WHITENESS AND RACE

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In the United States conversations about race in practice often amount to conversations about people of color, and race is treated as something that people of color (and only people of color) 'have' or belong to. But white is also a racial category, and prevailing disinclination to name and examine it as such has served to maintain racial inequality. As British cultural critic Richard Dyer notes, one of the privileges of whiteness is never having to speak its name.

The purpose of this course is to critically interrogate whiteness. What is whiteness? Who is white? What does it mean to be white? When did white become a category of thought? Why is whiteness invisible to many white people? How have the boundaries of whiteness changed in the course of US history? Is there such a thing as white culture? How does whiteness intersect with class and gender to produce social and economic inequality? What is white privilege? How do we explain racial inequality in a time of almost universal disavowal of racism? What does anti-racist practice/activism look like in twenty-first century America?

To begin answering these questions, we will study the perspectives of major American intellectual figures as well as autobiographical writing, and scholarship in Whiteness Studies, a field of inquiry that emerged in the 1990s.

TEXTS

Unless otherwise noted, all excerpts, essays and chapters are in the Course Reader. *The main exception is week 1: go to D2L.*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Active class participation: 15% of grade
Leading class discussion once: 15% of grade
Two short analytical papers: 20% (10% each) each 3 pages or so (approx 1000 words)
Proposal for research paper: 10% (2 pages + bibliography of relevant sources)
Research paper: 40% (approximately 10 pages/3000 words)

**WORKLOAD**

This is a 3-credit course. We meet in class for about 90 minutes weekly (37 hours over the course of the semester). As a general rule, expect to spend 2-3 hours outside of class for every one hour in class – that means you should set aside around 6 hours a week for regular preparation (reading, taking notes, completing small assignments, and exploring), and more time when you have papers due or prepare to lead seminar discussion. Other weeks will require fewer hours. Over the 14 weeks, a 3-credit course is expected to take 147.5 hours of your time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated time for course components</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
<th>Hours per semester</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time in seminar</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent reading and preparing for class</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>84-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time spent on presentation</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time spent writing and revising papers</td>
<td>10-15</td>
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**ABSENCES**

Make every effort to attend all classes. If you have missed one class or know that you’re going to miss one due to the common cold or some snafu, do not email me to explain why; instead, contact a class mate to find out what was discussed in class, get their notes, and visit D2L to see if anything has been posted. If you have concerns beyond that come see me during office hours. If you miss multiple classes or if you are facing a health issue or family emergency which prevents you from attending or affects your participation, please do contact me (and also talk to your advisor).

**MIDTERM SEMINAR EVALUATION**

I propose we do a brief anonymous evaluation of the course and the class as a learning community. I use feedback to make adjustments and changes so as to improve seminar discussions etc. In some of my classes, we have an open discussion about how we are doing, but this will be at your initiative.
EMAILING ME
When you first email me, mention your name (first and last) and which class you’re in. Expect a response within 24 hours unless it’s the weekend (Friday 3PM-Monday 8AM). Feel free to email me to:
- Schedule an appointment (alternatively, approach me right after class)
- Share relevant news stories, or bring events and films to my attention (alternatively D2L)

Do not email me to:
- Ask questions that you can answer by consulting the syllabus/D2L documents
- Notify me that you will be missing class or explain why you missed a class (unless you miss more on account of documented illness or family emergency—in which case, see under ABSENCES above)
- Find out your current grade. If you have sincere concerns about your progress in the course, come see me during my office hours. I hope the conversation will be about how you can improve your grasp of a particular issue, your writing, etc., rather than about how to get you from one grade to another.
- Ask me to explain my comments on your paper—come see me instead.

GRADES
A+ 97-100      A  93-96      A - 90-92      B  87-89      B  83-86
A  79-82      C+ 77-79      C  73-76      C - 70-72      D  60-69
Note that B- is the lowest course grade that will count as Honors credit.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
I expect each student to demonstrate integrity in their academic conduct. One of the most common forms of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which includes failure to attribute ideas and statements (whether cited verbatim or paraphrased) and copying the work of others. For more information, see http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

DISABILITIES
UWM is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. It is university policy that no qualified student with a disability be excluded from participating in any class activity, denied the benefits of any university program or activity, or otherwise subjected to discrimination. The Student Accessibility Center (SAC) determines qualified disability status and assists students in obtaining appropriate accommodations and services by issuing a Verified Individual Services and Accommodations record. This includes learning disabilities. For more information contact: http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
UWM faculty will make reasonable accommodation of observance of religious holidays. I will make every effort to accommodate students who face conflicts between their academic responsibilities and their religious commitments. Please let me know in advance if you need accommodation.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES (*knowledge and skills*)

EXPECTATIONS

CLASS RULES OF CONDUCT
READING SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION
Monday January 26
Course Objectives, Key Concepts, Seminar Pedagogy, Participation and Protocols
What are we reading and why? What is Whiteness Studies?

Wednesday January 28
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (1-22) D2L
Darryl Fears, “Hue and Cry on ‘Whiteness Studies’” (4 pages) D2L
Beverly Tatum, “Defining Racism: ‘Can We Talk?’” (16 pages) D2L

Watch: *Skin Deep* (12 minute excerpt) [http://www.irisfilms.org/films/skin-deep/](http://www.irisfilms.org/films/skin-deep/) (interviews with students from different races and backgrounds)

WEEK TWO: THE HUMAN COSTS OF WHITENESS
Monday February 2
Dalton Conley, "'Universal Freckle' (~20 pages)
Mab Segrest, "The Souls of White Folks" (43-71)
Nell Irvin Painter, "Slavery and Soul Murder" in *Black on White* (326-331)

! Monday or Tuesday evening screening of *Race: The Power of an Illusion: Episode I and II* in Honors House (day and time to be determined in class).

Wednesday February 4
Audrey Smedley, "The Origins of the Idea of Race" (4 pages)
Prepare to discuss *Race: The Power of an Illusion: Episode I and II*

WEEK THREE: RACE AND RACISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
Monday February 9
bell hooks, "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination" in *Black on White* (38-53)
Olin & Wright, "Racial Inequality" (1-27)
Watch Robert Jensen's Lecture *The Color of the Race Problem is White* (53 mins) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aHSqanyQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aHSqanyQ)

Wednesday February 11: BEYOND A WHITE NATIONAL IDENTITY?
Patricia Hill Collins, “’Like One of the Family’: Race, Ethnicity and the Paradox of National Identity” (29-54)
Neil Foley, “Partly Colored or Other White: Mexican Americans and their Problem with the Color Line” (361-378)
WEEK FOUR: THE COLOR OF THE RACE PROBLEM
Monday February 16
Black on White selections:
  - Roediger, Introduction (1-26)
  - 'Ethiop' (William J. Wilson) "What Shall We Do with the White People" (58-66)
  - George S. Schuyler, "On White Folks" (71-84)
  - J.A. Rogers, "Debating the Senator" (85-98)
  - W.E.B. DuBois, "The Souls of White Folk" in (184-199)
  - bell hooks, "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination" (38-53)

Wednesday February 18: WHITENESS AS PROPERTY
Black on White selections (103-137, 177-180)
  - Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property"
  - Amiri Baraka, "White Wages"
  - Robert Hayden, "Speech"
  - Langston Hughes, "White Man"
  - Harry Haywood, "Shadow of the Plantation"
  - Frank Marshall Davis, "Snapshots of the Cotton South"
  - James Baldwin, "On Being ‘White’… and Other Lies"

WEEK FIVE: RACE, CULTURE, AND REPRESENTATION
Monday February 23
Due: first short paper.
Black on White selections:
  - Rudolf Fischer, "The Caucasian Storms Harlem" (216-217)
  - Nelson George, "On the White Negros" (225-232)
  - Langston Hughes, "Slave on the Block" (240-247)
  - Bakari Kitwana, “Why White Kids Love Hip Hop” (excerpts)

Wednesday February 25
  - Richard Dyer, “White” (44-64)

WEEK SIX THE WAGES OF WHITENESS
Monday March 2
  - David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness, 1-40

Wednesday March 4
  - DuBois, Black Reconstruction, excerpt (pages....)
  - Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness, 43-94

Exhibit Identity Check: Works in Contemporary Photography UWM Union Art Gallery (Feb 27-March 27).
WEEK SEVEN:
Monday March 9
Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 95-163

Wednesday March 11
Due: second short paper
Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 165-193

In class: Brainstorm research topics; clusters.

WEEK EIGHT
*Spring Recess March 16-22*

WEEK NINE: GENDER AND WHITE IDENTITY
Monday March 23

In class: Topic development and exchange; clusters.

Wednesday March 25

In class: Topic Development: from Topic to research question.

WEEK TEN
Monday March 30
Library Orientation and Database instruction: Locating scholarly sources. Meet at ....

Wednesday April 1
Frankenberg, *White Women*, 137-244

WEEK ELEVEN: RACISM 'LITE': THE IDEOLOGY OF COLORBLINDNESS
Monday April 6
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, Front matter and & Chapter 1 (ix-24)
In class: The components of a proposal

Wednesday April 8
Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, Chapter 2 and 3 (frames, styles) 25-74
WEEK TWELVE  
Monday April 13  
Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, Chapters 4 and 5 (racial stories) 75-130  
Due: research paper proposal w. preliminary bibliography  

Wednesday April 15  
Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, Chapters 6 and 7, 131-176  

WEEK THIRTEEN  
Monday April 20  
Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, Chapters 8 and 9, 177-260  

Wednesday April 22  

WEEK FOURTEEN  
We will have no class this week; instead, 15 minute meetings will be scheduled Wednesday and Friday.  
Monday April 27 / Wednesday April 29  
Due: Draft of Research Paper (via D2L) by 10 AM the day before you meet with me. Note which day you meet with me above.  

WEEK FIFTEEN: YOU CAN’T BE NEUTRAL ON A MOVING TRAIN: ANTI-RACISM IN PRACTICE  
Monday May 4  
Karyn McKinney & Joe Feagin, "Diverse perspectives on doing antiracism: The younger generation" (233-252)  
Laura Smith & Rebecca Redington, "Lessons from the Experiences of White Antiracist activists" (541-549)  
William Aal, "Moving from Guilt to Action: Antiracist Organizing and the Concept of 'Whiteness' in the Academy" (294-310)  

Wednesday May 6  
Course conclusions; new questions; New insights from research, Course Evaluation.  

Research Paper is due **Monday May 11** by 2 PM via D2L. Any extensions have to arranged beforehand.