

SYLLABUS

AFAS 304A: The Social Construction of Whiteness
Spring 2006; Tuesday 4-6:30pm
MLNG 202

Professor: Dr. Whaley

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Office Phone: 520-626-9856

Office Hours: By appointment Tuesday and/or Wednesday, 1-3pm

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Course Weblog: <http://blog.ltc.arizona.edu/afas304a/>

Hypertext Website: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~dewhaley/afas304a.htm>

Course Description:

AFAS 304A: the Social Construction of Whiteness requires approximately 150 pages per week of reading and active discussion. While this may seem like a lot, it is the standard number of pages for an upper-level college course. It will explore the field of Critical Whiteness Studies from an interdisciplinary framework. It thus uses cultural and social history, philosophy, science, law, literature, autobiography, film, and the expressive arts to understand whiteness as a socially constructed category with material effects in everyday life. In other words, while our interdisciplinary readings, discussions, and lectures acknowledge race as a social construction, our materials also realize race as a category with salience in determining public policy, forming identities, and shaping people's actions. Our reading, discussions, and exams will examine whiteness through the mantra of gender, class, ethnicity, sexualities, region, generation, and nation. AFAS 304A will press beyond the white/Black binary in racial discourse. Many of your readings, lectures, and your final project will grapple with conflict, commonality, and cooperation between white Americans and major racial-ethnic groups in the U.S. (e.g., African/Black Americans, Chicanos/Latinos, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders) and the regions of Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia, and Mexico.

The course will begin by reading essays that present foundational concepts in Critical Whiteness Studies. From thereon, our reading, lectures, and discussion will concentrate on and debate Whiteness Studies as a discipline. Next, we will use interdisciplinary readings that serve as examples of seminal works in the field. Questions we will work through during the semester include:

1. What is Critical Whiteness Studies?
2. What material work is necessary in order to intervene in the assumption that "whiteness always equals terror and racism?"
3. How is whiteness an "unmarked marker?"
4. What historical and social conditions led European immigrants to claim a racial identity?
5. How and why have definitions of whiteness changed over historical time?
6. What are the "wages of whiteness?"
7. How does racism hinder class-based political movements?
8. What is the relationship between working class identities and epistemological solipsism and middle-class identities, neo-liberalism, and colorblind racism?
9. How does 'Othering' work as a process of identity denial and formation?

Course Objectives:

- To press beyond individual experience to articulate and comprehend larger and systemic race, class, and gender inter-relationships and hierarchies
- Gain a working knowledge of 19th and 20th century white ethnic histories, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Critical Race Theory
- Provide skills to analyze gender, race, sexualities, class, and ability as social constructions with material consequences
- Learn how to critically read, interpret, and critique texts
- Hone vocabulary, public speaking, writing, and analytical skills

- Gain a better understanding of the interplay between dominant power structures, subgroup identities, and subjectivity, (i.e. agency and empowerment)
- Work effectively in groups, structured, and non-structured environments
- Have fun while learning ☺

Required Texts at the U of A Bookstore and on Library Reserve (your ERES password is afas304a):

1. (2005) David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*
2. (2005) Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*
3. (2004) Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*
4. (1998) George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*
5. (1993) Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*

Selections from these Texts are Optional to Buy and are on Library or E-Reserve:

1. (2005) Michael Berger, *White: Whiteness in Contemporary Art*
2. (2003) Hilton Als, *White Noise: The Eminem Reader*

Required Articles on Electronic Reserve:

1. Terrance MacMullen, “Beyond the Pale” (reader)
2. Robyn Weigman, “Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity” (reader)
3. Phillip Deloria, “Literary Indians and Ethnographic Objects” (PDF)
4. John Kuo Wei Tchen, “Believing is Seeing: Transforming Orientalisms and the Occidental Gaze” (PDF)
5. bell hooks, “Representing Whiteness in the White Imagination;” “Killing Rage, Ending Racism” (PDF)
6. Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (reader)

Field Trip: We will have at least one field trip or special event that, as a learning community, we will plan together. I look forward to your suggestions!

Film Excerpts and Features (depending on availability):

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|--|-------------------------------|
| ▪ <i>Color of Fear</i> (documentary) | ▪ <i>Good Fences</i> (clip) |
| ▪ <i>Falling Down, Disclosure, Wall Street</i> (clips) | ▪ <i>Crash, Havoc</i> (clips) |
| ▪ <i>Higher Learning, Lean on Me</i> (clips) | ▪ <i>8 Mile</i> (clips) |

Art Slides:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ <i>Black Belt</i> | ▪ <i>Let us Now Praise Famous Men</i> |
| ▪ <i>White</i> | ▪ <i>Monopoly Franchise</i> |
| ▪ <i>Faith Ringgold</i> | ▪ <i>Immigration Cartoons</i> |
| ▪ <i>Sam English</i> | |

Music:

Eminem, Yellow Peril, Tupac Shakur, Jill Scott, Kanye West, and other selections TBA.

Course Pedagogy: We will devote the majority of class time to discussion of the listening, reading, and viewing that we will do together; however, I will present student-participatory lectures when we begin a new text or when it is appropriate to the discussion at hand. In other words, you will co-design the course, discussions, activities, and lectures through your active participation and feedback. I will periodically administer “one-minute” papers where you check-in concerning how the course is going for you and mid-semester evaluations. Therefore, the success of AFAS 304A relies, in a significant part, upon your contentious engagement with the material and willingness to articulate areas in the curriculum that require democratic modification.



Course Requirements:

Participation (25%): You will complete the assigned reading by the designated dates on the course schedule, complete thoughtful, online Blog entries that relate to the assigned reading and course topics, and do one in-class presentation. On a weekly basis you will also demonstrate that you have read, digested, and carefully considered the material. You will thus bring 1 point for discussion each time our class meets, and you should write down these points for easy recollection. You may want to use your Blog entry, or the most important concept you learned from the reading as your 1 point for discussion. I regularly call on students to participate in class in response to the reading assignments, so writing out your thoughts ahead of time will aid you with your readiness to grapple with the material in class. Your willingness to engage during class time will account for 1/4 of your participation grade. I may administer pop (un-announced) quizzes.

Blog entries: You are required to complete 12 out of 15 Blog entries at our course weblog. Each entry will consist of a few sentences in response to the week's question. We will use Blog entries to help facilitate discussion, and to facilitate on-going engagement with the course concepts and themes. While your Blog entries are informal responses, please follow proper netiquette when posting to our weblog (i.e., no flaming). If you do not have a home computer please use one of the many campus computers to complete your Blog entries. I cannot accept hand-written Blog entries. Directions for the Blog are located at your weblog site. Our homework weblog is located at: <http://blog.ltc.arizona.edu/afas304a/>. Your entries will account for 1/2 of your participation grade.

In-Class Reading Presentation: Pairs of students will facilitate discussion on given days. As a facilitator, you will point out the main arguments/subjects of the day's reading and propose two questions for the class to consider during class discussion. While students will convey their understanding of the material by drawing upon a few key points, facilitators will not summarize the reading. The facilitators should choose a few vocabulary words or concepts to define during their presentation that were initially unfamiliar to them (I will help you with this requirement). The total time of the presentations will consist of fifteen minutes (7 1/2 minutes each), and I will keep time. After your presentation, we will have a larger group discussion, which I will facilitate. The presentation will reflect 1/4 of your overall participation grade.

Attendance: Because this class meets only once a week, you have two free absences before you begin to lose percentage points (one percentage point upon the third absence and additional percentage points if more absences occur). I do not include University recognized or religious holidays in this count. Do not notify me that you plan to

be absent or that you need to leave early. If you have to leave early, simply pack up your belongings in a quite manner and leave the classroom. **PLEASE NOTE:** If you leave class early more than once and you miss half or more of the class, I will count this as an absence, regardless of the reason.

Exams (25%): You will have five-to-six short exams (approximately 10 questions). These exams will require you to recall key information from readings, lectures, and discussions. From time to time, we may grade your exams during class time via a democratic trading process. There are no make-ups for the short exams. Do not ask if you can make-up a short exam.

Midterm Exam (25%): You will have an in-class midterm exam that will require you to synthesize and demonstrate mastery over the main ideas of the first half of the course using the semester's readings, viewing materials, and lectures. The format of your midterm exam is objective, short answer, and essay. It does not require a blue book. You will receive a midterm review sheet at least two weeks before our exam. The midterm will cover lecture, discussion, visual materials, and readings for the first half of the class. Your midterm is 7 March 2006.

Final Project (25%): You must choose your final project topic by the fourth week of classes. Your final exam constitutes a written and public speaking project and it is collaborative. The final project is due 9 May 2006, 5-7pm. Groups of 3-5 five students will construct a multi-media and written report that explores the interrelationship between a major racial-ethnic group or geographical region and whiteness. While you will likely discuss the dynamics of power, race, and discrimination in your written portfolio and in your oral presentation, group projects will not simply explore 'racism' targeted toward a racial ethnic group/region by a white racial-ethnic group. Rather, your group will construct a high quality, interdisciplinary project that draws from history, music, visual culture, and literature to analyze how whiteness is constructed, deployed, and inter-relates to another identity category or geographical space. I will handout a separate sheet that outlines this project in detail. There are seven choices. Groups will explore whiteness and:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Region</u>
Asian American/Pacific Islanders	Middle East
American Indians/Alaskan Natives	Africa
Black Americans/African Americans	Caribbean
Chicanos/Latinos/Mexicanos	

Format of written work: You will type all written work with a 12-point font, 1.5 to 2.0 spaced with 1-inch margins on each side of the paper. Students will also proofread all of their written work and pay attention to grammar, spelling, and the mechanics of writing. A few errors are fine (even the greatest minds and their works are subject to typos!) but numerous and careless errors will affect your paper grades.

Evaluation: Based on a 100% scale and standard marks (A, B, C, D, and E).

Participation (reading presentation, weblogs, discussion)	25%
Short Exams	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Project	25%

Total: **100%**

Extra Credit:

You may complete up to two extra credit assignments during the semester. One extra credit can replace an absence or buttress your participation grade, and another can replace an exam grade. I will provide details in class about acceptable extra credit assignments. I will grade extra credit assignments according to my schedule and will add them to your final grade total. In other words, do not expect a quick turnaround on these assignments.

Course Policies

Plagiarism: University policy indicates plagiarism is a violation of the student code of conduct. Plagiarism involves taking credit for or utilizing someone else's ideas or writing without citing your source. You must cite all references and you must write in your own voice. Plagiarism includes copying Internet sources (e.g., downloading term papers, cutting and pasting Internet text into your own document, and copying hypertext verbatim is plagiarism). Any form of academic dishonesty/cheating will result in a failing grade. Please see me if you are unclear about proper citation or what constitutes plagiarism before you turn in your short papers and final.

Classroom Etiquette and Netiquette: We will engage with each other respectfully during class and via our Blog, by avoiding personal attacks, racial epithets, hate speech, and other such unpleasantness. During class discussion, one student will speak at a time. It is perfectly fine to engage and press each other to the next level of complexity and things may become heated during our discussions; however, we must engage with each other in a collegial manner. If you are late for class please walk in quietly so that your tardiness does not disrupt lecture, discussion, or student presentations, and please do not make a habit out of being tardy. All cell phones and pagers must remain off or on "vibration mode" so that you do not disrupt class. (PLEASE NOTE: You may not excuse yourself from class to make cell phone calls during our midterm exam). Failure to adhere to course etiquette and netiquette will result in the subtraction of one percentage point per infraction. I will not tolerate incendiary language or any threatening behavior via email, in class, or in office hours. Please read the university's policy on threatening behavior if you have questions about what constitutes inappropriate or threatening behavior:
<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml>.

Disability Accommodations: If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, please register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss any needed accommodations or modifications to aide in your successful completion of the course. If you have any questions about this policy, please see the DRC website:
<http://drc.arizona.edu/index.html>.

Consultation, Absences, & Turning in Your Work: I encourage you to visit me during office hours for help with the course and academic advising. I am also available via email for general questions. Because of viruses, printing costs, and the incompatibility of various computer programs, I do not accept assignments via email. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you need to mail course-related materials to me, it must arrive on the due date. My campus address is:

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Citations: You will use the *Modern Language Association* or *Chicago Manual of Style* guides for all written work. The *MLA* handbook requires you to write the author name and page number in parenthesis and to include an alphabetical list of sources at the end of your paper. *Chicago Manual of Style* end or footnotes requires you to write the author name, the title of the chapter in quotation marks and book name italicized with the city, press, date, and page number. For your final project, it would be most expedient to use *MLA*, but you do not need a separate page of sources unless you use outside readings to supplement your response to the course texts. Avoid using numerous and lengthy quotations in your final project. However, if you find an extraordinary, provocative quote that you feel you must use to supplement your own original argument and analysis and the quote is more than three lines of text, you do not need quote marks. You will simply indent the quote five spaces for each line, using a smaller font and single space the quote with the author name and page number following the quote. For example, a quote more than three lines should look like this:


This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote.
 This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote.
 This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote. This is a long quote.
 (Author, page)

Editing: Here are explanations of markings that I will make on your paper to help you improve your writing skills. If you have questions about these markings please see me in office hours. You may also consult the *Chicago Manual of Style Guide* for explanations of editorial markings. I will not mark every mistake; rather, I will point out patterns to help you look for and become aware of common errors.

Capitalize	cap	Awkward	awk
Lower Case	lc	Unclear	?
Italicize	Underline	_____
Delete	3 or 8 or 7	Insert	^ or > or h
New Paragraph	¶	Join paragraphs	↑
Indent Five Spaces]	Delete indentation	[
Space Needed	#	Delete space	○
Comma	,	Colon	: or :
Semicolon	;	Single Quotation Marks	‘ ’
Quotation Marks	“ ”	Run-on	r/o
Period	.	Syntax	syn
Spelling Mistake/Spell Out	sp	Word choice	w/c
Transpose (Reverse Order)	tr or N	Change back	stet



READING SCHEDULE

For important due dates, look for this icon: “”

PLEASE NOTE: I reserve the right to make changes to the Course Schedule.

JANUARY: MAPPING CRITICAL WHITENESS STUDIES

17th: Course Intro; Read MacMullen and McIntosh in or before class (Suggested reading: Weigman)

Blog Question: What are the goals and critiques of Whiteness Studies?

24th: Read hooks (“Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination”), Kuo Wei Tchen, and Deloria. View images from [Faith Ringgold](#), [Black Belt](#) and [Sam English](#) at ERES. Listening Selection: Yellow Peril

Blog Question: bell hooks writes that it is often difficult to imagine people of color finding whiteness terrifying in the same way the dominant culture is often afraid of other racial-ethnic groups. Why do you think some may find it implausible that whiteness instills fear in non-white, racial-ethnic minorities?

31st: Read selections from Berger ed., pp.: 1-21 (Williams); 22-32 (Berger); 66-67 (Simmons) 90-103 (Roediger); View images from [Let Us Now Praise Famous Men](#) and [White](#).

Blog Question: Berger writes that most white Americans can exist in society without thinking about the color of their skin and advocate color blindness as a viable response to racism. How does whiteness affect your everyday life?



[EXAM ONE]

FEBRUARY: BECOMING WHITE & THE CONSTRUCTION OF MANHOOD

7th: Read Roediger, 1-132.

Blog Question: Does prejudice exist between Euro-ethnic groups today? In other words, are there still distinctions made between white ethnic groups and do those groups face discrimination as a result?

14th: Read Roediger, 133-244.

Blog Question: Is there a compensation for being white in the 21st century? In other words, does white privilege exist in the 21st century?



[EXAM TWO]

21st: Read Kimmel, 1-156; Viewing: the best of Michael Douglas

Blog Question: Does hegemonic masculinity affect men in the 21st century? In other words, are there prescriptions of manhood that men feel pressure to conform to, or has the metro-sexual movement erased rigid definitions of being and acting like “a real man?”

28th: Read Kimmel, 191-336; Viewing: *The Color of Fear*

Blog Question: Kimmel argues that what often looks like discrimination against women perpetuated by men is in actuality the process of men competing with other men. Do you agree?

MARCH: REPRESENTING WHITENESS



7th: MIDTERM EXAM: Download the midterm study guide at ERES.

21st: Read Avila, 1-144.

Blog Question: In what dominant ways does popular culture shape prominent ideas about the city and how does this representation affect movement into or out of this and other geographical spaces?



Mid-semester Course Reflection Due (You can download a copy of the mid-semester check-in at ERES).

28th: Read Avila, 145-224. Viewing: *Havoc, Crash*

Blog Question: According to Avila, how did freeway construction and the streetcar system affect social relations in urban public spaces?



[EXAM THREE]

APRIL: WHITENESS AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

4th: Read Lipsitz, vii-117, Viewing: clip from *Higher Learning*

Blog Question: Cultural critic George Lipsitz uses examples from other authors to suggest racism “is not a Black problem,” but a “white problem.” Do you think this is true? Why/why not?

11th: Read Lipsitz, 139-157; 184-234; Viewing: clip from *Lean on Me*

Blog Question: Lipsitz describes several, tangible examples of inter-ethnic alliances among historically marginalized groups, especially during times of unrest, e.g., World War II. Drawing from your own experience or knowledge base, answer the following question: What conditions are necessary to secure alliances among racial-ethnic groups that often find themselves in competition for scarce resources and political power?



[EXAM FOUR]

18th: Read Frankenberg, 1-136.

Blog Question: What do the stories of the women in Frankenberg’s book reveal about the relationship between gender, race, and discrimination?

25th: Read Frankenberg, 137-243.

Blog Question: Which narrative in Frankenberg’s book did you find most compelling and why?



[EXAM FIVE]

MAY: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?: (POST?)MODERN WHITENESS

2nd: Read Selections from Als; hooks, "Killing Rage, Ending Racism;" Listening Selection: Eminem, "Mosh," and Jill Scott, "Watching Me"; Course Reflections and Evaluations.

Blog Question: Can you think of a musical text or performer that addresses ending racism or represents transformative whiteness?



[EXAM SIX]



9th: Final Exam 5-7pm: Projects due and whiteness exhibit (We will hold a contest to come up with an appropriate title for our end of the semester final project exhibit).

Blog Question: What is the most important concept you learned in this class and how did your knowledge about our course's subject matter augment throughout the semester?



Hmmm... Now that I have read five books and several articles on whiteness studies and cultural/social history, I will have the upper hand on, and the necessary tools for, an informed conversation on race and politics in the public sphere.