

# SC041/BK151: RACE RELATIONS

Fall 2006

MWF 10 AM, Campion 200

Instructor: **Chiwen Bao**  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Office: McGuinn 410b

phone: 443.722.2167  
e-mail: baoch@bc.edu

In terms of what we understand as “race relations” in the history of the United States, we could tell narratives of progress marked by the end of formal slavery, highlighted by the civil rights movement, and concluded with the advent of color-blindness. However, we do not need to look far or probe deeply to see that so-called race relations remain a great social, political, and economic problem in this country and outside of our political boundaries. Why do race relations continue to be a perpetual problem when decades of efforts have ostensibly attempted to improve relations? How do we understand and explain the persistence of overt and covert racism, prejudice and discrimination when we have social policies like affirmative action and laws against hate crimes that are supposed to function as remedies for and protections against negative race relations?

To begin exploring these questions, we will first examine how the notion of race and racist ideologies emerged and co-evolved. We will then begin to investigate patterns and trends in the history of race relations in the United States. We will examine how systemic inequality is rooted in and supported by racial ideologies and various social, political, and economic structures and institutions. Giving texture and voice to the experience of race in America, we will explore the complexities of how race is lived through its articulation with other forms of dominance (such as gender and class) as well as along both the binary and the hyphen of the schematic black-white axis. To situate our understanding of U.S. race relations, we will briefly examine and compare its manifestations here to those in a few other post-slavery and post-colonial societies for a comparative and wider understanding of how race functions and is lived in a greater context. Finally, we will look at several responses to the persistence of racial antagonisms to understand how we can imagine and enact futures that are built upon greater respect for every person’s dignity and humanity.

**Note: Since this course will involve openly discussing issues that may arouse many emotions, including discomfort and even anger, please be intellectually, mentally and emotionally prepared to:**

- 1) interrogate and explore your own assumptions and belief systems**
- 2) have others *respectfully* interrogate and explore your comments and**
- 3) *respectfully* interrogate and explore others’ comments.**

## **Course Requirements:**

20% 2 3-4 page essays (10% each)

25% Midterm

35% Final exam (scheduled for Fri, Dec. 15, 9AM)

20% Class attendance and participation

## Essays

You will write two short papers responding to specific issues by drawing upon relevant readings. A week before the due date, I will distribute the writing assignment. The first essay will be collected September 29 and the second one will be collected on November 20.

## Midterm

The midterm will be a take-home exam on the material we have covered in the course up until that point. Exam questions will be distributed in class on October 20 and your work will be collected in class on October 27.

### Final exam

The final exam on December 15 will be a series of essays. Part of the exam will be take-home and the other part will be completed in class on the day of the final. You will be given guidelines to help you prepare for the exam.

### Class attendance and participation

This course will be conducted partially like a lecture course and partially like a discussion section. The discussion portion of our classes will be your opportunity to raise questions, wrestle with ideas, share your insights and reflections on the material, and engage with your classmates in an intellectual and respectful dialogue about course topics. Since we will not always have time for everyone's comments and contributions during class, you will jot down a couple thoughts about the readings and the class during each course meeting and hand them in at the end of class. I welcome feedback on the lectures and classroom discussions and can meet with you to discuss issues further and to recommend readings.

**\* Your thoughtful engagement and diligence is at the heart of your individual learning experience and our work together throughout the semester. \***

### **Academic integrity:**

Needless to say, all academic (and general) integrity rules apply to all of your work. For information on Boston College's Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy, please see [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/enmgt/stserv/acd/univ.html#integrity](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/enmgt/stserv/acd/univ.html#integrity)

**Readings:** Required texts are available at the bookstore and on reserve at O'Neill. All other readings will be available online or distributed in class.

### **Required Texts:**

Michael K. Brown, Martin Carnoy, Elliott Currie, Troy Duster, David B. Oppenheimer, Marjorie M. Shultz, and David Wellman. Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2003. (*this text is referred to in the course outline as WWR*)

bell hooks. Killing Rage: Ending Racism. New York: H. Holt and Co., 1995.

Joe R. Feagin. Racist America: Roots, Current Realities and Future Reparations. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Manning Marable. How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1983.

Ronald Takaki. A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993.

Beverly Daniel Tatum. "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And Other Conversations about Race. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

### **Satisfying the Cultural Diversity and Social Science Core Requirement:**

As a core course, we will:

1. Address perennial questions in intellectual debates related to issues of intergroup relations (including intergroup hostilities, prejudices, biases, and group identification), social justice and inequalities, and the formation of social and political communities.
2. Address issues of cultural diversity by examining race relations through the intellectual work of persons of diverse backgrounds and perspectives and by expanding our discussion of race relations

- through recognizing its variegated manifestations and its complex and multiple intersections with other domains of power.
3. Pursue a historical view of knowledge by looking at the historical construction of race, racial discourse and ideologies of racism and colorblindness. We will also lend particular attention to exploring historical migration patterns, effects of policies, and the development of structural inequalities.
  4. Explore social science methodologies like the utilization and application of demographic material, social and political theory, statistical methods, observations of behavioral trends, historical and social analyses of contexts and structures, narratives and various qualitative methods. These methods allow us to examine discursive controversies and see how human behavior and our social worlds articulate with the political economy, current scientific knowledge, etc.
  5. Use writing as a medium through which we draw connections, organize and express ideas cogently and coherently. Writing assignments include written exams, short papers, and in-class reflections.
  6. Reflect on values and commitments that offer meaning and direction to our lives, like values of community, self knowledge, history, culture, and morality. In particular, we will examine our belief systems and our judgments and interactions with each other in order to promote social justice, awareness, and humanity.
  7. Explore the causes and dynamics of human behavior and social problems, such as race relations and its relationships to poverty, crime, health, economy, politics, institutions, individual behavior, and communities. This objective reflects how the course can satisfy the social science core requirement.
  8. Attempt to understand the world from perspectives other than our own, examine constructions of identity and difference, and assess historical developments of race and social systems that reinforce differences. This objective reflects how the course can satisfy the diversity core requirement.

### **Course Outline**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION: The ongoing problem of race in the U.S.**

**Wednesday, 9/6:** Introduction

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#### **II. LOOKING BACK: The emergence and evolution of race and racial ideologies in the U.S.**

##### **Racism: An American Tale**

**Friday, 9/8:** Feagin Chapter 1 “Systemic Racism: A Comprehensive Perspective”

##### **Crossing Borders, Creating Boundaries: The Making of Races**

**Monday, 9/11:** Takaki “A Different Mirror” Introduction (pages 1-17), 1 chapter from Takaki Part 2 (you will be assigned a chapter)

**Wednesday, 9/13:** 1 chapter from Takaki Part 3 (you will be assigned a chapter), Takaki Chapter 14

##### **The Historical Formation and Permutations of Racial Ideologies**

**Friday, 9/15:** Feagin Chapter 2 “Slavery Unwilling to Die: The Historical Development of Systemic Racism”

**Monday, 9/18:** Feagin Chapter 3 “Racist Ideology as a Social Force”

**Wednesday, 9/20:** Feagin Chapter 7 “Systemic Racism: Other Americans of Color”

**Recommended readings:**

Matthew Frye Jacobson. Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5)

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**III. UNDERSTANDING OUR PRESENT MOMENT: How racial inequalities and injustices are rooted in institutions, politics, identities**

**An Overview of Persistent Racial Privileges, Inequalities and Injustices**

**Friday, 9/22:** WWR Introduction “Race Preferences and Race Privileges” (Essay 1 assignment distributed in class)

**Monday, 9/25:** WWR Chapter 1 “Of Fish and Water: Perspectives on Racism and Privilege”

**Wednesday, 9/27:** Feagin Chapter 5 “Racial Oppression in Everyday Practice”

**Friday, 9/29:** Feagin Chapter 6 “White Privileges and Black Burdens: The Continuing Impact of Oppression” (Essay 1 collected in class)

**Examining the Workings of Institutions and Politics**

**POVERTY AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY**

**Monday, 10/2:** Manning Introduction to the First Edition “Inequality and the Burden of Capitalist Democracy: A point of View on Black History”

**Wednesday, 10/4:** Manning Chapter 1 “The Crisis of the Black Working Class”

**Friday, 10/6:** Manning Chapter 2 “The Black Poor: Highest Stage of Underdevelopment”

**Wednesday, 10/11:** WWR Chapter 2 “The Bankruptcy of Virtuous Markets: Racial Inequality, Poverty, and ‘Individual Failure’”

**GENDER AND CLASS POLITICS**

**Friday, 10/13:** hooks “Black on Black Pain: Class Cruelty,” “Marketing Blackness: Class and Commodification”

**Monday, 10/16:** hooks “Challenging Sexism in Black Life” “The Integrity of Black Womanhood”

**CRIME, VIOLENCE AND JUSTICE**

**Wednesday, 10/18:** Manning Chapter 4 “Black Prisoners and Punishment in a Racist/Capitalist State”

**Friday, 10/20:** WWR Chapter 4 “Been in the Pen So Long: Race, Crime, and Justice” (Midterm Exam distributed in class)

### **POLICIES, POLITICS AND THE LAW**

**Monday, 10/23:** WWR Chapter 5 “Civil Rights and Racial Equality: Employment Discrimination Law, Affirmative Action, and Quotas”

**Wednesday, 10/25:** WWR Chapter 6 “Color-Blindness as Color Consciousness: Voting Rights and Political Equality”

**Friday, 10/27:** Manning Chapter 6 “Black Brahmins: The Underdevelopment of Black Political Leadership” (Midterm Exam collected in class)

### **EDUCATION**

**Monday, 10/30:** Manning Chapter 8 “The Destruction of Black Education”

**Wednesday, 11/1:** WWR Chapter 3 “Keeping Blacks in Their Place: Race, Education, and Testing”

### **Lived Experiences, Attitudes, Identities, and Representations**

**Friday, 11/3:** DuBois Chapter 1 “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” DuBois Chapter 4 “Of the Meaning of Progress” from *The Souls of Black Folk*

**Monday, 11/6:** 1 chapter from Tatum Part 2 “Understanding Blackness in a White Context” (you will be assigned a chapter)

**Wednesday, 11/8:** hooks “Beyond Black Rage: Ending Racism,” “Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination,” “Black Beauty and Black Power: Internalized Racism”

**Friday, 11/10:** 1 chapter from Tatum Part 3 “Understanding Whiteness in a White Context” (you will be assigned a chapter)

**Monday, 11/13:** Feagin Chapter 4 “Contemporary Racial Attitudes and Images: White Americans,” hooks “Teaching Resistance: Racial Politics of Mass Media” (Essay 2 assignment distributed in class)

**Wednesday, 11/15:** 1 chapter from Tatum Part 4 “Beyond Black and White” (you will be assigned a chapter)

### **Recommended readings:**

W.E.B. DuBois. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. (chapters 4, 5, 9, 14)

Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge, 1994. (Chapters 6, 7, Conclusion, Epilogue)

Vijay Prashad. *The Karma of Brown Folk*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

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#### **IV. ON DIFFERENT TERRAIN: Racial politics in Cuba, Brazil and South Africa**

##### **Cuba**

**Friday, 11/17:** Alejandro de la Fuente, Chap. 7 “Building a Nation for All,” Chap. 8 “The Special Period,” A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba

##### **Brazil**

**Monday, 11/20:** Melissa Nobles, “With Time, They Will be White,” Shades of Citizenship (Essay 2 collected in class)

##### **South Africa**

**Monday, 11/27:** Govan Mbeki, “The Anatomy of the Problems of the National Liberation Struggle in South Africa,” Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo “Swapo Leads Namibia” Reflections in Prison

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#### **V. MOVING FORWARD: (Re)Imagining and (re)building community**

**Wednesday, 11/29:** WWR Conclusion “Facing Up to Race,” Manning Chapter 10 “Conclusion: Toward a Socialist America”

**Friday, 12/1:** Feagin Chapter 8 “Antiracist Strategies and Solutions”

**Monday, 12/4:** hooks “Black Identity: Liberating Subjectivity,” “Overcoming White Supremacy: A Comment,” “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance”

**Wednesday, 12/6:** hooks “Feminism: It’s a Black Thing” “Revolutionary Feminism: An Anti-racist Agenda,” “Where is the Love: Political Bonding Between Black and White Women”

**Friday, 12/8:** Tatum Part 5, Chapter 10 “Embracing a Cross-Racial Dialogue,” hooks “Beyond Black Only: Bonding Beyond Race,” “Keeping a Legacy of Shared Struggle,” “Beloved Community: A World Without Racism”

**Final Exam Friday 12/15, 9 AM**