

## METRO SEMINAR: DIVERSITY AND INEQUALITY IN CHICAGO

**Instructor: Rebecca Burwell, PhD**

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### Course Description

In this course, we will spend time observing, learning from, and interacting with diverse urban communities. We will pay particular attention to the history, culture, and economic conditions of Chicago neighborhoods. Students will study immigration patterns; race/ethnic relations in Chicago, as well as the intersection of class and gender; and community organizing, economic development, and housing issues. Furthermore, students will spend time outside of class exploring various communities through visiting churches, museums, and cultural events.

### Course Objectives

- 1) To introduce students to urban issues and cross-cultural experiences.
- 2) To examine issues of racial/ethnic identity, displacement, immigration, racism, and poverty from the perspective of those most intimately impacted by these struggles.
- 3) To examine the impact of race, ethnicity, and gender on the urban environment and how various communities use their social capital to create neighborhood vitality.

### Learning Outcomes

*As a result of this course, students will be able to:*

- 1) Articulate a framework for understanding cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity and inequality.
- 2) Identify the strengths of urban communities by utilizing the asset-based community development model.
- 3) Demonstrate professionalism and openness in classroom discussions, with guest speakers, and during neighborhood immersion experiences.

### Course Requirements and Policies

This course is “immersion intensive;” that is, you are expected to go out and explore, observe, engage in, and research Chicago. You will do this in class as well as on your own time, with each person encouraged to take up a particular issue or neighborhood that they find interesting. As such, one of the biggest expectations of the class is that people come prepared to discuss, dialogue, and interact with community members, guest speakers, fellow students, and staff. Each assignment and class requirement is listed below and will be explained in more detail on the first day of class (with explanations of assignments attached).

- 1) **Class Participation and Attendance.** Class participation is very important as well as regular, prompt attendance. In order to gain a better understanding of the subject matter, you need to be willing to engage in class discussions (put away those cell phones and no texting!!). You should be prepared to discuss questions pertinent to each session’s readings, such as: What is the author’s main point? How did what you read resonate with your own experience? Do you agree with the author’s main ideas? Finally, you will also be asked to engage in discussion w/ community based groups and guest speakers. **Class participation and attendance are worth 25% of your final grade.**
- 2) **Critical Reading, Writing, and Reflection Assignments.** These assignments will take two forms: short essays at the beginning of class with 2-3 questions related to one of the readings and/or questions formulated for our field trips and visits outside of class that you will ask of our guest speakers and those we visit at community based groups. **Critical reading and writing assignments are worth 25% of your final grade.**
  - a. **Reflection Essays:** These essays will not be announced, but will be randomly assigned on various days at the beginning of class. You will be asked to write your reactions to the readings

and connect it to your own beliefs and practices.

- b. **Questions for Guest Speakers/Field Trips:** On days when we will be outside of class, either visiting with a community group or hearing from a guest speaker, each student will be required to send me via email one question related to the readings, to be asked of the guest speaker(s) during our time with them. You must send the question by 12noon the day of the activity.
- 3) **Paper #1 – Self-Portrait: Reflections on Race, Ethnicity, and Culture.** For paper #1, you will be asked to reflect on the impact of race, ethnicity, and culture on your formative experiences and your identity. You will also be asked to share about your family’s migration journey to the U.S. or about their experience as indigenous inhabitants of the U.S. More details about this paper will be handed out in class. **It is worth 25% of your final grade and due on Wednesday March 10<sup>th</sup> by 5pm.**
- 4) **Paper #2 – Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience.** For this paper, you will be asked to reflect on (y)our visit to a multi-cultural church service or some other cross-cultural experience that you will be asked to engage in. A list of activities is included at the end of the syllabus. More details about this paper will be discussed in class. **Paper #2 is worth 25% of your final grade and due on Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> by 5pm .**

### **Papers, Academic Integrity, and Other Issues:**

- 1.) All papers and assignments must be typed and double-spaced.
- 2.) Deadlines are important. Late papers will be dropped ½ letter grade each day that they are late, unless you have made previous arrangements with me or there is some emergency.
- 3.) Finally, students are expected to honor the standards of academic integrity at all times. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in an **F** for the course.

*Chicago Semester will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students can alert us in the “Additional Information” portion of the Application Form prior to their coming on the program. Or they can notify the Director privately if necessary. Students should also alert their instructors during the first two weeks of class so that reasonable accommodations may be made. Students should also let the staff know if they think they may need accommodations during the semester. For further assistance, contact Clinton Stockwell at [Clintons@chicagosemester.org](mailto:Clintons@chicagosemester.org).*

### **Required Reading**

*Never a City So Real*, by Alex Kotlowitz.

*Brother, I’m Dying* by Edwidge Danticat.

**Reading Packet of Various articles**, to be handed out before class on the indicated days.

(FT) – This designates a day when we will be visiting various Chicago neighborhoods.

*At any time during the semester, the schedule might change due to unforeseen circumstances. Please be flexible. Also, for some field trips, we will not return until 5pm.*

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1, Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>**

Introductions: Talking About Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

#### **Thinking About Identity and Culture: Values, Beliefs, and Practices**

#### **Week 2, Wednesday February 10<sup>th</sup>**

(FT) Chicago Neighborhood Tour: Introduction to Immigrant Chicago

*Read: Kotlowitz, Chs. 1-4( pgs 11-85) and article on NBHD tour*

#### **Week 3, February 17<sup>th</sup>**

Introduction to Multiculturalism and Race and Ethnicity in Chicago

*Read: Kotlowitz, Chs. 4-9 and "Race Relations, Chicago Style" by Bennett & Schaefer*

**Week 4, February 24<sup>th</sup>**

**(FT) Walking Tour of Pilsen**

*Read: Excerpts from "State of Latino Chicago"*

**Week 5, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Sharing Cultural Traditions/Beliefs/Practices/Migration stories

*Read: "A Different Mirror," and "Breaking Silences," by Ronald Takaki;*

**Communities Resisting Oppression: Race, Class, Culture**

**Week 6, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

**\*\*Tentative (FT) Chinatown and Beyond: Asians in Chicago**

*Read: Excerpts from AAI's "What's at Stake?"*

**Paper #1 Due by 5pm**

**Week 7, March 17<sup>th</sup>**

Discrimination in its Many Forms

*Read: "Universal Freckle or How I Learned to be White," by Dalton Conley; "White Privilege:*

*Unpacking the Invisible Backpack," by Peggy McIntosh*

**Week 8, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Guest speaker: Jackie Leavy - Housing issues and Community Organizing in Chicago**

**Week 9, March 31<sup>st</sup>**

Housing, Gentrification, and Race/ethnicity

*Read: "Whose Neighborhood is it Anyway?" from Newman and Tan Chen; housing article from New Chicago Reader.*

**Week 10, April 7<sup>th</sup>**

**\*\*Tentative (FT) Humboldt Park: Puerto Rican Chicago**

**Pursuing Justice**

**Week 11, April 14<sup>th</sup>**

Race, Poverty, and Economic Development

*Read: "The Missing Class," from Newman and Tan Chen and "Is it Now a Crime to be Poor?" by Barbara Ehrenreich*

**Week 12, April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Immigration and Refugee Issues

*Read: Begin Danticat book, Part 1: Pgs 1-127.*

**Week 13, April 28<sup>th</sup> – No class/Research Day for paper #2**

**Week 14, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

*Read: Danticat, Part II.*