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Classism Curriculum Design

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The gap between rich and poor in the United States is the greatest it has been since 1929. In the United States, since the late 1970s, the wealthy have gained a bigger share of the nation's private wealth, so that now the richest 1% of the population owns a greater share of the wealth than the bottom 90% combined. Income inequality has grown as well. Average Americans were actually making less, on an hourly basis, at the end of the 1990s than they made in 1980 (Collins & Yeskel, 2005). Even billionaire investor Warren Buffett reflects, "It's class warfare. My class is winning" (in conversation with CNN's Lou Dobbs, June 2005).

Some results of this changing economic picture include more families with dual-wage earners, more part-time and overtime employment for working-class and middle-class families, significantly less leisure time, less access to health care, higher overall unemployment, and a greater burden of debt. The federal government now plays a smaller countervailing role in counteracting poverty than in the decades from the 1930s through 1970s. For example, President Ronald Reagan reduced spending on affordable housing and home ownership by 80%, saying he wanted to "get the government out of the housing business"; this spending has never been restored.

Some people believe that U.S. society is breaking down and that the economy is in decline. Many of today's social problems fit this pattern of decline, including urban decay, increased homelessness and hunger, increasing numbers of youth not in school or unemployed, and an increase in stress-related illnesses. For many Americans, this situation has led to increasing anxiety about the future and a growing disillusionment with government and corporations.

The Global Context

With the rise of multinational business and global markets, class issues in the United States have become ever more complex. The same multinational corporations that

increased U.S. prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s by manufacturing here and selling their products around the globe are now draining the United States and other economies by moving jobs to wherever wages are lowest and environmental standards lax, or taxes can be avoided (Derber, 2002; Pizzigati, 2004). The status of average American workers is ever more closely tied to the economic and working conditions of laborers in Third World countries, and class politics in the United States often center on international trade issues, such as the debate over the Central America Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Cavanagh, Mander, Anderson, & Barker, 2002).

The structural adjustment policies and austerity measures that are inflicted on developing countries, further impoverishing their citizenry, find their U.S. parallels in privatization, cuts in domestic social programs, and the weakening of the post-World War II safety net. For example, college scholarship grants have been reduced (Draut, 2006), and welfare is now a fixed block grant that doesn't expand when unemployment grows (Coven, 2006). Tax cuts targeted at the wealthiest Americans have resulted in massive federal debt that will burden future generations. To date, U.S. economic prominence has been held in place by wars over natural resources (such as the Iraq war and our dependence on oil) and by a fragile coalition among industrialized capitalist countries.

The overall decline in manufacturing jobs (a highly unionized sector), which once offered the possibility of attaining a middle-class lifestyle to blue-collar workers, has dramatically changed the class picture in the United States to resemble more that of Third World countries. Although an introductory course on classism cannot address this issue in any depth, and this curriculum design has been deliberately and artificially limited to U.S. issues, it is important for facilitators to be informed about these global changes and their effects on the American workforce. Useful resources are provided in Appendix 13M.

Intersections of Class with Other Forms of Oppression

Issues of class clearly intersect with every other form of oppression. For example, although about half of all poor people are white, wealthy people are disproportionately white, and poor people are disproportionately black, Latino, and Native American. The racial wealth divide is even wider than the income gap: People of color own about 18 cents for every white dollar in assets (Lui, Robles, Leondar-Wright, Brewer, & Adamson, 2006). Racial divide-and-conquer tactics have historically been used to limit working people's demands; this dynamic has contributed to lower wages and a weaker safety net in the United States than in most other industrialized countries.

People living in poverty are more likely than others to be disabled, and disabled people are more likely than able-bodied people to be poor. A far higher percentage of people with disabilities live in households that are below the poverty level (29 versus 10% overall), and a similarly disproportionate number report not having adequate access to health care or transportation (National Organization on Disability, 2000).

The feminization of poverty in the last 30 years has increased the intersection of classism and sexism. Women still perform endless hours of unpaid work caring for children and the elderly (Folbre, 2001). Men are socialized to equate self-worth with what they produce, with their net worth. Women doing comparable work to men are still not paid an equal amount.

Class is also related to age. The changes in the economy over the last few decades mean that younger people today face a much more challenging economic environment than their parents and grandparents did. A college degree now is equivalent to the high

school diploma of the past, and the cost of college has escalated dramatically, whereas the availability of scholarships has decreased. This means that today's college generation graduates with substantially greater debt than prior generations (Draut, 2006; Kamenetz, 2006). Sometimes, middle-aged people do not adequately understand the economic pressures facing today's youth. Seniors also have higher poverty rates than middle-aged people.

Non-economic Aspects of Classism

The harm from classism extends far beyond economic hardships. Popular culture and the media in the United States are full of classist stereotypes. Working-class people are often portrayed as dumb buffoons, whereas poor people are depicted as criminals, tragic victims, or heartwarming givers of wisdom. Wealthy people are rendered as shallow and vain, or as evil villains. Portrayed as normal is an expensive upper-middle-class lifestyle that is in fact affordable to no more than 10% of American families. This combines with manipulative advertising to fuel consumerism, the overemphasis on buying more and better things as a component of happiness, which in turn fuels excessive consumer debt (Degraaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2001; Frank, 1999).

Prejudice exists in our language, in words such as *trailer trash, white trash, redneck, ghetto, low class*, and *classy*. The same prejudice is manifested in treatment of service workers, such as underpaying them, disregarding their humanity, and creating unnecessary messes for them to clean up.

Many working-class lives, especially those of people in poverty, are full of stress. The shortage of options and scarce resources take an emotional toll (Sennett & Cobb, 1972). Bad health outcomes, such as shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality, and more preventable diseases, are prevalent among working-class and poor people. These stem not only from inferior health care, poor diet, and long hours and physical work that take a toll on workers' bodies, but also from the stress of living in a society that looks down on them. Disrespect is harmful (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000; Miller & Savoie, 2002).

Classism can be internalized, causing low expectations, discouragement, and self-doubt, in particular about one's intelligence. Internalized classism can also be manifested through disrespect toward other working-class people, in the form of harsh judgments, betrayal, violence, and other crimes. Upward mobility, far from bringing relief from classism, can bring culture shock and painfully divided loyalties (Jensen, 2004; Lubrano, 2003).

Middle-class people are harmed by isolation from working-class people, and by being taught they are superior to them and ought to be in charge. They are harmed by misinformation about how society works (they are sometimes less clued in to social and economic trends than working-class, poor, or rich people), and by conditioning that shapes their behavior to a narrow "proper" range, preparing many for dull middle-management jobs (Leondar-Wright, 2005).

Wealthy people find that others sometimes connect with them primarily in relation to their money, and may have trouble trusting others' motivations. Some learn a sense of entitlement and arrogance that makes them unable to connect across class differences. Some owning-class children, in particular those from multigenerational, superwealthy families, grow up in intense isolation uncommon in other families, such as being raised by nannies and seeing parents infrequently, going to boarding school at a young age, or spending a lot of time alone in a different wing of a house than other family members (O'Neil, 1996).

The Social Reproduction of Class

In *The Forms of Capital* (1986), Bourdieu distinguishes three types of capital:

1. *Economic capital*: control over economic resources (cash, assets).
2. *Social capital*: access to resources based on group membership, relationships, and networks of influence and support.
3. *Cultural capital*: education, skill, forms of knowledge, any advantages a person has that give them a higher status in society, including high expectations. Parents provide children with cultural capital, the attitudes and knowledge that make the educational system a comfortable, familiar place in which they can succeed easily.

In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron introduced the idea of cultural reproduction to describe how existing disadvantages and inequalities are passed down from one generation to the next, partly due to the education system and other social institutions.

Many of the ways we "read" someone's class, or "size someone up" in terms of class (a process that can be quite unconscious), are based on their cultural capital. Cultural capital includes the internalization of certain "dispositions of the mind and body"—what an individual knows and utilizes from within (including normative behaviors such as language use, manner of dress, and the "proper" guidelines for conducting oneself, i.e., manners). Although these things can be learned, the process is not easy. Cultural capital also refers to familiarity with cultural objects such as books, fine art, and jewelry.

Students who have knowledge that allows them to navigate through the school system by displaying desired behavior and/or conforming to unspoken norms are more likely to succeed. The tracking system may track, among other things, the amount of cultural capital a student possesses. This is often masked through the ideology of meritocracy: Individuals who do not have the desired cultural capital are labeled as lacking in intelligence and the drive to succeed. In this manner, social classes are reproduced.

Difficulties in Teaching about Class

The ability of average Americans to analyze and understand economic and social patterns is thwarted by prevailing myths about class and classism, compounded by lack of knowledge of global economic trends, global capitalism, and colonialism and imperialism, as well as by a mainstream version of history in which class and classism are largely invisible. "Class in America is a taboo subject because of the national reluctance to examine how the class system of the United States operates on a day-to-day basis" (Perrucci & Wysong, 2002, p. 4).

The Myth of Meritocracy

The American Dream is that anyone in this country can attain enough income to own their own homes and provide comfortably for their families if they work hard enough. The fact that most Americans can point to at least one example where this is true reinforces the myth of class mobility and assumptions that those who don't move up lack a strong work ethic. Although it is true that there is some class fluidity, and that class status may change over the lifetime of many individuals, the reality is that class is much less fluid than most people think. A series on class in the United States, later compiled into a book called *Class Matters*, reviewed research on class mobility and concluded

that the amount of upward mobility in the United States has either stopped increasing or has actually decreased (*New York Times* Correspondents, 2005).

This *New York Times* poll, conducted in 2005, demonstrated that the popular misconception that it is possible to start out poor, work hard, and become rich is actually more common now than it was 20 years ago (*New York Times* Correspondents, 2005). However, according to Princeton economist Alan Krueger (2002, p. C2), "if the United States stands out in comparison with other countries, it is in having a more static distribution of income across the generations with fewer opportunities for advancement." There is a particular cruelty to our situation in the United States, where people are more likely to believe that they can make it when in fact they are less able to succeed. People in this situation, without adequate understanding of how class works, often internalize classist attitudes, and blame themselves or each other. The psychological investment most Americans have in a meritocratic American Dream makes it difficult to challenge the obstacles to making the dream come true (McNamee & Miller, 2004).

During periods of social and economic crisis or frustration, in the absence of a framework for understanding the situation, people often turn to scapegoats and distractions. Thus, the underlying factors (imperialism, war, global trade policies, multinational corporate power, and domestic tax and spending policies, for example) that create vast inequalities in wealth, along with the beneficiaries of these policies, remain largely invisible (Collins & Yeskel, 2005; Kivel, 2004). Instead, people on welfare are blamed for causing our budget woes, urban young men of color are blamed for crime, immigrants are blamed for taking away jobs, working women and gays and lesbians are held responsible for the breakdown of the nuclear family and the moral decay of society, Jews are labeled as controlling the banks and the media, and other countries are blamed for taking our jobs. In the post-9/11 United States, Arabs and Muslims are presumed to be terrorists. The fears created by the corporate media provide the rationale for wars that funnel money to corporations and their wealthy stockholders, while poor and working-class American soldiers' families hold bake sales to pay for body armor, and spending on social programs is slashed.

Public policy debates center around fighting terrorism, criminalizing undocumented immigrants, welfare reform, or getting tough on crime, whereas proposals to increase capital gains taxes, make child health programs universal, ensure access to higher education, increase estate taxes on multimillion-dollar inheritances, or raise the top income tax bracket back to previous levels seldom enter the public debate.

The terms of public debate are set in large part by a small number of major media outlets, whose corporate owners and major advertisers have a vested interest in promoting policies favorable for corporate profits. The true beneficiaries of the redistribution of wealth are rarely visible or acknowledged (Collins & Yeskel, 2005; Pizzigati, 2004). Just as the beneficiaries remain hidden, so too does the existence of poverty and racial divides, except for rare moments such as the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. However, as with Katrina, public acknowledgment of extreme inequality quickly fades from view.

As global citizens and voters, the participants in our social justice classes will find themselves needing to make judgments about proposals for political and economic change that differentially affect various groups in our society and abroad. Understanding how social and economic class operates in the United States, as well as globally, is important for them to be able to participate in these debates in an informed way. Although not replacing macroeconomic and political science courses, this curriculum is designed to introduce participants to a framework for understanding the broad outlines of economic class structures, as well as dealing with social and cultural classism in the United States and considering steps toward a more equitable and respectful society.

Taboo about Class

In the United States, discussions involving issues of class and money are often more taboo than those involving sexuality. Deep-seated prohibitions about disclosing the facts of one's class identity are learned quite early in our lives. Most parents or caregivers do not tell children how much money they have or earn; if they do, children learn not to discuss these topics with others. Shame at being poorer or richer than others leads to secrecy and silence. This silence powerfully maintains the invisibility of class.

Differing Definitions of Class

Economists, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, and activists define *class*, *social class*, and *socioeconomic class* differently. For some sociologists, class is defined by *occupational* status: blue-collar, pink-collar, or white-collar, for example. For some economists, class is defined by *income* and *economic* strata, whereas for other economists, particularly Marxists and neo-Marxists, *ownership*, *power*, and *control* figure most prominently in defining class. These varying definitions can be confusing for participants who may be considering class for the first time.

Our working definition is that class is "a relative social ranking based on income, wealth, education, status, and/or power," indicators of class that tend to go together. If you have power, you tend to have wealth and status; if you have wealth, you typically have power and are given status; and so forth.

Participants may not have considered their own class identity prior to this course. When asked to do so, many conclude that they are more or less middle class. Even if some indicators would link participants with the working class or the owning class, most will tend to stress contradictory indicators that point instead to middle-class affiliation. For example, "Even though my parents had lots of investments, we lived in a small house and mowed our own lawn," or "We were always broke, but because my dad was a preacher, we got lots of respect from the community." Thus, we need to define class and classism, as well as discuss criteria for distinguishing different classes, before we can usefully examine this topic. We do this in the first module of the course.

Higher Education: The Access Channel

Education is the class-sorting mechanism or access channel, setting up future vocational opportunities and thus income. Ostensibly, the sorting is by merit, but in fact it is heavily influenced by class background (see Brantlinger, 2003). Students arrive at college with beliefs about why they and their fellow students were admitted that are tinged with classism. Questioning the fairness of the system of sorting can feel personally threatening to some students, who may be invested in their self-image as smarter than others who didn't gain admission to the same type of school. Deconstructing test scores, the educational tracking system, the "halo" effect, the impact of role models and access to information, and legacy and other class-based admission policies, not to mention the cost of college and financial aid policies, could be a course in itself.

Hidden History of Classism and Resistance to Classism

History is typically taught from the perspective of the privileged. Much of what we learn in public school, for example, is told from the perspective of political and military leaders and other famous personages who usually are members of the upper classes. The

perceptions and realities of everyday working people are less commonly explored. For example, industrialization is typically taught as a positive transformation of society. From the perspective of the average worker at the time, the era brought loss of control over working conditions when factories and assembly lines replaced craft guilds. The economic "progress" of industrial development looks quite different from the perspective of slaves, indentured servants, and impoverished immigrants, whose perspectives are usually invisible in our history books (Jones, 1998; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1980/1995). Currently, increased productivity to make the United States "more competitive" is widely accepted as a positive goal, despite the fact that "productivity" is often a code word for replacing jobs with machines and thus displacing workers.

The history of resistance to classism also remains largely invisible. Strikes, boycotts, slowdowns, and labor organizing are all tactics that workers have used to fight class oppression (Zinn, 1995). The labor movement used New Deal labor laws to organize many industries, reaching a 35% unionization rate by 1954. But as of 2005, only 12% of workers were in unions, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006). Currently, the role of the media cannot be emphasized enough. The increased concentration of corporate media ownership by a few elites ensures that the information to which most of us have access is biased in favor of the media owners (Bagdikian, 2004; McChesney, 2004) or those in the upper classes. It is difficult to get multiple perspectives, especially those of the people on the receiving end of classism as systemic inequality.

Conflation of Democracy and Capitalism

During the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union from the 1950s to the 1980s, capitalism and communism became polarized. Capitalism was equated with democracy, whereas communism, by comparison, was equated with undemocratic and totalitarian political systems. Whenever the capitalist economic system in the United States has been challenged, the challenge has been framed as an attack on the political system of democracy. Raising issues of class inequality is often labeled as *antidemocratic, class warfare, communist, red,* or *unpatriotic,* with the effect of marginalizing or silencing criticism of the economic structure. This conflation of democracy and capitalism confuses political and economic critique, so that challenges to the economic order are cast as opposing democracy in favor of communism, thus preventing consideration of alternative economic policies and structures. The psychological investment most Americans have in the American Dream makes it difficult to challenge the problems of advanced capitalism and address these issues clearly.

In fact, true democracy in the United States is limited by the extraordinary influence of large multinational corporations and wealthy donors over our political process. Unfortunately, the influence of this concentrated economic power isn't understood by most Americans (Collins & Yeskel, 2005; Kivel, 2004; Pizzagati, 2004).

Economic Mystification

Issues of class may be less familiar than other issues of oppression partly due to secrecy about the personal aspects of class identity and the confusion surrounding the societal aspects. Participants who are unfamiliar with even the economic basics (the difference between income and wealth or between salary and wages, or the meaning of terms like *gross national product* [GNP]) often feel overwhelmed while studying social class. Math anxiety and math phobia also contribute to a feeling of disempowerment toward or distrust of statistical information that documents class issues. Print resources that

explain economic concepts in clear understandable language (such as Collins and Yeskel 2005; Anderson & Cavanagh 2005; Teller-Elsberg, Folbre, Heintz & the Center for Popular Economics 2006 and the other print and video resources listed in Appendix 13M), can be useful in demystifiying classism.

Hopelessness and Helplessness

Interrupting classist slurs, changing classist language, and changing consumer behavior seem insignificant in comparison to the immensity and complexity of the problem. The need to work against classism on a systemic level is overwhelmingly evident, yet what to do is contested. This can lead to an enormous sense of helplessness, based on several factors: the seemingly intractable imbalances in the distribution of wealth, economic power's influence on political power, the complexities of economic theory, and the contradictory explanations of experts.

The fact that class inequality is getting worse rather than better, and the lack of a major visible economic alternative, can lead to overpowering hopelessness. The linchpin of the hopelessness is the limited scope of the organized social movement against classism. Meanwhile, other social movements have made visible progress over the last 50 years, starting with African American civil rights, women's liberation, and more recently lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender liberation and disability rights movements. If participants are unaware of organized efforts for economic justice, they may feel that classism is a fact of life, hopelessly entrenched and unchangeable, or a result of innate human nature or laws of the marketplace. However, recent successes in organizing service workers (including recent immigrants) and in the living wage campaign show promise of creating such a movement. The campus living wage movement and Students Against Sweatshops may be part of this upsurge in economic justice organizing that is most visible to students.

Because classism operates at many levels, an antidote to hopelessness is to focus on personal and organizational manifestations, about which participants can take action. Speaking up when classist jokes and comments are made, developing class-sensitive payment systems, and appreciating the range of skills necessary to get something done are all ways participants can take action about classism in their lives. Taking action is a good cure for hopelessness.

Overall Issues for Facilitators

Classism is a huge topic ranging from daily experiences to the workings of global macroeconomic structures. The following modules represent an introduction to the topic of classism. Because of time constraints, we have focused on the experience of classism in the United States. We want to acknowledge that participants who are immigrants to the United States will have different experiences with classism based on their class standing in their country of origin, on whether or not their class standing changed in immigrating to the United States, and on their country of origin and its relative status (northern European countries like England or Scandinavian countries are viewed more favorably than Latin American or African countries due to racism).

Discussions of classism can often be challenging. For one, it is hard to name class identity. There is often confusion over, and may be differences between, class origins and current class standing. Participants' deficits in economic literacy result in confusion over the difference between income and wealth, and the political system (democracy) and the economic system (capitalism). There is a strong attachment to beliefs about meritocracy that is supported by anecdotes—everyone knows someone who made it against the odds. In an

experiential teaching situation, this makes it difficult to intervene. Participants will wonder about the vision of changing the system—do we get rid of classism by getting rid of class? Does class only occur in capitalist systems? This may be a recurrent issue that you can't fully explore in this curriculum, but you can invite participants to follow up in other courses.

Therefore, it is especially important for the facilitator to develop her or his own understanding about classism. It is also necessary to prepare participants for the challenge of being respectful of individual experience while placing personal stories in the larger context of systemic classism. Facilitators should be calm and nondefensive, reminding the group of the discussion guidelines as necessary. For many participants, this will be a first exploration of class, and more time may need to be allocated to the first three modules before participants will be able to move to action.

Classism Curriculum Design

Overall Goals

- Begin to explore the impact of class on our personal lives, institutions, and culture.
- Develop an understanding of basic concepts about class and classism.
- Understand the systemic dynamics of classism.
- Understand the intersections between classism and other forms of oppression.

Overview of Modules

Note to readers: The curriculum design in this chapter is based on the assumption that participants have completed the introductory module(s) described in Chapter 3 prior to beginning this design and have a basic understanding of the conceptual framework of oppression described in Chapter 3. See Table 13.1 for an overview of this chapter's modules.

Table 13.1 Overview of Modules: Classism

Module 1: Defining Class (4 hours, 10 minutes)	Module 2: Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Classism (3.15 hours)
1. Welcome and Introduction (10 min.) 2. Common Ground, Part 1 (20 min.) 3. Assumptions, Guidelines, and Agenda (20 min.) 4. First Memories and Class Indicators (40 min.) Break (15 min) 5. Class Background Inventory (50 min.) 6. Common Ground, Part II (15 min.) 7. Class Caucuses and Whole-Group Sharing (50 min.) 8. Key Definitions (30 min.)	1. Individual, Cultural, and Institutional Classism (50 min.) 2. Brainstorm Stereotypes (20 min.) Break (15 minutes) 3. First-Person Accounts of Diverse Class Experiences (70 min.) 4. Income Distribution Activity (20 min.) 5. Wealth Distribution Activity (30 min.) 6. Closing, Homework, Wrap-Up, and Feedback (20 min.)
Module 3: Manifestations of Classism (3 hours, 10 minutes)	**Module 4: Action Against Classism (3 hours, 20 minutes)**
1. Cultural Classism (30 min.) 2. Institutional Classism (165 min. incl. break) 3. Closing (10 min.)	1. History of Classism and Anticlassism in the United States (45 min.) 2. Acting as Allies (30 min.) Break (15 min) 3. Classism in Your School (60 min.) 4. Actions Against Classism (45 min.) 5. Closing Circle: Personal Next Steps and Evaluation (20 min.)

Module 1: Defining Class

Time needed: 3 hours, 55 minutes

Objectives

- Create a safe environment in which participants can discuss difficult issues.
- Reflect on class experience, and name class of origin.
- Understand working definitions and basic concepts about class and classism.

Key concepts: class indicators, social class, ruling class, owning class, middle class, working class, poverty class, classism, class continuum, cultural capital, class privilege

1. Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)

Welcome participants to the course, introduce yourselves, and tell a bit about your background and experience with the issue of classism. Then ask participants to introduce themselves and state one reason they are taking this course.

2. Common Ground, Part I (20 minutes)

In order to help people begin to know one another, ask participants to stand in a circle. Explain that you will name a series of categories and those who fit the category should take a step into the center of the circle, look around, and note who else shares this common ground. Start with low-risk categories, such as "common ground for everyone who ..."

- got 5 or less hours of sleep last night.
- would rather be asleep now.
- is an oldest (youngest, middle, only, twin) child.
- grew up in a city (rural area, small town, suburbs).
- is first-generation American (a citizen of another country, grew up outside of the United States).

Make up other categories as you go, and invite participants to suggest categories. You may also want to include questions that will give you as the instructor some sense of participants' understanding of and/or comfort with economics, such as:

- who has ever taken a course on economics.
- whose eyes glaze over when reading a chart or talking about statistics.

3. Assumptions, Guidelines, and Agenda (20 minutes)

Print the goals listed at the beginning of this design on newsprint, and discuss them in light of the assumptions discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Review guidelines with the group. These can be brainstormed together, or you can post a list from those outlined in Chapter 3. Post the agenda on newsprint, and review it in a general way, highlighting major items.

4. First Memories and Class Indicators (40 minutes)

Ask participants to pair up and take turns listening and responding to the following questions:

- What is the first memory you have of someone you thought was of a more privileged or "higher" class than you? Why did you think so?
- What is the first memory you have of someone you thought was of a less privileged/"lower" class than you? Why did you think so?

First, one person will speak while the other listens; after 5 minutes, ask participants to switch speaker/listener roles. Then reconvene the group and ask for volunteers to share the memories they discussed in order to elicit a variety of examples. In particular, note factors that indicate different class positions, and write these on newsprint. The list should include indicators such as income, education, housing, occupation, need to work, neighborhood, language (accent, vocabulary, grammar), assets or wealth, appearance (dress, condition of teeth, posture), possessions (computers, TV, DVD/VCR, cell phones, iPods, types of cars), and leisure (types of activities, hobbies, travel).

Facilitation Issues

Pay particular attention to nonmaterial examples of class privilege such as forms of knowledge, skills, values, expectations, and so on that are types of "cultural capital." It is often more difficult for participants to notice these types of class indicators than the material ones. You may also notice that there are examples of contradictory class indicators, such as someone who has a well-paying job but very little education. This is one of the reasons class is so complex and confusing.

5. Class Background Inventory (50 minutes)

Pass out the class background inventory (Appendix 13A). If you are co-facilitating, model interviewing each other while participants observe, using the inventory as a guide. (If you are teaching alone, you can play both roles—asking, then answering the question.) Ask each participant to note his or her own responses to the inventory, then pair up and take turns interviewing each other as the facilitator(s) did. After 5 minutes, tell them it's time to switch. Next, ask each pair to join another pair, creating small groups of four. Ask each person in the group to briefly share a few items from his or her background, still using the inventory as a guide.

Ask participants to take a 5 × 8½-inch index card and, based on the activities, write a short description of their class of origin. They will not be asked to share these cards but will periodically review them to add to what they've written. The card will serve as a record of their learning about their class identity as the course proceeds.

Facilitation Issues

Facilitators should be able to provide information and model comfort and awareness in discussing their own class background(s) during this activity. Often, people at either end of the class spectrum experience feelings of shame. The more matter of fact the facilitator(s) can be about their own class of origin, the more at ease participants will be. Especially when co-facilitators are from different class backgrounds, this activity will help participants feel more at ease in sharing their stories. Encourage participants to jot a few notes rather than extensive responses to the inventory. If participants report confusion, or if their class situation changed as they were growing up, suggest that they focus on formative childhood experiences.

At times, participants' current class position is different than their class of origin or class background. We think it is still important to spend time focusing on class background. Many of our formative experiences happen in childhood. Although material situations may change later, many times our values, assumptions, expectations, and sense of place in the world stem from our childhood class experience. Sometimes, the lessons of our class of origin, our class culture, linger even though our class changes.

6. Common Ground, Part II (15 minutes)

Ask the group to stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, with one facilitator in the middle. Reintroduce the activity, this time asking people to step into the circle when the class category fits. "Common ground for anyone ..."

- who grew up in rented apartments
- who has owned a house
- whose family owns a summer home or other second house
- who has a credit card their parents pay for
- who has traveled internationally
- who is on a scholarship
- who has worked at a fast-food restaurant
- who has a trust fund or owns stocks and bonds in your name
- who shared a bedroom as a child
- who has shopped with food stamps

You can ask members of the group to make other common-ground statements as long as whatever they say is true for them and relevant to the topic of class. This gives participants a chance to learn about others with similar experiences.

Process the Common Ground activity with the following questions, while still standing in the circle. Ask participants, "What feelings came up for you as you took part in the common-ground activity?" "Did anyone choose not to step into the circle even though the common ground item was true for you?" "What new information does this give you about your own class background?"

7. Class Caucuses and Whole-Group Sharing (50 minutes)

This activity gives participants an opportunity to spend time with others who have similar class backgrounds, and to notice what similarities and differences might exist among class caucuses. Following are suggestions of ways to help participants form caucus groups.

Ask participants to pay attention to which people they saw most often in the "Common Ground: Part II" activity and join them. Once they are together in a small group, you might ask them to give their group a class name. (Other options for breaking into class caucuses are included in the supplemental materials on the CD; see Appendix 13B.)

Once participants form class caucuses, ask them to select a note taker who will report back to the whole group. Give them 30 minutes to focus on the following questions:

1. What positive (knowledge, skills, community support networks) did you gain from your class of origin? What was good about your class experience growing up? What did you gain from it?
2. What was challenging about your class experience growing up? What was limiting about it?
3. What do you not want others to say, do, or think about your group?
4. How did race, ethnicity, and/or immigration status impact your experience of class?

After 30 minutes, bring the whole group back together and give each group recorder 2 to 3 minutes to report back to the whole group on their group's responses to the questions. Ask which group would like to go first, and take each group in turn until all have shared with the whole group.

Facilitation Issues

It is often difficult for class groups to form because participants are often confused on the subject. Encourage people to do their best, and tell them that they may later learn they are in a different group. You may also want to model naming your own group and sharing your responses to the questions. Tell participants that there are no hard-and-fast lines about class definitions and class identity. The process of coming to understand one's class identity (either background or current) may be one of trial and error.

8. Key Definitions (30 minutes)

Using newsprint or overhead transparencies, present the definitions of general concepts for classism in Appendix 13C and give examples. If necessary, review definitions of *oppression, prejudice, social power, stereotype, advantaged* and *targeted*, and *ally* (Chapter 3) before presenting and discussing the definitions.

Because our definition of class involves the concepts of income, wealth, education, occupational status, and power, make sure that participants understand these concepts. *Income* is the amount of money, from all sources, that comes into your household (could be a family or one person) in a 1-year period. *Wealth* is the same as assets, the amount that you have accumulated over time. *Education* refers to the highest level of educational attainment. Every job or *occupation* can be categorized according to where it fits in the status or prestige hierarchy of professions. There are a variety of scales or measures. *Power* can refer to the amount of control someone has at work or the amount of social and political influence they have in the wider society.

Ask participants to reflect on the definitions and consider what they might add or change in the description they wrote on their card earlier concerning their own class background. They can add changes to their card, but should not cross out anything written before, so as to keep a record of their evolving understanding of class as the course proceeds.

Facilitation Issues

People are often reluctant to acknowledge the existence of classism, so it is important to start with participants' lived experience and with indisputable facts such as U.S. Census data rather than theories and definitions. Be aware of the political and ideological issues surrounding class and classism, and try to steer clear of ideological arguments. Share theories, definitions, and models as useful concepts and working models rather than as the truth. Acknowledge the diversity of thought on this subject, and explain your rationale for choices you've made, rather than argue for a single correct framing of the issue.

Participants may be more comfortable focusing on race and educational attainment rather than explicitly talking about class. Facilitators will need to keep the focus on class without denying its interconnections to race and ethnicity, education, or other factors. Either/or debates on which is the real underlying issue are not useful; instead, provide participants with language and ideas that can increase the complexity of their understanding.

Module 2: Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Classism

Time needed: 3.5 hours

Objectives

- Reflect on where participants' personal class experiences fit into the class spectrum in the United States.
- Increase awareness and understanding of individual, institutional, and cultural manifestations of classism in the United States.
- Learn about and understand the experiences of people from other class backgrounds.

Key concepts: income quintiles, stereotypes, internalized oppression, class continuum, individual classism, institutional classism, cultural classism

1. Individual, Cultural, and Institutional Classism (50 minutes)

Explain that so far we have been primarily focusing on the individual or personal level of class and classism and that we will continue to do so by looking at stereotypes and hearing first-person accounts. Briefly introduce the concepts of individual, institutional, and cultural classism (see Appendix 13D).

Ask the group to brainstorm a few examples of each type of classism, and be prepared with examples of your own. (For examples, see Appendix 13E.) Ask participants to form groups of four and come up with additional examples of individual, institutional, and cultural classism. Give them three different colored self-stick notes. Ask participants to write all their examples of individual classism on one color, using another color for institutional examples, and a third for cultural examples.

Processing

After 10 minutes, bring the group back together to share examples and clarify distinctions among the different levels. Post newsprint for each level (individual, institutional, and cultural) on the wall. Ask each group to come up, and post and read out one example of each manifestation. Continue until all of the manifestations are posted. Discuss any disagreements or confusion about how an example was categorized. Poll the group about the type of manifestation that was easiest or most difficult to come up with. Discuss why that might be so. Then, move to a discussion of class stereotypes.

2. Brainstorm Stereotypes (20 minutes)

Have several sheets of newsprint posted on the wall ahead of time. At the top of each sheet, write one of the following: "Owning class," "Middle class," "Working class," and "Poor." Break the class into four small groups. Ask each group to gather next to one of the sheets; brainstorm as many images, words, or stereotypes as possible for their particular class group; and then record the stereotypes on the newsprint. Remind them to list all ideas that come to mind even if they are negative or false. Finally, ask one person from each group to share the group's list. Common examples are as follows:

- *Owning class*: effete snobs, incapable of anything physical, condescending, greedy, cultured
- *Middle class*: normal, regular, boring, wannabes, stodgy
- *Working class*: tacky, blue collar, bigoted, stupid, bad taste
- *Poor people*: trailer trash, irresponsible, can't delay gratification, lazy, stupid, disorganized, criminals

After each group has shared its list, ask for any additions. Then process the activity; first ask which of the stereotypes seems to hold some truth. For each of these, ask

for any historical or structural underpinnings of the stereotype. Also, ask for examples of information they now have that contradicts or challenges any of the stereotypes listed.

3. First-Person Accounts of Diverse Class Experiences (70 minutes)

The purpose of this activity is to help participants learn about and understand the experiences of people from different classes and clarify their own class experiences. In some locations, it may be possible to organize a panel that includes people from diverse classes, or a fishbowl with participants that is representative of class diversity, whereas in other locations that are more homogeneous you will need to rely on other sources of information. It is often most powerful for participants to meet real people who have different class experiences from their own, but if this is too difficult to arrange, these other options provide exposure to a variety of class experiences. Two additional options are provided on the CD (see Appendix 13F).

Panel of People From Diverse Classes

Ideally, the panel should include at least one person each raised as owning class and poor, and one or two others in between, such as working class and upper-middle class. To find an owning-class speaker, contact a local community foundation (call the Funding Exchange in New York City for local foundation names) and ask them to suggest one of their donors. To find raised-poor and working-class speakers, contact local antipoverty groups such as tenant groups, welfare rights groups, service workers' unions, or community action agencies, and ask for low-income speakers. Offer to pay for expenses such as transportation and child care, and an honorarium if possible. To find middle-class, lower-middle, and upper-middle speakers who are aware of classism may be harder. Try asking professors in sociology or social work departments, or call unions of professionals or semiprofessionals, such as nurses' or teachers' associations. Give the questions to the panelists ahead of time. (Directions for setting up panels are provided in Chapters 8 and 12.)

Questions for panel may include the following:

1. What have you gained from your class background? What advantages did you receive?
2. What has been difficult about your class background? What limitations did you experience?
3. Provide examples of memories/critical incidents in your awareness of your class.
4. What do you want others to know about people of your class?
5. How can others be your ally? How have you been an ally for others?
6. What strategies do you see for taking action against classism?

Once panelists have spoken and participants have had an opportunity to ask questions, thank the panel members for their participation and allow them to leave. Then, hold a discussion among participants using the following questions:

- What feelings did you have while you listened to the different panelists?
- How did the speakers challenge stereotypes we listed earlier?
- What similarities and differences of experience did you notice among the panelists?
- In what ways was classism manifested in the different panelists' experiences?

4. Income Distribution Activity (20 minutes)

Begin the activity* by posting a copy of the income distribution chart in Appendix 13G (cover it with newsprint until you are ready to reveal it) and the following definition: *Income Quintiles*: A method of comparing mean incomes of each one fifth of a country's families. If every family in the United States were lined up in order of income, and then divided into five groups with the same number of families in each group, and the incomes within the groups were averaged, the five resulting numbers could be compared as *income quintiles*for a measure of income inequality.

You can tell participants that this activity compares income distribution in two recent periods of economic growth in the United States, to demonstrate the growth and decline of incomes in these two periods. Ask five volunteer participants to come and stand in the front of the room. (For this activity to work well, volunteers need plenty of space to move forward and a little space to move back.)

Props

It is helpful to make 8½" × 11" placards for each volunteer to hold, identifying the quintiles and showing the income range. Explain what is on the placards, and prepare them in advance (e.g., each placard will have one quintile, such as "Bottom 20%," with the income range for that quintile). Participants holding the placards will move to demonstrate changes in income growth during different periods.

Instructions

1. State that you are going to look at the changes in *family* income during two recent periods of economic growth. Ask, "What are some examples of income?" Possible answers include wages, salary, savings account interest, social security checks, rent from owning real estate, capital gains from selling investments, dividends from stocks, and gifts. Ask the five volunteers to stand shoulder to shoulder. Give each volunteer a placard showing the income range—in pretax, year 2003 dollars—of the quintile they represent.
2. Review the definition of *income quintile* on wall chart. Economists often talk about the U.S. population in terms of "quintiles" or "fifths" of the population. They imagine the entire population of the United States lined up in order, from the lowest income to the highest. They then divide that line into five equal parts. This activity looks at what happened to the incomes of each quintile during two periods of economic growth: 1947–1979 and 1979–2003. Let's look at some of the folks who are in these quintiles. Ask participants to name what sorts of occupations or economic situations they imagine fall into each quintile. Remember, this is *family* income. (A family is two or more related individuals living together.)
3. The following demonstration may seem like the childhood game "Mother May I" (also known as "Giant Steps"). Each volunteer, representing a quintile or fifth of the U.S. population, will step forward or back according to whether their income gained or declined. Each step equals a 10% change, so, for example, two steps forward would indicate an income gain of 20%. Start with the lowest quintile, and have each person move the appropriate number of steps forward.

* This activity was developed by United for a Fair Economy, 29 Winter St., Boston, MA 02108, (617) 423-2148, www.FairEconomy.org.

Table 13.2 Percentage Change in Income Quintiles, 1979–2003

Quintile	Steps	Percent Change	Yearly Income Range (2001) (family income before tax)
Lowest	1/4 step back	–2%	$0–24,117
Second	3/4 step forward	+8%	$24,117–42,057
Middle	11/2 steps forward	+15%	$42,057–65,000
Fourth	21/2 steps forward	+26%	$65,000–98,200
Highest	5 steps forward	+51%	$98,200 and higher

Note: Income ranges in 2003 dollars.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2004).

4. Between 1979 and 2003, here's what happened (see Table 13.2). Facilitators read from Table 13.2, while participants representing each quintile step backward or forward, as instructed by facilitator.
5. Tell the group you are now going to see what happens when we break down that top quintile even further and look at only the richest 5% of the population. Ask another volunteer to come forward to represent the top 5%—people with incomes of $170,082 and higher. From 1979 to 2003, the income of this group grew 75%. From the spot where the top quintile is standing, the sixth volunteer takes two and a half additional steps forward—seven and a half steps in total from the starting line.

   Top 5% 21/2 additional steps forward +75% $170,082 and higher

6. Processing: Ask participants what might have caused this widening income inequality. Some things to share:
   - From 1979 to 2003, there was much growth in income, but the distribution of that growth was very uneven. Although the top 20% as a whole did well, the ones who really made out were the top 5%. Some reasons for this skew of income from 1979 to 2003:
   - At the top, the biggest income growth source was income from assets (rental income; earnings from stocks, bonds, and other investments; and capital gains from sales of property and investments). Because asset ownership is heavily concentrated in the wealthiest 20%, it is not surprising that that's where the gains went.
   - There was explosive growth in CEO salaries.
   - At the bottom, the real value of the minimum wage has been allowed to fall since the 1980s.
   - A weakened labor movement was less able to prop up the wages of workers at the bottom of the scale.
7. Next, demonstrate what happened to the quintiles during the post-World War II years 1947–1979. Ask all volunteers to go back to the starting line. Ask the group how well they think the bottom quintile fared, or the top 5%. (See Table 13.3.) Facilitators read out the quintiles from Table 13.3, and participants step forward as directed by the facilitator.
8. Processing: Ask the group: What strikes you about these two periods in history? What are the reasons for the difference? How did women and people of color fare during these two economic periods? Some things to share include the following:
   - From 1947 to 1979, incomes for each quintile as a whole—from top to bottom—basically doubled. In fact, the greatest increase was experienced by

Table 13.3 Percentage Change in Income Quintiles, 1947–1979

Quintile	Steps	Percent Change
Lowest	12 steps forward	+116%
Second	10 steps forward	+100%
Middle	11 steps forward	+111%
Fourth	11½ steps forward	+114%
Highest	10 steps forward	+99%
Top 5%	8½ steps forward	+86%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000).

the bottom 20%, and the smallest increase was experienced by the top 5%. In other words, the divide between top and bottom in the United States actually narrowed slightly during this period.

- However, although the rate of income growth during this period was generally the same for everyone within each quintile, the significant gap between the incomes of African Americans and white Americans remained wide.
- The point is not to glorify the 1950s but to point out that we achieved greater income equity across the quintiles, thanks to the positive impact of social programs from the 1950s through the 1970s.
- The period from 1947 to 1979 demonstrates that the great disparity in the distribution of income growth, as happened from 1979 to 2003, is not inevitable. Rather, it is, in part, the result of deliberate government policies.
- The goal of the government during the early postwar period was to build a middle class. Programs such as the GI Bill—which allowed hundreds of thousands of returned veterans to go to college and purchase homes—were funded by relatively high taxes on the wealthy (the top tax rate was 91%). It is important to acknowledge that these programs disproportionably favored white men. For example, the VA and FHA loan programs for housing, both of which utilized racially restrictive underwriting criteria, assured that hardly any of the $120 billion in housing equity loaned from the late 1940s to the early 1960s would go to veterans and families of color. These loans helped finance over half of all suburban housing construction in the country during this period, less than 2% of which ended up being lived in by people of color.

5. Wealth Distribution Activity (30 minutes)

Preparation:* Set up 10 chairs without armrests in front of the room.

1. Define wealth: One way to explain the difference between wealth and income is to think of income as the stream and wealth as the reservoir into which the stream empties. Wealth is what a person owns (assets), minus what they owe (debts). Ask participants to brainstorm examples of wealth. For people on the lower end of the continuum, wealth consists of things such as clothing, furniture, or a car (minus money owed). For those in the middle, it may be a house (minus mortgage) or a stake in a pension fund. For people on the upper end of the continuum, wealth consists of stocks, bonds, real estate, businesses, and artwork.

* This activity was developed by United for a Fair Economy, 29 Winter St., Boston, MA 02108, (617) 423-2148, *www.FairEconomy.org*.

2. To illustrate how wealth is distributed in this country, ask 10 volunteers to sit in each of the 10 chairs. Note that in this demonstration, *each person* represents one 10th of the U.S. *population*, and *each chair* represents one tenth of all the *private wealth* in the United States. (Try to select a person for the top 10% who is a bit of a ham.) Point out that if wealth were evenly distributed, this is what it would look like—*one person, one chair.* Make the point that this picture of equal wealth distribution has never existed and likely never will exist.
3. Currently (the most up-to-date data we have are for 2004), the top 10% (who average $831,600 in net worth) owns 70% of all private wealth, according to the Federal Reserve. The volunteer representing the top 10% takes over seven chairs, "evicting" the current occupants and making her or himself comfortable on this 7-chair expanded share of the wealth pie. The rest of the volunteers (representing 90% of the U.S. population) must now figure out how to share three chairs (or about 30% of the wealth pie).
4. Even within the top 10%, there is great disparity—a disparity that has increased significantly over the last 25 years. In 1976, the share of the top 1% was 22% (about two chairs). But by 2004, their share had increased to 33.4% of all wealth (more than three chairs)! That's a bigger piece of the wealth pie than the bottom 90% have combined! *To illustrate this, let the leg of the volunteer representing the top 10% represent the wealthiest 1% of the households, reaching across first two and then three chairs, "evicting" the rest of the person's body.*

Facilitation Issues

It sometimes may require encouragement to get people to really get into this activity. Groups less familiar with one another will cluster sitting and standing around the chairs. Encourage folks to sit on each others' laps and the person representing the top 10% to sprawl across his or her chairs. In the discussion afterwards, make sure you ask participants to name the common themes in responses about the reasons for these distributions, rather than asserting their own individual opinions.

Discussion to process this activity:

Ask the volunteers in the chairs:

- How are you feeling in the bottom 90%? Whom do you blame for being squished?
- How are you feeling at the top? How do you explain your greater amount of space?
- If you were going to push someone off the chairs to make room, who would it be?
- Where is the focus of public policy discussions—looking up the chairs at the top 10% or looking down the chairs at the people squished at the bottom?
- What information here on these chairs seems to contradict your prior assumptions about class?

Thank the volunteers, and ask the viewers to give them a round of applause. Then, post a copy of the Wealth Distribution Chart (Appendix 13H). Ask participants to pair up and discuss their reactions (thoughts, feelings, questions) with a partner. Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you feel when you saw the 10-chair activity?
- Is the distribution of wealth illustrated by the 10 chairs obvious in your life? In the media?
- What are some of the rationales people give for wealth being distributed the way it is?
- What questions did this demonstration bring up for you?

After 10 minutes, bring the group back together, ask for general reactions, and respond to questions. In closing, ask participants to revisit their card and consider how they would change their class description based on any of this new information.

6. Closing, Homework, Wrap-Up, and Feedback (20 minutes)

Review the definition of cultural classism, and assign for homework to look in the popular media (magazines, TV, radio, and newspapers) and find examples of cultural classism. Ask participants to think about the hidden messages or ideology contained in their examples in preparation for Module 3.

As a wrap-up to Module 2, ask participants to pull out the index card on which they described their social class at the end of Module 1, turn to their neighbor, and discuss: How would you change your self-description now? How do you feel about what's written there? Participants can make additions on the card to reflect any new thinking, but should not change what was written there earlier.

Module 3: Manifestations of Classism

Time needed: 3 hours, 10 minutes

Objectives

- Deepen participants' knowledge and understanding of the experiences of people of class backgrounds other than their own.
- Increase awareness and understanding of how a class-stratified system works and the power dynamics involved.
- Increase awareness and understanding of individual, institutional, and cultural manifestations of classism in the United States.

Key concepts: power, privilege, collusion

1. Cultural Classism (30 minutes)

Ask participants to form groups of four or five and share the examples of cultural classism they found for the homework assignment. Ask them to consider the following questions (15 minutes):

1. Is this example classist?
2. What messages does it give to people of different classes?
3. Does it reinforce stereotypes?
4. What values does it hold up as better or normative?

Next, ask each group to choose two clear examples to share with the whole group, noting the hidden (or not so hidden) messages conveyed. Make a list of these messages as each group reports. Discuss how the media communicate and enforce our culture's ideology about class.

2. Institutional Classism (150 minutes)

Star Power Simulation

Star Power is a simulation game that illustrates the dynamics of power and privilege. The specific rules for playing the game are detailed in the instructor's manual that accompanies the game. *Star Power* may be ordered for $225 from Simulation Training Systems, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, CA 92014, (800) 942-2900, (858) 755-0272, Fax: (858) 792-9743. The game cannot be played without the instructor's manual and simulation materials. (If you do not choose to use *Star Power*, see Appendix 13I for alternative activities on Institutional Classism.)

To prepare for this activity, ask participants to put chairs in three equal-sized circles, and invite everyone to take a seat in one of the circles. Tell them that *Star Power* is a game of trading and that the three individuals with the highest score at the end of the game will be declared the winners. Note that winners will receive a prize. (The prize can be anything that is divisible, such as a cake or other treat.) Go over the "Trading Rules" and "Scoring" sections detailed in the *Star Power* instructor's manual. Let participants know that the facilitators will be taking on specific roles for the duration of the simulation. Facilitators might even want to have a costume (or hat) to help participants differentiate between the facilitator and the "director" role she or he takes within the game. The rules can be confusing, so make sure before starting that the rules are clear. Let participants know that you will enforce the rules.

Play the actual game according to the rules for at least 1 hour. At the end of the time allotted, stop the game. Participants may still be immersed in the game, so ask them to remove their symbols and consciously get out of their roles. Make a display of taking off your costume and getting out of your role as well. Take a short break, and then regroup to talk about responses to the game.

Facilitation Issues

It is sometimes hard to help participants let go of the simulation. You might want to do something physical for a few minutes, such as stretch and walk around, to help participants mentally remove themselves from the simulation. You should be aware that participants frequently get angry at the "director" in the game (usually the facilitator) for rigging the game, and you need to be prepared for that.

Processing

Participants typically have very strong reactions to the *Star Power* simulation. Ask participants to pair up with someone for 5 minutes and talk about their reactions to the game with their partner. You might ask them the following questions:

- How did you feel when you first got your chips?
- How did you feel after each of the rounds?
- What did you feel and think when the "Squares" got the right to make the rules for the game?
- Did anything about your behavior surprise you? Someone else's behavior?

Then ask participants to come back together and discuss their experiences in the simulation with the whole group. Start with asking about how they felt at different points in the game and how they are feeling now. This will often involve discussing what happened in the game, who did what to whom, and how it felt to those involved. You may need to draw out particular people or groups; for instance, if only "Squares" are talking, invite the "Circles" or "Triangles" to join in. If one member of a group

says something, such as "I realized after the first round that the rules were stacked," focus on this issue. Ask the other groups if and at what point they also realized it. Sometimes, "Squares" will be the most clueless about what happened, and others will want to tease them. Often, members of the "Squares" group will be defensive. Emphasize that one's *role* in the game often determines one's feelings, perceptions, and understanding.

Often, the facilitators will observe interactions that participants do not see. Share your perceptions also. Make sure people also process their feelings about the "director." Sometimes, people have the most intense feelings about this role. Discussing this can be a challenge if the facilitator is the same as the "director" in the game, because people may still act out toward the "director." If possible, let another person facilitate the processing so that feelings about the "director" can be aired freely.

When it seems that most issues have been aired and discussed, move the discussion to parallels between the game and the "real world." Help participants discuss similarities and differences. Encourage them to look at all levels—personal, institutional, and cultural. Go over the definitions of *power, class privilege*, and *collusion*, and consider how these were manifested in the game and in the "real world."

Facilitation Issues

This segment completes the transition from individual experience to society-wide systems; if participants fail to make this transition, they will gain little from the remaining focus of the course. At no time is the possibility of going off-track into particular policy debates or tangential issues stronger than during the discussion of institutionalized classism. However, the sheer number of examples presented in the initial presentation and exercise should keep most participants from the misconception that the facilitators are equating classism with advocating a particular solution. Make sure you have a number of examples of each type of institutional classism, similar to the examples given above. Facilitators should point out the recurring themes in the examples and repeatedly restate the definition of institutional classism.

3. Closing (10 minutes)

Ask participants to pair up and talk about one thing they learned from this session and one thing they want to learn more about in the next session. When the groups come back together, have five or six participants share their responses. Have everyone write the thing they learned and what they still want to learn on a piece of paper and hand it in.

Module 4: Action Against Classism

Time needed: 3 hours, 20 minutes

Objectives

- Identify examples of opposition to classism in U.S. history.
- Identify ways of taking action against classism in everyday life, and make commitments to individual next steps.
- Increase understanding of the roles and importance of allies and cross-class alliances.

Key concepts: allies, cross-class alliances, economic justice, labor movement

1. History of Classism and Anti-classism in the United States (45 minutes)

Use the sample outline in Appendix 13J to emphasize that this is a very abbreviated version of a much more complex story. Encourage participants to read books and articles from the readings suggested in Appendix 13M. Talk in a lively, dramatic, storytelling way, using handouts and visual aids. A useful visual is a simple timeline with decades marked at intervals posted on the wall, to which the presenter can point. Emphasize historical examples of resistance to class inequality.

Processing

Ask participants to pair up and share emotional responses, questions, and ideas. Ask them to take turns, and remind them when it's time to switch. Then, bring the whole group back together and facilitate a discussion using the following questions:

- What were your reactions to the history presentation?
- What themes or key ideas did you hear?
- What is still confusing or unclear?
- What aspects of this history have you heard before, and what, if anything, was new or surprising to you?
- Can you think of other social justice movements that connected with class movements? For example, sanitation workers striking in Memphis during the Civil Rights movement, the Poor People's Campaign, and women fighting for the right to vote.

Facilitation Issues

Because most undergraduates don't know much history, the facilitators should expect varied nonhistorical issues to come up. This is a likely point in the course for participants to express disagreements with the course material. Further resources from Appendix 13M can be made available for future study by participants, perhaps as a self-education action plan.

2. Acting as Allies (30 minutes)

Introduce the concept of an ally as someone who speaks up or takes action against oppression of people from other groups. Ask participants to think about one time they had an ally and a time they acted as an ally; then have them pair up and take turns sharing their examples. In the whole group, ask for examples that relate to classism. For example, in one course, a participant talked about interrupting a store clerk who was disrespectfully treating a customer using food stamps. If necessary, share one or two of your own examples to prime the pump. Ideally, at least one interpersonal example (such as interrupting a "dumb hillbilly" joke) and at least one institutional example (such as not sending kids to private schools but working to make the public schools better) can be shared by participants or facilitators.

On a blank piece of newsprint or a chalkboard, write "Qualities of an Ally." Ask participants to draw out characteristics of an ally from the examples in their own pairs and in the whole group, then to think of others. Finally, give participants copies of the handout "Acting as an Ally" (Appendix 13K).

3. Classism in Your School (60 minutes)

Tell participants that we will be coming up with examples of how classism is manifested in their school so that we can later talk about taking action for change. Ask participants to brainstorm examples of classism they have observed at their school or college. Ask

them, "What was a situation in which you wanted to be an ally or needed an ally against classism?" As they speak, write key words on newsprint or chalkboard. Allow clarifying questions and brief reactions, but enforce the rules of brainstorming (no discussions about what happened, whether it was really classist, who was to blame, or what to do about it). If the group is having trouble thinking of examples, prompt them with questions and examples. Examples can be found in Appendix 13L.

Ask participants to choose one example from the list that involves face-to-face interactions between people. If participants have trouble coming up with an interactive example of classism from their own school, have one of the examples from Appendix 13L ready for use. Ask for volunteers to play each role in the situation, or assign roles if there are no volunteers. Make sure at least one role is that of an ally against classism. Have the players stand up where the group can see them. Suggest an opening line for one actor, and ask the others to respond in their roles. At key moments, say, "Freeze!" and ask the rest of the group to suggest alternative responses. Stop the role play after a few minutes. Ask those playing anticlassist characters how they felt. "What did you feel worked? What didn't work?" Ask those playing classist characters how it felt to get different reactions to their behavior. If time allows, do another one or two additional role plays based on examples generated by participants, or examples in Appendix 13L.

4. Actions Against Classism (45 minutes)

Ask participants to pair up with someone in class with whom they feel they made a significant connection. Using the examples of classism at their school and using the action continuum in Appendix 6H as a guide (see also Chapter 14, Module 4 Activity 3), ask them to discuss ways they could be anticlassist, and then make at least one specific commitment to a particular action against classism. Pass out blank sheets of paper and envelopes. Ask participants to self-address the envelope and to write their future selves a letter reminding themselves of what they've learned in this course and what commitment(s) they made to an anticlassist action. Tell them you will mail the letters to them in a month.

5. Closing Circle: Personal Next Steps and Evaluation (20 minutes)

Have participants spend a few minutes on revisiting their index cards. Ask them to reflect on any new learnings that have impacted their understanding of their class of origin identity. Ask them what they would now say about their current class identity.

Next, ask the group to evaluate the sessions. There are a variety of ways to do this. It might be best to ask for participants to write their comments in response to the following questions:

1. What was the highlight of the course for you? What did you like best? What was most useful to you?
2. What I learned from this course was ...
3. As a result of participation,
    - I will change my thinking by ...
    - I will change my feelings by ...
    - I will change the way I do things by ...
4. As a follow-up to this experience, I would like to ...
5. What aspects of the course would you have done differently? Please describe any changes that you feel would improve or enhance this course.
6. If future courses were offered on classism, what would you like to see covered?