

POL 377H1 S
Section L0101

Topics in Comparative Politics I: Race, Conflict and Politics in the Americas
Department of Political Science, University of Toronto, St. George Campus
Winter 2019

Course Description:

In five short years, Black Lives Matter has reconfigured mainstream discourse on race relations and racial inequality in the Americas. By indexing the precarity of black life, the Black Lives Matter movement signals a turning point in public discourse of blackness, racial violence and conflict in the 21st century. This course provides a framework for interrogating structural and cultural racial violence at the interpersonal, institutional, national and international level. In addition, the course examines the various temporal ways in which acts of resistance and mobilization has pushed against these processes. Using a comparative approach, this course is structured around three questions: 1) How does the intersections of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, coloniality and patriarchy collude in producing different conditions of racial inequities?) 2) How does racial capitalism inform racial violence and disparities in the 21st century? ; 3) What are the various anti-racist and anti-colonial interventions, academic or otherwise, through which people take up these political struggles?

The course is divided into three main sections. First, we will look at the key concepts that orient this course—race, racialization, violence and conflict. We will ask: *How do we actively construct race? How does race operate with other categories of identity? How does race shape intra and inter group relations and norms?* The second section of the course explores theoretical approaches that examine the historical and contemporaneous social, political and economic institutions that produce racialized violence. Finally, in the third section of the course we examine how the various forms of structural racism shape the precarity of Black life. We conclude the course with discussions on the liberatory possibilities drawn from acts of resistance and mobilization.

Course Outcomes:

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop clear critical reading, thinking and analytical skills;
2. Define and critique key concepts used in the study of political science and critical race studies
3. Illustrate key concepts with real world examples
4. Construct and defend an argument using logic, evidence, clarity and consistency
5. Critique and challenge the dominant analysis which surrounds the discussion of race, tolerance

and politics in the case studies and beyond.

6. Understand that history is not dead, gone, past or forgotten but remains embedded within existing practices, norms, and institutions.

Students will consider the following themes in the course:

- Racialization
- Racial capitalism
- Settler-colonialism
- Enslavement
- Patriarchy
- Neoliberal logics of domination
- Neoliberal governance
- (In) visibility of anti-racist and anti-colonial resistances
- Decolonial versus denaturalized practices

Course Format and Requirements

As a third-year course, students are expected to attend all classes and come prepared for informed and insightful participation in class discussions. Students will be expected to have completed the assigned readings for each class and to come prepared with questions, comments, and critiques. While this class may not adhere to conventional epistemological approaches on issues, *all points of view are welcome*. It is important that the classroom be an inclusive and respectful space for all points of view – however, this does not mean rigorous discussion and critical reflection is foreclosed. Therefore, communication within the class must follow a respectful tone and not descend into harmful and injurious language in regards to race, class, ability, gender, age, nationality, or sexuality.

Due Date	Component	Weight (%)
Ongoing	Attendance and participation	15%
Day before class	Weekly reflection: 1 page (Week 2-11)	20%
March 5, 2019	Essay Submitted through Turnitin.com	20%
April 2, 2019	Group project: Anti-racism commercial	20%
TBD	Final exam	25%

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is mandatory. Please note that simply attending regularly is not sufficient to do well on this portion of the grade. Participation is extremely important. You are expected to do the required readings and come fully prepared to engage in discussion.

Participation comes in many forms, including asking questions and contributing ideas / material to the upcoming lectures via email. This course is intended to be flexible, so we will always welcome suggestions in regards to shifting topics and material from all students throughout the term. If there are any issues which will limit your participation in class – please make sure to discuss this with us at the start of the term.

Weekly reflections

Students will write a weekly reflection on the readings. The reflections will be single spaced, 500-750 words. Students are expected to critically reflect on the relationship between race, gender, power and political science. The reflections should be rooted in a topic, concept, and/or argument brought up in the readings from weeks 2-11.

Group project

Students will form groups of 3-4 people to develop a 90-seconds commercial that tackles the issue of racism or racialized gendering in Canadian society. Commercials are a powerful tool to raise awareness and communicate a particular point of view. The objective of the commercial is to persuade your viewer of the collective societal benefit if we ALL engage in anti-racism praxis. The aim of this assignment is to create an appealing and persuasive argument as to why the viewer should subscribe to this point of view.

This assignment will be accompanied with a write up that:

- identifies the issue that will be the focus of your commercial;
- determines your intended audience;
- demonstrates the strategies your group employed and why; and
- includes the script used for your commercial.

This assignment will be evaluated by the course instructors and your peers. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the second week of class.

Essay

Students will write one 14-20 page (double spaced) essay for this course. Students will write on a topic of their choosing that has been approved by one of the course instructors. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used

solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site”.

Students will be graded on the quality of the writing, quality of their argument, and proper citation style. “Quality of writing” refers to mechanics (e.g., grammar and punctuation), organization, and flow. “Quality of argument” refers to your ability to address your topic clearly and concisely. All papers must include a thesis statement. “Citations” refers to your ability to use cite your sources properly. Further instructions on essay formatting will be handed out during Week 3.

Final Exam

There will be a final exam which students will be able to take home to complete. The exam will consist of two parts. The first part will consist of a short answer section which asks students to clarify key concepts, persons or events. The second part of the exam will consist of two essay questions in which students will demonstrate their knowledge by insightfully drawing upon lectures and required readings. Because this exam is not written in the classroom, it is expected that students will produce very high quality, insightful and grammatically correct answers which synthesize the course material.

Course Policies:

Assignment Submission and Penalties for late submissions

The penalty for late submissions follows the Departmental authorized standard of 0.5% (or one-half of a mark) deducted from the final grade for the course for each day late. This means that if your essay is two days late, for example, you would lose $.5 \times 2 = 1$ mark, deducted from your final grade in the course. If your final grade totals 74 before the penalty, the imposition of the penalty means that your submitted grade will be 73. The due date for the written assignment will be extended and the penalty waived only upon the presentation of a medical certificate or other comparable documentation explaining fully the length and seriousness of the illness and why it prevented you from handing in your essay on time. **Assignments are due in class.**

Students should retain copies of all graded work until they have received the final grade in the course. To ensure that all grades are recorded properly, *you should keep all graded work after we hand it back to you for the duration of the semester. If you cannot produce the graded work, you will not receive credit for it.*

Extensions for Written Work

Arrangements for extensions (due to serious, unforeseen, and unavoidable circumstances) must be made with the instructor BEFORE the assignment is due. Short extensions will be considered

upon provision of official documentation. Extensions cannot be granted by instructors beyond the end of term.

Accessibility Services

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility and meeting the diverse learning styles and needs of students who require such accommodation. If you require such accommodation or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility services (<http://www.utoronto.ca/~ability/>) as soon as possible (ability@utoronto.ca) or 416-287-7560.

Academic Conduct

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and achieving course goals. The assignments in this course are designed to give you an opportunity to learn important skills and concepts over the course of your degree by making honest attempts through your own thinking, writing, and hard work.

Students are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policies on plagiarism, which is defined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T.

Plagiarism

All work must also be your own. ***Penalties for plagiarism will be dealt with by the department and university.*** Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. This could include direct quotations from sources that you do not properly cite or presenting someone else's work as your own. Material from the internet is subject to the same citation requirements as any other material. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite properly, talk to your course instructor. You should also refer to <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

Communication

You will be able to reach us via email at lahoma.thomas@utoronto.ca or kevin.edmonds@utoronto.ca. Please allow 24 hours turnaround time. In addition, we will be available for weekly office hours before lecture in room TBA.

Course Schedule

Section 1: Race and Racialization

Week 1 – January 8, 2018: Introductions and Intro to core concepts

Syllabus review

Class activity – “What is race?”

“How to Talk about Race” by Eric Deggans at TEDxBloomington;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UojLHDG_Y4w

Week 2- January 15, 2019: Race, Racialization and Racial Triangulation in the Americas

Questions: How do we actively construct race? How does race operate with other categories of identity? How does race shape intra and inter group relations and norms?

Reynolds, Graham . 2016. *Viola Desmond's Canada: A History of Blacks and Racial Segregation in the Promised Land*. Halifax, Fernwood Publishing. Chapter 2.

Bristow, Peggy. 1994. *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up": Essays in African Canadian Women's History*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press. Chapter 1

Complete prior to attending class

Complete two of Harvard University’s “implicit racism” tests—for RACE (black/ white) and SKIN TONE (light /dark skin): <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

*Take notes of the results

Recommended Readings:

Kim, Claire Jean. 1999. “The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans.” *Politics & Society* 27,1 pp. 105-138.

Week 3 – January 22, 2019: Race and State-Making

Questions: What is race? How has the state engaged in constructing race?

Charles, Mills. 1999. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1

Fanon, Franz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Mask*. New York: Grove Press. Chapters 6 -8.

Pemberton, Sarah X. "Criminal Justice as State Racism: Race-Making, State Violence, and Imprisonment in the USA, and England and Wales." *New Political Science* 37, no. 3 (2015): 321-345.

Week 4– January 29, 2019: The Political Economy of Racism

Manning, Marable. 1999. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*. San Francisco, South End Press. Chapter 2

Dollard, John. 2010. "The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism." In *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, edited by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, 25-52. Toronto: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Mills, Charles. W. and Mills, Tom. 2012. *Racism and the Political Economy of Domination*. New Left Project.

http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/racism_and_the_political_economy_of_domination

Section 2: Theoretical Approaches to Unpacking Racial Violence

Week 5 – February 5, 2018: Black Feminist Thought Pt. 1

Massaquoi, Notisha. 2007. "Introduction: Future Imagings of Black Feminist Thought." In *Theorizing Empowerment: Canadian Perspectives on Black Feminist Thought*, edited by Massaquoi Notisha and Njoki Nathani Wane, 5-26. Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.

Davies, Carole, Boyce (ed.). 2011. *Claudia Jones, Beyond Containment*. Oxfordshire, UK. Ayebia Clarke Publishing Limited. Chapter 1.

Angela Davis Criticizes Bourgeois Feminism.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzQkVfO9ToQ>

Recommended Readings

Davis, Angela. 1981. *Women, Race & Class*. Toronto: Random House Inc. Chapter 2.

Ransby, Barbara. 2003. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. London: The University of North Carolina Press. Introduction and Chapter 12.

Harris-Perry, Melissa. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

Week 6 – February 12, 2019: Early Social Movements & The Politics of the Radical Black Tradition in Canada

Austin, David . 2013. *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex & Security in Sixties Montreal*. Montreal, Between the Lines. Introduction & Chapter 1

Dua, Enakshi. 1999. *Scratching the Surface: Canadian Anti-Racist Feminist Thought*. Toronto, Women's Press. Chapter 3.

Robinson, Cedric. 2000. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press. Chapters 1 & 2

Section 3: Structural Racism

Week 7– February 16, 2019: Environmental Racism

Passidomo, Catarina. 2014. “Whose Right to (Farm) the City? Race and Food Justice Activism in Post-Katrina New Orleans.” *Agricultural Human Values* 31 pp. 385-396.

Pulido, Laura. 2015. Geographies of Race and Ethnicity I: White Supremacy vs. White Privilege in Environmental Racism Research. *Progress in Human Geography* 39, 6 pp. 809-817.

Ron Finley: A Guerilla Gardener in South Central L.A. TedTalk
https://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la

February 18-22, 2019: READING WEEK

Week 7 – March 5, 2019: Institutional Racism Pt 1: Health

Washington, Harriet. A. 2006. *Medical Apartheid*. New York: Random House Inc. Introduction.

In Flint, Michigan, Overpriced Water is Causing People's Skin to Erupt in Rashes and Hair to Fall Out” by Curt Guyette for *The Nation*; thenation.com/article/in-flint-michigan-overpriced-water-is-causing-peoples-skin-to-erupt-and-hair-to-fall-out/

Propublica, Nina Martin and Montagne, Renee. 2017. Black Mother Keep Dying After Giving Birth. Shalon Irving's Story Explains Why.
<https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why>

Lockhart, P.R. 2018. What Serena Williams's scary childbirth story says about medical treatment of black women. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/1/11/16879984/serena-williams-childbirth-scare-black-women>

Week 8 – March 12, 2019: Institutional Racism Pt 2: The Political Economy of Mass Incarceration in the United States

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. Chapter 1

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2016. "Critical Perspectives on Police, Policing, and Mass Incarceration." *The Georgetown Law Journal*, 104, pp. 1531-1557.

Police Originated From 'Slave Catching Patrols for *Counter Current News*;
<http://countercurrentnews.com/2015/04/police-originated-from-slave-catching-patrols/>

The ugly history of racist policing in America by Dara Lind for *Vox*;
<http://www.vox.com/michael-brown-shooting-ferguson-mo/2014/8/19/6031759/ferguson-history-riots-police-brutality-civil-rights>

Know Anyone Who Thinks Racial Profiling Is Exaggerated? Watch This, And Tell Me When Your Jaw Drops" by Rafael Casal for *Upworthy*; <http://www.upworthy.com/know-anyone-that-thinks-racial-profiling-is-exaggerated-watch-this-and-tell-me-when-your-jaw-drops-2?g=2>

Davis, Angela. 2003. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press. Intro and Chapter 1.

Documentary: *The 13th* (Dir. Ava DuVernay, 2016)

Recommended Reading

Rehmann, Jan. "Hypercarceration: A Neoliberal Response to 'Surplus Population'", *Rethinking Marxism*, 27:2, 2015. 303-311.

Week 9 – March 19, 2019: Power, Racial Profiling and Police Brutality in Canada

Robyn, Maynard. 2017. *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to Present*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing. Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Shantz, Jeff. "They have always been military: On so-called militarized policing in Canada." *Journal of Social Justice* 6 (2016): 1-26.

Desmond, Cole. 2015. The Skin I'm In: I've been interrogated by police more than 50 times—all because I'm black. Toronto Life. <https://torontolife.com/city/life/skin-im-ive-interrogated-police-50-times-im-black/>

Week 10 – March 26, 2019: Social Movements & Transnational Anti-Black Racism

“Afro-Palestinians talk heritage and resistance” by Jaclynn Ashly for *Aljazeera*; <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/afro-palestinians-talk-heritage-resistance-170329072425883.html>

“Japan’s blackface problem: the country’s bizarre, troubled relationship with race” by Katy Lee for *Vox*; vox.com/2015/3/17/8230783/japan-racism-blackface

“The Afro-Iranian Community: Beyond Haji Firuz Blackface, the Slave Trade, and Bandari Music” by Beeta Baghoolizadeh for *Ajam Media Collective*; [com/2012/06/20/the-afro-iranian-community-beyond-haji-firuz-blackface-slavery-bandari-music/](http://ajam.com/2012/06/20/the-afro-iranian-community-beyond-haji-firuz-blackface-slavery-bandari-music/)

“The Dominican Republic Hates Black People” by Jemima Pierre for *Black Agenda Report*; [com/content/dominican-republic-hates-black-people](http://blackagenda.com/content/dominican-republic-hates-black-people)

“8 Ways Haitians Have Been Severely Mistreated in the Dominican Republic” by Nick Chiles for *Atlanta Black Star*; [com/2015/03/18/8-ways-haitians-have-been-severely-mistreated-in-the-dominican-republic/](http://atlantablackstar.com/2015/03/18/8-ways-haitians-have-been-severely-mistreated-in-the-dominican-republic/)

Week 11 – April 2, 2019: Liberatory Possibilities – Political Organizing & Acts of Resistance

McKanders, Karla Mari. 2010. Black and Brown Coalition Building During the ‘Post-Racial’ Obama Era. *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 29(2) 473-499.

Keeanga Yamahtta-Taylor. 2016. From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation. Chicago: Haymarket Books. Chapters 1-3

Balfour, Lawrie. 2014. “Unthinking Racial Realism: A Future for Reparations?” *Du Bois Review* 11(1) pp. 43-56.

Recommended Readings

Bell, Derrick. 1992. “Racial Realism.” *Connecticut Law Review* 24(2) pp. 363-379.