RACE AND US POLITICS (POSC 257)
Fall 2019

DESCRIPTION

This course is one part theoretical, presenting race as a multifaceted concept that is both a social construct and a social fact and considering the theory of social movements; One part historical, exploring how race in the United States has been constructed over time through institutions like the Census and in response to different waves of immigration; And one part political, surveying the politics of race in the United States from slavery to civil rights to the politics of race under Donald Trump. Throughout the course, we will toggle between the course material and current events with students contributing weekly media to a class discussion board.

The class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30am-12:50pm. Before class on Tuesdays students will each post a link to a piece of media they have consumed that week that they feel relates to the course on the class discussion board along with a paragraph stating the connection to the course. Before the beginning of class on Tuesdays, students will also submit one-page discussion papers responding to the readings. These papers will be graded on a ✔/✔+/✔- scale. On Tuesdays the class format will be a lecture followed by a five minute break. After the break, we will spend the second half of class either doing engaged learning activities or hearing from guest speakers. On Thursdays the class format will be a shorter lecture followed by a structured discussion then a 5 minute break. After the break, there will be a discussion of both the week’s reading and the media submitted by members of the class (students should look at the media submitted by their peers before Thursday’s class).

The class has an in-class midterm exam on Thursday, October 17. Students may opt to write a final exam on Thursday, December 19 or may write a final paper on a topic of their choice chosen in consultation with the instructor. Please note, if you want to write a final paper, you must indicate this to the instructor by Tuesday, October 29. Final papers will be due on Friday, December 20. Any extensions beyond this date must be taken up with your Dean.
OVERVIEW OF MEETINGS

*****Theory*****

Week 1 – What is Race?

Tuesday September 3, 2019 – Introduction to the course; “Why is a white lady teaching this class?”; Race and Political Science

Thursday September 5, 2019 – Race: Social Construct, Social Fact


Week 2 – Race and Democracy in the United States

Tuesday September 10, 2019


Thursday September 12, 2019

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

Week 3 – Critical Race Theory
Tuesday September 17, 2019


Thursday September 19, 2019

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

*****History*****

Week 4 – Race Before and at the Founding; Amherst College and Race

Tuesday September 24, 2019

Read the Feature Essays and Short Articles written by Amherst student, Christine Miranda, class of 2015 in her online exhibition *Beyond Lord Jeff*. [https://beyondlordjeff.wordpress.com/essay-index/](https://beyondlordjeff.wordpress.com/essay-index/)


Thursday September 26, 2019

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

Week 5 – The Living Legacy of Slavery

Tuesday October 1, 2019


**Thursday October 3, 2019**

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

**Week 6 – Civil Rights**

**Tuesday October 8, 2019**

Watch Part 5 of *Eyes on the Prize*.


**Thursday October 10, 2019**

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

**Week 7 – Midterm Exam**

*Tuesday October 15, 2019 – NO CLASS – MID-SEMESTER BREAK*

*Thursday October 17, 2019 – MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS*
Week 8 – Immigration and the Census

**Tuesday October 22, 2019**


Chan, Jason. "" Being Asian American Is a Lot Different Here": Influences of Geography on Racial Identity." *Journal of College Student Development* 58, no. 7 (2017): 1001-1017.


**Thursday October 24, 2019**

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

*****Politics*****

Week 9 – *Dog Whistle Politics*

**Tuesday October 29, 2019 – Last day to decide to write a final paper**

Thursday October 31, 2019

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

Week 10 – Race and Congress

Tuesday November 5, 2019


Netflix Documentary. Knock Down This House.


Thursday November 7, 2019

Week 11 – Race and the Courts

Tuesday November 12, 2019


Another article TBD focusing on the outcome/continuation of Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard

Thursday November 14, 2019

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.
Week 12 – Criminal Justice

Tuesday November 19, 2019


Thursday November 21, 2019

Read the class media blog and be prepared to engage with at least two pieces of media other than your own.

Tuesday November 26, 2019 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK
Thursday November 28, 2019 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13 – Topic TBD (options: Welfare, Education, Housing or something related to current events etc...)

Tuesday December 3, 2019
Thursday December 5, 2019

Week 14 – Final Day, Recap

Tuesday December 10, 2019 – Last day of classes

GRADING SCHEME

Weekly Response Papers..............25%
Midterm...........................................25%
Final Exam or Final Paper.............35%
Participation............................15%
Tues & Thurs 11:30am – 12:50pm
SCCE E110

Professor Tess Wise
twise@amherst.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 1-3pm
Or by appointment
Clark 202

A $\geq$ 93%
90% $\leq$ A- $<$ 93%
87% $\leq$ B+ $<$ 90%
83% $\leq$ B $<$ 87%
80% $\leq$ B- $<$ 83%
77% $\leq$ C+ $<$ 80%
73% $\leq$ C $<$ 77%
70% $\leq$ C- $<$ 73%
D $<$ 70%