

POLS 3065 – Political Culture of Race and Racism
Course Director: Laila Mourad
Lmourad@yorku.ca

Winter 2024 – Wednesdays 2:30pm – 5:30pm
Room: CB 129
Office hours: By appointment

Intro to course

What does Race mean to us? How has Race been constructed historically? How is our understanding of Race and Racism shifting? Whose knowledge counts and is valid when learning about Race and Racism? What are the various ways that we experience Race in our everyday lives?

In this course we will collectively explore the invention of Race, its colonial roots, and its intersections with gender and class and other categories of oppression. We trace how race plays out under global capitalism and the global division of labor. Race and racism are concepts that go beyond identity politics and have an impact on the politics of development and global economies.

Racial justice is interconnected with environmental justice, migration struggles, feminism(s), technology innovation, and resistance movements and liberation struggles worldwide. Ultimately this course is meant to explore and disrupt narratives of Race and Racism, and shift the narrative towards thinking about what racial justice and liberatory futures could look like.

“Welling and swelling I
bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of
terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's
wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my
ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the
hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise”

— *Maya Angelou*



The objectives of this course are for you to:

- Learn and explore critical race theories
- Critically think about issues of Race and Racism
- Analyze media, art, and poetry through a political lens and use them as sources of knowledge
- Collaborate with colleagues in research and creative activities and discussions
- Push yourself outside your comfort zone
- Center your original voice and thoughts in your writing and work

Grades & Assignments

Assignment Type	Value	Due Date
Reading / movie reflection	25%	Any time before Monday 26 th February
Group Case Study Presentation	30%	You decide (choose the topic you want from weeks 7-11)
Final Paper	25%	Any time before Friday 26 th April
Attendance & Participation	20%	Ongoing

1. Reading / movie reflection (25%) - *Due any time before Monday 26th February*

We will be watching a few movies during class (weeks 2 - 6) that speak to the respective weekly topic and themes of the course. Choose one movie to analyze through a political lens and refer to that week's readings to support your writing.

Some guiding thoughts to come up with your argument: what are the main themes that emerge in the movie and stand out for you? How can you connect them to core concepts from class? What is standing out to you in the ways that race / racism is portrayed? What interests you? What is problematic for you or unclear? How does this shape / shift the way you understand race / racism?

The paper is expected to be 1000-1500 words, and to include proper citations of the movie and course reading material (refer to at least 2 readings from the course).

2. Class Presentation (30%) – *Due based on choice (choose the topic you want from weeks 7-11)*

You have the option to select your preferred topic from weeks 7 – 11 and form a group (2 or 3 in a group) to work on a case study presentation. Choose an issue that is currently happening or took place in the past and connect it to the relevant weekly topic. Make sure you have a clear argument and to reference the weekly readings. This is a research exercise so you can include data, art, media, and any other sources to support your presentation.

It will be a conference style presentation so you can use PowerPoint slides, videos, interactive tools or anything you wish to engage your audience.

Presentations are to be 10-15 minutes long depending on the group size.

3. Final Paper (25%) – *Due any time before Friday 26th April*

For the final paper, you will use poetry to analyze themes from the course. Referring to at least one of the poetry books below, use these texts to come up with an argument related to the “Political culture of race and racism” as you understand it through these poems.

Some guiding thoughts to come up with your argument: How are these poems speaking to some of the concepts we explored during the course? What are they making you think about? How are they explaining or defining race / racism? Why do these words matter or stand out to you? How do alternative forms of knowledge change or impact the way we think about race and social justice issues?

Poetry books to choose from:

Salt by Nayyirah Waheed

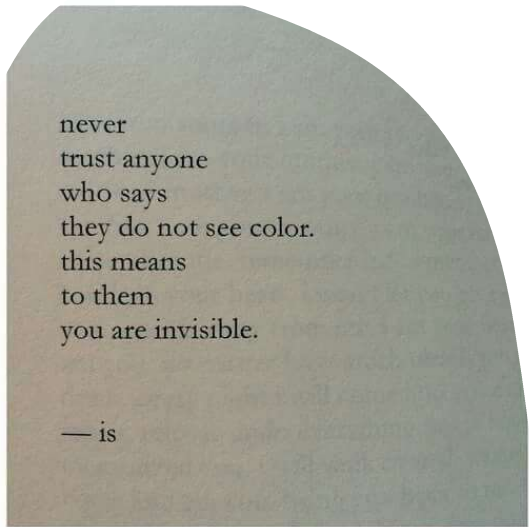
Waheed, Nayyirah. 2013. *Salt*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

Islands of Decolonial love by Leanne Simpson

Simpson, Leanne. 2013. *Islands of Decolonial Love: Stories & Songs*. ARP Books.

And Still I Rise by Maya Angelou

Angelou, Maya. 1978. *And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems*. Random House Publishing Group.



The paper is expected to be 1000-1500 words, and to include proper citations of poetry book(s) and course reading material (refer to at least 3 readings from the course).

4. Attendance & Participation (20%)

This accounts for attendance, participation, and engagement throughout the semester. Everyone has different ways of communicating and connecting, but students are encouraged to show up, listen to each other, get involved in discussions, and share their thoughts and ideas during class.

Academic Honesty

Breaches of academic honesty will be taken very seriously. A student found to have plagiarized in the course will receive an automatic grade of 'F' on the plagiarized assignment with no recourse for submission. If a student is found to have plagiarized more than once in the same course, that student will fail the course. [Click here for more information on York University's Senate Policy regarding academic \(dis\)honesty.](#)



Course Weekly Topics

Week 1 - January 10th: Intro class – How do we study, think, and talk about Race?

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. "Research through Imperial Eyes." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed:44–61. London: Zed Books.

Week 2 – January 17th: Colonialism - Inventing race, who is the Other?

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. "On Violence." In *The Wretched of the Earth*, 30-52. Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Said, Edward W. 2014. "Introduction." In *Orientalism*, 1-28. New York, United States: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Movie: Born in Gaza

Week 3 – January 24th: Intersectionality - Race, Gender, Class

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989 (1).

Lugones, Maria. 2016. "The Coloniality of Gender." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development: Critical Engagements in Feminist Theory and Practice*, edited by Wendy Harcourt, 13–33. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Movie: Stamped from the Beginning

Week 4 – January 31st: Racial Capitalism and Social Reproduction

Robinson, Cedric J., Robin D. G. Kelley, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, and Damien Sojoyner. 2021. "Racial Capitalism: The Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development." In *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 9–28. Chapel Hill, United States: University of North Carolina Press.

Salem, Sara, and Mai Taha. 2019. "Social Reproduction and Empire in an Egyptian Century." *Radical Philosophy*.

Movie: 13th

Week 5 – February 7th: Development and Global Economies

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. "Grandeur and Weakness of Spontaneity." In *The Wretched of the Earth*, 52 - 64. Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Sultana, Farhana. 2019. "Decolonizing Development Education and the Pursuit of Social Justice." *Human Geography* 12 (3): 31–46.

Movie: The True Cost

Week 6 – February 14th: Decolonization and Alternatives

Tuck, Eve, and K Wayne Yang. 2012. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1 (1): 1-40.

Movie: *For love*

READING WEEK – NO CLASS ON February 21st 2024

Make sure you submit your reading/movie reflection by Monday 26th February

Week 7 – February 28th: Race and the Environment (Group presentations)

Mollett, Sharlene. 2010. "Está Listo (Are You Ready)? Gender, Race and Land Registration in the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve." *Gender, Place & Culture* 17 (3): 357-75.

Vaz-Jones, Laura. 2018. "Struggles over Land, Livelihood, and Future Possibilities: Reframing Displacement through Feminist Political Ecology." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 43 (3): 711-35.

Video: TBD

Week 8 – March 6th: Nationalism, Migration and Borders (Group presentations)

Anderson, B., Sharma, N., & Wright, C. (2011). "Why No Borders?." *Refuge* (Special Issue on "No Borders as a Practical Political Project") 2(2): 5-18.

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. "The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness." In *The Wretched of the Earth*, 64 - 81. Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Video: TBD

Week 9 – March 13th: Anti/Decolonial Feminism(s) (Group presentations)

Hill Collins, Patricia. 2000. "Black Feminist Epistemology." In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 251-71. Psychology Press.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. "Introduction: Decolonization, Anticapitalist Critique, and Feminist Commitments." In *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, 1-13. Durham, United States: Duke University Press.

Video: Nadine Naber, *Arab Feminism is Not an Oxymoron* (2019)

https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_naber_arab_feminism_is_not_an_oxymoron

Week 10 – March 20th: Race and Technologies (Group presentations)

Phan, Thao. 2019. "Amazon Echo and the Aesthetics of Whiteness." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 5 (1): 1–38.

Lobenstine, Lori, and Kenneth Bailey. 2015. "Redlining the Adjacent Possible: Youth and Communities of Color Face the (Not) New Future of (Not) Work." Design Studio for Social Intervention.

Video: Ruha Benjamin, *Is technology our savior — or our slayer?* (2023)

https://www.ted.com/talks/ruha_benjamin_is_technology_our_savior_or_our_slayer

Week 11 – March 27th: Resistance(s) and Movements (Group presentations)

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. "On National Culture." In *The Wretched of the Earth*, 81 - 94. Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. 2017. "'I See Your Light': Reciprocal Recognition and Generative Refusal." In *As We Have Always Done*, 175–90. Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance. University of Minnesota Press.

Video: TBD

Week 12 – April 3rd: Course reflections and writing workshop

Bengezi, Khaoula. 2023. "Countering Colonial and Nationalist Histories: The Ethos of Libyan Poets Fatima 'Uthman and Fatima Mahmoud." *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 9 (1): 97–108.

Video: Rafeef Ziadah, *We teach life Sir* (2012)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKucPh9xHtM>

Final paper due before Friday 26th April



Additional Resources | Special Accommodations | Important Contacts

If you would like help working on your reading, writing and thinking skills, please visit the [Writing Centre at York University](#) located at South 311 Ross or via email (lpswrit@yorku.ca) or 416-736-5134.

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) [Policy on accessible education for students with disabilities](#) and [York University Senate policy on Academic Accommodation](#), Student Accessibility Services at York provide individualized academic accommodation planning to students with temporary and/or permanent disabilities. Please make sure that you contact Student Accessibility Services if you need class/course accommodations located at the N108 Ross building or via email (sasinfo@yorku.ca) or via telephone 416-736-5755.

If you or someone that you know within the York community is negatively impacted in any way (e.g., in need of housing, financial assistance, any other complex issue, or conflict resolution) please contact [The Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) for help and/or be referred to the proper entity for help. OSCR is located at the W128 Bennett Centre for Student Services or via email (oscr@yorku.ca) or via telephone 416-736-5231.

If you or someone that you know has experiences sexual violence and are in need of support (e.g., counselling, academic accommodations, emergency housing, medical, financial, social services, or training and educational programs), please contact [The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education \(The Centre\)](#). The Centre is located at 301 York Lanes or via email (thecentre@yorku.ca) or via telephone 416-736-5211.

