In recent years many have come to believe that we live in a “post-racial” America. Yet for over three centuries the differences in physical appearance we call “race” have been deeply rooted in the social imagination of the United States and fundamental to our understanding of self. The eminent social thinker, W.E.B. Dubois, highlighted the importance of the issue over a hundred years ago in *The Souls of Black Folk* when he declared: “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” So: How important is the color line for us today?

The course starts by clarifying the nature of “race” and its oppressive consequence: racism. It goes on to consider how racial categories came about historically, how they became institutionalized and how they are reproduced and experienced. We consider some of the subtle, unseen, yet ever-present ways in which “race” structures our lives and how racial meanings shift over time. The aim is to challenge our commonsense ideas about so-called racial differences and at the same time give us the tools with which to better understand the social forms and injustices these entrenched ideas have produced. But I want you not simply to be learning about “race” in this seminar but to be able to use the knowledge and insights you gain here to become agents of meaningful change.

Writing

This seminar is designated a **W1 course** and puts special emphasis on writing to help you to become more self-aware, cogent, confident writers. Words, both spoken and written are, after all, the building blocks of thought and the media through which we think. The three graded papers you will work on for the seminar each address different aspects of the subject matter of the course and aim to help you develop different kinds of analytical skills. The first, is on the concept and meaning of “race;” the second, asks you to reflect on and to analyze your own racial positioning; and the third is a research paper on a topic of your choosing relating to the contemporary impact of racialization and efforts to overcome them. The assignments will be spelled out in separate handouts well before they are due. Besides these graded papers, you will have shorter writing
assignments in and out of class as well as oral presentations at different points during the semester.

We are fortunate to have Peer Writing Assistant Brett Emmons and Writing Specialist, Dr. Misty Beck, of the Writing Center in the Learning Commons working with us. You will have opportunities on the various assignments to discuss your writing at different stages in the process with me, with Brett, and or with Dr. Beck.

So: What is a W1 course? Here is a partial summary of the College’s goals and expectations for W1 courses:

**Expectations for the W1**

The overarching goal of the W1 course is to enhance students’ understanding of how analysis and intellectual discovery shape the process of writing. W1 courses are meant to introduce students to college-level expectations of writing exposing students to the conventions of particular fields and disciplines, or across multiple disciplines, while emphasizing the commonalities of good writing across subject areas.

W1 courses teach a number of skills that fall under the college-wide writing learning goals broadly defined as Inquiry, Argument, Evidence, Organization, and Style.

**INQUIRY**
- Adequately addresses the question posed by the assignment
- Engages the audience in the question
- Explains the scholarly context of the argument or Topic

**ARGUMENT**
- Has a clearly stated thesis
- Explores counterarguments or other perspectives
- Develops argument through logic and use of evidence

**EVIDENCE**
- Chooses adequate and appropriate scholarly sources
- Critically assesses sources
- Integrates sources adequately through quotation and paraphrase

**ORGANIZATION**
- Shows awareness of an organizational scheme
- Understands functional “nuts and bolts” (such as topic sentences and transitions)

**STYLE**
- Writes in clear, straightforward prose
- Fairly close attention to citations and scholarly conventions
- No gross grammatical or mechanical errors

Through written papers, small research projects, lively, mutually respectful class discussions, research projects, and in-class presentations, then, we develop greater insight into the vexed subject matter of the course. **Grades** will be based on the thoughtfulness, care and originality of your written papers and the quality of your class participation and presentations. First paper: 15%; second paper: 15%; Research paper: 30%; class
participation: 40%. In evaluating participation I take into account your attendance and level of engagement both in class and writing-conferences; participation in class discussions; oral presentations and the quality of thought given to the short writing assignments.

### Academic Integrity

When you entered Bates you joined an academic community deeply engaged in inquiry, intellectual exchange, and the testing and creation of knowledge. It is now your academic community, and it offers you the opportunity to add your voice to the ongoing scholarly conversation—a conversation that values, acknowledges, and depends on the work and ideas of others.

Of course, using and crediting sources properly not only lends credibility to your work but also keeps you clear of plagiarism. Misusing sources can take many forms, ranging from innocent but incomplete citations to outright and intentional deception. The College defines plagiarism as "the representation of another person's words, ideas, or information as if they were one's own." The definition continues: "You may use another person's words, ideas, or information, but to do so without acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism."

At Bates, the consequences of plagiarism can be severe and can be imposed by the College at the institutional level and independently by the instructor at the course level. A fuller discussion of plagiarism appears in the Bates College Statement on Plagiarism and Guide to Source Acknowledgments (http://abacus.bates.edu/pubs/Plagiarism/plagiarism.html). Details of Bates's disciplinary procedures when plagiarism is suspected are in the Bates College Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Processes (www.bates.edu/entering/policy/judicial-affairs/code-of-student-conduct/academic-misconduct). You are responsible for reading these documents.

SOURCE: Guide to Writing with Sources, Bates College, 2012, p.2

### Books Ordered for Purchase

Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow  
Dalton Conley, Honky  
Keith Hjortsshoj, The Transition to College Writing  
**Strongly Recommended:**  
Diana Hacker & Nancy Sommers, A Pocket Style Manual

Other readings and relevant materials for the seminar are posted on the College’s on-line platform, Lyceum
Class Meetings
(Note that reading and other assignments are to be completed in time for class on
the dates listed)

Part I
The Concept of “Race”

Sept 4  Introductions

Sept 5  “Race” After Obama:
Aren’t we now “post-racial?”

Na-Tehisi Coates, “Fear of a Black President”
This article in the current issue of the Atlantic is a bit long, so be sure to
give yourself enough time to read it in addition to the two chapters of
Hjortshoj listed below.

Hjortshoj, The Transition to College Writing. Chapters 1 & 2: pp 1 - 29

Sept 10 What is “Race?”

View before class the PBS documentary, “The Difference Between Us,”
Part 1 of the PBS series, Race—The Power of an Illusion (on reserve in
Ladd Library)

Read:
Jonathan Marks, “Scientific and Folk Ideas About Heredity”
http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-01-12.htm

Interview with Pilar Ossorio
http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-01-03.htm

Interview with Joseph Graves, Jr.
http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-01-06.htm

Sept 11 Public Lecture, Todd Gitlin, Columbia University Journalism Professor,
Social Historian, “Will There Be an Occupy 2.0?” Muskie Archives, 7:30 p.m.

There will be a note-taking assignment based on the lecture

Sept 12 Race-Making and the Gains and Losses it Produced

View before class: “The Story We Tell,” Part 2 of PBS documentary
Race—The Power of an Illusion
Thomas A. Costa, “Who Built Virginia: Servants and Slaves as Seen Through Runaway Advertisements”  
http://www.virtualjamestown.org/essays/costa_essay.html

Charles Mills, “Global White Supremacy,” in Paula Rothenberg, ed.,  
White Privilege, pp 97 -104

Sept 17  
View before class “The House We Live In,” Part 3 of the PBS series,  
Race, the Power of an Illusion

For your essay, due Sept 24th, you will need to review all three parts of the  
documentary, Race, the Power of an Illusion and or the transcripts of each  
episode.

http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-about-02-01.htm  
http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-about-01-01.htm  
http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-about-03-01.htm

You may also find it valuable to explore the scholarly articles and other  
resources relevant to your paper that are listed on the websites for Race,  
the Power of an Illusion and Understanding Race and to read carefully one  
or two of these articles to further support your argument.

Sept 19  
Hjortshoj, The Transition to College Writing.  Chapter 4: pp 56 - 78

Guest Presenter, Misty Beck, Bates Writing Center: “Using Textual  
Evidence Effectively” & “Developing Your Voice as a Scholar”

Indicate the topic for your Research Paper by today

Part II  
Whiteness

Sept 24  
Hjortshoj, The Transition to College Writing.  Chapter 6: pp 107 - 137

Paper # 1 due in class

Schedule and hold meeting with Brett before Friday to discuss your paper

Sept 26  
Discovering Whiteness / Discovering Class

Dalton Conley, Honky Prologue & Chapters 1 – 6 pp xiii-xiv & 3 - 63

The book is a personal memoir by a professional sociologist. We will use  
it to think about our personal stories of coming to know and experience  
“race” as well as to introduce several useful analytical concepts and ideas
such as “class,” “dominance,” “privilege,” “marked” vs. “unmarked”
categories, “normativity,” “racial geography,” “social capital,” “cultural
capital,” and others that can help us better to understand Conley’s
experience and our own.

Oct 1     Conley, Honky Chapters 6 – 8 pp 65 - 101

Paper # 1, second draft, due in class

Oct 3     Conley, Honky Chapters 9 – 17 & Authors Note pp 103 - 207

Oct 8     Presentation by Laura Juraska, Social Sciences Reference Librarian
          Class meets in the Instruction Room of Ladd Library

Oct 10    Producing Whiteness

White Privilege, pp 9 - 14

Karen Brodkin, “How Jews Became White Folks,” in Paula Rothenberg,
ed., White Privilege, pp 41 – 53

Group Presentation on Brodkin

Paper # 2 due in class

Oct 12    Conferences to discuss Paper # 2

Oct 15    Power, Privilege, & Invisibility

Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” in
Paula Rothenberg, ed., White Privilege, pp 123 - 127

bell hooks, “Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination,” in
Paula Rothenberg, ed., White Privilege, pp 19 -23

Group Presentation on hooks

Oct 16    Paper # 2, second draft, due by 12:00 noon

Fall Recess
Part III
Living on the Other Side of the Color Line or, American Apartheid & its Consequences

Oct 22  Death & Dying

Karla F.C. Holloway, Passed On: African American Mourning Stories, Chapter 1, pp 15 – 56

Holloway describes and analyzes ways in which the experience of death and dying varied in black and white communities as a result of segregation. Her account forces us to think about aspects of life “behind the veil” (as DuBois expressed it) that we might scarcely have thought about before.

Oct 24  Karla F.C. Holloway, Passed On: African American Mourning Stories, Chapter 2, pp 57 - 103

Guest Presenter, Misty Beck, Bates Writing Center

Prospectus for Research Paper due

Oct 29  Economic Inequality

Melvin Oliver & Thomas Shapiro, “Race, Wealth, and Equality,” Chapter 1 in Black Wealth / White Wealth, pp 11 - 33

Oliver & Shapiro distinguish between “income” and “wealth” as ways to measure historical and present-day differences in economic well-being between black and white American families. They explain how one measures wealth and how it is accrued over time. They also discuss the impediments to its accumulation.


Group Presentation on Oliver & Shapiro

Academic Integrity Workshop with Misty Beck

Nov 5  Incarceration: “The Prevailing System of Control”

Alexander’s book argues provocatively that the United States’ unprecedentedly high rates of incarceration as a result of the so-called war on drugs since the 1980s has been especially devastating for the black community and constitutes a new form or racial control.

**Nov 7**  

**Group presentations** on Chapters 3 & 4

Meetings with Brett to discuss Research Paper & help prepare presentations

**Nov 12**  
Work-in-progress presentations on Research Papers

**Nov 14**  
Work-in-progress presentations on Research Papers

**Thanksgiving Recess**

**Nov 26**  

**Nov 28**  
Research Paper due

Schedule conferences to discuss Research Paper

**Dec 3**  
Syllabus flex time

**Dec 5**  
Wrap-up

**Dec 7**  
Research Paper, second draft due by 4:00 p.m.