

MAJORITIES, MINORITIES AND GROUP IDENTITIES IN AMERICA: STATUS, RIGHTS, AND PUBLIC POLICY

*It must be odd
to be a minority
He was saying.
I looked around
and didn't see any.
So I said
Yeah
it must be*

Mitsuye Yamada *Camp Notes*

Professor David M. Elcott
Office hours by appointment
Office 212-992-9894
Mobile 914-391-7503
David.elcott@nyu.edu

Teaching Colleague:

Perry Wong
pw641@nyu.edu

Room: The Global Center for Academic and Spiritual Life
238 Thompson St.
Room 275

The position of those who collectively identify as a distinct group, generally seen as of minority status in the United States, an immigrant nation since its inception whose indigenous population was perceived as non-American, remains a volatile topic of debate that touches the core of American identity. In this course, we will focus on the status of a number of groups that have been identified as “minority” (leaving the term minority itself in question) within America’s cultural and political framework, examining how the debate over rights informs policy decisions and shapes identity and institutions. We will apply a range of theoretical constructs, seeking to define what “minority” status entails by studying how ethnicity, race, gender, sexual identity, national origin and religious identities, and their cultural expressions, play out in the public sphere. Attention will also be paid to community building - how public policies and leaders nurture or undermine collective identity and the communities they seek to build.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Begin to grapple with definitions – minority, majority, group - in the United States: when did the concept of “minority” emerge in the United States, how are individual identities and groups identified and given meaning, what are

the internal and external aspects of such identities? Can we even use the term minority in the United States today?

- Examine the essential concepts of power and privilege (and the marked and unmarked positions) – what it is, how it is used and how groups and communities expand and strengthen their political power. We also will consider the ways that addressing group identity status affects power in America.
- We will explore in what ways identity is personal, communal, self-determined and/or imposed and the intersections of identity in America today.
- We will study how the status of those identified as minorities has changed over the history of America.
- Sessions will address the impact of education, housing, workplace, voting and religious policies on the lives and status of minorities.
- We will ask what roles should and do governments – federal, state and local - play in determining individual and group status?
- We also will consider whether the state has an interest in strengthening self-identified minority communities and what is necessary to nurture such communities today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE:

1. Careful preparation for and serious involvement in all seminar sessions. This means reading the materials and thinking about the topic before the session. Try your best to cover all the readings so that in class, you will be citing from the works that I assigned. In your reading, you are asked to:
 - Question the significance of the topic and the analyses you read – is the methodology solid; does the analysis comport with the results?
 - Search for what biases (and there are always biases) affect the choices of subject, data and analysis.
 - Check yourself out: In what ways do the evidence and analyses conform to your own experience and assessments, and in what ways do they challenge them?
 - Consider what institutional and organizational implications can be drawn from the readings, and what types of leadership responses would be most productive.
 - Think about what you learn as a leader and manager, policy analyst and advocate for policy change.
2. Class participation is crucial and the quality and thoughtfulness of your involvement will be reflected in your final grade. **If speaking in public is difficult for you, please come to see me early on.**
3. Assume leadership in class activities (alone or as part of a team) – there will be many opportunities for you to lead portions of class sessions.
4. Students will choose readings, quotes and/or something said by one of the speakers from four sessions of the course that seems powerful, meaningful and/or problematic, and then write up to a two page single space analysis after

each of those days. Whatever your focus, you are expected to reference the readings as well as any discussions we have had, the outside world you observe and/or your own personal experiences. This analysis, while reflecting your rigorous and careful reading, allows you to explore what excites you intellectually and how you imagine applying what you read to professional areas that interest you. Make sure you provide direct citations from the readings or the lectures. Length is not what matters most – a thoughtful, integrated and coherent analysis or critique is what we want to see. These four one-pagers must be submitted on NYU Classes under assignments as follows:

- Anytime up to the week after the fourth session
 - Anytime up to a week after the 5th, 6th or 7th sessions
 - Anytime up to a week after the 8th, 9th, 10th or 11th sessions
5. There will be a midterm after the sixth session. It will consist of five questions about the work we have done so far. You will be able to choose two of the questions and write your exam at home. It will be due before the seventh session. The exam should be no more than ten pages double-spaced. You will be expected to use the materials we have covered up to that point in the course, your own experience and any additional references you choose to bring in to your responses. Please do not skimp on footnoting the readings we have used.
 6. You will have a final project that you will prepare in concert with up to two other students. You will choose one of the issues that study in the course and prepare a class presentation on the most effective ways you have determined to address this issue on a national, state, local and/or institutional level. You will present a one paragraph description of what you plan to investigate by the tenth session and are welcome to meet with me before that time to figure out what you want to do. The final presentation can be up to fifteen minutes and creativity in the form and content of presentation will be valued.
 7. A written form of your presentation at whatever length you feel is necessary to convincingly make your points will be due one week after your presentation, giving you time to reflect on the responses to your presentation by me and by the class. The written presentation can be in the form of a power point, a final reflective essay that examines your issue, or a formal paper no more than 10 double-spaced pages plus appendices and footnotes.
 8. Your grade will reflect all these elements:
 - your three one page analyses of readings reflections 30% (10 points each)
 - your overall class participation and leadership 10%
 - your midterm exam 20%
 - your final class team presentation 20%
 - your final paper 20%

At any time, you are welcome to discuss your progress with me for both guidance and confidence in how you are doing.

Readings and NYUClasses:

1. Much of the reading, many announcements, class-related documents, and other useful class information will be posted on NYU Classes and on the “Forum” so make sure to check that out regularly.
2. Also, check your NYU email regularly for any other announcements.
3. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view some of the materials. Make sure that you have it installed.
4. Downloads of articles have been provide in most cases. **Please make sure, however, that you know how to find an article by using NYU’s excellent library resources in case a link fails to open.**
5. Please read Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow* before the semester begins, if possible. Even with weaknesses, it is a crucial read for understanding many of the issues we will consider.

Academic Integrity

As a professional, you will need to use many resources that have been developed, authored and/or organized by others. Making great use of the work of others is a valuable professional tool – originality is not axiomatically a virtue. Honoring the hard work of those who prepared what you borrow and use is an issue of integrity. That lesson begins in your academic work. To refresh yourself on the rules of academic integrity, see <https://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/>

Seminar sessions:

1. Framing the Questions January 28, 2015

The word minority is, in a sense, a new and fluid concept. It also is very controversial. There of course have always been different ethnic, religious and national groups that vied with each other for position and status and power in the places that they interacted and we have early evidence of cultures declaring their superiority over the other (even the Bible states that when entering the Land of Israel, “you shall not let a soul remain alive. No, you must excise them... lest they lead you into doing abhorrent things...”). Much the same has been said about Africans and Jews, Chinese and Japanese, and Italians and Irish at one time or another. There has been the “other” who is dangerous and sinister, sub-human and/or just different. Yet the classification of a group as a “minority” is a more modern phenomenon and one with which we still are grappling. Italian immigrants to the U.S. were disdained by many in the early twentieth century -- they were not considered white. But by the 1960’s, Italians were very white. There were covenants preventing Jews from buying homes in large swaths of the country in the 1950’s while today, when a Jew marries a Kennedy or a Clinton, there is great celebration (except by those who want to sustain unique ethnic or religious identities). Are women, who make up over half the U.S. population, a

“minority” in need of legal protections? Is the LGBTQ community “privileged” as Justice Roberts has claimed in the past few years? The first session will allow us to work on framing the questions for the course by examining our own conceptions, those of key political leaders as well as social analysts and theorists.

Questions to Consider:

1. What markers seem to be salient in considering group identity and individual status and how do we imagine the ways that such a status is determined?
2. How real are these categories for you and your families?
3. How are these categories used in America and by whom?
4. What can we learn about framing issues and ideas that will help us better understand the issues of minority status?

Materials:

- Ronald Takaki *A Different Mirror*, N.Y: Little, Brown and Co., 2008, chapter 1
- John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. Chapter 1
- George Lakoff, lecture found on authors@google.georgelakoff (especially from 14:00)– watch it

For class: <http://furmancenter.org/research/iri/pattillo>

2. Becoming a Real American, Two competitive visions: The melting pot vs. a nation of immigrants February 4, 2015

America has long held two competing visions of itself. The first is America as a haven for wretched refugees who, seeking freedom and opportunity, come to these shores to become real citizens, adopting the language, culture and values of the historic, founding dominant majority. The second view is of America as a rich *mélange* of cultures and languages, a nation that celebrates diversity with the realization that what binds its citizens is its pluralism. This session will examine the analyses and the data used over the past centuries to define and then redefine who and what is American with the background awareness that the battle over what constitutes a true American still rages fiercely.

Questions to consider:

1. What about nation building and citizenship is at the core of each of these two visions?
2. What are the costs of choosing one vision over the other?

3. What are some examples of public policies have been instituted as a result of each of these visions?

Materials:

- Beyond the Melting Pot Reconsidered, a collection of essays, International Migration Review, vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring 2000), p. 243-279.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4673
- Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, N.Y.:Little, Brown and Co, pages 44-65
- Sam Roberts, *Who We Are Now: The Changing Face of America in the Twenty-First Century*, Holt and Co. NY, 2004. Chapter 1
- Barak Obama's convention speech 2004
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWynt87PaJ0> (in class)
- Paul Ryan, "Renewing the American Idea" July 2014
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcBIqF543PM>
- Emma Lazarus, *The New Colossus*

3. Determining Community and Personal Identity Rights: Should They Be Collective, Individual or Non-existent?

February 11, 2015

While no one argues that there are communities with shared unique and distinct identities in America, there is heated debate over what obligations, if any, the nation has to these communities. For those who see America as a pluralist experiment, society must provide equality and justice to the individual for whom ethnicity, religious, or national origin identity is a significant background condition. The reason: A pluralist America that fosters distinct ethnic, religious and national origin communities will be a healthier democracy. Then there are those who see America as a nation of "minority" communities with collective communal rights that flow to the individual. Collective rights means that one's position in society is linked to one's minority identity and that society offers rights and recognition based not only to the individual, but to those within the group as well. And then there are the cosmopolitan critics who argue that collective rights means privileging a particular definition and identity of a self-declared minority community over others, forcing individuals to choose a singular identity in a world saturated with multiple identities.

Questions to Consider:

1. What difference does it make if one is given rights as an individual or given rights as part of a collective group?
2. What so disturbs those who believe in justice and equality about providing minority rights in America?

Materials:

- Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, ch. 6.
- Jeremy Waldron, *The Cosmopolitan Alternative* in Kymlicka *The Rights of Minority Culture*, Oxford, 1997, ch. 4.
- Michael Walzer, *Pluralism, A Political Perspective*, in Will Kymlicka *The Rights of Minority Culture*, Oxford, 1997, ch. XXXXX
- *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, January 7, 2009 Medicine Cabinet (shown in class)

Case Study: Lani Guinier and the Case of Representation and Elections

4. Black, Brown, White, Yellow, Red: Effects of Public Policy: Categorizing Individuals and Determining Status in the United States February 18, 2015

We will explore how race, ethnicity and national origin have been categorized in the United States and how such determinations affect status and identity. Our interest is both in the “facts” that underlie identities and also the processes that produced these categorizations. What is the relationship between racial/ethnic (Afro-American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White), gender (male/female/others), and religious (note: the average American changes religious affiliation multiple times during a lifetime) designations and the individual’s identity and choice of communal affiliation? What are the gains and losses of such designations?

We will research the range of censuses used over the past 200 years and then focus on the most recent census as a case study of how public policy affects one’s identity.

Guest Speaker: **Carrie Nordlund**, Clinical Assistant Professor of Public Service at NYU Wagner. Dr. Nordlund received her Masters of Art and PhD in Political Science from Brown University. She’s currently producing works focused on racial identification and minority representation, and the U.S. Census.

Questions to Consider:

1. What’s the narrative? How were the various minority identities determined and toward what end?
2. What is gained by minority status? What are the costs? Winners/losers?
3. Would there be other ways of imagining categories and designations or would we be better following the thinking of Jeremy Waldron?

Materials:

- Carmen R. Lugo *So You Are a Mestiza: exploring the consequences of ethnic and racial clumping in the U.S. Academy*
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01419870701568882>
- Nathan Glazer, "Do We Need the Census Race Question," *Public Interest*, Washington: Fall 2002, pg. 21
http://www.nationalaffairs.com/public_interest/detail/do-we-need-the-census-race-question
- Charles Hirschman, Richard Alba and Reynolds Farley, *The Meaning and Measurement of Race in the U.S. Census, Demography, Vol. 37. No. 3 (August 2000) pp. 381-393*
<http://cooley.libarts.wsu.edu/schwartzj/pdf/hirschman.pdf>
- June Kronholz, *Racial Identity's Gray Area, June 12, 2008*, Wall Street Journal, pg A10.
http://online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB121322793544566177.html
- Sam Roberts, *Who Are We Now*, ch. 8
- Junot Diaz, *Drown*, pp. 121-140 (Edison, N.J.)

Text Analysis: Parsing the 2010 U.S. Census

http://www.census.gov/schools/pdf/2010form_info.pdf

5. In America, Color Has Meaning: Criminal Justice or the New Jim Crow February 25, 2015

Seeing the first family would be startling to prior generations of American (and still we assume for many today). In front of us stands a rainbow of races, Indonesian, Kenyan, European national origins, Muslims, Christians and Jews, descendants of slaves and of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. It would be easy to claim that the dream of integration has been fulfilled. Critical race theory takes issue with the notion that equality is the result of legislation, court mandates or even an Afro-American president. After hundreds of years, the meaning and impact of race and racism in the United States, from slavery to Jim Crow segregation to the New Jim Crow, remains unresolved. While we will not resolve the issues, we will focus on a case study on how policies, supported by legislation, law enforcement, courts, prisons and governments have (and continue) to structure a criminal justice system in the United States that plays out in destructive ways.

In fact, no area of contention today is more ripe for reform than the criminal justice system. The United States incarcerates more people than any other democracy and a larger percentage of its population than any country in the world. This reality disproportionately affects men of color, from being stopped to arrest, to conviction, incarceration, and parole – and even the box on applications that asks if you ever were arrested or convicted of a crime.

The policy implications are huge, from housing to education to employment, as we have seen. The system seems so imbalanced that Michelle Alexander calls the American criminal justice system as the new Jim Crow, a 21st century form of segregation.

Questions to Consider:

1. What policies have brought the U.S. to this point and what policies could help remedy what is now seen as a failure to address the public and private costs of our criminal justice system?
2. How did the War on Drugs and “Stop and Frisk” policies transform American prisons?

Materials:

- *Crenshaw, et al., *Critical Race Theory*, NY: New Press, 1995, Introduction
- *Alexander, Michelle - The New Jim Crow, Intro and Ch4
- *Forman Jr, James - Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration, Beyond the New Jim Crow
- *Sentencing Project: To Build a Better Criminal Justice System
- New York State Reforms Harsh Rockefeller Laws
- *Rose, Heather and Martin, Glenn - Locking Down Civil Rights Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, pp. 214-216, 259-261, ch. 15 Part 4 (for overview)
- John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution*, chapter 2
- John Manzon-Santos, The Balgopal Lecture on Human Rights and Asian Americans, February 27, 2008, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Case Study: Public Housing with a criminal past

6. Gender, Power, Politics and Color: More Ways To Tell the Story March 4, 2015

Guest seminar speaker: Prof. Erica Foldy

The unmarked position in America remains white, heterosexual, male and Christian. No one would expect a judge of that background to recuse himself on issues of gay marriage, women's rights or race-based affirmative action. Yet Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor was attacked in hearings for noting that being “a wise Latina woman” may offer a valuable different perspective on judicial decisions. It is disingenuous to deny the role one's background, heritage, and experience play in one's perspective and decision-making. Those of the marked positions (such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, religion) who have traditionally been shut out from power or have not had access to resources, are the only groups asked to check their identity at the door. To deepen our understanding of minority status in America, we

need to investigate the intersections of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and other markers of difference and their impact on rights and public policy outcomes at the local, state, and national levels.

Questions to Consider:

1. What do we mean by intersectionality and how does this concept apply to our study of minorities?
2. How does the marked position of female affect other identities?
3. In what ways should one's identity affect public policy issues, voting and other forms of civic engagement?

Materials:

- Mitsuye Yamada, *Desert Run Poems and Stories*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1992, pgs. 87-89 (on NYUClasses)
- Excerpt from *The Color Purple* (on NYUClasses)
- *Leading At the Intersections*, Nicole Mason (on NYUClasses)
- Catharine MacKinnon, *Women's Lives, Men's Laws*, excerpts

7. Residential Patterns, Housing and Urban Planning Policies and Minority Identity

March 11, 2015

Segregated residential patterns have been a way of life in America, sometimes by choice but, more often, enforced by societal constraints and legally sustained covenants. The chasm in the quality of schools, public services and employment opportunities are a reflection of that history of segregated housing, yet immigrant groups often self-segregated as a means of sustaining their own cultures and communities. Politically, minority enclaves offered greater power or leverage with those in power. Yet, while integrated housing became the tool to break down racial and ethnic disparities, its successes are mixed. We will explore the story of segregated and integrated housing and their effect on personal and communal group identities and success in America.

- Camille Zubrinsky Charles, *The Dynamics of Racial Residential Segregation*, [Annual Review of Sociology](#). Palo Alto: 2003. Vol. 29 pg. 167, 41 pgs
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?index=2&sid=1&srchmode=1&vint=PROD&fmt=3&startpage=-1&clientid=9269&vname=PQD&RQT=309&did=415396451&scaling=FULL&ts=1233858507&vtype=PQD&rqt=309&TS=1233858516&clientId=9269>

- Bowling with Robert Putnam, *The American Interest Online*, Jan-Feb 2008 issue <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2008/01/01/bowling-with-robert-putnam/>
- National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity - Final Commission Report (Executive Summary),
- Sage Publications "The Neighbourhood Contact Hypothesis: Evidence from the Multicity Study of Urban" Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi" *Urban Stud.* 2002; 39: 619-641
<http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:9451/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=13&sid=7a333d2c-1f47-463e-9f8e-a9e6908fb266%40sessionmgr11>

Case Study: The Nehemiah Project in East Brooklyn

OPTIONAL VISIT TO ELLIS ISLAND

Ellis Island allows us to experience two very crucial elements of our study that are on the front-burners of American policy and politics: immigration and the "othering" of those who are not the prevailing image of what an American should be. In particular, the effective exhibits on anti-immigrant othering gives almost experiential depth to our study as we are taken through American history.

8. A Nativist America: Immigration and the Fight for a Dominant Culture March 25, 2015

As noted in the first session, the battle over what constitutes authentic American culture goes back to colonial times. Benjamin Franklin, who hailed from the City of Brotherly Love, complained, "Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them?" We will seek to understand the cultural and political analyses of both those who are anti-immigrant and their relationship to nativist beliefs and those who see immigrants as valuable to America. We will pose questions about the types of rights claimed by immigrants to sustain their unique cultures, languages, communal institutions and identities.

A case study: What should immigration reform look like in America?

Questions to Consider:

1. What does the word American mean to you – to different populations in the United States – to those living in other countries?
2. Are the children of undocumented immigrants born in the U.S. real Americans?
3. Framing the question: What do we mean when we say immigrants and immigration?

4. How does public policy, including such agreements as NAFTA, impact the immigration debate?

Materials:

- Check out the websites for FAIR at <http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer> and for the Center for New Community at <http://www.newcomm.org/>
- Sam Roberts, *Who We Are Now*, chapter 7
- Pew Research Center on Arizona Immigration Law <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1591/public-support-arizona-immigration-law-poll>
- Christina M. Rodriguez, *The Significance of the Local in Immigration Regulation*, in the Michigan Law Review, Feb2008, Vol. 106 Issue 4, p567-642 (read the Abstract and the conclusion)
- John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution*, pgs. 37-57
- Mitsuye Yamada, *Camp Notes*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1992, pgs. 13-22
- Manuel Muñoz *Campo* in *Zigzaggers*, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 2003. pp. 51-62

9. Faith-based politics and policy: Religion and minority status April 1, 2015

Religion in America is so unlike that in other nations. Americans are believers (88% have certain or fairly certain belief in God) but not to their religious identity (44 percent of Americans have switched religious affiliations). Just under 50% percent of Americans taking on leadership positions do so in religious settings, yet a majority of Americans want religion out of politics. For our study, we also note that no religious denomination in the U.S. sees itself as a majority so that, in some profound ways, all those of faith take on a minority status and fight to protect their rights. Some still claim that their religious values should be the values of the nation while others strive with avid passion to protect their desire to do as they choose. We will explore the rights to be religious with a case study focus on the public policy issue of faith-based initiatives.

Case Study: The battle over Hobby Lobby

Questions to Consider:

1. How did the Founding Fathers imagine religion in America? What does the “freedom of religion” clause in the Bill of Rights mean?
2. Can religious groups be a minority in America and who would be the majority?

3. Can we reconcile Church-State separation and faith-based initiatives?

Materials:

- Supreme Court Ruling *Salazar vs. Buono*
- <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=340> Faith based initiatives
- <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=337> More Americans Question Religion in politics
- <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=153> Many Americans Uneasy with Mix of Religion and Politics
- Religion and Politics in the Contemporary United States (A Special Issue of *American Quarterly*)" R. Marie Griffith; Introduction: Is the Public Square Still Naked? [R Marie Griffith](#), [Melani McAlister](#). [American Quarterly](#). College Park: [Sep 2007](#). Vol. 59, Iss. 3; pg. 527, 38 pgs
- The Blaine Game: Over the Blaine Amendments and Public Funding of Religion <http://pewforum.org/events/?EventID=194>
- Survey on Religions in America <http://religions.pewforum.org/comparisons#>
- Barack Obama, *Call to Renewal*, speech delivered at a conference sponsored by Sojourners, June 28, 2006 <http://sojo.net/magazine/2006/11/one-nation-under-god>
- Michael Gottsegen, Religion and the Public Good, in *Religion As A Public Good*, Mittelman, ed, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2003
- Robert Wuthnow, *Saving America? Faith-Based Services and the Future of Civil Society*, Princeton Univ Press, 2008, ch 1

10. Color, Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Schools and Workplace: Battles Over Reparative Affirmative Action and Merit in Determining Public Policies

April 8, 2015

In 1952, *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka* overturned the principle of separate but equal while the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII) prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. These landmark decisions have been challenged in their implementation ever since with convincing evidence that discrimination in education and employment still affect minorities. In fact, efforts to use merit as the sole basis of admissions, employment or salary increases have proven faulty, with the effects of bias evident in lingering disparities.

Guest seminar leader: Talia Milgrom-Elcott,

Talia Milgrom-Elcott is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of 100Kin10, a networked approach to strategically addressing the nation's shortage of STEM teachers and improving STEM learning for all students by activating more than 100 organizations, including corporations, foundations, non-profits, school districts, and others, to train and retain 100,000 excellent STEM teachers over ten years. She was a Program Officer in Urban Education and worked at the New York City Department of Education as part of Chancellor Joel Klein's team. Prior to working at the Department of Education, Talia clerked for Judge Robert Sack of the Second Circuit Federal Court of Appeals and was the first Workers' Rights Fellow at New York Jobs with Justice. Talia received her BA magna cum laude from Harvard University, where she was also Phi Beta Kappa. She returned to Harvard for her JD, which she also received magna cum laude.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did the Court rulings and the civil rights legislation attempt to correct the lingering injustices of slavery and racial and ethnic discrimination? What was the society they were imagining as their goal?
2. What was the debate over affirmative action and what were its ideological and pragmatic pros and cons?
3. What evidence do we bring to bear in discussing the socio-economic disparities that exist today? What are the different framings of the issues?

Materials:

- * Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, N.Y:Little, Brown and Co., pp. 25-31, 82-87
- *Lani Guinier The Meritocracy Myth, <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2006/0106guinier.html>
- Pew Forum, Discrimination in the Workplace on the Rise, <http://pewforum.org/news/display.php?NewsID=17425>
- *Derrick A. Bell, Brown vs. the Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma, Critical Race Theory, pgs 20-29
- National Academy of Education [*Race-Conscious Policies for Assigning Students to Schools: Social Science Research and the Supreme Court cases*](#)
- More Evidence on Social-Psychological Processes that Perpetuate *Minority Segregation*: The ... ERIC: Education Resources Information Center, <http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED233098> by JH Braddock
- Christopher Jencks, Secrets of the SAT, interview on PBS Frontline, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/sats/interviews/jencks.html> (you can check out the other interviews as well)

11. Status, Legislation and the Courts: How the Legal System Addresses Issues of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Religion and National Origin

April 15, 2015

Often the greatest advocates for the individual and group rights of those classified as minorities have been the courts that overturned laws or referenda that minorities claimed oppressed them. In other cases, courts have ruled unconstitutional legislation passed in support of minority rights. In studying the major court cases, we will grapple with all the issues we have studied so far and how complex and subtle decision-making concerning minorities and rights is in America today. Our fundamental question ends up being: Should America reinforce the unique collective identities of racial, religious, gender, sexual identity and ethnic groups when the law is presented as colorblind – or rather, committed to the principle that all men (sic) are created equal?

Guest Speaker: Julie Ehrlich

Julie Ehrlich is the Chief of Staff, NYU School of Law. She has been an associate at LKLS and Cuti Hecker Wang LLP, civil rights litigation boutique law firms in New York City. Julie began her legal career as a staff attorney and fellow at the ACLU Women's Rights Project, where she litigated cases concerning the conditions of confinement for women and girls in prison. She graduated from Yale University and NYU's Law School.

Questions to Consider:

1. How have the courts crafted principles that address minority status and where have the conflicts been?
2. What are the key court rulings that determine minority status and its implications in America today?
3. How do minority issues play themselves out within the judicial and penal process – think about incarceration rates, probation, juries and crimes and their punishments?

Materials:

- A Fluid Boundary: The Free Exercise Clause and the Legislative and Executive Branches
<http://pewforum.org/newassets/images/reports/freeexercise2/freeexercise2.pdf>
- *The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination*
<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html>
- Julie B. Ehrlich, Breaking the Law by Giving Birth: NYU Review of Law & Social Change, 32 N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change 381 (2008)

<http://socialchangenyu.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/ehrllich-breaking-the-law-by-giving-birth.pdf>

- *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)* in Nivola and Bloom, *Classic Readings in American Politics*, St. martin's Press, NY, 1986, ch. 40
- Hernandez v Robles (NY Court of Appeals Ruling on Gay Marriage) http://www.courts.state.ny.us/reporter/3dseries/2006/2006_05239.htm
- Editorial, Extraordinary means, *Commonweal*. 132.7 (Apr. 8, 2005): p5. <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALE%7CA131753940&v=2.1&u=new64731&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w&authCount=1>

12. Organic and voluntary identity and culture: GLBTQ status, a case study April 22, 2015

Is one's identity given at birth, as in color or national origin, or is it voluntary, as in religion? Nowhere is this debate more public today than over the nature of sexual identity and whether there are rights and/or protections that should be provided. Is the discussion about LGBTQ identities one of civil rights, communal norms and values, choice and/or destiny – and what role should the values of the majority play in limiting the rights of a minority, whether an identity of choice or not, in American democracy? Marriage equality is achieved. So if gay becomes normative, a subset (for white gay males) of privileged heteronormative, then what happens to Queer and Queer culture. Is perfect assimilation the ultimate goal, two dads, two kids, and a dog sitting on the front porch of their suburban home?

Questions to Consider:

1. In terms of rights, does it matter whether sexual identity is based on biology, nurturing and culture, or personal choice?
2. Are white, high-end socio-economic class gays and lesbians a minority with rights to be protected?
3. Are there "others" not included in the new order such as transgender and bisexuals?
4. Should the goal of GLBTQ power be to make sexual identity no more significant than eye or hair color?

Materials

- Rimmerman, Wald and Wilcox, *The Politics of Gay Rights*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000. Chapters 2 and 5
- Brian J. MacCann, *Queering Expertise: Counterpublics Social Change, and the Corporeal Dilemmas of LGBTQ Equality* (28 Jul 2011.)
- Manuel Muñoz *Zigzagers*, Evanston, IL, Northwestern Univ Press, 20034. *Waiting to be Dangerous*, pp. 116-117;

- Manuel Muñoz *The Faith Healer of Olive Street*, Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 2007, *Bring, Brang, Brung*, pp. 24-46

Case Study: Does the successful fight for marriage equality undermine LGBTQ as a minority status and identifiable culture?

13. So Where Are We and Where Do We Want to Go? **April 29, 2015**

This course is about public policy. We seek to understand the theory, practice and experience of identity that play out in the public arena, in law and social interaction. These issues are also personal. Who am I in this equation and what do I want from my identities? And how does all this play out in the lives of all of us who live at this moment in the United States? We look at ourselves, our families and circle of acquaintances, and the communities we inhabit, as both policy makers and participants in American society.

Guest Speaker: Selima Jumarali, Asst. Director, Center for Multicultural Education and Programs, NYU, focused on NYU CMEP enhances the NYU experience by fostering a more inclusive, aware and socially just community. CMEP accomplishes this by fostering dialogue that explores issues of identity, diversity and social justice, supporting the diverse NYU community in their personal, professional and academic lives, creating educational initiatives and campus-wide programming that engage the NYU community and cultivating allies and advocates to create and promote positive change.

Materials:

- Dave Chappelle, *About His White Friend Chris*, <http://vodpod.com/watch/2256036-dave-chappelle-about-his-white-friend-chip> (in class)
- Chris Rock- How Not To Get Your Ass Kicked By the Police, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj0mtxXEGE8>

14. Class Student Presentations: Case Studies of Status, Rights and Public Policies and Minorities **May 6, 2015**