

CES 301: Race and Global Inequality (3 credits)
Spring 2016
CUE 114
MWF 2:10 - 3:00

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office hours:
T 1:30 - 3:30

and by appointment

The philosophy of the course syllabus

There are two general kinds of course syllabus: the recipe and the map. The syllabus-as-recipe provides a literal, formal, precise set of rules that govern every minute of every class meeting, from which deviation is viewed as disruptive and is therefore discouraged. In the first week, you may look at the recipe-syllabus and know exactly what will be happening in class midway through the second meeting of the twelfth week. The map-syllabus, on the other hand, provides a suggestive, informal sense of where the course begins and where it intends to go. It is flexible and allows for, even shows, alternative routes for deviations. Under institutional and economic pressures, college courses are increasingly required to be “accountable” and quantitative, to adopt the recipe-syllabus. The result is an outcomes-oriented course that, like standardized tests, forces teachers and students to conform to an institutionally determined template for “learning.” Here, the syllabus will serve as a map, in an effort to be more student-centered and responsive to current events and the demands of social justice and real education.

Course texts

Delia D. Aguilar and Anne E. Lacsamana, eds. *Women and Globalization*. Humanity, 2004.
Ben Crow and Suresh K. Lodha. *The Atlas of Global Inequality*. U of California P, 2011.
Edwidge Danticat. *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. Princeton UP, 2010.
Mike Davis. *Planet of Slums*. Verso, 2007.
Claudia Rankine. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Graywolf, 2014.

We will also read or view various handouts, films, and Web sites. You are responsible for keeping up with these as they are assigned.

Introduction, course description, learning goals, learning outcomes

Though not directly linked to CES 201, this course will continue the work of contextualization begun in that course. Now we expand our focus to the globe. While a course titled “Race and Global Inequality” could conceivably exist in other departments such as history and political science, it exists here because the central goal of Ethnic Studies is social justice. This is a political work, and yet it is every bit as academically and intellectually rigorous as the work of those other departments. We could even argue that, in order to reach our political goal convincingly, we must be even more intellectually rigorous than those departments. In any case, the most important tool for doing good work in this course will be critical reading and thinking.

In fifteen weeks, we cannot cover all the world’s injustices and inequalities. We will look at some of them, and hope to perceive patterns that might help us understand injustices elsewhere. This entails risk, of course. But the particularities of multiple colonizations beg to be known. Many native Hawaiians, for example, insist that their stories be told separately from those of Asian Americans. And so we might be wisest to look for patterns only in the *processes*

of racism, colonization, sexism, and what Vandana Shiva calls corporate globalization—while acknowledging that the *effects* of these injustices may well differ, depending on context.

In an essay in the MLA's *Profession 2006* Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues, "An irony of globalization is that the globe is shrinking into a village because of information technology and yet its divisions of culture have deepened" (37). He goes on to blame these divisions on "varieties of fundamentalism: ethnic, racial, and nationalist," and explains:

Democracy becomes defined as the right of capital to move freely within and across states but not as the right of labor. Racism, which also takes the extreme form of religious bigotry through the boast 'my race is the chosen race,' has become more pronounced, and as a result some countries are even calling for the erection of actual physical barriers around their territories. (37-38)

Claiming that racism is becoming a more serious threat to global justice, he goes against a trend among political, media, and corporate leaders, who assume that racism is such "old news" that we no longer need such Civil Rights-era legislation as Affirmative Action and voting-rights laws. And if he is right to observe that democracy exists for capital but not for workers, and that this problem crosses national borders, then the work of global justice is truly difficult.

Our goals include a pursuit of answers to these questions:

- 1) How can Ethnic Studies cross borders and examine global inequalities?
- 2) To what extent, if any, are global inequalities merely an extension of inequalities within a nation such as the United States?
- 3) To what extent must resistance be localized? and to what extent must it be globalized?
- 4) Given the massive scale of global inequalities, how can we measure progress?
- 5) How can we think and write critically about injustices and resistances?
- 6) How can we think and write critically without co-opting the voices of oppressed peoples who live thousands of miles away?
- 7) How can we turn resistance into justice?

As for learning outcomes, by semester's end we should achieve the following goals: 1) general knowledge of the history of racism and inequality in the United States, 2) ability to apply that knowledge to a knowledge of the history of racisms and inequalities elsewhere, 3) ability to recognize similarities and differences in these two sets of knowledge, 4) recognition of the role of political economies in those histories, 5) awareness of efforts at resistance by victims of local and global injustices, 6) understanding of what lasting justice might demand of both victims and profiteers of injustice. Because achievement of these goals may be uneven, may overlap, and will surely involve frequent returns to previously studied injustices, no timeline for these goals is possible or desirable. Moreover, because it is the aforementioned institutional pressures that demand a timeline—in their insistence that "student learning outcomes . . . are observable and measurable" (see *WSU Syllabus Checklist*, August 7, 2013, page 7), an insistence that seems like a naïve and paranoid threat to police classrooms—the interests of historically marginalized peoples are best served only by demonstrating and using our knowledge, not measuring it.

Requirements

Attendance: Attendance is required. After the fifth class meeting, I will distribute an attendance signup sheet, and then you will be permitted three unexcused absences, after which each absence results in deduction of one-third of a letter grade for the course. Any absence is unexcused if it is not legitimate and not cleared with me in advance. **Your ninth unexcused absence results in an automatic F in the course.** As our readings and discussions will consider theory and

application, attendance is especially important. Therefore, **doctors' appointments, study sessions for other classes, and career fairs are *not* excusable absences.** Do not come to me late in the semester with explanations for earlier absences. It is your responsibility to let me know as soon as possible about excusable absences. If you wait till weeks later, those absences will not be excused. You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, leave only when class is over, and participate in an informed and thoughtful manner. These policies are absolute, and they are not negotiable.

Participation: Class discussions will depend on your reading the assigned texts and coming to class ready to talk about them. Participation takes many forms: discussing issues raised in class or in our texts, keeping up with local and national and global events that are relevant to our work, joining an activist group working for social justice, writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or Web site on an issue we discuss, even presenting your research at an academic conference. Some form of participation is required. If you do not participate, do not expect to get a high grade.

Journals: You will write four journals. The first three will cover a single book each, but the fourth will cover both Danticat and the Atlas, two very different books. Each journal must clearly identify and respond to the text. For Davis, Rankine, Danticat, and the Atlas, write a one-sentence statement of each reading's thesis or argument, and explain, in 300 to 500 words, why it is (or is not) persuasive. I will give you special instructions for your journal on Aguilar and Lacsamana.

Final paper: Your final paper must be five to seven pages, engaging an issue we discuss and read about. Though the paper itself is due near the end of the term, you will start working on it early. This early assignment will be a proposal, a one-page typed statement of a problem in global inequality that you wish to explore in detail, with your plan for researching and covering the issue. On a second page, you will write a tentative bibliography, naming at least three sources. In the last three weeks you will present your paper before the class.

Here is a breakdown of the course grading, based on a 400-point system:

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|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Attendance and participation | 15 percent (60 points) |
| Journals | 20 percent (80 points) |
| Proposal | 10 percent (40 points) |
| Paper | 50 percent (200 points) |
| Presentation | 5 percent (20 points) |

Course policies and community standards

Ideally, each class meeting will be a lively, student-directed and student-centered discussion of our course material. Short of that ideal, you will still come to class prepared to discuss readings assigned for that day. I hope we will model a good community, driven by shared concerns and goals even when we disagree. To do well, please note the following guidelines:

1) For all reading assignments, be sure to read authors' explanatory footnotes and to scan their sources. *Bring the assigned reading to class.*

2) No written assignments will be accepted late unless cleared, for good and documented reason, in advance. Nor will they be accepted through e-mail unless cleared in advance.

3) All written assignments must be typed, in standard font and margins, and stapled. Number your pages. Your final paper should have a title.

4) Extra credit opportunities exist. You are responsible for keeping up with events on campus or in the area and letting me and your classmates know about them in advance, so that you may write a one-page analysis of them. Each analysis is worth 5 points.

5) If, in any written assignments, you use information or ideas from other sources, whether you are quoting or merely paraphrasing, you must cite those sources. This is true even when your sources are interviewees for oral histories.

6) Do not read outside material in class, and turn off phones and all other media devices unless you can show that you are using them for note-taking.

7) You may choose your citation style—whether MLA, Chicago, Turabian, APA, AMA, CBE, Harvard, or any other—but you must remain consistent. Do not mix styles.

8) I will be very disappointed if, at some time during the semester, you don't find extremely distasteful or disagreeable a comment made by me or a classmate. Argue—defend your position, demonstrating your knowledge of history. But do so respectfully. Name-calling is not educational. Nor is hate speech.

9) The best way to show your respect is by listening. Cultivate good listening skills, if you have not done so already. And ask questions.

10) Consider others' views. Reflect on your own social location and your privileges.

11) Learn a historically informed definition of racism—Ruth Wilson Gilmore's definition at the end of this syllabus is a good place to start—and challenge all racist discourse.

12) Reflect your own grasp of history and social relations by respecting shy and quiet classmates, and by deferring to each others' experiences.

13) Finally, understand and consider the rage of people who are victims of systematic injustice. James Baldwin wrote that people of color have an obligation to feel and express rage over this nation's history of racism. If injustice does not fill you with rage, then you should ask yourself why.

Note on language: In our readings and discussions you may encounter words or phrases that will be, to some sensibilities, coarse or vulgar or racist. By themselves, no “mere” words are offensive. What makes a word vulgar or racist is its usage by a particular speaker in a particular context. Insensitive white men complain that, for example, they are not allowed to say the “n word” without being labeled racist but that black men use it among themselves all the time. To “earn” the right to that word, they must first endure 500 years of racism. When you see and hear such words, consider their context. Who speaks them? Why? And to whom?

While in this course no words or phrases will be absolutely forbidden—that is, we will not serve as Language Police—still you should bear in mind the implications of your language, not for reasons of “political correctness” but to demonstrate both your intelligence and your sensitivity to historically marginalized peoples. For example, historically, who has used the term “colored people” and why? Should you use it? Why or why not?

No student may, under any circumstances, electronically record lectures or class content without express written permission.

Academic integrity: “Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student caught cheating on any assignment will be given an F grade for the course and will be reported to the Office of Student Standards and Accountability. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/standards-of-conduct/>. It is strongly suggested

that you read and understand these definitions and standards. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will result in your failing the course.”

Academic honesty is much easier to achieve than academic dishonesty, if only you observe Course Policy 6 above: Whenever you use someone else’s information or ideas, cite the source. In some styles, if you write a five-sentence paragraph and use a source for all five sentences, even if it is the same source for all the sentences, you must cite that source in every sentence. If you cite your source only at the end of the paragraph, then you have plagiarized the first four sentences (unless you use a style that permits this), and your grade will be lowered. This is not negotiable. You are expected to know the rules. In college, ignorance is no excuse.

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 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: Pullman or WSU Online: 509-335-3417; <http://accesscenter.wsu.edu>.”

Safety and Emergency Notification: “Classroom and campus safety are of paramount importance at Washington State University, and are the shared responsibility of the entire campus population. WSU urges students to follow the ‘**Alert, Access, Act**’ protocol for all types of emergencies and the ‘*Run, Hide, Fight*’ response for an active shooter incident. Remain **ALERT** (through direct observation or emergency notification, **ASSESS** your specific situation, and **ACT** in the most appropriate way to ensure your own safety (and the safety of others if you are able). Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the FBI’s *Run, Hide, Fight* video and visit the WSU Safety Portal.”

Schedule

Note: Assignments are subject to change. You are responsible for keeping up with changes.

Jan 11: Course and community introductions.

Jan 13: Read Atlas, Introduction and first three sections of Chapter 1, pp 9-21.

Jan 15: Read Atlas, rest of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, pp 22-38. Discuss Occupy Wall Street.

Jan 18: No class. MLK Day.

Jan 20: Read Atlas, chapters 3 and 4.

Jan 22: Read *Women*, Introduction.

Jan 25: Read *Women*, chapter 2.

Jan 27: Read *Women*, chapter 4.

Jan 29: Read *Women*, chapter 5.

Feb 1: Read *Women*, chapter 6.

Feb 3: Read *Women*, chapter 8.

Feb 5: Read *Women*, chapter 11.

Feb 8: Read *Women*, chapter 12.

Feb 10: Read *Women*, chapter 14.

Feb 12: Read Rankine, 1-38. FIRST JOURNAL DUE (on *Women*).

Feb 15: No class. Presidents Day.

Feb 17: Read Rankine, 39-162.

Feb 19: Read Davis, chapter 1. PROPOSAL DUE.

Feb 22: Read Davis, chapter 2. SECOND JOURNAL DUE (on Rankine).

Feb 24: Read Davis, chapter 3.

Feb 26: Read Davis, chapter 4.

Feb 29: Read Davis, chapter 5.

Mar 2: Read Davis, chapter 6.

Mar 4: Read Davis, chapter 7.

Mar 7: Read Davis, chapter 8 and Epilogue.

Mar 9: Read Danticat, chapter 1. THIRD JOURNAL DUE (on Davis).

Mar 11: Read Danticat, chapter 2.

Week of March 14: Spring break.

Mar 21: Read Danticat, chapters 3-8.

Mar 23: Read Danticat, chapters 9 and 10.

Mar 25: Read Danticat, chapter 11.

Mar 28: Read Danticat, chapter 12.

Mar 30: Read Atlas, chapter 5.

Apr 1: Read Atlas, chapter 7.

Apr 4: Read Atlas, chapter 6.

Apr 6: Read Atlas, chapter 8.

Apr 8: PAPER PRESENTATIONS. FOURTH JOURNAL DUE (on Danticat and Atlas).

Apr 11: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 13: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 15: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 18: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 20: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 22: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 25: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 27: PAPER PRESENTATIONS.

Apr 29: FINAL PAPER DUE. End of semester errands and final notes.

A useful definition of racism: Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2005. 28.