

CAREER ESSAY

This week we are discussing the concept of intersectionality and work culture. Intersectionality should be thought of as a constantly moving web of forces meaning that people experience power differences in unequal and fluid ways. It is also an important element, often left out, when considering what "options" various people have or what it might mean to discuss "a level playing field" when it comes to careers, advancement, opportunity, and income.

This essay is intended to help you think about important issues of intersectionality in or around a field you hope to pursue. Choose a work culture related to your career interests. This could be a field (e.g. Nursing) or a workplace setting (e.g. farms that use migrant labor or a therapist office). Do some research and draw upon your own understandings of the field. Perhaps consider chatting with a professor or a professional about this field more broadly.

Feminist scholars have demonstrated that race, gender, and class act together to reproduce inequalities throughout society and the labor market with real consequences for individuals, institutions, and the public. Your goal is to demonstrate how race and/or ethnicity and class contribute to inequality in contemporary US work culture and how these forms of inequality interact with social characteristics and/or institutions of gender.

Your essay should take the form of 4 paragraphs bookended by a formal introduction and conclusion. You will need to be clear and concise. This is a to the point essay. Please use the following rubric to structure your essay. (approx. 1500 words)

Introduction: Overarching setting of your example. Where this discussion is specifically relevant. Thesis statement (what is your point/claim). Why this matters to the world. – 4-5 Sentences.

Paragraph 1: Explain what power dynamics are present in your example. Show how these inequalities are produced and maintained by ideas about race and ethnicity in the broader culture, the individuals involved, or both. – 200-250 words

Paragraph 2: Identify some key places where cultural differences matter in your example. Show how these cultural differences are shaped by power, privilege, and inequality and with what consequences. – 200-250 words

Paragraph 3: Identify a sociological or anthropological theoretical framework discussed in class* that is useful to explain how race, gender, and class inform social inequalities in labor processes, occupational structures, and inter-group relations in your example. Then, briefly analyze how this works in your example. – 200-250 words

Paragraph 4: Reflect critically on how racism, ethnocentrism, power, privilege, and inequality shape the experiences of individuals in your example. Connect this to your own experience (How might this shape your ability to practice respect, recognition, courage, and/or cultural humility as you move into a career?). – 200-250 words

Conclusion: Why is this a good example of the theoretical idea illustrated? What are the consequences of this in your example? Why does this matter to people in this field? Why should this matter to the broader society?
– 4-5 sentences

*Theories Discussed in Class

1. Intersectionality (All of the articles. This should be incorporated into everyone's essay in some way)
2. Freedom and Binds (Intersecting Cultural Beliefs in Social Relations)
3. Racial Division of Reproductive Labor ("Dirty Work") (Race and Class of Women's Work)
4. Labor Process Theory ("Degradation") (Race and Class of Women's Work)
5. Feminism as a "Cultural Solvent" (A Dangerous Liaison)
6. Hegemonic Masculinity (Age, Sexuality and hegemonic masculinity)
7. Embodying Change (Age, Sexuality and hegemonic masculinity)