SOCIAL DIFFERENCE, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (SDEI)

The courses listed on this page are exclusive to the LPS BAAS degree (https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/what-bachelor-applied-arts-and-sciences-degree/) and LPS Online certificates (https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/academics/certificates/).

SDEI 1100 Introduction to Social Difference in American Society
In this course, we will consider matters relating to the origin, persistence, and change of social norms, the composition of diverse populations, and the meanings attached to the social construction of various social problems, including racial, class, and gender inequality. This course is designed to provide you with a broad introduction to social difference using contemporary America as a case study. We will engage with a collection of readings each week, which will highlight important issues, theories, concepts, and methodologies. We will focus on several aspects of American society including, race, education, gender, social class, the family, and poverty. In the long term, the exposure to the sociological approach to social problems will provide a more thorough and nuanced understanding of public issues that affect humans on both macro and micro levels. Foundational Requirements Contributions # Analytical and Critical Skills # Communication # Cross-Cultural Interactions & Diversity
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 1500 Cultural Capital and Social Spaces
This course will explore the intersections of race, cultural capital, and social spaces, with a focus on professional and organizational spaces.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 2000 Organizational and Institutional Power & Hierarchy
Power structures often order our personal and professional lives—from macro level institutional frameworks governed by collective laws and policies, to micro level organizational relationships shaped through individual actions and practices. Some of these structures are designed to offer clear, open, and equitable social benefits for diverse populations. Others are situated within systems that obscure their harmful effects on specific, historically marginalized, groups. This course will offer learners a critical lexicon for identifying, describing, and engaging with organizational and institutional expressions of power.
In addition to examining mixed-methods research, historical examples, and contemporary case studies that demonstrate relationships between power, structural hierarchies, and difference, learners will participate in simulations that highlight the personal “power maps” each of us navigate in social landscapes—across real-world professional spaces—every day. Foundational Requirements Contributions # Analytical and Critical Skills # Communication # Cross-Cultural Interactions & Diversity # Historical Perspectives
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 2500 Race, Place, and Space
In this course, our collective aims are to understand race as a dynamic social and political construct that evolves through time and space and to recognize how race as a social construct relates to social stratification, intergroup and intragroup relations, and economic and political hierarchies within U.S. society. The general purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study of race within the contemporary U.S. context and to provide a better understanding of how and why race continues to be such a powerful stratifying agent. We will explore the enduring persistence of racism and discrimination across Space and Place and how race as an ascribed, master status remains a key organizing principle in American society. We will focus on the power of Place as intrinsically linked to the social significance of race, racial identity, and racism for several underrepresented racial minority groups including Blacks, Indigenous Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans; we will study how race affects these groups in different ways based on their historical and present-day positions within the racial hierarchy. For the purposes of this class, Place is defined as the permanent physical locations we inhabit throughout the life course and become socialized within including the family, school, neighborhood, and work. We will also explore in-depth the power of Space as those indefinite, liminal locations individuals construct and traverse daily based on their racial vantage points and interpretations of race as a significant factor in their upbringing, attitudes, worldview, and experiences as social and numerical minorities. To that end, we will explore how race and competing intersectional social identities such as gender, sexuality, social class, nativity, skin color and generational status affect individuals’ worldviews, racial consciousness, and self-concept, as well as their perceptions of racial climates, intraracial solidarity and hierarchies within their own racial groups and across the racial spectrum. In conclusion, we will analyze the power of intersectionality and the complexity of racialization along the color line for individuals within the aforementioned groups. Equally important, we will study the lexicon(s) of difference that individuals of all backgrounds must become fluent in to better understand the lived experiences of marginalized others in all contexts and to make meaningful, sustainable change to ensure equality for all. We will also host guest lecturers throughout the semester. Foundational Requirements Contributions - Analytical and Critical Skills - Communication - Cross-Cultural Interactions & Diversity - Historical Perspectives No textbook is required. All course information is available on CANVAS. Students are required to take both SDEI 1100 and SDEI 2500 to take higher level SDEI courses.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 3000 Spaces of Creativity and Social Action
In this course, we will explore examples of spaces that support individual and collective social action through creativity, developing analytical tools to identify the ways in which these spaces and actions support goals of equity and inclusion.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 3500 Qualitative Methods
In this course, students will develop a foundation in understanding how researchers from the social sciences and humanities use qualitative methods to analyze and understand society and culture, with attention to empirical research in these areas focusing on social difference, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students will learn the principles of sound qualitative research, and will be able to apply these principles to critical readings of published research literature.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit
SDEI 3550 Quantitative Methods
In this course, students will develop a foundation in understanding how researchers from the social sciences and humanities use quantitative methods to analyze and understand society and culture, with attention to empirical research in these areas focusing on social difference, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students will learn the principles of sound quantitative research, and will be able to apply these principles to critical readings of published research literature.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 4000 Designing Critical Futures
In her Nebula award-winning novel Parable of the Talents, Octavia Butler writes that “(w)e can, each of us, do the impossible as long as we can convince ourselves that it has been done before.” But what if this “before” is located somewhere in critical futures? Why should these futures matter to people who are concerned with practicable strategies for building a more just world? DIGC 320 invites students to imagine what “each of us” can do to reframe the possible by engaging with: (1) creative labor from sonic, literary, and visual artists; (2) critical labor from scholars, media experts, and non-profit professionals; and (3) social movement labor from activists, journalists, and civic participants. Along the way, students will design visions of critical futures that speak to the communities they hope to serve outside of the course. The course is organized around four essential units that each culminate in a creative project. The first unit focuses on place-making efforts that connect speculative design to community organizing and civic engagement. The second thickens these connections through discussions of queer community, liberatory imagination, and feminist praxis. The third centers mutualistic collaboration and critical play as radical practices for advancing equity and affirming generative difference. These practices set up the final unit which invites students to make a digital object that engages with a critical future of their design. Each unit will frame speculative work and other materials as case studies for designing critical futures.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 4400 Intersectional History of Sexuality
In this course, we will consider the impact of social, economic, and political conditions on social constructions of sexuality, from the classical world of Greece and Rome, to the early modern West, to the streets of Victorian London and 1920s New York, to 21st-century movements for gender and sexual equity and inclusion. We will pay special attention to the ways that race, class, religion, ethnicity, and gender come together to shape power dynamics through the development, change, and continuity in sexual roles, norms, and relationships.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

SDEI 4500 Advanced Topics in Social Difference, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Advanced Topics in Social Difference, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit