

First Year Seminar

Color & Money:

Race and Social Class at Trinity and Beyond

Trinity College
WF 1:15-2:30pm

Fall 2008
LSC 138-139

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Introduction:

Who gains -- and who loses -- from the admissions process at Trinity College and other elite institutions? How does the financial aid system distribute the costs of higher education among families of different means? Are these policies fair? Do they create meaningful social change -- or reproduce inequality for future generations? In this writing-intensive seminar, we will investigate white privilege, affirmative action, campus culture, and real ways that ordinary people are trying to make change. Students will participate in a role-playing simulation of elite college admissions decisions, debate the US Supreme Court rulings in the Michigan admissions cases, and develop qualitative, quantitative, and information literacy skills while conducting our own study of race and social class at Trinity. Given our controversial topic, students should be prepared not only to challenge other students' views in seminar, but also to listen closely to alternative ideas, question their own assumptions, and get involved.

We also will participate in the FY cluster, *Through Other People's Eyes*, with seminars led by Professors Dina Anselmi (Children's Rights) and Zayde Antrim (Arabian Nights).

Required readings:

Peter Schmidt, *Color and Money: How Rich White Kids Are Winning the War Over College Affirmative Action*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. See also author's website: <http://www.colorandmoney.blogspot.com/>

Mitchell Stevens, *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Beverly Daniel Tatum, *"Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" and Other Conversations about Race*, revised edition. New York: Basic Books, 2003.

Stacey Lee, *Unraveling the "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Holt Paperbacks, reprinted 2008 (with new afterword).

Additional readings will be made available in seminar.

How to succeed in this seminar:

Attend each class session on time, bring relevant readings and notes, and participate regularly in discussions. Keep a calendar (paper or digital) to manage your time and stay ahead of deadlines for all of your classes and other obligations.

If an illness or family emergency interferes with attending class, immediately inform your instructors and inquire about how to compensate for what you have missed.

Take the initiative by asking questions. If you don't understand something, odds are that other students are wondering about the same issue. Go ahead -- ask the question!

Talk with your professors, advisors, and mentors. Feel free to stop by during office hours, or make an appointment in advance (by suggesting 2-3 days/times that would be convenient to meet). Email is the best way to contact me, or stop by my office.

How your work will be evaluated:

Exercises 13 x 2 pts each = 26 pts

- A) Quantitative skills: Excel calculations with Trinity Common Data Set
- B) Organization skills: propose an admissions rating system (with peers)
- C) Information literacy: search strategy assignment (with peers)
- D) Community learning: reflective writing on Hartford experience
- E) Information literacy: citing sources & avoiding plagiarism
- F) Qualitative skills: test Tatum's developmental stages on *Skin Deep* (with peers)
- G) Qualitative skills: test Lee's social construction analysis at Trinity
- H) Qualitative skills: conducting & transcribing a student interview
- I) Information literacy: research paper proposal with search strategy
- J) Presentation skills: design interactive presentation for cluster (with peers)
- K) Discussion facilitation: conduct portion of a seminar book discussion (with peers)
- L & M) Cluster peer reviewing: feedback on papers by cluster students (x2)

Formal writing, reviewing, and revising:

Paper #1: Legal brief in preparation for oral debate (approx 3-5 pages)
first draft (2 pts); seminar peer reviews (2 pts); final draft (10 points) = 14 pts

Paper #2: Interpretive report on qualitative research (approx 4-6 pages)
first draft (2 pts); seminar peer review (2 pts); final draft (15 points) = 19 pts

Paper #3: Identify problem and pose solution for Campus Climate (6-8 pages)
first draft (2 pts); seminar peer reviews (x2 = 4 pts); final draft (20 points) = 26 pts

Overall seminar contribution, evaluated by peers (10) and instructors (5) = 15 pts
TOTAL 100 pts

Be advised that adequate work (70-79%) earns a C, good work (80-89%) earns a B, and outstanding work (90-100%) earns an A in this class. The penalty for overdue assignments will be 10% for every 12-hour period beyond the deadline, with exceptions granted only for documented medical or family emergencies. Please notify the instructor during the first week of the course if you require any special accommodations (such as religious observances, learning disabilities, etc.).

Schedule of classes and assignments:

Note: If necessary, the instructor may make minor adjustments during the semester.

Summer assignments:

Read Schmidt, *Color & Money*, introduction; and Stevens, *Creating a Class*, chapter 1.
Email 3 insightful questions on themes raised by authors before Wed, Aug 20th

Read Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You* (book required for all first-year students), write 1-2 page response to the assigned question, and bring to our first seminar meeting on Friday, Aug 29th in a digital format, where we will teach you to post it to our Blackboard web server. You will be assigned to read a paper written by another member of our cluster, in preparation for our dinner & book discussion on Monday, September 1st.

Friday Aug 29

Introduce syllabus and discuss questions from summer assignment
Distribute Round 1 simulation assignment; advising appointments
Blackboard demo for the entire cluster (10-10:15am)

Mon Sept 1 (Labor Day)

Cluster dinner and Fadiman book discussion, 5:30-7:30pm, Rittenberg Lounge in Mather Student Center

Wed Sept 3

Discuss Stevens, *Creating a Class*, chapters 1-4

Exercise A: Quantitative Skills -- complete Excel calculations assignment using Trinity Common Data Set (2007-08); download PDF file from Trinity Institutional Research web (scroll down to Common Data Set); due Thursday, Sept 4th at 9pm via Blackboard (BB)
<http://www.trincoll.edu/orgs/planning/reports.html>

Fri Sept 5

Read Stevens, *Creating a Class*, chapter 5 (to be discussed later, with Schmidt book)

Round 1: Admissions & Financial Aid Simulation -- Rating the Applicants
Guest: Scott Herrmann-Keeling, Associate Director of Admissions at Trinity

Exercise B: Organizational Skills -- propose an admissions rating system (in collaboration with peers, if desired) to help us make progress for Round 2; due Monday Sept 8th at 9pm via BB

Exercise C: Information Literacy -- search strategy questions will be assigned to pairs/trios, to work on after Sunday's library tour; due Monday, Sept 8th at 9pm via BB

Sat Sept 6

Recommended (for Exercise D):

DoIt Day, sponsored by Trinity's Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement (See other community learning opportunity with Christina on Saturday, Sept 27th)

Exercise D: Community Learning -- write a reflective essay on your experience with the Hartford community, drawing on seminar themes of race and social class; due on BB no more than two days after your experience

Sun Sept 7

Library tour led by FY Mentor Christina Ramsay, to meet librarian Katy Hart for overview and advice about information literacy search strategy questions (time TBA)

Wed Sept 10

Discuss: Stevens, *Creating a Class*, chapters 6-8

Read: Elizabeth Ferrell and Martin Van Der Werf, "Playing the Rankings Game." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 25, 2007. See link and browse "related materials" at <http://chronicle.com/free/v53/i38/38a01101.htm>

Conference call with Mitchell Stevens from 2-2:15pm

Assign roles and prep materials for Round 2 of Admissions & Financial Aid Simulation

Fri Sept 12

Read: Rupert Wilkinson, *Aiding Students, Buying Students: Financial Aid in America* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), pages 9-17 (introduction); 133-135 (need-blind vs. need-aware); 142-156 (merit scholarships), and glossary.

Read: David Leonhardt, "The (Yes) Low Cost of Higher Ed." *The New York Times*, April 20, 2008.

Round 2 of Simulation -- Financial Aid Review & Merit Awards

Guest: Jennifer Kennan-Jolie, Associate Director of Financial Aid at Trinity College

Sun Sept 14

Read: selected news clippings on Trinity campus racism, 2006 (see BB)

Alfonso Bui '08, *Some Place I Call Home*, Kingsbridge Productions video, 2007.

Introduction by filmmaker, viewing, and discussion, from 7-9pm in Washington Room at Mather Student Center. View the trailer:

<http://www.kingsbridgeproductions.com/someplace.htm>

Wed Sept 17

Discuss Schmidt, *Color & Money*, chapters 1-5

Exercise E: Information Literacy -- complete assignment on properly paraphrasing, quoting, and citing sources, in order to avoid plagiarism; due by Thu, Sept 18th at 9pm via BB

Fri Sept 19

Round 3: Admissions and Financial Aid Simulation -- Managing Yield and the Waitlist

Assign Paper #1: Legal brief; first draft due by Sunday, September 28th at 9pm via BB

Wed Sept 24

Discuss: Schmidt, *Color & Money*, chapters 6-14 + epilogue

Fri Sept 26

Prepare for Round 4: Simulation -- Debate (next week)

In seminar: Court filings submitted in the University of Michigan admissions lawsuits
<http://www.vpcomm.umich.edu/admissions/>

Introduce First-Year Seminar Writing Evaluation criteria

Seminar peer review assigned for paper #1 first draft (see instructions on BB on Monday, Sept 29th); due by Wed Oct 1st at 12 noon via BB (and bring printout to seminar). [Note: Students from another seminar in the cluster also will peer review these drafts.]

Sat Sept 27

Highly recommended (for Exercise D: Community Learning)

Mentoring session, organized by Christina Ramsay, with Saturday SMASH 9th graders from Steppingstone Academy, Hartford Youth Scholars Foundation

<http://www.hysf.org>

**Note: Students who select this session for Exercise D may submit their letter to 9th graders as part of their 1-page reflective essay

Wed Oct 1

Discuss peer review feedback from seminar & cluster reviews of paper #1 first drafts, in preparation for the debate and revising final draft

Fri Oct 3

Round 4: Simulation -- Debate

Final draft of paper #1 to be posted on BB before the debate begins

Oct 6 & 7 Trinity Days (Monday & Tuesday) -- no regularly scheduled classes
View: *Skin Deep* (video directed by Francis Reid, 1996, Iris Films) during evening session TBA _____ Also available on Library reserve, VID 1857.

Wed Oct 8

Discuss: "White Privilege Checklist" (http://www.unh.edu/residential-life/diversity/aw_article17.pdf), adapted from Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," *Peace and Freedom Journal*, July/August 1989.

Discuss: Beverly Tatum, *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together?*

Exercise K: Discussion facilitation #1 by _____ and _____
#2 by _____ and _____

Exercise F: Qualitative skills -- test if Tatum's developmental stages apply to specific individuals in *Skin Deep* video (in pairs/trios), due on Fri Oct 10th at 12 noon via BB

Fri Oct 10

Discuss: Janny Scott and David Leonhardt, "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide," in *Class Matters* (NY: Times Books, 2005), 1-26.

Browse: "Interactive Graphic: How Class Works," *New York Times* website (2005).
http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/national/20050515_CLASS_GRAPHIC/index_01.html

Discuss: Jack Dougherty, "Class Matters: Dealing with Socioeconomic Differences among Trinity Students." TCCTR presentation notes, Trinity College, November 2005.

Distribute Trinity interview project guidelines, prior examples of interview guides, IRB

Sat, Oct 11

Family Weekend lunch

Wed Oct 15

Discuss: Stacey Lee, *Unraveling the Model Minority Stereotype*

Exercise K: Discussion facilitation #3 by _____ and _____
#4 by _____ and _____ and _____

Discuss: Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s, second edition*. (NY: Routledge, 1994), pp. 54-56.

Exercise G: Qualitative skills -- test Lee's social construction of race (and/or social class) by writing what you observe and hear in a specific Trinity context; due on Sun Oct 20th at 9pm via BB

Fri Oct 17

In seminar: Finalize interview guide for Trinity study; recording equipment overview

Exercise H: Conduct and transcribe an interview with a designated Trinity student, due on Friday, Oct 24th at 12 noon via BB. (Optional: Complete 2nd interview for 2 pts extra credit.)

Wed Oct 22

In seminar: progress report on interviews, guidance on transferring digital recordings to computer and transcribing

Assign Paper #2: Interpretive report on findings from Trinity interview study; first draft due on Tuesday, October 28th at 9pm via BB

Fri Oct 24

In seminar: Thematic coding of interview transcripts, to test hypotheses and build claims with supporting evidence for Paper #2

Wed Oct 29

In seminar: Seminar peer review assigned for paper #2 first draft, due by Fri Oct 31st at 12 noon via BB (and bring printout to seminar). [Note: Students from another seminar in the cluster also will peer review these drafts.]

Exercise J: Presentation skills -- working in teams, design an interactive presentation about a portion of our seminar topic, for our cluster sharing event on Friday, Nov 21st

Fri Oct 31

Discuss peer review feedback from seminar & cluster reviews of paper #2 first drafts; final draft due on Monday, Nov 3rd at 9pm via BB

Discuss: "Final Report of the Charter Committee on Campus Climate." Trinity College, December 2007.

Prepare for Advising Week by scheduling individual appointments _____

Wed Nov 5

Session with Librarian Katy Hart on researching sources for paper #3; Location TBA ____

Exercise I: Information literacy -- write a proposal for paper #3, with research strategy and initial source citations, due Sunday, Nov 9th at 9pm via BB

Assign Paper #3: Identify problem and recommend a solution to the Trinity Charter Committee on Campus Climate; first draft due Sunday, Nov 16th at 9pm via BB

Fri Nov 7

In Seminar: on-line course registration advising with Prof Anselmi and mentors
[I will be away at an academic conference]

Wed Nov 12 **Switch rooms with Prof Antrim's seminar (LSC 131)

Discuss: Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel & Dimed, introduction.

Exercise K: Discussion facilitation #5 by _____ and _____

Team updates on progress toward completing Exercise J: Presentations (due Nov 21st)

Seminar peer reviews (x2) assigned for paper #3 drafts (see instructions on BB), due anytime before Thanksgiving break via BB

Fri Nov 14

Cluster event led by Professor Anselmi's Children's Rights seminar; assignment TBA

Wed Nov 19

Cluster event led by Professor Antrim's Arabian Nights seminar

Exercise L: Cluster reviews of her seminar's papers are due on the evening BEFORE this session, on Tues, Nov 18th at 9pm via BB

Fri Nov 21

Cluster event led by our Color & Money seminar (Exercise J: Presentations due)

[No class on Wed Nov 26 or Fri Nov 28 -- Thanksgiving break]

Wed Dec 3

Discuss: Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel & Dimed*, chapters 1-3 and evaluation

Exercise K: Discussion facilitation #6 by _____ and _____

Guests TBA

Fri Dec 5

In seminar: self-evaluation of writing; peer evaluation of overall seminar contribution

Final draft of paper #3 due Monday, Dec 5th at 3pm via BB (in place of final exam)