

# THE HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT OF RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## Teaching Assistants

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**Course Description:** We will study the historical forms which racism has taken in the United States of America and identify past and present methods of opposing racism. Major content areas will include a study of European antecedents to racism in the USA, the development of white attitudes toward people of color and the institutionalization of racism in the colonies and the United States. In addition, the emergence of Urban Web of Racism will be examined.

**\* Please note that HDR does not count as a Social Science Core course.  
It does, however, receive credit as a “Cultural Diversity” course. \***

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Book reflection papers, project papers, and final exam are to be typed. *Papers will not be accepted by e-mail unless prearranged with Mr. Marcus.* The only papers that will be accepted in handwriting are the “open” journals; the two directed history journals *must be* typed. All papers are due on the dates stipulated on the syllabus. Extensions will be granted only in unusual circumstances, upon discussion with Mr. Marcus. **Late papers will be downgraded.**
2. Reading in the “core books”: In Bookstore, under Philosophy:  
*Autobiography of Malcolm X*, by Alex Haley  
*The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*, by Randall Robinson  
*Lies My Teacher Told Me*, by James Loewen  
*Hard Road to Freedom*, by James Oliver Horton & Lois E. Horton  
  
*Articles and Handouts* – it is expected that you will read any articles handed out in class and that you will be prepared to discuss or answer questions about the articles during the next class.
3. One book from the list of books chosen from the course bibliography, with a **5-page reflection paper, (due October 23)**. A separate list of books from the bibliography that will meet this requirement will

be provided. Reflection is to tell what the book means to you, making application to your understanding of racism. **“Core books” may not be used to fulfill this requirement.** Fiction is not generally accepted.

4. **Journals and Quizzes:** Each person is expected to keep a journal of written reflections on assigned readings and/or other class content. A total of six journals are due on the dates listed below. Four of the journals are “open”, according to your interest. “Open” journals will go to the TA, and will provide an opportunity for dialogue between Home Group members and the TA. The two “directed” journals require a response to an assigned question/s, which will be distributed in class at least one week prior to the due date.
5. **Final, take-home exam, which is to be typed.**
6. **Project:** Completion of a research project to be chosen from topics, which are suggested on an attached sheet. Project choices are due **September 11**; Detailed Project Outlines are due **October 16**, and final papers are due **November 3**.

**NOTES:**

1. **Grading:** Grades will be as follows A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F

A is excellent; B is good; C is satisfactory; D is passing but unsatisfactory; F is failure. In grading, weight will be given to required papers as follows:

Project Paper	25%	4 Open Journals/Quizzes	10%
Book Reflection	15%	2 Directed Journals	20%
Final Exam	25%	Class & Home Group Participation	5%

2. Late papers for which no extension has been granted will be downgraded. Extensions will be granted only after consultation with Mr. Marcus. A “late” paper is defined as one which is submitted after class on the designated due date.
3. All papers should be footnoted as necessary, and should include a bibliography of source(s) utilized. Quotations and paraphrased material must be cited. Where ideas or materials are derived from reading and research, the sources should be indicated. ***Materials from a website must include the name of the author and a title, position, or other indication of the author’s qualification to be cited. Please note that Wikipedia® is not an acceptable source.***
4. Attendance for each class session is assumed. Attendance and participation in class are very important. If you seek an excused absence, please speak to Mr. Marcus prior to the class for he is the only person designated to honor your request. Excused absences will be granted only for conditions that are beyond your control (i.e. a death in the family). If absent from a class you are responsible for knowing the content of the class and for any assignments. **Any unexcused absence will bring your grade down; THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL BRING COURSE FAILURE.**

## The History and Development of Racism in the United States of America

DATE	CLASS CONTENT	READING (S) DUE	PAPERS DUE
Sept 4	Course Introductions/View of History Video: <i>True Colors</i>		
Sept 11	Process Reading Paradigms & Mindsets/Begin Definitions Video: <i>Race the Power of an Illusion I</i>	Haley 1-12	Project Choices Due
Sept 18	Process Reading Videos: Excerpt from <i>Eyes on the Prize</i> Star Power	Complete Haley Robinson 1-2	Journal #1
Sept 25	Process Reading/Definitions Video: <i>Traffic Accident in Buffalo</i>	Robinson 3-6	
Oct 2	Process Reading/Definitions continued/ Community Power Analysis Rank & Privilege Video: <i>Race the Power of an Illusion III</i>	Loewen 1-3	Journal #2
Oct 9	Process Reading Exploration & Evangelization Video: <i>What's Race Got to Do with It?</i>	Hortons 1-2	Directed Journal #1
Oct 16	Process Reading English Antecedents/Colonial Laws/Founding Fathers	Hortons 3-4	Project Outlines Due
Oct 23	Founding Fathers/Enlightenment/Jefferson Video: <i>Race the Power of an Illusion II</i>		Book Reflections Due
Oct 30	Process Reading Enslavement of Africans TA Presentation	Hortons 5	Journal #3
Nov 6	Process Reading Abolition/Civil War	Loewen 6 Hortons 6-8	
Nov 13	Reconstruction/Post Reconstruction		Projects Due
Nov 20	No class in lieu of viewing <i>Sankofa</i> and Black Heritage Trail Tour with Horace Seldon (Schedule TBD)	Robinson 7-10 Loewen 11-12	Directed Journal #2
Nov 27	Modern Civil Rights Movement/Asian American Experience	Hortons 9-13	Journal #4
Dec 4	Japanese Internment Learnings/Evaluations/Closing		
Dec 11	Final Exams Due by 3:30 pm		

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE IN COURSE**

Punctuality and full-time attendance will be expected in class and Home Group.

Written papers are to be handed in on time as required by the syllabus.

Participation in discussion will demonstrate an ability to listen to what others say and to respond to or build on what has been heard.

Verbal participation and written work will demonstrate mastery of course content.

Speaking and writing will demonstrate an ability to express ideas clearly and concisely.

Students will demonstrate an ability to research relevant sources in addition to those available in the core content of the course.

Students will demonstrate an ability to articulate concepts presented and to make applications to their personal lives.

Students will show an ability to constructively challenge the ideas of others and to welcome challenges to their own thoughts without defensiveness.

Students will demonstrate an increasing ability to draw lessons from history and to apply them to the present.

## BOOK REFLECTIONS – Due October 23

Book reflections should be no longer than 5 typed double-spaced pages. **Only books listed in the section of the syllabus entitled “Books acceptable for Book Reflections” are allowed for book reflections. This list is a small subset of all the books listed in the bibliography.**

For your reflection, begin with the book and then show its relevance to the course content and its application to your own life:

1. The Book – A book reflection is a written response to a book, which you have read, but it need not recite everything which is in the book. In this course on the History and Development of Racism, we will be especially interested in reflections that show
  - How the book has informed you about racism
  - How the content has expanded your knowledge about racism
  - What questions it raised for you about racism
  - Things about which you may want to “argue” with the book
  - What topics you want to explore further
2. The Course – Your paper must necessarily make reference to the book, but it should not be a detailed analysis or recounting of the content. Connect the book to the course. For instance, you might want to say something like the following:

“The ideas of overt and cover forms of racism were new to me and have helped me understand...”

Or

“The author has organized thoughts in a way which clarifies...”

3. Your life – The paper becomes an opportunity for you to “inwardly digest” the content and to begin to identify its personal meaning for you. Ultimately what is important about any reading is what it does for your life.

What influence will this reading have upon your life? Do you think or feel differently?

How do you think this reading might affect your living tomorrow morning?

Will it have any affect in the way you approach your vocation, your involvement in community or national issues?

## **JOURNAL ENTRIES**

### **Open Journals**

Your journal entries are the only papers in this course which need not be typed, but which must be in legible handwriting. A Journal is a much less formal piece of writing than any other paper you are required to submit. Four Open Journals are due during the semester, due dates listed on the class schedule. The Open Journal provides a place and time when you have an opportunity to sit quietly and think about all of the content of the course, trying to answer questions or complete thoughts such as these:

I wonder what “so-and-so” meant the other day when in Home Group she said...”

When I was reading the Horton’s I noted something I have never heard before...

As I think about what I heard one of my roommates say, I am beginning to see...

In an E-mail from home, my mother said something which I think was racist...how shall I talk with her about my feelings?

Parts of the lecture on Tuesday were good, but there was one idea I think was dead wrong...

I was watching the TV news and began to wonder why they chose to report at the “top” of the hour that item about...

When I get out of college, I want to do something about racism in the job that I get...

My initial response to the comment in class was defensiveness, but as I have had time to process what was said, I realize that...

An article that was published in The Heights troubled me because...

Don’t let these suggestions limit your Journal reflections, but use them and all that you see going on around you to stimulate your thoughts and focus them on issues of racism. The intent is to let your thoughts flow freely, and to be honest with yourself. The content may be quite personal. Only your TA and/or Mr. Marcus or Mr. Yoon will read it; none of the material will be shared with anyone else.

The experience of keeping journal notes has been an important one for many people, a time and place for watching your own growth. We hope it might be that for you, so please give your best to it.

### **Directed Journals**

Unlike the open journals, directed journals will be guided by a specific question that will be handed out the week prior to the due date. This is an opportunity for you to make connections between what you are learning in class and your reading in the required texts. A strong journal demonstrates your grasp of the reading and the synthesis and application of the material.

**Directed journals should be typed, double spaced and no more than 5 pages in length.**

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## THE PROJECT/ PAPER – Due November 3

The Project/Paper topic must be listed below. Project papers should be no more than fifteen pages in length. All papers meeting the requirements of the course must reflect the purpose of the course by examining, assessing, and commenting on the role of race/racism in the subject studied, including specific references to ideas, definitions, concepts central to the course.

The choice of project/paper must be from the following list of options:

1. Study the treaties into which the United States has entered with native indigenous nations, and describe the major ways in which those treaties have been followed or violated by the USA. What are the major issues of sovereignty, which remain problematic today? Assess the role of race and racial prejudice in this history.
2. Identify how racism has functioned in the Caribbean.  
**Choose ONE of the following areas for study:**
  - a. Focus on the Arawak people Columbus encountered, and the treatment they suffered by the Spanish.
  - b. Identify ways in which Haiti suffered racism **prior to its independence.**
  - c. Review the history of the relation of Puerto Rico to the United States, including present options for its continuing status.
3. Study the origins and development of slavery in this country. How did slavery get started? As people discussed and argued about whether or not to become involved in slavery, what were the reasons why it was viewed as necessary by some, and opposed by others? Identify the arguments, which were advanced to justify the institution as it developed during its **early years**, long before the arguments developed in the Abolition Movement. (The focus should be on the institution of slavery rather than on the slave trade.)
4. What were the views of Thomas Jefferson about superiority/inferiority of white/black people, and how did those views impact his words/acts? He has been variously called a hypocrite, a man in contradiction, perhaps confused, a man whose thought patterns allowed him to move on different paths without reconciling the differences. How could he have written the famous words about equality, while at the same moment he “owned” over two hundred people?
5. Historians have often disagreed about the primary issue over which the Civil War was fought. Some say it was over African enslavement, some say it was a sectional issue, some say states rights, etc. Review the arguments, and indicate, which argument/s you think best account for the historical importance of the war.
6. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century our nation saw the Abolition Movement bring an end to African enslavement, one of the great “moments” of moral reform in history. Men, women, black and white were active in that Movement. Identify and describe briefly the **major methods** used by Abolitionists as they sought to end slavery, showing how they differ, and indicate which methods you think were most effective.
7. Review the history of Chinese people in the United States, with an emphasis on white attitudes toward the Chinese immigrants. How did views of race as have encountered them in our

national history, affect the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and how has that legislation affected immigration subsequently?

8. Early in World War II, two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt issued orders, which led to the internment of a large number of citizens of Japanese ancestry. Review the history of this act, assessing the way in which race or racial prejudice may have influenced the decision. Review the prior history of Japanese people in the United States, and indicate ways in which that history influenced the decision. Assess the arguments made as government leaders debated whether or not to intern, and discuss how this act may influence present-day relationships of Japanese and other American people.
9. Study the U.S. involvement in Latin America. Review the history, identify how racism has driven U.S. foreign policy and make connections to the present day in one of the following 3 areas:
  - a. The Mexican War
  - b. The Spanish American War
  - c. U.S. Involvement in Central America particularly Guatemala, Nicaragua or El Salvador