



# FYS 15: Diversity in the U.S.

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Fall 2013  
MW 12:30-1:45  
Lab T 1:30-3:30

Class: MW  
12:30-1:45  
How 212  
Lab: T  
1:30-3:30  
How 309



Office: Howard 105B  
Office Hours: Tues. 11-1  
Wed. 11-1200 and 3:30-4:30  
and by apt.

“We tell ourselves stories in order to live.”  
Joan Didion, *The White Album*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore issues of diversity in the U.S. through a

“Somewhere, on the edge of consciousness, there is what I call a *mythical norm*, which each one of us within our hearts knows ‘that is not me.’ In america this norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian, and financially secure. It is within this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society.”

Audre Lorde “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”

narrative framework. We will consider storytelling about the U.S. and its “diverse” people at the individual, familial, cultural, media, and institutional levels. Students will explore questions of identity and the various routes by which we arrive at understandings of who we are as individuals and members of various groups. These routes include the

literal paths our families took in moving from place to place as well as more metaphorical routes such as the paths established for all of us to follow based on our nationality, gender, race, socioeconomic class, sexuality, and level of mental and physical ability, among others.



family, and the “American Dream,” including attention to the stories that don’t often get told publically. Students will work collaboratively to make videos about “diversity” with elementary school students at Walnut Street International Baccalaureate School in downtown Des Moines. These collaborative videos will be the students’ contributions to public storytelling, and will be screened for the public at Bulldog Theater on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.

One of our goals will be to come to a fuller understanding of ourselves and of the various communities we inhabit. We will critically explore and analyze public and personal narratives about immigration,



*collaborative learning  
visual storytelling  
critical thinking  
information literacy  
writing to learn  
engaged citizenship*



Drake students will work **collaboratively** with Walnut Street students throughout the semester on an **interdisciplinary** media project focused on **critical thinking, reading, and analytical skills** for understanding our identities, our places in the world. The central idea of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade learning unit is: *Organisms evolve as a response to changing environments.* The lines of inquiry are:

1. Cultural Differences
  2. Adaptation
  3. Similarities and Differences
- Key Concepts: perspective, connection, causation, influence and culture

### **COURSE TEXTS:**

Readings available at:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/101732716/fys%20diversity%20in%20the%20u.s./FYS%20syl%20fall%202012.docx>

### **Assignments**

Attendance and Participation	10%
Writing Sequence #1	20%
Information Literacy Assignment	10%
Writing Sequence #2	20%
Group Digital Video	20%
Final Paper—Learning Analysis	20%

### **Grading and Writing to Learn**

This course is about learning, not grading. It is about thinking and writing and making connections. It is about reflection, growth, risk-taking, and constructing knowledge. We will spend all semester reading, writing, viewing, discussing, reflecting, researching, and deconstructing and constructing knowledge. You will not receive grades on individual assignments, but rather, your grade will emerge through your work all semester. If at any time you wish to have a sense of where your grade is you may request a grade review. Each piece of writing we do this semester will be designed to move your final paper along, and to that end, you will receive comments from both professor and peers.

**“And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he 's forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.”**

**--Plato,  
“Allegory of the Cave”**

**READING ASSIGNMENTS – This schedule is subject to change. If you miss class be sure to check with a classmate regarding reading assignments. This is a *writing-intensive course*, and thus, we will spend a great deal of time writing and reading the writing of fellow classmates. Missing class puts you and the entire class at a disadvantage.**

- 8/26 Introduction: Who are we? Why are we here?
- 8/27 lab: video *The Matrix*
- 8/28 Plato's "Allegory of the Cave"
- 9/2 LABOR DAY- NO CLASS MEETING
- 9/3 lab: introduction to imovie—James McNab; meet in FAC 33  
Digital Storytelling Cookbook
- 9/4 "Introduction: Power and Knowledge," *Foucault for Beginners*
- 9/9 "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" Horace Miner  
"Ethnography and Culture" and Step Two "Interviewing  
an Informant, Spradley
- 9/10 lab: first visit to **Walnut Street International Baccalaureate Elementary School**, meet in the lobby of the school at 1:45.
- 9/11 Library information session—meet in lower level of library
- 9/16 *Negotiating Identity and Culture*, John Caughey, pps. 1-22
- 9/17 lab: video: *First Person Plural*
- 9/18 selection from *A Single Square Picture*, Robinson
- 9/23 "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" Audre Lorde
- 9/24 lab: **Walnut Street**
- 9/25 *Negotiating Identity and Culture*, John Caughey, pps. 23-43
- 9/30 "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images," from *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins
- 10/1 lab: video *Ethnic Notions*





10/2 *Negotiating Identity and Culture*, John Caughey, pps. 44-59

10/7 "Excerpts from *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*"  
David Wallace Adams

10/8 lab: **Walnut Street**

10/9

10/14-15 FALL BREAK

10/16 *Negotiating Identity and Culture*, John Caughey, pps. 60-76

10/21 "Storytelling As Social Conscience: The Power of Autobiography" Thompson and Tyagi

10/22 lab: **Walnut Street**

10/23 "White Privilege and Male Privilege;"  
Peggy McIntosh  
"Straight White Male: The Lowest  
Difficulty Setting There Is"  
John Scalzi

10/28 "Smashing Icons," Blackwell-Stratton  
et al  
video: *Mis-Representation*

10/29 lab

10/30 "Teaching Resistance: The Racial  
Politics of Mass Media" bell hooks



11/4 "We Always Stood on Our Own Two Feet" Stephanie Coontz

11/5 lab: **Walnut Street**

11/6 "Fictive Kin, Paper Sons,  
and *Compadrazgo*:  
Women of Color and the  
Struggle for Family  
Survival" Bonnie Thornton  
Dill



11/11 reread "Age, Race, Class, and Sex..."  
Audre Lorde

11/12 lab: video: *The Celluloid Closet*

11/13 reread Foucault

11/18

11/19 lab: **Walnut Street**

11/20 **Rough cut of digital stories due**

11/25

11/26 THANKSGIVING BREAK

12/1 Wrapping up

**12/4 VIDEO SCREENING 6:00PM  
SUSSMAN THEATER, OLMSTEAD**

**12/12 Learning Analysis Paper Due**

