ETHS 375 : Black Life in Wealth and Poverty

A. Course Description

Credits: 4

Lab Hours/ Weeks: Corequisites: None

Lecture Hours/ Week :

MnTC Goals: Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies , Goal 05 - Hist/Soc/Behav Sci , Goal 07 - Human Diversity

This course will introduce students to the lived realities of social class through the lens of black Americans whose social and economic ties to wealth and ownership have been obstructed via enslavement, job and housing discrimination, and other forms of institutional racism. Fraught with contention, students will analyze material related to racial authenticity and the expectation of communal obligation in instances when wealth and related privileges have been amassed as well as examine reasons why individuals in positions of economic privilege have distanced themselves from the black underclass. Through engaging with autobiographies, novels, music, documentaries, and cultural criticism, students will come to understand the relationship between the historic legacy of European and American wealth building and the shaping of contemporary black America: from objects of ownership to a community stratified in large numbers in the lower and middle classes to a strong social resistance against measures designed to "level the playing field." Some of the specific themes this class will cover are black working class identity; the impact of wealth or poverty on the family, children, and community; crime and violence; strategies for survival and empowerment; intragroup class tensions; and issues facing the black middle class. By the end of this course, students are expected to understand key themes such as institutional racism, colorism, interlocking oppressions, economic discrimination, affirmative action, and how they facilitate or complicate black identities and lived realities related to the acquisition or absence of wealth.

B. Course Effective Dates: 05/09/2015 - Present

C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

See Course Description for major content areas.

D. Learning Outcomes (General)

1. Demonstrate a working fluency in the key terms and concepts in Black Studies
2. Retain a basic knowledge of the events leading up to and following the transatlantic slave trade and an understanding of how these events would impact African American claims to wealth and property
3. Exercise an effective ability to use an intersectional framework in order to analyze the layered oppressions of black Americans and other people of color
4. Build practical skills with which to synthesize ideas related to black American socioeconomic class experiences which will be translated into a final reflective paper

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies

None

Goal 05 - Hist/Soc/Behav Sci

1. Employ the methods and data that historians and social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. Use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
3. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
4. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.

Goal 07 - Human Diversity

1. Demonstrate an awareness of the individual and institutional dynamics of unequal power relations between groups in contemporary society.
2. Analyze their own attitudes, behaviors, concepts and beliefs regarding diversity, racism, and bigotry.
3. Understand the development of and the changing meanings of group identities in the United States' history and culture.
4. Describe and discuss the experience and contributions (political, social, economic, etc.) of the many groups that shape American society and culture, in particular those groups that have suffered discrimination and exclusion.
5. Demonstrate communication skills necessary for living and working effectively in a society with great population diversity.

G. Special Information

Racial Issues Graduation Requirement