

# SC041/BK151: “RACE RELATIONS”

Spring 2008

T/Th 10:30 AM Gasson 305

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

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,” marked by racial inequalities and injustices, remain a great social, political, and economic problem in this country. Why do racial inequalities continue to be a perpetual problem when decades of efforts have ostensibly attempted to improve social conditions? 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 racial 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 racial 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 within the binary and along the hyphen of the schematic black-white axis. 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) reflect upon and interrogate your own assumptions and belief systems
- 2) have others *respectfully* examine and critique your comments and
- 3) *respectfully* analyze and consider others’ comments.

## **Course Requirements:**

25% Class attendance and participation

20% 2 3-4 page essays (10% each) due February 5 and April 8

20% Midterm on February 28

35% Final exam scheduled for May 12, 9 AM

## 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.

To facilitate the discussion portion of class, 3-4 students will post questions and comments on the WebCT discussion board by 8 PM the day before class. These questions may be used to guide discussion in class. I will let you know at the beginning of the semester for which 2 classes you will be asked to post questions and comments.

#### 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 on February 5 and the second one will be collected on April 8.

#### 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 February 21 and your work will be collected in class on February 28.

#### Final exam

The final exam on May 12 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.

**\* 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/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*)

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

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

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.

Eric K. Yamamoto. Interracial Justice: Conflict and Reconciliation in Post-Civil Rights America. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

## Course Objectives\*:

In exploring racial relations, 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. Explore the causes and dynamics of human behavior and social problems, such as racial relations and its relationships to poverty, crime, health, economy, politics, institutions, individual behavior, and communities.
3. 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.
4. Address issues of cultural diversity by examining racial relations through the intellectual work of persons of diverse backgrounds and perspectives and by expanding our discussion of racial relations through recognizing its variegated manifestations and its complex and multiple intersections with other domains of power.

In drawing upon various methodologies, we will:

1. 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.
2. 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.

In developing personal academic skills and examining moral values, we will:

1. 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.
2. 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.

\*Fulfilling these objectives contributes to satisfying the Cultural Diversity and Social Science core requirements.

## Course Outline

### I. INTRODUCTION: Setting the scene for dialogue and moving beyond ignorance

#### The ongoing problem of race and racism in the U.S.

January 15 (1)

- Feagin Introduction
- Feagin Chapter 1 “Systemic Racism: A Comprehensive Perspective”

### How do we talk constructively about race and racism?

January 17 (Th)

- hooks “Introduction: Race Talk”
- Tatum Chapter 1 “Defining Racism: ‘Can We Talk?’”
- Audre Lorde. “Learning from the 60s.” From Sister Outsider. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984. (online)

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

### The making of American “races”

January 22 (I)

- Audrey Smedley. “Some Theoretical Considerations.” From Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007. (online)
- Takaki Chapter 1 “A Different Mirror”

### Crossing borders, creating boundaries

January 24 (Th)

- Takaki – you will be assigned and present in class 1 chapter from Part 2 “Borders”

January 29 (I) *istribute paper 1 assignment*

- Takaki – you will be assigned and present in class 1 chapter from Part 3 “Distances”

January 31 (Th)

- Takaki Chapter 14 “Through a Glass Darkly: Toward the Twenty-first Century”

### The historical formation and permutations of racial ideologies and racism

February 5 (I) *paper 1 due in class*

- Feagin Chapter 2 “Slavery Unwilling to Die: The Historical Development of Systemic Racism”
- Feagin Chapter 3 “Racist Ideology as a Social Force”

#### *Recommended:*

- Thomas C. Holt. The Problem of Race in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Matthew Frye Jacobson. Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Audrey Smedley. Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007.

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## **III. UNDERSTANDING RACIAL FORMATIONS OF OUR PRESENT MOMENT: Institutions, politics, racial inequalities and injustices**

### An overview of persistent racial privileges, inequalities and injustices

February 7 (Th)

- WWR Introduction “Race Preferences and Race Privileges”
- WWR Chapter 1 “Of Fish and Water: Perspectives on Racism and Privilege”

*Recommended:*

- Michael Omi and Howard Winant. Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s. New York: Routledge, 1994.

February 12 (T)

- Feagin Chapter 5 “Racial Oppression in Everyday Practice”
- Feagin Chapter 7 “Systemic Racism: Other Americans of Color”

February 14 (Th)

- Feagin Chapter 6 “White Privileges and Black Burdens: The Continuing Impact of Oppression”
- Lani Guinier. “Whiteness of a Different Color?” From The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. (online)

*Recommended:*

- George Lipsitz. “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness.” From The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics. Temple University Press, 1998.

**Poverty, the political economy and class politics**

February 19 (T)

- WWR Chapter 2 “The Bankruptcy of Virtuous Markets: Racial Inequality, Poverty, and ‘Individual Failure’”
- Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro. “Race, Wealth, and Equality.” From Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality. Routledge, 1997. (online)

*Recommended:*

- Manning Marable. “Inequality and the Burden of Capitalist Democracy: A Point of View on Black History.” From How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1983 and 2000.
- Manning Marable. “The Crisis of the Black Working Class.” From How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1983 and 2000.
- Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro. Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality. Routledge, 1997.
- hooks “Black on Black Pain: Class Cruelty”
- hooks “Marketing Blackness: Class and Commodification”
- Patricia J. Williams. “The Ethnic Scarring of American Whiteness.” From The House That Race Built (ed. Wahneema Lubiano). New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

February 21 (Th) ***distribute midterm assignment***

- bell hooks. “Class Claims: Real Estate Racism.” From Where We Stand: Class Matters. New York: Routledge, 2000. (online)
- Michael Massagli. “Residential Preferences and Segregation.” From The Boston Renaissance: Race, Space, and Economic Change in an American Metropolis. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000. (online)

*Recommended:*

- Peter Kwong and Dušanka Mišćević. “The Rise and Fall of Chinatowns.” From Chinese America: The Untold Story of America’s Oldest New Community. New York: New Press, 2005.

**Crime, violence and justice**

February 26 (T)

- WWR Chapter 4 “Been in the Pen So Long: Race, Crime, and Justice”
- Angela Y. Davis. “Race and Criminalization: Black Americans and the Punishment Industry.” From The House That Race Built (ed. Wahneema Lubiano). New York: Vintage Books, 1998. (online)

**Policies, politics and the law**

February 28 (Th) *midterm due in class*

- WWR Chapter 5 “Civil Rights and Racial Equality: Employment Discrimination Law, Affirmative Action, and Quotas”
- Derrick Bell. “Affirmative Action and Racial Fortuity in Action.” From Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. (online)

March 11 (T)

- WWR Chapter 6 “Color-Blindness as Color Consciousness: Voting Rights and Political Equality”
- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. “Color Blindness, History, and the Law.” From The House That Race Built (ed. Wahneema Lubiano). New York: Vintage Books, 1998. (online)

*Recommended:*

- Lani Guinier. “A Critique of Colorblindness.” From The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- David O. Sears and Victoria Savalei “The Political Color Line in America: Many ‘Peoples of Color’ or Black Exceptionalism?” Political Psychology 27(6), 2006.

March 13 (Th)

- Mary Romero. “Racial Profiling and Immigration Law Enforcement: Rounding Up of Usual Suspects in the Latino Community” Critical Sociology 32(2-3), 2006. (online)
- George Lipsitz. “Immigrant Labor and Identity Politics.” From The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics. Temple University Press, 1998. (online)

*Recommended:*

- Vijay Prashad. “Of the Origin of Desis and Some Principles of State Selection.” From The Karma of Brown Folk. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Peter Kwong and Dušanka Mišćević. “The Limits of the Civil Rights Agenda.” From Chinese America: The Untold Story of America’s Oldest New Community. New York: New Press, 2005.

### **Education and persistent inequalities**

March 18 (T)

- WWR Chapter 3 “Keeping Blacks in Their Place: Race, Education, and Testing”
- Derrick Bell. “Searching for Effective Schools in the Post-*Brown* Era.” From Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. (online)

### **Gender politics**

March 25 (T)

- hooks “Challenging Sexism in Black Life,” “The Integrity of Black Womanhood”
- Rhonda M. Williams. “Living at the Crossroads: Explorations in Race, Nationality, Sexuality, and Gender.” From The House That Race Built (ed. Wahneema Lubiano). New York: Vintage Books, 1998. (online)

## **IV. LIVING RACIAL REALITIES: Experiences, attitudes and identities**

### **Racisms, discrimination and prejudice**

March 27 (Th)

- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. “The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism.” From Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003. (online)
- Jody David Armour. “Repealing the Black Tax: Breaking the Discrimination Habit.” From Negrophobia and Reasonable Racism: The Hidden Costs of Being Black in America. New York University Press, 1997. (online)

#### *Recommended:*

- Feagin Chapter 4 “Contemporary Racial Attitudes and Images: White Americans”
- Jody David Armour. Negrophobia and Reasonable Racism: The Hidden Costs of Being Black in America. New York University Press, 1997.
- Vijay Prashad. “Of Antiracist Racism.” From The Karma of Brown Folk. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

### **Racial consciousnesses**

April 1 (T) *distribute paper 2 assignment*

- W.E.B. DuBois. “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” From The Souls of Black Folk. Penguin Books, 1989. (online)
- Vijay Prashad. “Of a *Girmit* Consciousness.” From The Karma of Brown Folk. University of Minnesota Press, 2000. (online)
- Gloria Anzaldúa. “Movimientos de Rebeldía y las Culturas que Traicionan.” From Antonia Darder, Rodolfo D. Torres and Henry Gutierrez (eds.) Latinos and Education: A Critical Reader. Routledge, 1997. (online)

#### *Recommended:*

- W.E.B. DuBois. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

## **Identity formations**

April 3 (Th)

- Tatum – you will be assigned 1 chapter from Part 2 “Understanding Blackness in a White Context”
- Tatum – you will be assigned 1 chapter from Part 3 “Understanding Whiteness in a White Context”

### *Recommended:*

- hooks “Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination”
- hooks “Black Beauty and Black Power: Internalized Racism”

April 8 (T) ***paper 2 due in class***

- Tatum – you will be assigned 1 chapter from Part 4 “Beyond Black and White”
- Martha E. Gimenez. “Latino/‘Hispanic’ – Who Needs a Name?: The Case Against a Standardized Terminology.” From Antonia Darder, Rodolfo D. Torres and Henry Gutierrez (eds.) Latinos and Education: A Critical Reader. Routledge, 1997. (online)

April 10 (Th)

- Juan Flores and George Yudice. “Living Borders/*Buscando America*: Languages of Latino Self-Formation.” From Antonia Darder, Rodolfo D. Torres and Henry Gutierrez (eds.) Latinos and Education: A Critical Reader. Routledge, 1997. (online)
- Attinasi, John J. “Racism, Language Variety, and Urban Minorities: Issues in Bilingualism and Bidialectalism.” From Antonia Darder, Rodolfo D. Torres and Henry Gutierrez (eds.) Latinos and Education: A Critical Reader. Routledge, 1997. (online)

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

### **Addressing racism meaningfully**

April 15 (T)

- hooks “Beyond Black Rage: Ending Racism”
- Yamamoto Chapter 1 “‘Can We Get Along?’: Justice Grievances among Communities of Color”
- Yamamoto Chapter 2 “‘When Sorry Isn’t Enough’: A Worldwide Trend of Race Apologies”

### **Practicing racial justice and healing**

April 17 (Th)

- Yamamoto Chapter 7 “Interracial Healing: Multidisciplinary Approaches”
- Yamamoto Chapter 8 “‘Facing History, Facing Ourselves’: Interracial Justice”

### *Recommended:*

- Yamamoto Chapter 5 “‘Who’s Hurting Whom?’: Reframing Racial Group Agency and Responsibility”
- Yamamoto Chapter 6 “Race Praxis: A Developing Theory of Racial Justice Practice”
- Yamamoto Chapter 10 “The Hat Shop Controversy: African Americans and Asian Americans in Los Angeles”
- Feagin Chapter 8 “Antiracist Strategies and Solutions”

### **Facing racism and sexism**

April 22 (T)

- hooks “Feminism: It’s a Black Thing”
- hooks “Revolutionary Feminism: An Anti-racist Agenda”
- hooks “Where is the Love: Political Bonding Between Black and White Women”
- Audre Lorde. “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism.” From Sister Outsider. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984. (online)

### **Acknowledging histories and reclaiming identities**

April 24 (Th)

- hooks “Black Identity: Liberating Subjectivity”
- hooks “Overcoming White Supremacy: A Comment”
- hooks “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance”
- Ronald Takaki. “Breaking Silences: Community of Memory.” From Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1998. (online)

#### *Recommended:*

- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. “Conclusion: ‘The (Color-Blind) Emperor Has No Clothes’ – Exposing the Whiteness of Color Blindness.” From Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

### **Building solidarity and community**

April 29 (T)

- hooks “Beyond Black Only: Bonding Beyond Race”
- hooks “Keeping a Legacy of Shared Struggle”
- hooks “Beloved Community: A World Without Racism”

### **Moving forward with action and dialogue**

May 1 (Th)

- WWR Conclusion “Facing Up to Race”
- Tatum Part 5, Chapter 10 “Embracing a Cross-Racial Dialogue”

**9 AM Monday, May 12 Final Exam**