

 <p>THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & PEACEBUILDING</p> <p>A PROGRAM OF EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY</p>	<p>SPI 2025</p> <p>IDENTITY, PRIVILEGES & JUSTICE</p> <p>PAX 692</p> <p>Session 2: May 19 - 27, 2025</p> <p><i>Course meeting location and time: TBA</i></p>
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Understanding privilege is a crucial first step towards addressing social inequalities. Privilege is not just a personal possession but a systemic feature of social structures, which creates disparities in power, resources, and opportunities based on class, race, caste, gender, sexuality, age, ability, region and religion and other identity markers. The course *Identity & Privilege* is designed to help practitioners understand and critically examine the concepts of privilege and systemic inequality. The course delves into how privilege operates in society, perpetuating injustice, and offers a pathway to not only recognize these issues but actively work towards systemic change.

In this course, practitioners will learn how privilege is institutionalized through policies, practices, and norms that perpetuate inequality. Participants will engage with foundational theories of privilege and intersectionality, exploring how their own identities relate to broader systems of oppression. We will explore historical and contemporary examples of privilege, with particular attention to class, race,

caste, and gender and examine strategies for confronting and undoing these systems. Emphasizing action-oriented approaches, it equips practitioners with tools to challenge privilege in their professional settings and contribute to more just and equitable social systems through critical self-reflection and transformative action.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

(Un)Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, participants will:

- Understand the structural nature of privilege and systemic injustice
- Analyze how different forms of privilege (racial, caste, gender, class, sexuality, ability, region & religion) intersect and reinforce systems of inequality
- Reflect on their own identities and positionality in relation to privilege
- Develop strategies to use their positions to challenge inequality in their professional practice

REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- Kimmel, Michael S. & Abby L. Ferber (2017) [*Privilege: A Reader*](#), Routledge: US
ISBN 9780813350035
- Pease, Bob. (2022) *Undoing Privilege Unearned Advantage and Systemic Injustice in an Unequal World*, Bloomsbury: USA
- Haines, Staci K. (2019) *The Politics of Trauma: Somatic, Healing & Social Justice*, North Atlantic Books: Berkeley, CA.
- Haidt, Jonathan (2013). *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. United Kingdom, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Pathania, Gaurav J. (2023). [Caste Should not Be part of the American Dream](#), *The Emancipator*, Boston Globe. February 17.

Online sources from Interfaith America:

[Why Campuses Need Centers for Pluralism \[Eboo Patel 2023\]](#)

<https://www.interfaithamerica.org/resources/defining-interfaith-and-pluralism/>

[Identity of an Interfaith Leader](#)

Journal articles, multimedia resources, and/or other scanned readings will be assigned for each class period and available on Moodle.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Participation (20%)**– Engaging in discussions, stimulations, exercises, activities, and case studies.
- **Reflective Journal (30%)** Entries on identity, privilege, and intersections based on readings and personal reflections.
- **Final Project (50%)**– A comprehensive action plan on how to implement anti-privilege strategies in their professional practice, using concepts from the course [**Final Submission by August 8**]

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS FOR 3 GRADUATE CREDITS: (TOTAL COURSE POINTS = 100)

NOTE: These descriptions summarize required graded assignments. More comprehensive details will be provided in the “Guidance Notes” shared in class.

1) READING REVIEWS – PRESENTATIONS (20%)

During our synchronous sessions, students will deliver brief presentations outlining the key themes and questions from the assigned course readings. Each presentation should be supported by a single PowerPoint slide summarizing the main concepts.

2) BOOK REVIEW (20%)

This exercise aims to help students explore the broader landscape of advocacy by identifying historical figures who have employed effective strategies for change. To achieve this, students will read a book on change strategies and write a brief review summarizing their insights and observations. Select a book on transformational leadership for social justice published within the last ten years and compose a critical review.

3) CLASS PARTICIPATION – ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES (10%)

4) TWO INTERVIEWS OF SOCIAL ACTIVISTS (20%)

Students will conduct two interviews with activists from different organizations engaged in critical theory or social justice work. This assignment requires documenting the key themes and insights from these interviews. Additional guidelines will be available on Moodle.

5) FINAL: INTERVIEW FINDINGS- SUMMARY & PRESENTATION (30%)

Students will analyze and synthesize content from their two interviews into a 10-12 page summary. This summary will highlight key metrics that demonstrate how each organization implements transformative justice strategies. Students will also deliver a class presentation based on their findings. Further instructions for

SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY

Participants are expected to attend all sessions unless an emergency or unforeseen travel delay occurs. Those who anticipate missing any class days should contact SPI at **spi@emu.edu** before registering. SPI certificates are only granted if a participant misses no more than one class day unless prior arrangements are made with the SPI team and approved by the instructor. Students enrolled for credit must attend all sessions unless they receive explicit permission from the instructor. Active engagement is crucial, and repeated absences that disrupt class learning may result in dismissal from the course without a refund.

GRADING CRITERIA & ADDITIONAL POLICIES

SPI provides students taking courses for graduate credit with supplemental materials, including library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, guidelines for graduate-level writing, grading scale information, and course deadlines. These materials are available online for continued reference beyond SPI.

- **7-day SPI courses** can be taken for **2 or 3 credits**.
- Expectations differ for students auditing the course for professional development

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE:

Date	Topic	Readings
Unit 1 - Introduction		
Session 1	GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND THE COURSE	What is Privilege and how it works “CHECKING MY PRIVILEGES”
Session 2	DEFINING PRIVILEGE AND IDENTITY IN THE AGE OF PLURALISM THE INVISIBILITY OF PRIVILEGE: RECOGNIZING UNEARNED ADVANTAGES. INTERSECTIONALITY: RACE, CLASS, CASTE, IDEOLOGY, GENDER, DIASPORA & FAITH IDENTITY	Ch. 1, Michael and Ferber (2017) Activity: Identity Mapping Participants create a map of their own social identities and reflect on how these relate to privilege Patel (2018) Out of Many Faiths
Unit - 2: Privileges & Intersectionality		
Session 1	LOCATING PRIVILEGE IN THE ERA OF DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM	Seeing Privilege Where It Isn't: Marginalized Masculinities and the Intersectionality of Privilege
Session 2	HISTORICAL & STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF PRIVILEGE	Reading: <i>Undoing Privilege</i> (Chapter 3); <i>Privilege: A Reader</i> (Chapter 4: "White Privilege and Male Privilege" by Peggy McIntosh)

Session 3	STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES : How LAWS, POLICIES, AND INSTITUTIONS PERPETUATE PRIVILEGE	Activity: Case Study Analysis: Examine historical case studies where structural privilege was embedded in law and policy (e.g., redlining, voting rights, gendered labor practices). The concept of “normalcy” and its role in maintaining privilege
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Unit - 3: Caste in a Globalized World

Session 1	CASTE, CLASS & RACE	Isabel Wilkerson, <i>Caste: The Origin of Our Discontent</i>
Session 2	CASTE PRIVILEGE CASTE AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON	The Etymology of Caste The Characteristics of Caste Genesis of Caste [Ambedkar] Racial Paradigm and Caste Caste Should not Be part of the American Dream
Session 3	INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CASTE	Global Anti-Caste Movement Different Shades of Caste among the Indian Diaspora

Unit 4: Race and Privilege and Intersectionality

Session 1	THE CONSTRUCTION OF RACE AND RACIAL PRIVILEGE	<i>Undoing Privilege</i> (Chapter 4); <i>Privilege: A Reader</i> (Chapter 8: "Racialized Social Systems" by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva)
Session 2	Understanding Intersectionality	Kimberle Cranshaw [Video]
Session 3	Intersectionality and racial identity	Activity: <i>Group Discussion: Participants discuss how racial privilege manifests in their professional fields and how it can be challenged</i>

Unit – 5: Gender, Sexuality, and Privilege

Session 1	GENDER PRIVILEGE AND THE PATRIARCHY.	Reading: <i>Undoing Privilege</i> (Chapter 5); <i>Privilege: A Reader</i> (Chapter 13: "Masculinity as Homophobia" by Michael Kimmel)
Session 2	THE INTERSECTION OF PRIVILEGE AND SEXUALITY. MASCULINITY, FEMINISM, AND THE GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOR	Activity: Role-play exercise: Participants role-play scenarios in professional settings to identify and challenge gendered assumptions and privilege
Session 3	UNDERSTANDING GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF CASTE	Pan, Anandita (2021). Mapping Dalit Feminism: Towards an Intersectional Standpoint , Sage Publication: UK

Unit – 5: Class and Economic Privilege

Session 1	CLASS PRIVILEGE: ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL MOBILITY. THE INTERSECTION OF CLASS WITH RACE AND GENDER. CAPITALISM AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF UNEARNED ADVANTAGES	Undoing Privilege (Chapter 6); Privilege: A Reader (Chapter 19: "The Power of the Wealthy" by C. Wright Mills) Activity: Reflective Journal: Participants reflect on their own class backgrounds and how it has shaped their experiences of privilege or disadvantage
Sessions 2	DISCUSSION & SOLUTIONS	Class presentations
Session 3	REFLECTIVE CLOSING	Evaluation and closing circle