

Race and Racism in U.S. Popular Culture

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CES 260
Wednesday 2:10-5:00
220 College Hall

Office Hours:
Wednesdays 1:00-2:00
and by appointment

It is impossible to understand race in the United States without examining the messages and media of American popular culture; it is impossible to appreciate the significance of American popular culture without considering racial images, identities, and ideologies. They are bound to one another in profound and disturbing ways. An understanding of the relationships is crucial: popular culture is not merely fun or entertaining or profitable; rather it has always been central to the production and reproduction race as well as to the reiteration and reinterpretation of racism.

Learning Goals

This course will enhance student capacities to...

1. discuss race and racism critically;
2. explain their place in popular culture;
3. locate themselves as consumers, fans, and critics of pop culture;
4. explain the fundamental social forces, political arrangements, and historical conditions shaping the production of race and racism in popular culture;
5. interpret popular texts (songs, films, and so on); make sense not only of ideas and arguments in texts, but also of the contexts in which they were produced and circulated;
6. identify and think critically about problems; synthesize ideas, evidence, arguments, and knowledge to innovatively produce original analysis, ideas, and solutions;
7. determine information needed, access information efficiently, and use information effectively in course assignments;
8. communicate concepts, arguments, and beliefs coherently.

Required Readings

There is one required book in this class.

Rebecca Lind, ed. *Race/Class/Gender/Media*, 3rd Edition (Pearson, 2012).

It is available to rent or purchase at the Bookie or Crimson and Grey; copies may also be obtained online. As needed, I can place it on reserve as well. Additional readings will be provided online and in class.

Expectations and Policies

This course emphasizes active learning. It stresses discovery, analysis, and application through listening talking, reading, reflecting, and writing. It sets aside lecturing in favor of interaction and discussion. Given the subject of the class, our explorations demand respect and sensitivity; open and honest communication will prove essential to understanding. All participants are expected to come to class prepared, to be engaged once in class, and to contribute to our ongoing discussions. A few points of etiquette warrant reiteration:

- **Treat others with respect and courtesy.**
- **Show up to class on time.** Students arriving late or leaving early disrupt the class and should not anticipate receiving credit for attendance.
- **Do the readings and assignments.**
- **Do not have private conversation in class.**
- **Do not read the paper or work on assignments for other classes.**
- **Turn your cell phones off. Stow laptops.**

This is a reading intensive, discussion oriented class, thus I expect each student to carefully read and think critically about the assigned readings and come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussion, group activities, and individual writing assignments. Student participation will be evaluated on quality as well as quantity. If you remain quiet throughout the semester or rarely express yourself, you can expect to your participation grade to suffer accordingly. Of course, one cannot participate, if s/he does not attend class. Students are expected to attend every class and will be awarded points for each day that they do. Missing class for legitimate, documented reasons (such as school sponsored event or illness) will be excused; oversleeping, job interview, work, dental visit and the like are important to be sure, but not legitimate reasons to miss class.

Academic Integrity

PLAGARISM OR CHEATING OF ANY KIND ON ANY ASSIGNMENT WILL NOT BE TOLLERATED AND WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE IN THE COURSE. (Consult the WSU Student Handbook for further details). I encourage students to collaborate, study together, and talk about ideas raised in class with their peers, but I expect each student to do her/his own work. If ideas or words belong to another give them credit. The WSU Libraries have a useful webpage, including helpful tutorials, here: <http://libraries.wsu.edu/library-instruction/plagiarism>.

Access and Accommodations

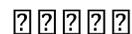
Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center (<http://accesscenter.wsu.edu>). All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center. Please stop by (Washington Building, Room 217), call (509-335-3417) or send an email (access.center@wsu.edu) to make an appointment with an Access Advisor.

Commitment to Campus Safety

Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the Pullman campus. As part of this commitment, the university has prepared this Campus Safety Plan, containing a listing of university policies, procedures, statistics and information relating to campus safety, emergency management and the health and welfare of the campus community. See: <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/> and <http://oem.wsu.edu/>.

Office Hours

As noted above, I will hold regular office hours each week (Wednesdays 1:00-2:00). Come see me if you are intrigued by something you read about for class or that was said in class and would like to read more about it. Come see me if you are puzzled or troubled about something that was said in class. Come see me if you need help with the term project, writing assignments, or readings. Come see me to talk about your grade. Come see me if you have ideas about how to make the course better.



The best way to communicate with me is via email. I check it regularly and will do my best to respond within 24 hours (except for weekends, holidays, and when I am away from campus). If you cannot make my office hours or simply find it more convenient to use electronic mail, let me know via computer what is troubling, perplexing, and/or inspiring you.

Grading

Please Note: Students must complete each of these components to pass the class.

In Class Work (20%)

Four key components comprise this component of the course:

- (1) attendance,
- (2) participation,
- (3) collaborative work, and
- (4) writing, including media analyses, free writes, and if needed quizzes.

Attendance is expected. Students will be allowed 2 free days.

Note: Students missing more than 5 classes will fail the course.

Each class will require in class writing. These will range from short reflections to focus students, prime discussion, assess understanding, and identify areas for clarification to responses to media shown in class. If students collectively slack on the readings or fail to participate, I will institute quizzes.

The success or failure of this class (both in terms of pleasure and learning) derives from the active, thoughtful, and respectful involvement of everyone. Consequently, I will evaluate students daily for their contribution to class discussions. Participation is not simply about talking regularly in class (although this helps). Rather, I will take into consideration what is said, how it contributes to ongoing conversations, how it engages readings, films, ideas, and peers. A few suggestions: come to class prepared; take notes on films and readings; bring questions; anticipate differing opinions; listen; think. **Note: Students, who text, do homework, or otherwise distract and disrespect the class, will not receive credit for participation on that day.**

Brief Writing Assignments (30%)

Each week students will be asked to engage the readings and apply ideas.

Take Home Exams (50%)

There are two take home exams in this course.

- A cumulative and comparative discussion of key ideas and themes. Due 26 Oct.
- A final encouraging critical and creative engagement with central problems of the class. Due 14 Dec.

Course Schedule

24 Aug	Key Terms 1: Race and Racism	
31 Aug	Key Terms 2: Pop Culture	Lind, 1; Storey ; Fiske ; Lipsitz
7 Sept	Boundaries: Difference	Lind, 2.1, 2.2, 3.6, 6.2
14 Sept	Belonging: Identity	Lind, 3.5, 4.1, 7.2
21Sept	Native Americans	Lind, 3.7, 5.6, 5.7, 6.4
28 Sept	Arab Americans	Lind, 3.4
5 Oct	Asian Americans	Lind, 3.2, 5.4, 7.5
12 Oct	Latinos	Lind, 5.2, 5.8
19 Oct	African Americans	Lind, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7
26 Oct	King in Germany	No Class. Take Home Exam.
2 Nov	Unpopular Culture	Readings to be Determined
9 Nov	Popular Theories of Racism	Readings to be Determined
16 Nov	King at ASA Conference	No Class.
23 Nov	Thanksgiving Break.	No Class.
30 Nov	Open	Readings to be Determined
7 Dec	Dead Week.	No Class.
14 Dec	Finals Week	Final Exam Due!