

Race and Racism in US Popular Culture
CES 260 – 01 (2250)
MWF 10:10 – 11:00am
Johnson Hall C0105

Instructor: Lizeth Gutierrez
Office Room #: Wilson-Short Hall 114
Office Hours: Thursdays. 10:00-11:00am, and by appointment
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“Caminante, no hay puentes, se hace puentes al andar” (Voyager, there are no bridges, one builds them as one walks.)” — Gloria E. Anzaldúa

“I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer...education as the practice of freedom... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created.” –bell hooks

COURSE DESCRIPTION & COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Parting from the notion that popular culture is just entertainment, this course seeks to show students the subtle and not so subtle ways in which popular culture reinforces and perpetuates existing ideas, ideologies, and behaviors. The course examines ideas and ideologies about race and racial(ized) groups as “created” and presented to us by popular culture with the understanding that those conceptions (1) have historical groundings in our society; (2) reflect

who we are as a society; and (3) can give us clues about how to change them. However, this course is not solely about race and racism. Using an interdisciplinary approach to popular culture, the course materials will also explore the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class in popular culture representations of identity. This will allow students to critically examine how popular culture shapes social and political expectations of identity performance. The course will ask students to reexamine their own engagement with popular culture as well as their taken-for-granted notions about what popular culture is and does to race relations, and the effects it has on everyone engaging with it.

PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNER OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Recognize the production and consumption of popular culture as a contested space of meaning in relation to racial categories and other significant identity categories and social markers, such as gender, class, and sexuality.
- Comprehend the subtle and not subtle ways in which racial difference is and racial meanings are perpetuated and taught through all forms of popular culture.
- Develop the ability to find and analyze the racial (and gendered, and sexual) meanings within various forms of popular culture.
- Develop the ability and willingness to enjoy popular culture while maintaining a critical gaze, and becoming a critical consumer.
- Understand the ways in which injustice and inequality operate within a context of cultural production and be able to analyze how consumption and the privileges afforded to each of us (in different ways) contribute to or undermine such injustice.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Course Reader (Available only at Cougar Copies)
Location: Compton Union Building; room 80
- Additional readings will be available on Angel

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Attendance (50pts): Attendance is required, hence arrive on time. Class will not only be lecture-based, therefore your participation in class is valuable for class discussions. I will take attendance every day. **You are allowed two unexcused absences before I start deducting 2 points from your final grade for every absence thereafter.**

* Only approved and documented university excuses will be excused from this rule.

- Athletes: I will need forms from the Athletic Department handed in BEFORE the absence.

Participation (50pts): I am expecting everyone to participate in class. I do, however, recognize that some students may have a difficult time public speaking. If that is the case, please see me early in the semester so I am aware of your situation and we can work something out. You will be graded based on your participation and preparation for class discussions. Your contribution to class discussions is very important. As such, you must bring your course packet to class every day. You will lose participation points if your course packet is not in front of you. If you are disrupting the class you will also lose points at my discretion and without any warning.

Exam #1 (300pts) and Exam #2 (300pts): You will have two exams throughout the semester, a mid-term exam and a final exam. The exams will include identification, short answer, and short essay sections. NOTE: No make-up exams will be given.

Quizzes (5x20=100pts): There will be five unannounced quizzes on assigned readings throughout the semester; **no make-up quizzes will be given.**

Race Analysis in Popular Culture Essay (200pts): You will critically examine any form of popular culture on an issue of race, gender, sexuality and/or class as it relates to the course materials. You must show in your essay an analysis that is consistent with the material we have covered in class. For instance, if you decide to analyze a hip hop song, you must describe what the song is saying and what the context of the song is. In addition, you will build a critical analysis that applies the concepts, themes, and ideas of race and/or other identity categories and social markers we have discussed throughout the semester to your popular culture example. In other words, your essay must show me that you have grappled with the course material in your application of popular culture. The essay must be 4 pages (typed and double spaced). I will provide a guide sheet one week in advance that will explain in detail what I am looking for in your analysis.

Your essay must have the following information in its heading on the RIGHT side of the paper:

Your name
Date
CES 260 – Pop Culture Essay
Instructor: Gutierrez

I will deduct points for every item missing or misplaced in the heading. This heading format is also required in your extra credit assignments. The only thing that will change is the “Pop Culture Essay” phrase to “Extra credit 1, 2 or 3.”

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities for extra credit, which I will announce as they come up. Documentation for extra credit will consist of 1-2 page critical analysis of an event, a lecture, or a film. Responses must be typed and doubled-spaced. Extra credit assignments must relate to

the course and the material we have covered in class. **Students are allowed only 3 extra credit assignments = 5 points each / total of 15 points.**

IMPORTANT: I WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY LATE WORK, NO EXCUSES.

COURSE POLICIES:

Grading	
Attendance_____	5%
Participation_____	5%
Quizzes_____	10%
Race Analysis in Popular Culture Essay_____	20%
Mid-Term Exam_____	30%
Final Exam_____	30%
	TOTAL = 100%

Grading Scale:

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

Submission of Assignments: I will only accept a hard copy of all written assignments. Students must turn in all written assignments in the beginning of class. I do not accept assignments through e-mail or other electronic/digital means.

Academic Integrity: Washington State University has no tolerance for academic dishonesty. Cheating and plagiarism is prohibited. You must always properly cite and acknowledge your resources because they are not your ideas. Students who violate WSU's Standards of Conduct for Students will be required to meet with me to determine the disciplinary outcome of the violation in question, which may include failing the assignment or the course. If you want to learn more about WSU's cheating policies, I suggest you read and understand the definitions that the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3) has on their website: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338>.

Classroom Etiquette: All cell phones must be turned off. Any devices to listen to music or surf the internet are also prohibited in my class. Unless you have a documented disability, no earphones are allowed. I have witnessed students get easily distracted with other internet sites while taking notes which prevent them from engaging in the class. **Do not use your laptops; take handwritten notes.**

Electronic Correspondence: The college experience is meant to prepare you for the professional world. As such, you must begin practicing professional etiquette. That begins with learning how to address your interlocutor in an electronic message correctly. Thus, here are some choices of salutations you may use when you start an email to me: “Dear Ms. Gutierrez;” “Dear Instructor Gutierrez;” “Hello/Hi Ms. Gutierrez;” or “Hello/Hi Instructor Gutierrez.” NOTE: Any messages sent to me without a salutation or with an improper salutation (such as “hey,” “yo,” or “Hi Lizeth,” etc.) will be sent to the trash bin without a reply.

Disability Accommodations: 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.

NOTE: If you need a disability accommodation please notify me during the first (2) weeks of class.

Campus Safety Plan Emergency Information: For campus safety and emergency procedures please visit these sites:

<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu> campus Safety Plan

<http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> Emergency management web site

<http://alert.wsu.edu> WSU Alert site

“How is that my problem” clause: I am a pretty busy person, and as an instructor, my role in this class is to teach you about popular culture and race, and to generally prepare you for the professional world. I feel the need to warn you, then, that often times I will have a standard response to many of your requests or “conflicts.” The response will usually be a variation of: “How is that my problem?” For instance, if you tell me that your parents are going on a vacation to Cabo San Lucas during the week your final paper is due, and they want you to come along (and already bought your tickets), I will ask you: How is that my problem? Similarly, if your best friend is getting married in California and you want to go to the wedding a day you are supposed to be taking an in-class assignment: How in the world is that my problem? Or, if your roommate/friend needs a ride to the Spokane airport and you decide to take him/her and miss class: not my problem! Thus, before you raise any issue with me, understand that your personal matters should bear no effect on me or on how this class is conducted. It is your responsibility to conform to and abide by the schedule and the syllabus. Ultimately, you need to consider that if you decide to bask under the Mexican sun, or eat wedding cake in “sunny California,” or go to Spokane during class time, the activity will come with a cost to your grade. It is ultimately up to you to make your own decisions, but decisions, even in college, have consequences attached to them. Keep that in mind.

CES 260 Reading Schedule

Though I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus, I still reserve the right to make changes. These will be announced in advance.

This syllabus tells you the dates by which you need to have the material read.

SECTION I: Racial Formation, Racial Ideology and Race as a Social Concept

- January 13 Introduction to the course
- January 15 “Racial Formations” by Michael Omi and Howard Winant
- January 17 “Defining Race and Ethnicity” by C. Matthew Snipp

- January 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- January 22 “Racialized Social System Approach to Racism” by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva
- January 24 *Race: The Power of an Illusion* Part 2 (film)

SECTION II: Whiteness: Ideology, Identity and Consciousness

- January 27 Finish *Race: The Power of an Illusion* Part 2 (film) AND “Racism: Naming What Hurts” by bell hooks
- January 29 “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy” by George Lipsitz
- January 31 “White Privilege and Male Privilege...” by Peggy McIntosh

- February 3 “The Social Construction of Whiteness” by Martha R. Mahoney
- February 5 “The Ideology of Color Blindness” by Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres
- February 7 *Race: The Power of an Illusion* Part 3 (film)

SECTION III: Patriarchy, Gender and White Supremacy

- February 10 Finish *Race: The Power of an Illusion* Part 3 AND “The Social Construction of Gender” by Judith Lorber
- February 12 “Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, a Them, or an Us” by Allan G. Johnson

February 14 “Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy” by Andy Smith

SECTION IV: Racism, Sexism and Popular Culture

February 17 Presidents’ Day holiday

February 19 “Racism and Popular Culture” by Danille Dirks and Jennifer Mueller

February 21 “Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide” by Andy Smith

February 24 “Black and White in Movies: Portrayals of Black-White Biracial Characters in Movies” by Alicia Edison and George Yancey

February 26 EXAM 1 Review Day

February 28 EXAM 1

SECTION V: Contextualizing Identity in U.S. Popular Culture

March 3 “Brain, Brow and Booty: Latina Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture” by Guzman and Valdivia

March 5 “My Skin is it Startin’ to Work to my Benefit Now?: Eminem’s White Trash Aesthetic” by Hamilton Carroll (pg. 101-111)

March 7 “My Skin is it Startin’ to Work to my Benefit Now?: Eminem’s White Trash Aesthetic” by Hamilton Carroll (“I’m sorry Momma” in pg. 111-127)

SECTION VI: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Animated Films

March 10 “Children and Adults: Animated Cartoons” by Jaap Van Ginneken

March 12 “Beyond Snow White: Femininity and Constructions of Citizenship” by King, Lugo-Lugo and Bloodsworth-Lugo (Angel site)

March 14 “Coming Attractions” by King, Lugo-Lugo and Bloodsworth-Lugo (Angel site)

March 17 – 21 Spring Vacation

SECTION VII: Race, Law and Hip Hop

March 24 “Jay-Z’s 99 Problems, Verse 2…” by Caleb Mason

March 26 “No Equal Justice: The Color of Punishment” by David Cole in Rethinking the Color Line AND *The Art of Rap* (film)

March 28 *The Art of Rap* (film)

SECTION VIII: Feminist Politics and Postfeminist Culture

March 31 “Introduction: Feminist Politics and Postfeminist Culture” by Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra

April 2 “Branding Consumer Citizens: Gender and the Emergence of Brand Culture” by Sarah Banet-Weiser

April 4 “Get Your Freak On: Sex, Babies, and Images of Black Femininity” by Patricia Hill Collins

April 7 “Divas, Evil Black Bitches, and Bitter Black Women: African American Women in Postfeminist and Post-Civil-Rights Popular Culture” by Kimberly Springer

April 9 “Subjects of Rejuvenation: Aging in Postfeminist Culture” by Sadie Wearing

SECTION IX: Globalization and the Feminization of Labor: Representation in Popular Culture

April 11 “Engendering Globalization” by Mary E. Hawkesworth

April 14 “Maid in Hollywood: Producing Latina Labor in an Anti-immigration Imaginary” by Isabel Molina-Guzmán

April 16 “The Nanny Dilemma” by Susan Cheever

April 18 “Blowups and Other Unhappy Endings” by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo

SECTION X: Resistance, Activism, and Critical Consciousness

April 21 “Everyday Resistance: Saying No to White Supremacy” by bell hooks

April 23 “Ending Racism: Working for Change” by bell hooks

April 25 **Race Analysis in Popular Culture Essay due at 10:10am (hardcopy only)**

April 28 “The Practice of Love” by bell hooks

April 30 “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”

May 2 EXAM 2 Review Day

May 6 Final Exam (8:00am-10:00am)