

COURSE DETAIL

CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Country

Netherlands

Host Institution

Maastricht University - University College Maastricht

Program(s)

University College Maastricht

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Philosophy Communication Anthropology

UCEAP Course Number

112

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

UCEAP Transcript Title

CRUCIAL DIFFRNC 21C

UCEAP Quarter Units

6.00

UCEAP Semester Units

4.00

Course Description

This course considers a variety of contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, age, religion, and other categories of difference. Students learn to examine the way in which these “crucial differences” are constituted in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, as well as to analyze the ways in which they function on social, cultural, political, and symbolic levels. The emergence of the various social movements during the 1960s and 1970s, such as the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and gay and lesbian liberation, and their lasting impact on society today, serves as a starting point of the course. It examines how these diverse movements have shaped and reshaped the form and content of the identity of various minority groups on individual and collective levels. Special attention will be directed to the notion of intersectionality, which refers to the interaction between multiple categories of difference in cultural, social and individual practices, and the effects of these interactions in terms of power and inequality. Subsequently, it takes a closer look at the complexity of such multiple differences and inequalities by tracing the entangled workings of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, age, and religion through a variety of topical cases. The course looks at the way in which such categories realign in various contexts of crisis and conflict, ranging from the late twentieth century wars in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia to the complex force-fields of (neo-)nationalism, populism, and xenophobia today. Students examine the rapidly shifting status of the human body in technologically advanced societies, zooming in, for example, on the role of cosmetic surgery as a technology of gender, race, and class. Students theorize and analyze the complex relations between norms of gender and sexuality in the structuring of contemporary performances of identity in a variety of social, cultural, and institutional environments. Contemporary constructions of whiteness and the role of race in the construction of national identity are critically examined. Special attention is paid to the emergence of sexual nationalisms across and beyond Europe today, focusing on the prominent place that women's sexual liberation and gay rights occupy in contemporary debates about Islam and multicultural citizenship. As these cases indicate, the course draws on a variety of geographical and cultural locations and contexts. Diversity is also exemplified in the interdisciplinarity that characterizes gender and diversity

studies as a scholarly field. The texts used in this course draw on theories and methods from disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, as well as from the fields of feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and queer studies. Through critical inquiry into concrete cases as well as major texts—including modern classics in the field such as Judith Butler's *GENDER TROUBLE* and Joan Scott's *THE POLITICS OF THE VEIL*—this course dynamically re-conceptualizes the intersections between the various “crucial differences” by examining the multiple ways in which processes of identity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality are produced and reproduced in ongoing flows of negotiation and transformation. Prerequisites for this course are a relevant intermediate-level course in the Humanities or Social Sciences.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

HUM3040

Host Institution Course Title

CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Host Institution Campus

University College Maastricht

Host Institution Faculty**Host Institution Degree****Host Institution Department**

Humanities

[Print](#)