

COMM 5840: Critical Race Studies

Mondays, 6:00 – 8:50 p.m., GAB 301

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What is race? What is racialization? What is the relationship between race/racialization and public discourse (broadly understood)? When people study rhetorics of race, there are oftentimes only a couple of paths that are taken. First, people study the speeches of great African American orators. Second, people reduce race to a black/white binary. Far from being mutually exclusive, these tendencies are mutually reinforcing, which risks reproducing a myopic conceptualization of the relationship between race and rhetoric. This graduate seminar will introduce students to (1) key theoretical literatures on race and racialization, (2) key examples of rhetorics centered on race, and (3) key critical engagements of public discourse centered on race. Over the course of the semester, students will be exposed to a variety of perspectives on race and racialization, coloniality, and intersectionality operating in/through various forms of public discourse (e.g., verbal, visual, and embodied). This course begins with readings geared toward crafting a theoretically robust foundation on race and continues through a series of case studies looking at engagements of race in public culture. Case studies include, but are not limited to, Latina feminisms, the Young Lords, contemporary constructions of immigration/immigrants, hip hop culture, and racial politics surrounding Obama—in all, an assortment of Latin@ and African American focused content. Final papers will need to be focused on some dimension of race and public discourse.

Required Books (with ISBN and Current Amazon Price)

Since the class was added late, you must purchase the books from a local or online retailer. Please be sure that you're getting the correct edition when you do that.

- Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd Ed. (0415908647 - \$28.26)
- Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (9780674019515 - \$16.34)
- Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (0801484634 - \$14.60)
- Darrel Enck-Wanzer, *The Young Lords: A Reader* (0814722423 - \$20.55)

Recommended Reference Books (all in Comm Library)

- *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Ed. (0226104206 - \$40.95)
- James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (ISBN: 0761905049 - \$53.69)
- Stephen M. Caliendo & Charlton D. McIlwain, *The Routledge Companion to Race and Ethnicity* (ISBN: 0415777070 - \$29.90)

Course Objectives

- ❖ Understand related but distinct critical conceptualizations of race.
- ❖ Understand various ways in which race is central to U.S. public culture.
- ❖ Understand the connections between communication and culture.
- ❖ Improve students' ability to critically engage race in public culture.
- ❖ Develop critical abilities necessary to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate rhetorics of race, racialization, and racism in the U.S.
- ❖ Bolster critical thinking and analytical skills. Students should be able to identify an issue, critically evaluate a situation, formulate a position, and answer research questions in a precise and nuanced manner.
- ❖ Appreciate, evaluate, and question the complex ways in which cultural objects make and re-make our (social) world around issues of race

Professionalization

One of the functions of graduate school is to start socializing you into academia. To help with that socialization, the beginning of each seminar meeting will be reserved for your questions about writing and finishing the thesis, continuing on to Ph.D. programs, developing a research agenda, publishing, teaching, service, or any other questions you may have about the profession. We'll spend up to 10-15 minutes in a judgment-free environment answering questions/engaging in conversation every week.

Course Requirements

1. Engaged Participation (15% of final grade)

This class will become what we make of it—collectively. A graduate class is meant to call forth critical thinking from each one of us so that we may engage in dialogue with each other and the chosen texts. Although we all enter the room with various backgrounds, everyone is expected to raise questions of interest or uncertainty on a weekly basis in the hopes that this engagement will help to stretch our perspectives as activists, teachers, researchers, writers, and human beings. We, inevitably, will disagree. Disagreement is not a problem from a rhetorical perspective. Rather, it suggests the opportunity for further dialogue and engagement so that we may learn from each other. Instead of aiming to resolve the “right” or “winning” answers, we will attempt to grapple with which ones are “better” and “worse.” Thus, your comments should be constructive and aim for specificity (noting a specific passage, a particular comment made in class, an example of a current event, etc.). By contextualizing even our questions, we hopefully will be able to learn from each other—which, I believe, is the primary goal of a graduate class. You have to attend to participate. Non-attendance is a non-option in graduate courses.

2. Collaborative Writing Assignment (25% of final grade)

The collaborative writing assignment is an opportunity to work toward a publication with your peers while doing background research that is going to be helpful in preparing your final paper. This assignment will ask you to work in a small group (which I will assign; the class will have three groups) to write a review essay that captures the gestalt of critical inquiries into “race” in rhetorical studies. Your essay should, partly, pick up where Ron Jackson (1998) left off in his essay “Tracing the Evolution of 'Race,' 'Ethnicity,' and 'Culture' in Communication Studies”; that is, you should (a) trace out the articulations of “race” and “ethnicity” in rhetorical studies

from the late-1990s to the present and (b) offer a turn toward critical race studies (like what we're reading in the first half of the semester) as a corrective/supplement. The essay should be written as if you were preparing it for the *Review of Communication*. I may choose one or more of the essays the class produces and revise it/them (with the authors' permission) for submission to the journal. To get a good sense of what the *RoC* is looking for, listen to an interview with the current editor (or read a PDF transcript of the interview) at:

<http://www.communicationarena.com/resources/ncaConference/rocInterview.mp3>
<http://www.communicationarena.com/resources/ncaConference/rocTranscript.pdf>

You'll be graded on the 20-25 page essay you produce as well as a peer evaluation you will complete, individually. Detailed information about the group makeups and the assignment will come early in the semester.

3. Final Critical Research Project (60% total)

For the final project, you are expected to write a critical research paper that engages some material rhetoric from the perspective of some of the theme(s), discussion(s), and reading(s) of this class. Being "critical," this paper will require an argument that involves both theoretical and political stakes. As "research," this paper will require some outside investigation on the specifics of your paper topic. The paper must deal with (a) public discourse, broadly understood, and (b) issues of race, racialization, and/or racism. As with all assignments, feel welcome to talk with me as you develop your ideas and begin working on the assignment. This paper should be presentable at a major conference. If this can be turned towards your thesis work, all-the-better. The project will be divided into several parts, which are detailed below. More information will be distributed in class.

- ❖ **The Prospectus.** This is a short (3-page) essay in which you will propose your final project. You should have a preliminary thesis, identify a body of theoretical literature to inform your analysis, and demonstrate your ability to put the two together in a critical way. Your project must be "approved" by the professor in order to proceed to writing the final paper. This is **10%** of your final grade.
- ❖ **The Final Paper.** Using material from your proposal (adjusted per the professor's comments), you will write a 20-25 page essay that advances a strong critical argument. The paper should include an introduction (2-3 pages), critical literature review (6-8 pages), three main points of analysis (10-12 pages), and a thorough conclusion (3-4 pages). These page ranges are estimates; but they are a good set of general guidelines. This is **45%** of your final grade.
- ❖ **Final Paper Presentation.** These should be conference-style presentations that are 15-20 minutes long. We will also have Q&A after each group (or panel) of papers presented or after each paper, depending on final course enrollment. This is **5%** of your final grade.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all papers should be submitted via email as an MS Word attachment (.docx or .doc). All papers should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* and be free of spelling, grammatical, and research errors.

Grading: I assume that grad students have the ability to read, analyze, synthesize, engage in critical thinking, write *expertly* using correct style/grammar/etc., and participate intelligently in class discussion. Students are expected to produce flawless written work and intelligent critical engagements.

- A Clearly Outstanding and Exceptional Work
- B Above Average Work
- C Average Work (meets all the criteria for an assignment)
- D Below Average Work
- F Fails to Meet Minimal Expectations

I reserve the right to adjust final course grades upward or downward by one increment (e.g., A to A+, or B to B-) on the basis of my subjective evaluation of your overall class performance.

Late Work Policy: Assignments are due by dates and times specified in the course schedule and must be submitted as directed. Late work will not be accepted.

Attendance Policy: This is a graduate class. Don't miss days. Each class missed will result in a ½-letter grade deduction from your final grade and impact your participation grade negatively. Exceptions for medical reasons, family emergencies, and required university events will be made on a case-by-case basis and only when discussed with the professor in advance. Missing for a wedding or for your annual trip to Key West, for example, aren't considered excused.

Policy Regarding Communication Devices: It's pretty simple ... turn off your cell phones, pagers, etc. during class. You should be devoting your attention to the class, not to your friends outside of class; so please, don't be texting, IMing, Facebooking, or anything of the sort during class. If your phone goes off in class or you're caught texting/IMing/Facebooking, you'll probably be mocked the first time. If it happens again or, worse yet, you don't stop when asked, you'll be asked to leave the class. If it happens during an exam, your test will be confiscated and you'll receive a grade of zero. If there are extenuating circumstances, you must inform the professor before class (not after you're caught).

Access Policy: "The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 -- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens." I cooperate fully with the University's Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to provide reasonable accommodation to students who wish to avail themselves of ODA services. Students who wish to self-identify should register with the ODA no later than the second day of class.

Plagiarism & Cheating: All persons shall adhere to the Student Standards of Academic Integrity regarding academic dishonesty, including acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage.

Policies and procedures regarding adjudication of acts of academic dishonesty are available in the UNT Policy Manual at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>. You can also read more

here: <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/development/integrity.html>. If you have ANY question whatsoever about what might constitute academic dishonesty, ask. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse. Plus, you all should know this stuff from COMM 3010.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

Incomplete Policy: In keeping with UNT policy, I cannot award incompletes simply because a student does not complete coursework in a timely manner. An incomplete may be awarded only in cases where students meet the following conditions: (a) the student has completed at least three-quarters of the work for the semester, and (b) the grade is warranted by a medical or military excuse. Even in such instances, it is the student's responsibility to request a grade of incomplete, which will not be awarded without explicit agreement by the professor.

Technology Issues: Each student is **required** to obtain the rudimentary skills necessary to maintain a university **e-mail account** and use **Dropbox**. Check your e-mail regularly so you receive class-related messages in a timely fashion.

We all depend upon machines to get our work done. We all know that machines break down. When they do, it does not constitute an "excuse" or an "emergency." It is expected that you will prepare your assignments *far enough in advance* so that *when* (not if) your computer malfunctions you will still have time to rectify the problem and turn in the assignment on time. Also: **ALWAYS KEEP GOOD BACKUPS!!!** Ask me about Dropbox if you don't already have an account.

Crisis Contingency: In the event of the university closing for weather-related reasons or illness outbreak, e.g. flu, please check your email for instructions.

COMM Library Copier Use Policy: Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department's holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing course assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

SETE/Course Evaluations: The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class. SETE administration for Spring 2011 will be available between April 19 (Tuesday) and May 13 (Friday).

Disclaimer: This syllabus should not be considered a binding contract on the part of the professor, who reserves the right to change any aspect of the course without prior notice.

Course Reading/Assignment Schedule

It is expected that you will read the text(s) **BEFORE** coming to class for the day they're assigned and that you will *bring the readings with you to class* so we can discuss them fully. We may alter some of the readings as the semester progresses depending on the needs of the class.

Readings marked with [ER] are available on the course Dropbox as PDF files. Please print them in a computer lab (free printing) and bring them for class on the assigned days.

Week 1: 1/24 – Introduction & Orientation

- Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*
- Ronald Jackson and Thurmon Garner, "Tracing the Evolution of 'Race,' 'Ethnicity,' and 'Culture' in Communication Studies" [ER]

Recommended

- James Jasinski "Introduction: On Defining Rhetoric as an Object of Intellectual Inquiry" [ER]
- James Carey "A Cultural Approach to Communication" [ER]
- Howard Winant, "The Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race" [ER]
- Michelle Holling, "Retrospective on Latin@ Rhetorical-Performance Scholarship: From 'Chicano Communication' to 'Latina/o Communication?'" [ER]

Week 2: 1/31 – Race and Democracy

- Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*

Week 3: 2/7 – Race and Whiteness

- Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*
- Mark Lawrence McPhail, "A Question of Character: Re(-)Signing the Racial Contract" [ER]

Recommended

- Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek, "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric" [ER]
- Greg Dickinson & Karrin Vasby Anderson, "Fallen: O.J. Simpson, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the Re-Centering of White Patriarchy" [ER]
- Helene A. Shugart, "Crossing Over: Hybridity and Hegemony in the Popular Media" [ER]

Week 4: 2/14 – Rhetorics of Racism: Complicity, Coherence, and Colorblindness

- Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Complicity: The Theory of Negative Difference" [ER]
- Mark Lawrence McPhail, "The Politics of Complicity: Second Thoughts About the Social Construction of Racial Equality" [ER]
- Lisa A. Flores and Mark Lawrence McPhail, "From Black and White to *Living Color*: A Dialogic Exposition Into the Social (Re)Construction of Race, Gender, and Crime" [ER]
- Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Revisiting the Rhetoric of Racism" [ER]
- Carrie Crenshaw, "Colorblind Rhetoric" [ER]
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "The Linguistics of Color Blind Racism: How to Talk Nasty About Blacks Without Sounding Racist" [ER]

Week 5: 2/21 – Racial Neoliberalism

- David Theo Goldberg, selections from *Racist Culture* [ER]
- David Theo Goldberg, selections from *The Threat of Race* [ER]
- David Theo Goldberg, selections from *The Racial State* [ER]

Suggested

- Jodi Melamed, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism” [ER]
- Bradley Jones and Roopali Mukherjee, “From California to Michigan: Race, Rationality, and Neoliberal Governmentality” [ER]

Week 6: 2/28 – Decoloniality

- Walter D. Mignolo, “Introduction: Coloniality of Power and De-Colonial Thinking” [ER]
- Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modern/Rationality” [ER]
- Ramón Grosfoguel, “The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms” [ER]
- Freya Schiwy, “Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity: Gender, Race, and Binary Thinking” [ER]
- Walter Mignolo, “Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-Coloniality” [ER]

Week 7: 3/7 – “Critical Race Theory”

- Derrick A. Bell, “*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest Convergence Dilemma” [ER]
- Alan David Freeman, “Legitimizing Racial Discrimination through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Review of Supreme Court Doctrine” [ER]
- Richard Delgado, “The Imperial Scholar: Reflections on a Review of Civil Rights Literature” [ER]
- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics” [ER]
- Marouf Hasian and Fernando Delgado, “The Trials and Tribulations of Racialized Critical Rhetorical Theory: Understanding the Rhetorical Ambiguities of Proposition 187” [ER]

Recommended

- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law” [ER]
- Gary Peller, “Race Consciousness” [ER]

Week 8: 3/14 – Spring Break!!!

- NO CLASS!!!!

Week 9: 3/21 – Civil Rights Movement & Black Power

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” “A Time to Break Silence,” and “I See the Promised Land” [ER]
- Davi Johnson, “Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event” [ER]
- Malcolm X, “Black Man’s History” and “Ballot or the Bullet” [ER]

- Robert Terrill, “Protest, Prophecy, and Prudence in the Rhetoric of Malcolm X” [ER]
- Celeste Michelle Condit and John Louis Lucaites, “Malcolm X and the Limits of the Rhetoric of Revolutionary Dissent” [ER]

Week 10: 3/28—The Young Lords

- Darrel Enck-Wanzer, *The Young Lords: A Reader*
- Jennifer A. Nelson, “Abortions Under Community Control’: Feminism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Reproduction Among New York City’s Young Lords” [ER]
- Darrel Enck-Wanzer, “Decolonizing Imaginaries: Rethinking ‘the People’ in the Young Lords’ Church Offensive” [ER]

Recommended

- Darrel Enck-Wanzer, “Gender Politics, Democratic Demand and Anti-Essentialism in the New York Young Lords” [ER]

Collaborative Writing Projects are Due on 3/28

Week 11: 4/4—Chicano Movement(s)

- “El Plan de Delano” [ER]
- John C. Hammerback and Richard J. Jensen, “Ethnic Heritage As Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano” [ER]
- “El Plan de Santa Barbara” and “El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán” [ER]
- Fernando Delgado, “Chicano Movement Rhetoric: An Ideographic Interpretation” [ER]
- Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, “Yo Soy Joaquín” [ER]
- Richard J. Jensen and John C. Hammerback, “‘No Revolutions Without Poets’: The Rhetoric of Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzáles” [ER]

Week 12: 4/11—Latina Feminisms in Perspective

- Gloria Anzaldúa, selections from *Borderlands/La Frontera* [ER]
- Lisa Flores, “Creating Discursive Space Through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland” [ER]
- Latina Feminist Group, “Introduction: Papeletos Guardados: Theorizing Latinidades Through Testimonio” [ER]
- Latina Feminist Group, selections from *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* [ER]
- Isabel Molina Guzmán and Angharad Valdivia, “Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latina Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture” [ER]

Week 13: 4/18—Hip Hop Culture: Black, Brown, and White

- Michael Eric Dyson, “The Culture of Hip Hop,” “Gangsta Rap and American Culture,” and “We Never Were What We Used to Be” [ER]
- Fernando Delgado, “All Along the Border; Kid Frost and the Performance of Brown Masculinity” [ER]
- Raquel Rivera, “Hip Hop and New York Puerto Ricans” [ER]
- Eric King Watts, “Border Patrolling and ‘Passing’ in Eminem’s 8 Mile” [ER]

Week 14: 4/25—Immigration and Immigrants’ Rights

- Anne Teresa Demo, “The Afterimage: Immigration Policy after Elián” [ER]

- J. David Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of 'Immigrant as Pollutant' in Media Representations of Immigration” [ER]
- Richard D. Pineda and Stacey K. Sowards, “Flag Waving As Visual Argument: 2006 Immigration Demonstrations and Cultural Citizenship” [ER]
- D. Robert Dechaine, “Bordering the Civic Imaginary: Alienization, Fence Logic, and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps” [ER]
- Karma R. Chavez, “Border (In)Securities: Normative and Differential Belonging in LGBTQ and Immigrant Rights Discourse” [ER]

Week 15: 5/2—Racial Politics Surrounding Barack Obama

- David A. Frank and Mark Lawrence McPhail, “Barack Obama's Address to the 2004 Democratic National Convention: Trauma, Compromise, Consilience, and the (Im)Possibility of Racial Reconciliation” [ER]
- David A. Frank, “The Prophetic Voice and the Face of the Other in Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union' Address, March 18, 2008” [ER]
- Robert Terrill, “Unity and Duality in Barack Obama's ‘A More Perfect Union’” [ER]
- Martell Teasley and David Ikard, “Barack Obama and the Politics of Race: The Myth of Postracism in America” [ER]
- Darrel Enck-Wanzer, “Barack Obama, the Tea Party, and the Threat of Race: On Racial Neoliberalism and Born Again Racism” [ER]

Week 16: 5/9—Final Presentations

Final Papers are Due on 5/9 by 11:59 p.m.