

READING RACE AT THE MILLENNIUM
COMM 2194/AADS 2194
Spring 2018

Professor Anjali Vats, J.D., Ph.D.
Tuesday & Thursday 1:30pm - 2:45pm
Gasson Hall 303

Office Hours
Tuesdays 10:30am - 1:00pm or By Appointment
St. Mary's Hall S455



Beyonce, Superbowl 2016

COURSE OVERVIEW

At the turn of the millennium, the United States appeared to be flourishing under the Clinton Administration. For many, particularly in the middle class, economic growth, a robust housing market, and the dot.com boom meant wealth, stability, and a high standard of living. Indeed, the biggest concern for a large subset of Americans was the “millennium bug” whose effects never materialized. However, not all Americans benefited from the apparent prosperity of the times. Indeed, the nation’s race and class

disparities were evident in heated debates over affirmative action, protests against police brutality, gangsta rap, the LA Riots, and anti-immigration policies. As the 2000s erased much of the fortune that middle class Americans had enjoyed in the late 90s, the effects of racial and class inequality became even more visible: the Great Recession, the subprime mortgage crisis, 9/11, military adventurism, genome mapping, post-politics, and global protests deepened racial divisions in the nation, particularly as income inequality grew at an alarming rate, culminating in widespread global protests like the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement, #BlackLivesMatter, and #SayHerName. Most recently, the resurgence of open and aggressive white supremacy across the nation has again turned the media's attention to questions of race and hate, problems that many misguidedly thought had already been solved.

Part history, part communication studies, and part cultural studies, this course will explore the ways in which the social and political events of the millennium have shaped race relations and theories of race in the United States. We will progress chronologically through the years from 2000 - 2017, discussing race-related historic events and their implications for race and race theory. The latter part of the semester will emphasize special topics and trends from the past five years. While the materials in the first part of the course will be drawn from academic sources, in the second part, we will read the work of bloggers and public intellectuals who shape contemporary debates on race and racism in the United States and abroad. Given the increasing of the importance of internet sources in debates over social and political issues, the assignments on the course will focus on teaching you to develop well-researched, and tightly argued opinions on issues of concern around race in President Donald Trump's America.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Describe major historical events related to race that occurred from 2000 - 2017;
- Understand historical and contemporary developments in race theory after the year 2000;
- Identify and explain multiple approaches to studying race at the millennium;
- Define and articulate key concepts in contemporary race theory;
- Lead a discussion on contemporary issues of concern; and
- Complete a thorough and insightful self-evaluation of your own learning.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Articles available from the course website and readings submitted by students.

ASSIGNMENTS

Below are brief descriptions of the assignments in this course. We will discuss each assignment in greater detail closer to its due date.

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|--|------------|
| • Exams (2 @ 250 points) | 500 points |
| • Current Events Presentation (1 @ 200 points) | 200 points |
| • Participation (10 @ 15 points) | 150 points |
| • Self-Evaluation (1 @ 150 points) | 150 points |

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS: We will have two **multiple-choice and short answer exams** which will test your understanding of the course reading, including key concepts and their definitions. These exams will take the entire class period and will be comprehensive of all preceding material.

CURRENT EVENTS PRESENTATION: You will be assigned one day on which you will **lead class discussion on a current event**. In order to do this, you will submit to me a long form piece of journalism

on a current event two weeks before your presentation date. In class, you will discuss the connections between that piece and the material for the day and lead class conversation for 10 - 12 minutes. You will also turn in a one, single-spaced page discussion of your ideas.

PARTICIPATION: Participation points can be earned in **three ways:** (1) by writing one-page response papers to the readings, (2) by handing in assignments on certain class days, and (3) by participating in class discussion. In order to receive points for in-class participation, which you must do at least 5 times in the semester, you must turn in a note card summarizing the comments that you shared in class that day by the end of class. All other participation assignments must also be turned in the same day by the end of the class. I reserve the right to adjust participation based on engagement, lateness, and other intangibles.

SELF-EVALUATION: For the final assignment for the course, you will write a **self-evaluation of your understanding of and relationship to race** over the course of the semester. This 5-6 page essay will help you to consider your ideas about race vis-à-vis the concepts we discuss in class.

GRADING

Grading will be done on a total points scale, calculated into a percentage, and translated as follows:

A	4.0	94 - 100%
A-	3.66	90 - 93%
B+	3.33	87 - 89%
B	3.0	84 - 86%
B-	2.66	80 - 83%
C+	2.33	77 - 79%
C	2.0	74 - 76%
C-	1.66	70 - 73%
D+	1.33	67 - 69%
D	1.0	64 - 66%
D-	.66	60 - 63%
F	0	59% or below

TALKING ABOUT RACE

We will discuss many controversial and difficult topics in this course that are often triggering. In doing so, we will strive to cultivate a safe classroom space in which each of us is comfortable expressing an opinion. Such a task requires respect, radical acceptance, thoughtfulness, and self-awareness. Harassing or discriminatory language and/or behavior or any other conduct which creates a hostile environment will not be tolerated. That is not to say we will not sometimes make mistakes in discussing difficult topics and negotiating our various identities but rather that we will continually strive to abide by the principles of safe space and address to the best of our abilities any missteps we have made.

Creating a safe space also requires attentiveness and engagement. Showing up late to class, texting, sleeping, and so on may result in you being asked to leave the classroom. If you have questions or concerns related to respect and openness, please do not hesitate to talk with me. My door is always open.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required as a condition of successful completion of all courses in the Department of Communication. It is your responsibility to follow up with your peers about any and all missed material.

The equivalent of 2 weeks of absence from any course will reduce a student's course grade by one full letter grade. Absence from a combined total of 3 weeks of class meetings will result in automatic failure of the course. Thus, if the class meets once a week, 3 missed sessions equals automatic failure. If a course meets twice a week, 6 missed sessions will result in failure of the course, and a combined total of 9 missed class sessions will result in automatic failure of a course that meets 3 times per week.

Absences for *any* reason are included in this total as per Department of Communication policy. This is not a punitive measure but a practical and pedagogical one given the dialogic nature of our course material and learning environment. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss 3 or more weeks of the course, then that student should not enroll in the course. Please note that there are no exceptions to any of these attendance policies as they are department level policy.

MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS

As a rule, there are no makeups for exams or presentations. Exceptions will only be made in the most extenuating of circumstances and only in the form of a research paper.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students will lose ten points per day an assignment is late. No assignment will be accepted more than 7 days after the due date. There are no exceptions to this policy.

EMAIL

As a general rule, I encourage you to come in to office hours to talk to me, *not* to email me. In my experience, most questions over email can either be answered by reading the syllabus or cannot be adequately answered by email at all. I find that face time not only helps students understand and engage with material but also creates the personal connections that help in talking about race.

If you choose to contact me by email, I will do my best to respond within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. I will not respond to emails regarding assignments that are due within 48 hours.

LAPTOPS & CELL PHONES

Cell phones and laptops are absolutely prohibited in class for any purpose. If you are caught using one, you will be asked politely to put it away the first time and asked to leave class each subsequent time.

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities.

GRADE DISPUTE POLICY

I am happy to discuss grade concerns with students. If you wish to discuss or challenge a grade, you must: (1) wait 24 hours after receiving your score, (2) email me a detailed paragraph summary of your concerns, and (3) make an appointment to meet with me, during office hours or another mutually agreeable time. Grade concerns will be considered for one week after papers are returned, after which time all grades are final. Please note that I will recheck your entire assignment and your grade can go down on reevaluation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Boston College's definitions of academic and personal misconduct are outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. It your responsibility to read and understand the expectations regarding your conduct. The faculty hold the highest standards of academic honesty for Boston College students. Because the faculty takes academic honesty so seriously, we remind all students in all courses of the academic integrity statement signed by all students upon matriculation at Boston College.

Please reread the statement carefully. Instances of cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty, or collusion will be treated seriously. Sanctions for such breaches of academic integrity will include failure of the course, ejection from the major, and/or expulsion from Boston College. All cases will be referred to the Department chairperson or the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Department of Communication policy requires written assignments to be handed in electronically and routinely checked for plagiarized material through a professional service.

A copy of the Statement on Academic Integrity from the College of Arts and Sciences is attached to the end of this syllabus for your review. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 16	<u>Course Introduction</u> Why Reading Race at the Millennium & Syllabus [Discussion] Hari Kondabolu, "2042 and the White Minority" [Media Screening]
January 18	<u>Race and the Millennial Moment</u> Current Events Presentation Guidelines [Handout] Howard Winant, "Race and Race Theory," <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 2000
January 23	<u>Race and the Millennial Moment (cont'd) – Samuela & Yanae</u> <i>black-ish</i> [Media Screening] Paula Ioanide, "Facts and Evidence Don't Work Here," in <i>The Emotional Politics of Racism</i> (Stanford University Press, 2015)
January 25	<u>Race and the Millennial Moment (cont'd) – Dinah & Javier</u> <i>Imported from Detroit</i> [Media Screening] Stuart Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes," in <i>The Media Reader</i> (Sage, 1990) Sara Boboltz and Kimberly Yam, <i>Huffington Post</i> , "Why Onscreen Representation Actually Matters," https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-on-screen-representation-matters_us_58aeae96e4b01406012fe49d
January 30	<u>Racial Feelings – Joe & Angelo</u> President H. W. Bush, <i>State of the Union</i> , 2002 [Media Screening] Douglas Kellner, "Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying: Presidential Rhetoric in the 'War on Terror,'" <i>Presidential Studies Quarterly</i> , 2007
February 1	<u>Racial Feelings (cont'd) – Liz & Dylan</u> Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," <i>Social Text</i> , 2004

- February 6** **Racial Feelings (cont'd) – Caroline & Whitney**
Glow [Media Screening]
 Leah Mirakhor, “The Hoodie and the Hijab: Arabness, Blackness, and the Figure of Terror,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 2015,
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/the-hoodie-and-the-hijab-arabness-blackness-and-the-figure-of-terror-james-baldwin/>
- February 8** **Generation E. A. – Allyson & Jessica**
Inauguration, President Barack Obama [Media Screening]
 Ellis Cashmore, “Buying Beyonce,” *Celebrity Studies*, 2010
 Ruth La Ferla, “Generation E. A.” *NYT*, 2003,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/28/style/generation-ea-ethnically-ambiguous.html>
- February 13** **“Generation E. A.” (cont'd) – Lucy F. & Mariah**
 LeiLani Nishime, “Multiracial Asian Americans and the Myth of the Mulatto Millennium,” in *Undercover Asian*, (University of Illinois Press, 2014)
- February 15** **“Paper Tigers” and Subprime Lenders – Lucy K. & Natasha**
 Ezra Yoo-Hyeok, “Globalization, Ideology, and Narratives of the East Asian Financial Crisis,” *Comparative Literature and Culture*, 2005
- February 20** **Hurricane Katrina**
 Selected News Clips and *When the Levees Broke* [Media Screenings]
- February 22** **Hurricane Katrina (cont'd) – Cassie & Sydney**
 Henry Giroux, “Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability,” *College Literature*, 2006
- February 27** **Naming Darfur**
Frontline: On Our Watch [Media Screening]
- March 1** **Naming Darfur (cont'd) - Nurun**
 Mahmood Mamdani, “The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency,” *London Review of Books*, 2007,
<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n05/mahmood-mamdani/the-politics-of-naming-genocide-civil-war-insurgency>
 David Lanz, “Save Darfur: A Movement and its Discontents,” *African Affairs*
- March 6** ***SPRING BREAK***
- March 8** ***SPRING BREAK***
- March 13** **Race and the Human Genome – Ellie & Yaejin**
 Jonathan Kahn, “Race-ing Patents/Patenting Race,” in *Race in a Bottle*, (Columbia University Press, 2012)
- March 15** *****EXAM #1*****

- March 20** **America’s Postracial President – Lily & Nick**
Barack Obama, *A More Perfect Union* [Media Screening]
Tim Wise, “The Rise and Triumph of Postracial Liberalism” in *Colorblind: The Rise of Postracial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity*, (City Lights Bookstore, 2013)
- March 22** **Empire in an Age of Postrace - Kevin**
Nikhil Pal Singh, “Beyond the Empire of Jim Crow: Race and War in Contemporary US Globalism,” *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, 2009
- March 27** **Revolution: The Arab Spring – Manny**
Tarik Ahmed Elseewi, “The Arab Spring: A Revolution of the Imagination,” *International Journal of Communication*, 2011
- March 29** *****EASTER BREAK*****
- April 3** **Revolution: Occupy Wall Street (cont’d) - Bianca**
Kenyon Farrow, “Occupy Wall Street’s Race Problem,” *American Prospect*, <http://prospect.org/article/occupy-wall-streets-race-problem>
Kevin DeLuca, Sean Lawson, and Ye Sun, “Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement,” *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 2012
- April 5** **Hashtag Activism – Amy & Zach**
The Colbert Report [Media Screening]
Suey Park and David Leonard, “In Defense of Twitter Feminism,” *Model View Culture* <https://modelviewculture.com/pieces/in-defense-of-twitter-feminism>
Noah Berlatsky, “Hashtag Activism Isn’t a Copout,” *The Atlantic*, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/01/not-just-hashtag-activism-why-social-media-matters-to-protestors/384215/>
Jay Caspian Kang, “The Campaign to ‘Cancel’ Colbert,” *The New Yorker*, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-campaign-to-cancel-colbert>
- April 10** **Hipster Racism – Amelia & Collin**
New Girl [Media Screenings]
Lindy West, “A Complete Guide to Hipster Racism,” *Jezebel*, 2012, <http://jezebel.com/5905291/a-complete-guide-to-hipster-racism>
Thea Lim, “A Historical Guide to Hipster Racism,” 2012, <http://www.racialicious.com/2012/05/02/a-historical-guide-to-hipster-racism/>
Heather Price-White, “*New Girl* Gets Away with Racism – And We Can’t Let that Slide in 2013,” *arts.mic*, 2013, <http://mic.com/articles/29751/new-girl-gets-away-with-racism-and-we-can-t-let-that-slide-in-2013>
- April 12** **Race and Gender in Popular Culture – Victor & Kiana**
Scandal and *Left of Black* [Media Screenings]
Self-Evaluation Guidelines [Handout]
Morgan Parker, “Why I’m Moving Out of Shondaland,” *For Harriet*, 2014, <http://www.forharriet.com/2014/12/why-im-moving-out-of-shondaland.html#axzz3kKIyPffM>
- April 17** *****NO CLASS – PRINCE FROM MINNEAPOLIS*****

April 19

Race and Social Protest: Sights, Sounds, and Bodies

Jamelle Bouie, "Michael Brown Wasn't a Superhuman Demon," Slate, 2014,
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/11/darren_wilson_s_racial_portrayal_of_michael_brown_as_a_superhuman_demon.html

Lisa Lebduska, "Racist Visual Rhetoric and Images of Trayvon Martin," Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric in Society, 2014,

<http://www.presenttensejournal.org/volume-3/racist-visual-rhetoric-and-images-of-trayvon-martin/>

April 24

Race and Social Protest: Sights, Sounds, and Bodies (cont'd)

Regina Bradley, "SANDRA BLAND: #SayHerName Loud or Not At All,"

<http://soundstudiesblog.com/2015/11/16/sandra-bland-sayhername-loud/>

Anusha Kedhar, "Hands Up Don't Shoot: Gesture, Choreography, and Protest in Ferguson," *Feminist Wire*, 2014,

<http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/protest-in-ferguson/>

April 26

*****EXAM #2*****

May 1

Racial Justice and Allyship

Khury Petersen-Smith and Brian Bean, "Fighting Racism and the Limits of Allyship," *Socialist Worker*, <http://socialistworker.org/2015/05/14/fighting-racism-and-the-limits-of-allyship>

M, "From Charity to Solidarity: A Critique of Ally Politics," 2016,

<https://roarmag.org/essays/ally-politics-racism-solidarity-critique/>

May 8

*****SELF-EVALUATIONS DUE*****

Statement on Academic Integrity from the College of Arts and Sciences

The College [of Arts and Sciences] expects all students to adhere to the accepted norms of intellectual honesty in their academic work. Any forms of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty or collusion in another's dishonesty is a fundamental violation of these norms.

CHEATING is the use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in any exam or other academic exercise submitted for evaluation. This includes data falsification; the fabrication of data; deceitful alteration of collected data included in a report; copying from another student's work; unauthorized cooperation in doing assignments or during an examination; the use of purchased essays, term papers, or preparatory research for such papers; submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from the instructor(s) involved; and dishonesty in requests for either extensions or papers or make-up examinations.

PLAGIARISM is the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data illustrative material, or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgment, and presenting them as one's own.

COLLUSION is assisting or attempting to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty. As part of your scholarly development, you must learn how to work cooperatively in a community of scholars and fruitfully utilize the work of others without violating the norms of intellectual honesty. You have a responsibility to learn the parameters of collaboration and the proper forms for quoting, summarizing and paraphrasing.

Faculty members who detect any form of academic dishonesty have the responsibility to take appropriate action. The faculty member also has the responsibility to report the incident and penalty to the Department Chairperson and the appropriate Class Dean. The report will remain in your student file until you graduate.

If the gravity of the offense seems to warrant it or if the faculty member prefers that another academic authority decide the matter, he or she may refer the case to a Dean. In addition, if the student is unwilling to accept the faculty member's decision, he or she may choose to have the matter adjudicated either by an Associate Dean or by an Administrative Board. The section of the College of Arts and Sciences in the Boston College Undergraduate Catalogue has further details about this process.

Academic integrity is a very important matter. If you have any questions in any of your courses about what is allowed or not allowed, please discuss the matter immediately with the instructor.