With thirty essays divided into five broad sections, *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* is not the first anthology to take as its focus the experiences of women of color in the academy, but it may well be the biggest. Given the multifaceted problem that is the intersection of racism and sexism in higher education, this may be a point in the anthology’s favor. It is best read as an ethnographic encyclopedia that bears witness to the routine dismissal of women of color in the academy. As Yolanda Flores Niemann, one of its editors, explains in the anthology’s closing chapter, “The challenges these authors have faced are grounded largely in the quadruple threat of racism, sexism, homophobia, and class-based subordination” (446). *Presumed Incompetent* attempts to represent them all, aiming to do a number of things at once: to bear witness to the experiences that women of color face, experiences that are underreported and often unaddressed within institutions; to offer practical advice for faculty of color who are working their way through academia; and to provide models for building successful ally networks. Like Stephanie Evans’s *Black Women in the Ivory Tower*, Deborah Gray White’s *Telling Histories*, and Dwayne Mack, Elwood D. Watson, and Michelle Madsen Camacho’s *Mentoring Faculty of Color*, *Presumed Incompetent* highlights the particular problems faculty of color face on an almost daily basis.¹


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No person of color reading this book will be surprised by the stories here. Instead, many will find echoes of their own struggles or the struggles of people they know in what editors Angela P. Harris and Carmen González refer to as the “culture of academia,” which is distinctly “white, heterosexual, and middle-and upper middle class” (3). Generally speaking, faculty of color report feeling intellectually isolated from their departments, struggle to find support from institutions when they face microaggressions, and receive lower evaluations from students, who judge them more harshly than their white counterparts. These problems are exacerbated by the economic crisis that plagues higher education and a commercializing process that turns students into consumers. Whatever progress has been made by adding faculty of color to the professoriate is undermined by the daily workings of departments and classrooms that are hostile to meaningful diversity.

There are hallelujah narratives here, soul-stirring reflections alongside structural critiques that affirm that these chapters are not anecdotal but a sign of problematic institutional patterns. The anthology has five parts (“General Campus Climate,” “Faculty/Student Relationships,” “Networks of Allies,” “Social Class in Academia,” and “Tenure and Promotion”), each with its own introduction. With essays like Stephanie A. Shields’s “Waking Up to Privilege: Intersectionality and Opportunity,” Sylvia R. Lazos’s “Are Student Teaching Evaluations Holding Back Women and Minorities? The Perils of ‘Doing’ Gender and Race in the Classroom,” and Elvia R. Arriola’s “‘No ha mal que poer bien no venga’: A Journey to Healing as a Latina, Lesbian Law Professor,” the anthology represents the intersectionality the academy needs in order to succeed. One of the anthology’s more useful interventions is the discussion of collegiality in Francisca de la Riva-Holly’s “Igualadas.” She discusses collegiality as the “Fourth Bucket” (292)—the fuzzy, ill-defined, invisible fourth area (after scholarship, teaching, and service) that faculty must fill to gain tenure and that can be a particular obstacle for women of color.

Presumed Incompetent provides testimony for faculty of color who feel their experiences are singular and offers graduate students cautionary tales along with strategies to navigate the pretenure years when faculty are most vulnerable.