

Div Lit Week 7: Race

Discussion: "Affirmation Action: UCT Admissions Policy"

1. Objectives of class:

- Provide the space to discuss a contentious, but very relevant topic
- Explore the different positions in the AA debate, and how different positions enable different actions
- Explore notions of redress and transformation in post-apartheid South Africa and
- Illustrate how there are no easy answers to these questions

2. Material:

- **Hochschild, J. I. (1999) Affirmative action as culture war. In M. Lamont (Ed) *Cultural Territories of Race: of Black and White Boundaries*. Chicago: Chicago Press (p. 343-388)**
- **e.tv** Televised debate 18 July debate between Dr Max Price and Prof Neville Alexander Accessed at <http://www.uct.ac.za/news/talkingpoints/admissions/archive#etv>
- Handout - Meanings of Admissions Policy: A beneficiary point of view
- Other useful resources:
 - UCT Admissions Policy Debate page
<http://www.uct.ac.za/news/talkingpoints/admissions/>

3. Method:

- **Pre-class Preparation:**

Ask students to watch the e.tv debate before the class.

- **Read:**

In class, ask students to read the handout.

- **Discuss:**

Ask students to discuss the following questions (it is useful to create handouts/cards with the questions on for them):

1. Considering the e.tv video, what are the major positions taken in the UCT Admissions debate? What actions become possible or are shut down inside of each of these positions?
2. Hochschild (1999) says "For example, we know very little about just how people are hired or admitted to universities...What happens when a person is hired or

admitted in circumstances where affirmative action is presumed to have played a role?" How is this assertion relevant to the UCT Admissions debate?

3. Considering the interview extract in your handout, in what ways does race in the policy debates and in the lived experiences of students refuse to be easily appeased?

Handout - Meanings of Admissions Policy: A beneficiary point of view

Below is an extract from one of Buhle Zuma's interviews with a group 2011 first year students. At this point the conversation was around the students perceptions of interracial relations at UCT.

Interviewee: Also, all the white people at UCT are smart because for you to get into UCT when you are white, it's harder than when you are black. So when especially you are at Med Campus with all the health sciences, you know that all the white people that you see are clever and they are probably cleverer than you. Ya, that is a reality.

Interviewer: You say you know this because?

Interviewee: Because when you apply, the APS [Application Point System] for whites comes to higher than black students so it is harder for them to get in than for us.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: So when you are sitting next to a white person in the class then you can actually have an exact number that you know this person's APS is higher than that. Haven't checked, haven't had the time but you could find that out and from that being in your head, you are kind of like okay you can't do this.

Interviewer: What is it that you can't do?

Interviewee: You just can't hang around with them, I don't know, you just can't you know.