

**CES 260**  
**Race and Popular Culture**  
**Summer 2014**  
**UCORE: Humanities; GenEd: S, D**  
**3 credits**

**CUE 119**

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**Introduction and Course Description**

This course begins with the assumption that popular culture is more than a playful diversion. Indeed, popular culture not only afford us an unique and important opportunity to think critically about human beliefs and behaviors, but it also directs our attention to the centrality of race to American identities and experiences. Consequently, in this class, we direct our attention to the interplay of difference and power within popular culture as manifested in social structures and institutions, symbols and rituals, language and discourse, as well as media coverage and mundane practices. Specifically, we will examine racial, social, cultural, political, and economic importance of sports, Disney films, and food, thinking about the ways in which popular culture, constitutes a site or space of identity formation and resistance, as well as one of subjugation, disempowerment, and control. We will attend to the complex relationships between race and popular culture through an examination of the social/cultural/economic significance of both the production and consumption of various types of popular culture directed at American (and increasingly globalized) children and youth, as well as the broader contextual meaning of these images, toys, places of place, etc. At its core, this class to underscore the importance of race within youth culture as a pedagogical tool and space of politics, ideologies, discursive articulations, control and resistance. It reflects on the broader context and significance of something we confront (or have) every day and the often take-for-granted, fostering thought about race and racism, whiteness/blackness/otherness, the American Dream, multiculturalism and difference represents within children's/youth culture. In the end, the class makes clear that within children's/youth culture in all its form, as with broader mediums of television, film, and video games, race and racism exists as a powerful force within American culture.

**Key Realities**

It is important that everyone arrives in class with an open-mind, a critical gaze (a willingness to go beyond common assumptions) and most importantly a willingness and desire to read, attend class, and learn. Without preparedness and reading skills (as well as a desire to engage in those elements of learning) this class will be a struggle. For those students who want to improve these skills, this class will facilitate that process. For those who want a class that does not require thinking, that does not mandate completion of the reading, that sees attendance as superfluous, and is in all ways easy on the mind, this may not be the class for you. For those who think discussions about race and

inequality are all about opinions and that class is a space to replicate the opinion-based debates of modern TV culture, this is not the class for you. Please also note that while the course will work to promote discussions and interactive dialogues, the course isn't a place to haphazardly share opinions without regard for research, facts, and evidence (this is not a debate show that we might see on television). Conversations and opinions should be grounded in research and evidence; in order for productive exchanges, we must speak through research, and specific examples.

### **Required Readings**

- *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture* (EE), Second Edition by E.N. Anderson (NYU Press, ISBN: 9780814760062)
- *Animating Difference: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Contemporary Films for Children* (AD) by C. Richard King, Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo, Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 9780742560826)
- *Commodified and Criminalized: New Racism and African Americans in Contemporary Sports* (C & C) edited by David J. Leonard & C. Richard King (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 9781442206786)

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Attendance**

You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and participate in an informed and consistent manner. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away. Attendance will be taken throughout the summer; you will receive 5 points for each day of class you are in attendance (no points for exam day or last 4 days of class, which you **MUST** attend since we will be doing final projects).

Yet, if you are absent 3-4 times, you will lose 100 points; if u miss 5-6 times, you will lose 150 points from your overall grade; if absent 7 times or more, you will receive an "F" for the course. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences. Please communicate issues as they arise.

#### **Participation**

In order for this class to be productive you will need to come to class each and every day prepared to discuss the material. This requires more than simply doing the reading (**WHICH IS ESSENTIAL**), but arriving at class with a readiness to discuss the issues for that day. Each day, we will work to have engaging and productive conversations. You should expect most classes to focus around an activity, interactive conversations, or group discussions.

Recognizing that silence is not always a result of a lack of interest or preparation, I envision participation along many lines. Participating in class not only consists of talking, but also includes **listening** (please do not talk while others are speaking), interacting with your peers, and

contributing to our classroom energy (body language, being engaged – no newspapers, no playing “rock, paper scissors,” or cell phones). Your participation score will consist of clicker points, attendance, and in-class/online participation.

There are three additional ways to enhance your participation grade and contribution to class:

- ☐ You can e-mail me comments or questions prior to class
- ☐ You can hand me a note at the beginning of class that asks specific questions (or relays comments) about readings, a previous lecture or film – I will do my best to incorporate into that day’s class
- ☐ You can also enhance participation grade by reading the daily newspapers in print or online and bringing the class’s attention to relevant articles/developments

Participation score will be derived from participation in class/online, attendance, and clicker points.

**Participation Portion of grades based on following:**

135-160 Points:	Attends class (less than 2 absences); active participant in class in all regards; enhances and invigorates the class; active and successful with student response device
115-134.99 Points:	Attends class; participates and contributes on occasion either in class or online; does not push class conversation in new directions but often contributes; good clicker score
85-114.99 Points:	More than 5 absences; low clicker score; contributes on occasions but does so at basic level; engaged, but not active
50-84.99 Points:	Rarely contributes, more than 5 absences and low clicker score; shows limited effort and interest in class
25-49.99 Points:	Does not contribute, and is often absent; brings little energy and generally demonstrates little interest or effort within class
0-24.99 Points:	Rarely in class and when in class detracts from overall success of class because of disinterest, use of cell phone in class, sleeping during class, disengagement, negative attitude rudeness, non or disruptive/destructive participation, etc.

**Exam (250 Points)**

There will an exam for the class, which will include short answers questions, an essay question, and, possibly, objective questions.

**Disney Letter (200 points)**

Having learned about race, gender, nationalism, and so much as it relates to Disney, you will write a letter to an adult, empowering them with the tools needed to educate and prepare kids for watching a Disney film. More details to follow

### **Food Origin Story (300 Points)**

In 2010, a course at The California College of the Arts, offered a global and geographic map deconstructing the taco. The project was described in the following way:

Examining the ingredients in a taco paints a picture of the globalization of our food production network.

Look closely enough at anything and you can start to see the sum of its parts. Even, for instance, a single taco, which, when examined recently by a group of architecture students, became a window into the complexities of globalization. The assignment was part of URBANlab, a program of The California College of the Arts that took place under the guidance of landscape architect [David Fletcher](#) and members of the art and design studio [Rebar](#).

The goal was to map the local "tacoshed," which, much like a watershed, establishes the geographical boundaries of a taco's origins-the source of everything from the corn in the tortilla to the tomatoes in the salsa.

By thoroughly understanding what it takes to make a taco, the class hoped to become "better able to propose and design a speculative model of a holistic and sustainable urban future."<sup>1</sup>

This assignment replicates the intended purpose of this assignment, asking students (in groups) to chronicle the global origins of a particular "food." Beyond geographically placing the origins of individual ingredients, students will be responsible for elucidating/providing details about the source, location, and conditions of production. In the end, groups will produce a visual documentation (preference online) that highlights the geographic origins of each ingredient in a product and also the conditions where those ingredients were produced.

Students will work in groups with each student being responsible for a particular ingredient. We will spend three class days working on these and then present on the final day of class. The following represents the food "groups" for the assignment

- Hot fudge sundae
- Hamburger
- Taco
- Vanilla latte
- Pepperoni and Mushroom Pizza
- Chocolate chip cookies
- Fruit salad

### **Assignment Schedule**

Due Date**	Assignment	Grade Value
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.good.is/post/your-taco-deconstructed/>

<b>July 11, 2014</b>	<b>Exam</b>	<b>250 Points</b>
<b>July 23, 2014 (Due at beginning of class)</b>	<b>Disney Letter</b>	<b>200 Points</b>
<b>August 1</b>	<b>Food Origin Story</b>	<b>290 points</b>
<b>Daily</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>160 Points</b>
<b>Daily</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>100 points (20 x 5)</b>

**\*\*We hold right to make adjustments to class and assignment schedule as needed**

**Grading Scale**

1000-930: A  
929-900: A-  
899-870: B+  
869-830: B  
829-800: B-  
799-770: C+  
769-730: C  
729-700: C-  
699-670: D+  
669-600: D  
590 and Below: F

## Course Schedule

### **6/30 – Introduction**

#### **7/1 – Bigger than a game**

Reading: *C & C*, Introduction

#### **7/2 – Tiger Woods**

Reading: *C & C*, chapters #1 & 10

Film: 60 Minutes and various commercials

#### **7/3 – Race, Place, and Soccer**

Reading: *C & C*, #6 and handout

### **7/4 –NO CLASS**

#### **7/7 - The Williams Sisters**

Reading: *C & C*, #3

Film: *Venus vs*

#### **7/8 – Ballers**

Reading: *C & C*, #4 & 5

#### **7/9 – King James**

Reading: *C & C*, #6

Film: *More than a Game*

#### **7/10 – Race, Gender & Sexuality on the court**

Reading: *C & C*, #9

### **7/11 – Exam**

#### **7/14 – The Disney Imagination**

Reading: *AD*, #1

Film: *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*

#### **7/15 - Disney Pedagogies**

Reading: *AD*, #2

Film: *Pocahontas*

#### **7/16 - The Colonial Imagination**

Reading: *AD*, #3

Film: *Pocahontas*

#### **7/17 - Imagining Latino identity**

Reading: *AD*, #4

#### **7/18 - Intersections**

Reading: *AD*, #6

#### **7/21 - Oppositional Gaze and Resistance**

Reading: *AD*, #7

#### **7/22 – Food Matters**

Reading: *EE*, Introduction & #5

#### **7/23 – Pleasure or just nourishment?**

Reading: *EE*, #6 & #7

DISNEY LETTER DUE

**7/24 – Food and Identity**

Reading: *EE*, #7

**7/25 – Inequality and Privilege**

Reading: *EE*, #9

Film: *A Place at the Table*

**7/28 – Race, Ethnicity and Difference**

Reading: *EE*, #11 & #12

**7/29 – Resistance**

Reading: *EE*, #12

In-Class: Food Origin Story (**bring all materials: research, a laptop, and other materials needed**)

**7/30 – Work In-Class: Food Origin Story**

**7/31 - Work In-Class: Food Origin Story**

**8/1 - Presentations**

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and shifts in class needs. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made in your absence.

**Course Policies**

1. To be successful in this class you must read prior to arrival to class; you need to be prepared each and every day. We will discuss and I will lecture on many of the topics, yet to be successful in participation and on the exams, you need to read.
2. The following are unwelcome and unacceptable within this class. Doing work for other classes, reading newspapers, sleeping, and using phone during class will result in an absence for that day.
  - a. Sleeping, daydreaming or otherwise tuning out during class
  - b. Habitual tardiness. If you are late, you **MUST SIT IN THE FIRST ROW AND SPEAK WITH ME AT THE CONCLUSION OF CLASS**. If you arrive after 15 minutes, this will count out 1/2 of an absence
  - c. Packing up your notebook and other materials prior to the end of class
  - d. Reading the newspaper, another book, or otherwise focusing on something other than class
  - e. Chatting to classmates

- f. Getting up during class because you feel thirsty or hungry.
  - g. Leaving class early
2. Turn cell phones off upon arrival to class – Absolutely no texting or phone calls DURING CLASS. Please note that if I see your cell phone/other handheld device (not if it rings) whether because you've decided to text message, check scores, show a friend a picture or listen to messages, you will be marked absence for the day
  3. Computer usage within class is strictly forbidden except in specific circumstances (disability accommodation) and with permission from instructor. In other words, no laptop/iPad/tablet/ETC. to take notes in class. Please take notes by hand. Those with disabilities for whom hand note taking is difficult or impossible, please alert me in writing at the beginning of the course and feel free to use electronic aids.

### **Netiquette<sup>2</sup>**

I expect you to observe the following proprieties in your email messages, as you would with any professional colleague:

- Emails must have a specific salutation: “Dear Dr. Leonard/,” “Dear Professor Leonard/,” or “Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening Professor Leonard/” are all appropriate.” “Hi,” “Hey,” “Mr. Leonard” or no salutation is an incorrect and inappropriate way to begin an email to me.
- Emails must be sent from your WSU account, unless an emergency requires you to use an alternate account. If you send from an alternate account, please follow up with me if you do not hear from me within 24 hours.
- Emails must close with a signature (“Sincerely,” “Thank you,” etc.)
- Emails should be grammatically correct, clear, and *concise*.
- Emails should not be sent to request info you can get elsewhere with minimal effort (i.e., my office hours, office location, phone number, due dates, location of the library, etc. All these are listed either on tumblr or the syllabus. I may or may not respond to such emails.)
- Assume that your response will come within 24 hours; if it hasn't come by then, do feel free to remind me of your message.
- DO NOT USE all CAPS
- If you have a complaint or concern about something, you should always come to see me about it in person. Email is not an appropriate forum for anything important enough to be dealt with in an extended conversation, or for a discussion in which email, because it can't convey tone, might allow for misinterpretation.
- Please don't email me to ask if I will be in office hours. Unless I have specifically stated in class that I won't be there, I will always be available during office hours on a drop-in basis or by appointment.

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from syllabus of Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls (earlier portions taken as well), <http://hiphopgendersexuality2012.tumblr.com/syllabus>



### Course Expectations

Despite the size of the class, it is my hope that this class is a lively educational space defined by interaction, discussions, and critical thinking. That being said, this class is one of lecture and one where critical discussions, engagement, and activities will emanate from the lectures. It is important to take notes and engage in these conversations. It is important to produce a classroom that is open, respectful, and trusting. Following the above rules will contribute to a productive educational environment; of equal importance will be the respect shown for the class, its members, and the ideas discussed therein. As such, it is crucial that we adhere to certain guidelines.

1. Be respectful of others, in terms of engaging and listening to lectures, peer comments, and other course materials.
2. Listen and listen
3. Reflect on social location and work to understand alternative arguments, analysis, and narratives, as well as anger.
4. Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist.
5. Acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexist, heterosexism, etc. is that we are **all systematically taught misinformation** about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups.
6. **Read in an engaged way**, recognizing the ideology and politics imbedded in every text. Make notes in the margins – **“dialogue” with the text**, using exclamation points, questions or issue complete statements, questions or critiques. Ask yourself: what is significant in this piece, what elicits anger/sadness/laughter, but go beyond emotional responses to be prepared to make specific statements about the reading!
7. **Be aware of your own subject position, ideologies, privileges and prejudices.** Recognize your own relationship to institutions of power and structures of domination. This can help you make specific connections to the reading, class discussions and other forms of feedback. Rather than proclaiming, “This article sucks,” or “You are wrong,” you can get more specific about the basis and origins of your reaction. For example, rather than engaging in a discussion about homosexuality with statements of disgust and contempt, it might be better to state: “From my position as a white male, who was raised with the teachings of the Bible, I find homosexuality a bit troubling, especially in the context of the arguments made by \_\_\_\_\_ on page \_\_\_\_.”
8. Agree to **combat actively the myths and stereotypes** about your own “group” and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain. Read and listen with recognition of other people’s subject position and ideologies.  
**LISTEN TO OTHERS!**
9. Reflect on our **choice of language in and outside of class**, striving to rid our vocabulary of racist, sexist, homophobic words, phrases. Recognize that your choice of words reflect your own ideological position and may bother others (think about how others may react to your words – not just content, but the way we chose to express those thoughts)
10. **Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion.** If members of the class may wish to

make comments that they do not want repeated outside the classroom, they can preface their remarks with a request that the class agree not to repeat the remarks. Also, think about your language (including body language), posture, etc. contributes to safe/empowering or disempowering/unsafe learning environment.

11. **Take Risks:** I want this class to be a space where everyone should feel comfortable enough to disagree with each other. This needs to be safe space so reflect on the ways you engage others with your own pronouncements and how you react (with words, body language) to their statements – react privilege and positionality
12. **Read and dialogue in a politically engaged way.** Racial Dynamics, for our purposes here, reflects **power**, and relationship to systems/sources of power. Power dynamics are contextual (situational) and relational. You may have power in some spaces and lack it in others, all depending on social location. Ask yourself these questions while reading and discussing within the classroom space: Is the analysis leaving anyone relevant out? For what reasons? Where is this analysis coming from? Whose knowledge base is being explored or forwarded?
13. **Speak with evidence** and “facts” on your side. Despite the popular pronouncements that there are no wrong answers, there are incomplete, problematic, superficial, surfaced, and unsubstantiated answers. Reflect on your own answers and the basis of your conclusions
14. **Go beyond an either/or dichotomy. Incorporate a both/and approach** rather than an “either/or.”
15. **Recognize the knowledge base of your peers.** Its ok – recommended and great, in fact – to respond to a counterpoint with “hey, I’ve never thought of it that way,” or “well, you do make a good point – I’ll have to think about that for a while.” Discussion in this class isn’t about proving, embarrassing, showing off, winning, losing, convincing, holding one’s argument to the bitter end – its about dialogue, debate and self-reflections.

### **Cheating**

DON'T DO IT! What constitutes cheating: Turning in any work that is not yours and yours completely, which includes using a “cheat sheet,” copying the answers from a peer, copying and pasting from a website, copying a friend's work, etc. If someone else said it, wrote it, thought it, etc. give them credit – DON'T STEAL THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF OTHERS. For more information, please see the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). Your failure to follow these basic instructions, to respect the classroom, to take the easy route, to be in the business of pretending to learn, think, analyze, and otherwise be a student, is not acceptable in any regard. What this means is that if you cheat, you will receive a “0” for that assignment and you will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Any decision to violate the sanctity and purpose of the classroom leaves me with little choice in this regard. If you are unfamiliar with WSU policy regarding cheating and confused as to what constitutes cheating (plagiarism), please consult the Standards for Student Conduct found here: <http://conduct.wsu.edu>

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the [Access Center](#). (Washington Building 217; 509-335-

3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center. For more information contact a Disability Specialist on your home campus: 509-335-3417 <http://accesscenter.wsu.edu>, [Access.Center@wsu.edu](mailto:Access.Center@wsu.edu)

### **Emergency Notification System:<sup>3</sup>**

Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.”

### **Primary Learning Outcomes**

#### **LEARNING OUTCOMES, CLASS SESSIONS, AND COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

<b>At the end of this course, students should be able to:</b>		<b>Course topics (&amp; dates) that advance these learning goals:</b>	<b>This objective will be assessed primarily by</b>
LG1	To understand the ways in which race matters within popular culture  WSU Learning Goals: Diversity Critical and Creative Thinking Information Literacy Communication	Sports; food culture; Disney	Exam; class; letter; project; participation; and in-class writing
LG2	To understand the persistence of racism and inequality within the United States and elsewhere around the globe; to look at the role popular culture plays  WSU Learning Goals: Diversity Critical and Creative Thinking Information Literacy Communication	Sports; food culture; Disney	Exam; class; letter; project; participation; and in-class writing
LG3	To reflect on the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and	Sports; food culture; Disney	Exam; class; letter; project;

<sup>3</sup> From T & L 589 syllabus of Dr. Paula Groves Price

	<p>nation</p> <p>WSU Learning Goals: Diversity Critical and Creative Thinking Information Literacy Communication</p>		<p>participation; and in-class writing</p>
LG4	<p>To be able to discuss the significance of race and media as it relates to nationalism, patriarchy, criminalization, movement, and</p> <p>WSU Learning Goals: Diversity Critical and Creative Thinking Information Literacy Communication</p>	Sports; food culture; Disney	<p>Exam; class; letter; project; participation; and in-class writing</p>
LG5	<p>To reflect instruments of change, processes of facilitating justice, and the history of social change.</p> <p>WSU Learning Goals: Diversity Critical and Creative Thinking Information Literacy Communication</p>	Sports; food culture; Disney	<p>Exam; class; letter; project; participation; and in-class writing</p>