

AC Observed 'Best Practice' Themes:

It's difficult to determine what makes an 'excellent' AC course, and how to isolate content and activities that deliver such excellence. Part of this determination lies with the notion of what learning is directly attributed to the AC classroom.

However, even with the selection bias I can attribute to my own reading of the dozens of syllabi offered over the past five years, the following elements seem common to syllabi, which are meaningful to delivering 'an AC classroom'.

- There is both description and deconstruction.
- Not always, but often, a chronological structure is avoided, which might tether a 'developmental' attitude to the students understanding of particular racial experiences as 'either' historical or contemporaneous.
- There is a deliberate linkage of the political and social present to the past.
- There are deliberate attempts to un-naturalize dichotomies such as free and un-free, queer-straight, illegal-legal, aimed at centering critical analyses of 'normativity'.
- There are efforts to 'de-familiarize' racial groups as know by their meta-frameworks (African American, White, etc.) through the theoretical work of 'racial formation and racialization'.
- The historical subjects of racial categories are more frequently contested through the examination of transnational processes, and also 'place' based analyses which are local, 'seaboard' or hemispheric.
- There are often attempts to expose the genealogy of how and in what contexts concepts such as race, gender and class arose and have been organized.
- There is concern with and theorization of power - as structure, persons and agency. Aimed at moving beyond presenting subjects with structures of domination, which have often been of a minority group by a white majority.
- Storytelling is used as a central pedagogy, both from first person historical accounts and from student assignments.
- Both distinctive and unifying cultural frames are critically introduced and analyzed excavating often invisible, racialized ideologies (stereotypes).
- Multiple orders and facets of relationships are present, with contestation of 'singular' experiences.
- They elevate intra group as well as inter group analysis.
- Intersectional analyses, as presented through the past work of women of color (Kimberlé Crenshaw) and the future possibilities of intersectional analysis, aiming to explain 'super diversity' as present in considering conjunctions as more than gender and ethnic affiliations and comparisons. The use of 'assemblages' centering the dynamism of conjunctions is being used more often.