

Racism 414/514

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

Fall Quarter 2009

	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Class Meeting/Times</i>
	Ethan Johnson Office Hours: 10:30-11:30 Tuesday 321 NH 503-725-5713 (office) ejohns@pdx.edu	Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:50PM Ondine 218

Overview & Learning Objectives

In this course our focus is to develop an understanding of the significance of race and racism. Today, we live in a time where many deny or diminish the importance of race and racism in our society with the end of legal forms of discrimination, the increase in the representation of Black people and other racial and cultural groups within multiple forms of popular culture, and the election and appointment of previously excluded racial and cultural groups to high levels of local and national government. Legal discrimination and other forms of overt exclusion have diminished, however as scholars and the experiences of Black people demonstrate race and racism continues to play a critical role in shaping the lives of all people at multiple levels. In this course we will explore historical and contemporary meanings of race and racism considering such topics as colonialism, slavery, the civil rights movement, the new or color-blind racism and the shifting meanings of racial identity. We will also explore the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality. Additionally, key to this course will be defining specific terms and concepts the authors use in order to explain forms of racial exclusion and marginalization.

Structure of Class Meetings:

Classes will be loosely structured as follows:

- ❖ Mondays/Wednesdays will be used for class discussion, lecture, movies and guest speakers that relate to the course readings.

Foundations of the Course

1. Attendance, Participation and Engagement (30 points): This course is based on individual as well as group commitment and engagement throughout the semester. The learning in the course will largely take place through dialogue about reading materials, group projects, and class generated themes and experience. It is expected that each participant come prepared to every section and class meeting, listen actively and respectfully to the thoughts and opinions of class members, and enrich the class by contributing ideas and insights. This class is a dynamic and collective creation. Input in discussion and dialogue is critical to its success. *Participation,*

attendance and creating a mutually respectful environment are shared and mandatory responsibilities. For every class you miss one point will be subtracted from your participation and engagement points.

Starting the second week of class students working in pairs will bring in an example/document of popular culture (news or entertainment) to the class. Your task in no more than 10 minutes will be to describe how the piece relates to the current set of readings the class is examining that week. You are required to show the piece to the class. For example if it's a song you are required to play the song to the class. If its a news article, provide access to the article, preferably online. If its a scene from a show, show it to the class online. Allow no more than 5 minutes for showing, playing or reading the document and 5 minutes for relating the piece to the course content (5 participation points).

2. Course Readings and Responses (40 points, 5 points each): Each week we will relate our discussion of a central issue related to the topic of racism to a critical analysis of a specified set of readings. The readings enhance our understanding of the issue and provide a common reference point for dialogue. In order to make these discussions successful, everyone needs to read the assigned material. In addition you are required to write during the term eight 1 page single-spaced critical analysis for the readings of the week; these are due on Tuesday at the end of class. **Any missed RR will result in the lowering of your grade by 5 points in this area and potentially impact your overall grade for the course.**

3. Personal Accounts Final (30 points): We will end the course with a "Personal Account Final" writing assignment. This assignment is designed to help you and the class think about how race has shaped your life. In this paper your job is to write about how your life experiences have been shaped by race and racism and critically interpret these experiences in **a four to five-page double space typed essay** (No less than 1000 and no more than 1250 words). Don't just describe your experiences, but critically interpret and analyze them as well. For this writing assignment, I ask that you discuss your *most empowering and most disempowering racialized experiences*. These experiences can be work, family and/or school-related or they can draw upon other circumstances in your life. In addition, they may be separate events, connected events, or different sides of the same situation. More information about the format and content of this assignment will be given in class. This assignment is due at the beginning of class on the day of the final on **Wednesday, December 8th at 12:30.**

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Week 1 (Sept. 27th-Oct. 1st): Introduction to the Course: What is Race, What is Racism?

Monday, Sept 27th: Overview of course and administrative issues. Name Game.

Wednesday, Sept. 29th: Ice Breaker and What is Race, What is Race/Racism discussion?

Week 2 (Oct. 4th - 8th): Race in the 21st Century

Read Chapter 1 “**Race in the 21st Century**” in *Racial Oppression, Racial Progress: The sociology of race in America* by Desmond and Emirbayer (2010).

Week 3 (Oct. 11th – 15th): Colonialism

Read **Discourse on Colonialism** by Aimé Césaire.

Film: *White King, Red Rubber, Black Death*

Week 4 (October 19th – 23rd): Race, Sexuality and Slavery

Read Chapter 2 “**The Color of Sex in America**” in *Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality* by Joane Nagel (2003) and Ch. 2 **Slavery Unwilling to Die** in *Racist America* by Joe R. Feagin (2010).

Week 5 (Oct. 26th – 30th): Black Masculinity

Read “**Murderers, Rapists and Drug Addicts**” by Rome, D. in *Images of Color Images of Crime, Ed. By Mann, Zats and Rodriguez* (2002) and **Anatomy of a Spectacle: Race, Gender and Memory in the Kobe Bryant Rape Case** by Johnathan Merkovitz in the *Sociology of Sport Journal* (2006).

Week 6 (Nov. 2nd - 6th): Black Femininity

Read Ch. 4 “**Mammies, Matriarchs and Other Controlling Images**” in *Black Feminist Thought* by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) and “**Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies: Women of Color Equality and the Right of Privacy**” by Dorothy Roberts in *Critical Race Theory* (1995).

Week 7 (Nov. 9th - 13th): Education and Health

Read Ch. 8 “**Desegregated Schools with Segregated Education**” by Darity and Jolla in *The Integration Debate: Competing futures for American Cities*, Ed. By Hartman and Squires (2010) and “**Race, Socioeconomic State and Health: The added Effects of Racism and Discrimination**” by David Williams in *Annals of New York Academy of Sciences* (1999) and “**Racism is Harmful to Your Mental Health**” in *Healthy Place* (2009).

Monday: Movie: Unnatural Causes

WEEK 8 (Nov. 16th – 20th): Jobs and Housing

Read “**The Political Economy of Black Housing: From the Housing Crisis of the Great Migrations to the Subprime Mortgage Crisis**” by Ruby Mendenhall in the *Black Scholar* (2010) and “**Are Emily and Greg more Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?: A Field Experiment in Labor Market Discrimination**” by Bertrand and Mullainathan in the *American Economic Review* (2004).

Week 9 (Nov. 23rd – Nov 27th): Multiraciality

Read. “**Interracial Intimacies, Barack Obama and the Politics of Multiracialism**” by Kimberly McClain DaCosta in the *Black Scholar* (2009) and Chapter 2 “**The Prime-Time Color Line: Interracial Couples and Television**” in *Fade to Black and White: Interracial Images in Popular Culture* by Erica Chito Childs (2009).

Week 10 (Nov. 30th – Dec. 4th): The Final Review

Final Review

No class Wednesday.

Format for all Reading Responses: *must be typed using a font size 12, Times New Roman, single-spaced, in black ink, with the student's name, title, the name of the assignment, and the date the assignment is due on the top of the first page.*

For example:

Juana López
Black Studies 414/ 514
Date

Prof. Johnson
Reading Response # _____
Class # _____

Grading: All work will be turned in during class periods. I will not provide or discuss grades over the phone or the internet. It is your responsibility to be aware of your grade during the academic term and to make an appointment with the professor if you have any questions. I WILL NOT GIVE

APPROXIMATIONS OF YOUR GRADES DURING CLASS TIME. If there are questions about the grade for this class, the student should make an appointment with the professor.

How to Calculate Your Grade

Attendance and Participation	30
Reading Responses	40
Personal Accounts Final	<u>30</u>
	100

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	1-59
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66		
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63		

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be offered at the professor’s discretion.

Cell Phones and Computers

Cell phones and computers should be turned off and not used during class time. If cell phone use or computer use becomes disruptive you can be dismissed from the class according to the rules as stated in the Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility.

University Laws

**Portland State University supports equal educational opportunity for all regardless of sex, race, national origin, age, marital status, handicap, religion or sexual orientation¹.*

**The following constitutes conduct as proscribed by Portland State University for which a student or student organization or group is subject to disciplinary action: All forms of academic dishonesty, cheating, and fraud, including but not limited to: (a) plagiarism, (b) the buying and selling of course assignments and research papers, (c) performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons, (d) unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information and (e) falsification of research data².*

**Students with disabilities need to contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will refer you to the following PSU offices for a referral indicating how we can best help you. It is important to obtain a referral in order to best accommodate your needs:*

¹ For more information read the “Policy Statement on Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities of Students,” <http://www.ess.pdx.edu/osa/osa_ahtm>.

² In “Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility,” <http://www.ess.pdx.edu/osa/osa_b.htm>.

--Learning disability screening and assessment at Counseling and Psychological Services;
--Disability Resource Center. Academic accommodations in classroom (note-taking, interpreting).
Other accommodations as indicated through testing results. Disability Resource Center, SMSU
435, 503-725-4150.
--Call or stop by Counseling & Psychological Services for more information, M343 SMC, 503-725-
4423³

³ For more information please contact the *Disability Office Center*,
<http://caps.pdx.edu/learning_disabilities.htm#Services>.