

Contemporary Theories of Race and Ethnicity (Am St 526)

American Studies Program

Thompson Hall 19 (Tu 1:25 pm to 4:15 pm)

Spring 2016

Dr. Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo

clugo@wsu.edu

Wilson-Short Hall 116

335-2889 (o)

Tu 9:00 am to 10:25 am and by appointment

White supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.

—Charles Mills

The historical legacy of racial identities will always carry as a central feature the history of racism, and in this way there is an association of race with racism, but *future* meanings of racial identity itself are open ended.

—Linda Martín Alcoff

Migrant imaginaries, as articulated by subaltern groups, rarely break into the closed domain of national sovereignty.

—Alicia Schmidt Camacho

For quite some time, many observers have held that money and interracial sex would solve the race problem, and, indeed, in some cases, they have. Nonetheless, poverty in a dark skin endures as the opposite of whiteness, driven by an age-old social yearning to characterize the poor as permanently other and inherently inferior.

—Nell Irvin Painter

Systemic racism can and will eventually be replaced with a more humane and just political-economic system, or U.S. society will not likely survive in the long term.

—Joe Feagin

Course Objectives and Rationale: In general terms, this course seeks to develop a clearer understanding and stronger grasp of contemporary theories engaging with conceptions of race and ethnicity by offering an overview of contemporary literature developing conceptualizations of race, ethnicity, racialization, and racism both within the US and transnationally. Given the time constraints of an academic semester, the course cannot be exhaustive in its coverage of authors and topics. Instead, I chose texts that can be seen as representative of the current literature (from the onset of the millennium to the “present”) dedicated to articulating explanations involving phenomena related to race/ethnicity and racism.

Caveat: Although I use the sociological concept of racialization (i.e., the processes by which “we” develop and attach meaning to socially-articulated racial categories and dynamics), it is imperative that we talk about racism. Thus, although we will talk about the more clinical/sanitized concepts racialization, racial/ethnic categories, racial dynamics, and race relations, such discussions will always and unfailingly be grounded in discussions of racism, its horrible faces, and its significant history.

And just so we are all on the same page, racism is not the equivalent of individual demonstrations of prejudice or individual acts of discrimination, for although these can certainly, and without question, be informed by racism, they are NOT racism. Racism can be defined and should be understood in ways that transcend the individual, always positioning the dynamics of social institutions, and the endurance of social structures at the center. To that effect, I offer the following definitions of racism:

- (1) A principle of *social domination* by which a racial or ethnic group seen as inferior or different from the mainstream group is systematically disadvantaged, exploited, controlled, and/or oppressed by another group.
- (2) An ideology that certain ethnic or racial groups are biologically (and thus socially) inferior to other groups and the systematic and institutionalized practices of domination and exploitation that result from such an ideology.
- (3) The institutional processes by which people within certain racial categories are systemically and systematically disadvantaged and oppressed.

Although somewhat simple, these definitions capture the heart of racism as a societal manifestation with tangible consequences and ramifications. The bottom line is that although some of the authors we will be reading and discussing in class may talk about “racists” (meaning individuals), these “racists” could not operate the way they do without the systemic infrastructure to back them up. Otherwise, a “racist comment,” would be just that.

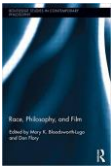
Texts for the class: *The Bookie* and *Crimson and Grey* are both supposed to have the texts. I, however, knowing how bureaucracy operates, assigned articles that can be found online and are available on blackboard for the second week of the semester. Thus, we are not starting to discuss the books until the third week. That will give you ample time to get a hold of the books, “by any [legal] means necessary”—and I know I’m butchering Malcom X’s words and intent, my apologies to him.

So I’m saying all this, because I do not want to hear “I have not been able to get/find the books” from anyone. I do not even allow my (CES) 101 students to get away with that. To paraphrase what I usually tell them, given the world of hyper-connectivity in which we live, there are plenty of venues, ways, and opportunities for you to get a hold of a copy of the books we are reading this semester. So make sure you have (access to) the books/readings when you need them.

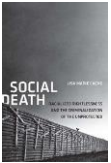
Books (listed alphabetically by author's last name):



Alcoff, L.M. 2006. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-513734-7



Bloodsworth-Lugo, M.K., and D. Flory. 2014. *Race Philosophy and Film*. New York: Routledge ISBN: 978-1138921900



Cacho, L. M. 2012. *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York: NYU Press. 978-0814723760



Camacho, A.S. 2008. *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the US Borderlands*. New York: NYU Press. ISBN: 978-0814716496.



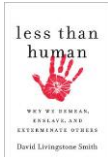
Feagin, J. 2013. *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415635226



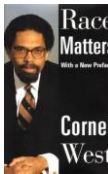
Mills, C. 1999. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. ISBN: 978-0801484636



Painter, N. I. 2011. *The History of White People*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0393339741



Smith, D.L. 2011. *Less than Human*. New York: St. Martin's Press. ISBN: 978-1250003836.



West, C. 2001. *Race Matters*. Boston: Beacon Press. ISBN: 978-0679749868.

Readings on BlackBoard (listed alphabetically by author's last name):

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and David Dietrich. 2011. "The Sweet Enchantment of Color-Blind Racism in Obamerica." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 2011. 634: March. Pp.190-206. DOI: 10.1177/0002716210389702.

Dyson, Michael E. 2015. "The Ghost of Cornel West: What Happened to the Most Exciting Black Scholar?" *New Republic*. <https://newrepublic.com/article/121550/cornel-wests-rise-fall-our-most-exciting-black-scholar-ghost>.

Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2013. "Does Racial Formation Theory Lack the Conceptual Tools to Understand Racism?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 36.6, pp. 994-999.

Rutledge, Dennis. "Convergences and Divergences on Race Theorizing: A Critical Assessment of Race Formation Theory and Systemic Racism Theory." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 36.6, pp. 982-988.

Winant, Howard. 2006. "Race and Racism: Towards a Global Future." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 29:5. Pp. 986-1003.

Winant, Howard. 2008. "Dealing with Racism in the Age of Obama." *The Huffington Post*. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/howard-winant/dealing-with-racism-in->

th_b_141634.html?view=print.

Requirements:

Attendance and participation (10 points): I will say two things: (1) Not coming to class every week shows a lack a professionalism, which will severely affect your grade; and (2) not participating in in-class discussions shows that either you are not ready to be in a graduate program or you are here to take knowledge from others without contributing back, which will also affect your grade severely. Listening to your peers is an important part of the process, of course, but so is thoughtfully responding to their ideas. The academic world is fundamentally constituted by a constant sharing of knowledge, and this can only be done by being present, listening, and speaking up.

Weekly Discussions (Discussant 20 points; Respondent 10 points): At the beginning of the term you will sign up to lead a discussion (i.e., be a discussant) of one of our readings during the semester. The presentation involves a brief summary (15-20 minutes) of the readings' key points, a brief analysis (an extra 5-10 minutes), and finally, two or three questions to help start the discussion (2-5 minutes). You will also sign up to do one response (i.e., be a respondent) to a classmate's discussion during the semester. Responses should not take more than 15 minutes, focusing on the discussant's take of the reading and also providing your classmates with several questions to pursue during the ensuing discussion.

- ✓ When you are a discussant, you will need to send the respondent your discussion points via electronic messaging no later than the previous Sunday @ 12 noon. You will copy me in your message and will lose one point for every hour you are late with your message. After 10 hours, you will lose the entirety of the points for the discussion.

Questions and Quotes (Q & Q's) (15 points total): Each week you will need to submit (in class) one typed question and one typed quote from the readings assigned for the week. Pose open-ended questions, not questions that ask your audience to regurgitate "facts," or that can be answered with a "yes" or "no." Your question could address a specific reading, or a theme running through several readings/chapters. Quotes may be anything from the readings that resonates with you. Along with the quote, write a paragraph or two explaining why you find the quote significant. Q & Q's may be used to facilitate class discussion.

Final paper (30 points): Your final paper should be an article-length (ie, fifteen- to twenty-page) theoretical analysis of an aspect of contemporary articulations of race, ethnicity, race relations and/or racism as they take place in US society. It is due on Monday, May 2, 2016.

Paper presentations (15 points): We will leave the last two days of class for presentations. At some point I will ask you to sign up for a time slot and during your time you will present the main points of your final paper. You will prepare to speak for roughly fifteen (and no more than twenty) minutes, identifying and providing a few key details about your argument(s) and themes.

Policies:*Cellular Phones and other Communication Devices*

I am including here the statement I unfailingly include in my undergraduate syllabi, because I want you to understand how much the use of cellular phones in the classroom really (really) bothers me. So please, read it and turn everything off. Here is the statement:

Turn your cell phones and communication devices off before coming to class (that includes laptop computers and tablets—even if your device lacks an internet connection—and any other electronic device utilized to communicate with the world outside our classroom). Of course, MP3 players and other gadgets used for entertainment are also prohibited. The world can survive without getting a hold of you for an hour and fifteen minutes. And you will also survive without knowing what’s going on outside the classroom for a few minutes. If, for a reason I cannot fathom at this point, you forget to neutralize your communication device, and it does go off during class, you will annoy the heck out of me, and will have the option of (1) turning it off immediately, or (2) handing it to me and letting me answer it. You will take full responsibility for what happens when/if you allow me to answer your phone. If your device goes off more than once during the semester, I will deduct points (at my discretion and without notifying you) from your attendance and participation points. I may also ask you to leave the classroom.

- ✓ *If I catch you “texting” during class, I will confiscate you phone and will make you stand in front of the entire class to share with your classmates why you were texting, who you were texting, and the content of your message. You will also lose points for attendance and participation (see explanation above). Finally, under those circumstances, I reserve the right to keep your phone in my office until one of two things happens: (1) you drop the class, or (2) the semester ends.*
- ✓ *But what if I want to take notes using my computer?—you may ask. Here is my standard answer: for over a century now, students have been able to take notes using a pad of paper and a pen or a pencil. This method has worked for generations of students, so it will work for you as well.*

As you can see, phones and gadgets in the classroom, aggravate me to no end. So I would strongly encourage you to forget your phone exists while class is in session.

Communicating in the Classroom

While obviously we should avoid abusive and hateful speech, I also want to encourage you to exercise your right to academic freedom in thoughtful, intellectually honest ways.

Official University Statement on Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417

to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

Campus Safety Plan/Emergency Information: In the interest of campus safety and emergency procedures, please become familiar with the information available on the following WSU-provided websites:

- ✓ <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu> (Campus Safety Plan);
- ✓ <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> (Emergency Management Website); and
- ✓ <http://alert.wsu.edu> (WSU Alert Site).

Plagiarism

If I actually have to ask graduate students not to plagiarize their work, something has gone terribly wrong in the educational process. So I won't ask. I will, however, use this space as a "teachable moment," and suggest that plagiarism is one of those "isms" (much like racism) that allows certain individuals/groups to take advantage of and use others while presenting themselves as something they are not, at the expense of those being used. I will also use this space to request, as kindly as I am able, that you do your own darn work. If you do not, the repercussions will be massive, involving the Department Chair, university officials and procedures (including the Student Conduct Office), and a not-so-pretty F in your transcript.

READING SCHEDULE SPRING 2016

Tuesday, January 12

Introductions, syllabus, and all those things we are supposed to do on the first day of class.

Tuesday, January 19

1. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David Dietrich's "The Sweet Enchantment of Color-Blind Racism in Obamerica."
2. Tanya Golash-Boza's "Does Racial Formation Theory Lack the Conceptual Tools to Understand Racism?"
3. Rutledge Dennis' "Convergences and Divergences on Race Theorizing."
4. Howard Winant's "Race and Racism: Towards a Global Future."
5. Howard Winant's "Dealing with Racism in the Age of Obama."

Tuesday, January 26

6. Cornel West's *Race Matters*.
7. Dyson's "The Ghost of Cornel West."

Tuesday, February 2

8. Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract*.

Tuesday, February 9

9. Joe Feagin's *The White Racial Frame*.

Tuesday, February 16

10. Nell Irvin Painter's *The History of White People* (pp. ix-200).

Tuesday, February 23

11. Nell Irvin Painter's *The History of White People* (pp. 201-399).

Tuesday, March 1

12. Linda M. Alcoff's *Visible Identities* (pp. vii-150).

Tuesday, March 8

13. Linda M. Alcoff's *Visible Identities* (pp. 151-300).

Tuesday, March 15

Spring Vacation

Tuesday, March 22

14. Alicia S. Camacho's *Migrant Imaginaries*.

Tuesday, March 29

15. Lisa M. Cacho's *Social Death*.

Tuesday, April 5

16. David L. Smith's *Less than Human*.

Tuesday, April 12

15. Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo and Dan Flory's *Race Philosophy and Film*

Tuesday, April 19
Student Project Presentations

Tuesday, April 25
Student Project Presentations (cont.)
Reminder: Final Papers due Monday, May 2, 2016

Grading Scale

A	94 points or above
A-	90 to 93 points
B+	87 to 89 points
B	84 to 86 points
B-	80 to 83 points
C+	77 to 79 points
C	74 to 76 points
C-	70 to 73 points
D+	67 to 69 points
D	60 to 66 pints
F	59 points and below