intertwine to shape our lives, opportunities, and experiences. Understanding the role, key concepts of United States history, and how this history continues to impact our current society allows us to develop concrete strategies for critically and actively engaging and changing the manifestation of injustices in society.

There are so many questions that I encourage you to become engaged and be open minded when discussing these difficult and sensitive topics. Be well and safe!



Linda Smith



Miss gender

They're beauty pageant queens and
mma fighters
They strut their stuff with pink hand-
bags and black combat boots

They know all of their lines
Manufactured in their dressing rooms
Their classrooms
Each other
They play so well they're Oscar
nominees
Tony performers

See they're in the running for Miss
Gender
Who can smile the best
Girlboss like no other
Curl their tongues in sweet lullabies
But keep their limited feminism
Pussy power and what not

Miss gender even finds me, in the back
of the movie theatre, searching the
screen for some semblance of myself.
But they laugh in my face and ask me
why I'm looking

Miss gender follows me through the
grocery store. Through a hail of mams
and misses, sweeties and hons from
miss gender's well-meaning followers

They're all in this game of pageantry
even they cannot begin to see
But oh are they invested

So they riddle me with smiles, side-
ways looks, discovering new ways to
let miss gender be front and center

Miss gender is their biggest goal
They are cutthroat
And miss gender doesn't like losers.

-- Irina Amouzou

Travel (safely) through Space & Time with Dr. Tua'one in her Vaka, "South Sea Tales"

By: Dr. Tua'one

The new Spring 2022 course WEST 3570 South Sea Tales: Decoloniality & Indigeneity in Transpacific Literature will take you back in time, to the Enlightenment, and make you ask, "How Enlightened were they really?" This class takes routes across the Pacific Ocean, from Europe to Tahiti, America to Hawaii, and Raiatea back to England, through the eyes of indigeneity, with the purpose to decolonize archives, history, literature, and the map. Specifically, we will encounter 18th-c. and 19th-c. Pasifika-centered Captain's Logs, Sailors Diaries, Queen's Letters, and the fictions generated from the Pacific Island's geographies: fantastical volcanic paradises, barbaric & savage atolls, and the vast, wide, endless ocean, moana.

WEST 3570 will meet on Wednesday's, 1:40-4:20 PM. This class fulfills both WEST major and minor requirements; LAS Global Awareness requirement; LAS Humanities requirement; and requirements for the WEST Native American & Indigenous Studies Certificate.

Women's & Ethnic Studies
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

New WEST Course:
WEST 3570

South Sea Tales: Decoloniality & Indigeneity in Transpacific Literature

This class will cover a wide range of South Sea Tales: From Pacific myths like Maui and Moana, to the Journals of Captain Cook and Queen Liliuokalani; from the romances of Herman Melville, to the realism of Jack London. We will discuss the impact of settler colonialism on indigenous knowledges, and critically interrogate stories about the "exotic Other" found in the vast "Sea of Islands."

Columbine Hall Room 127
Wednesdays: 1:40-4:20 PM

Spring 2022

Fulfills: WEST Major & Minor credits
CLAS: Core Global Awareness Requirement
CLAS: Core Humanities
Native American & Indigenous Studies Cert. credits
3 Credit hours

Professor N.S. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

For more information please email: ntuaone@uccs.edu
To register for this class: Add Class# Class Number: 34179

Dr. Torres's new "Boricua Crossings: Puerto Rico and its Diaspora" course

By: Dr. Torres

I am so excited to be offering a brand-new course for Spring 2022 that expands WEST's Latinx Studies Certificate and campus-wide course offerings on U.S. Latinx populations! "Boricua Crossings: Puerto Rico and its Diaspora" (WEST 3370) provides an introduction to the origins of Puerto Rican diasporic communities in the United States and explores the lived experiences of Puerto Ricans on the archipelago and across the country.



How do Puerto Ricans confront intersecting forms of oppression along the lines of race, gender, and class? How are Puerto Rican identities shaped vis-à-vis the colonial relationship with the United States? What are the boundaries of citizenship and belonging? We will explore the answers to these questions and more through an interdisciplinary and multimedia (films, podcasts, music, art, etc.) approach to historical and contemporary events in Puerto Rico and the United States. While I am passionate about so many topics, this one is near and dear to me as a Puerto Rican scholar. Reach out if you have any questions and I hope to see you next Spring!

WEST Beyond UCCS

Interview by Irina Amouzou

Whitley Hadley '13

This past summer the Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness, and Community (most popularly known as MOSAIC) and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center welcomed Whitley Hadley as the new MOSAIC director. This is not Hadley's first experience with UCCS, however.

They are an alum of the institution with a double major in Communication and Women's and Ethnic Studies.

Hadley, who uses she/they pronouns, started their undergraduate degree not knowing where they would be headed. Yet, after taking their first class with previous WEST instructor, Kimberly Holcomb, they realized the value of WEST. Hadley shared, "I felt like my brain was on fire when I left class. These



[topics] were all of the things nobody ever talked to me about! It reaffirmed so many of my experiences."

Hadley found community in WEST courses as they created space to discuss otherwise taboo topics, like race and class. They were advised "by Dr. Stephany Rose Spaulding via BSU and from Dr.

Gould on the thoughtful engagement with affinity institutions (Tribal Colleges), expanded literature options and self-empowerment through the "African American Literature" course."

They also completed an internship with the Educating Children of Color Symposium. Spaulding was a major force for Hadley and her mentorship continued into their master's degree (Student Affairs and Higher Education at Colorado State University).

WEST helped shape their future. It

sharpened their critical thinking skills, facilitated a sense of belonging and created community, offered tools to navigate the world with, and so much more applicable to any part of life. Hadley's advice to students who are unsure about WEST is to "build connections with your faculty members. If it's getting coffee with them or just chatting during office hours, be open to sharing your journey. The more vulnerable you are, the more authentic you are about your story and about the things that challenge you or things scare you or the things that excite you will just enrich your experience."

As the Director, Hadley can support students in the ways that they once were. Hadley reinforces the value of having hard conversations and even encourages them, recognizing that personal experiences matter. They encourage students to take-up their offer: walk-in and chat!

Cal Bigari '12

I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Wentling during my senior year at UCCS. After taking his special topics course, "Bodies, Genders, Sexualities," I sought Dr. Wentling's advisement for an independent study project. I wanted this independent study to explore gender equity in kindergarten thru fifth-grade classrooms. I did this through both quantitative and qualitative assessments of corrective vs. encouraging language of social behavior and academic performance of students



based on their perceived gender. Through this work, I discovered patterns of limiting and restrictive language aimed toward female perceived students.

Both the Bodies, Genders, Sexualities course and my independent study with him, provided me with a supportive foundation and springboard to apply theory to practice. For example, I began to lead large youth programs in which I implemented harm reduction and safer spaces protocols for gender creative and feminine youth.

Currently, I am the founder, owner, and operator of a queer and transgender focused hair salon and community space, [SalonBenders](#), in Long Beach, California. We provide community trainings, resources, and gender-

affirming beauty services to community members in need, and much more. [Donate](#) to the Give-a-Cut program or [become a supporting member](#) to provide gender-affirming beauty services to community members in need.



Jessie Santiago (left) & Cal Bigari (right)

I greatly appreciate Dr. Wentling's work as a facilitator in my learning experience. He helped me further develop my ability to critically listen to, and address the challenges faced by marginalized communities.

WEST Beyond UCCS (continued)

Bri Lacy '06

Faculty from the Women's and Ethnic Studies program impacted my life in more ways than I could have imagined as a young, first generation university student. The curriculum offered teachings that have become the foundation for my everyday practice as a death penalty appellate lawyer and as a sister, daughter, friend, and community member.

The tools I gained have allowed me to understand and empathize with an individual's experience, as well as assess how systems of inequity shape all of our lives. With a concrete understanding of why oppression and privilege exist, and how they impact individuals and communities, I am better able to zealously advocate



for my clients. I work for the Capital Collateral Region Counsel - South Office, a Florida state agency that represents death sentenced folks in capital postconviction proceedings in both state and federal court.

My UCCS coursework helped me understand the ways in which racism, classism, sexism, ableism, and other social inequities have failed my clients, their families, and communities. Understanding this framework prepared me for the often-overlooked step of humanizing my clients and bridging the gap between the folks affected by these systems and those in control of making the decisions.

I think of Dr. Albanesi, Dr. Herrera and Dr. Ferber often; each played powerful roles in my development as a student and future advocate. They helped inform the way I practice in courtrooms and the way I move about the world.

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Critical Race Theory (continued from pg. 1)

Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

teaching an individual to be ashamed of their race, teaching an individual that they bear responsibility for history, or individually feeling guilty. This is far from the truth. Instead, CRT examines how the history and systems we are born into have advantaged some at the expense of others. For example, black soldiers did not receive the same benefits as white soldiers from the GI Bill after WWII, denied both home loans and admittance to quality universities. This has led to white people in the suburbs benefitting from property equity, leading to tax revenue to adequately fund local schools. In turn, black renters have no equity, with lower tax revenues, which led to poorly funded schools. Notice how individuals do not bear responsibility for these inequalities, the systems in place do, specifically, the GI Bill, which was systematic in its discrimination. It is the system that critical race theory examines, not the individual—systematic inequality and systemic racism. The myth of individualism, or that an individual's hard work will yield great results, gets conflated

with the myth of responsibility, or that an individual's hard work will overcome systemic racism.

Critical race theory even explains, nay, anticipates the censorship of critical race theory. CRT examines power and power's effects. One thing that monarchies, oligarchies, and dictators have taught us is that people in power rarely like to cede that power. Indeed, they may start wars, coups, revolutions, or withhold goods and aid from their own people, to keep that power. They may even try to withhold knowledge. The way to continue to oppress people is to deny access to knowledge, deny their culture, their history, struggles, and achievements. By refusing to allow the truth is to deny that group's value, placing one group's needs over the others.

The banning of studies and books has a long-documented history; indeed, the fight for CRT is also nothing new. Arizona banned Ethnic Studies in 2012 (via state law HB 2281), which prohibits any class that "advocates ethnic solidarity," a shocking anti-solidarity ban

Blacker

-- Irina Amouzou

It's the streets of New York, the screech of the subway cars halting, the doors opening and shutting closed, tunnelling towards something. Something? There is no end to this journey as there was never a stop.

The melanin keeps popping, the drums keep beating, the children keep laughing. The sights of Living Single and A Different World. Queen Latifas and Phylicia Rashads giving way to Yara Shahidis and Lupita Nyong'o's.

It's Shea butter mornings, jewel hair ties, and blue skies. It's the Sunday afternoon gatherings paired with loud laughter and one too many Hennessy shots.

It's when The summer sun only exists to deepen beautiful dark skin under a purple pink filter. The inside jokes that keep pouring from thick lips that are envied and emulated.

It's hot combs and box braids, cornrows, and bantu knots, one tender headed cry at a time.

The melanin keeps popping in all shades of the rainbow.

The wheel keeps turning and black gets blacker.

that included banning books such as *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Zorro*, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*-. We have seen such censorship before. During WWI, it was illegal to speak, let alone teach, German in the US. During WWII, it was illegal to speak Polish in Poland. In 2018, Hungary banned Gender Studies. Even institutional knowledge is a contested ground for the history of racism in this country: the last school to desegregate in the US was Cleveland High School, in Cleveland, MS--in the year 2016. Critical race theory seeks to know why.

We fear the unfamiliar, yes. But remember, too, that we embrace the unfamiliar, we seek it out. We are naturally curious, and we love the unknown. We hate spoilers. CRT might be scary because it is unknown to you. But you might also find that the unknown is just what you need. Be cautious when you ban something, as the topic may become even more tantalizing: your child might just be left to learn about critical race theory, scared and alone, on the internet.

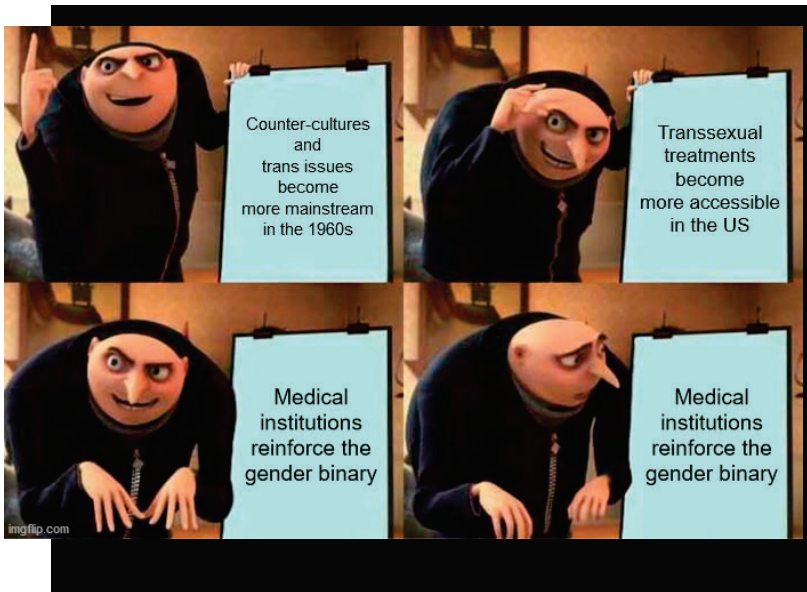
Student Memes from WEST 2100: WAP Women and Protest



April Hernandez



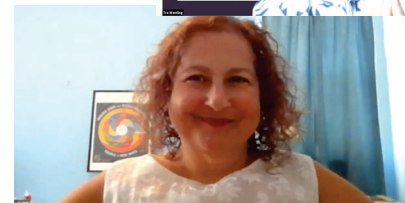
Student Memes from WEST 3080: Trans* Studies



News from The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion

Linda Smith and Dr. Abby Ferber have much to share. We ran our first virtual [Knapsack Institute: Transforming Teaching and Learning](#) over the summer. It was a challenging journey, but in the end, a great success. WEST faculty Drs. Brenda J. Allen, Andrea Herrera, and Tre Wentling were co-organizers and lead learners, and other WEST faculty presented and participated, as well faculty from other disciplines. In addition, we received a grant of sponsorship from Boeing, which contributed to easing this transition and offering a full, comprehensive experience for educators from around the country. We have

been honored with a second grant of \$12,000 to bring in leading race scholars over the next few years, with funding from the President's office to support EDI work on each campus. Our first speaker will join us in the Spring.



- SPRING 2022 COURSES -

WEST 1010

Intro to Soc Justice Studies

WEST 2100 Women & Protests

WEST 3020 Me, Myself, and I

WEST 3060

Multiracial Identities

WEST 3090 Peep Show:

WEST 3100

Women of Color: Image/Voice

WEST 3220

Global Indigenous Issues

WEST 3290

Perspectives on Race & Ethnic Relations

WEST 3370 Boricua Crossings

WEST 3570 South Sea Tales

WEST 3900 Black Lives Matter

WEST 4130 Memory, Culture, Trauma & War

WEST 4470

Intersections of Privilege

WEST 4480 Racial Storytelling

WEST 4900

Body, Culture, & Power

WEST 4950

WEST Methods & Capstone

UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Civics in WEST & Sociology

Civics Certificate in WEST & Sociology advances critical thinking about race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other socio-cultural hierarchies by focusing on dynamic relationships between the U.S. government and marginalized populations within American Society.

Disability Studies

Disability Studies is designed to develop understanding of the interdisciplinary field.

Latino/a Studies

Latino/a Studies is designed to highlight the diverse experiences of Latino/a communities in the U.S. and abroad.

Native American & Indigenous Studies

Native American & Indigenous Studies investigates American Indian issues and concepts of Indigenous knowledge worldwide; emphasis on Indian Nations within the United States, First Nations in Canada, and Pacific Islanders.

Gender & Sexualities Studies

Gender and Sexualities Studies examines sexuality as a social phenomenon, social process, social construct, formation of identity, role, and performance.

Global Studies

WEST approaches the study of global social phenomena as a complex and dynamic product of multiple regional, ethnic, and institutional identities from a trans-national perspective.