

## Bates College

### First-Year Seminar 242

## The Color Line or, Blackness (& Whiteness) in the Social Imagination Fall 2012

Instructor: Professor Charles V. Carnegie

157 Pettengill Hall. Phone 6079, e-mail, [ccarnegi@bates.edu](mailto:ccarnegi@bates.edu)

Office Hours: Monday, 3:00 – 4:00, Friday, 11:00 – 12:00 or by appointment

Class meets Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:10 – 2:30

Writing Assistant: Brett Emmons, e-mail, [bemmons@bates.edu](mailto:bemmons@bates.edu)

Writing Specialist: Misty Beck, PhD

222A Coram Library, e-mail, [mbeck@bates.edu](mailto:mbeck@bates.edu), 786-8375

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](http://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 Hjortshoj, 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](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](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](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](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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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-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-01-01.htm)

[http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-about-03-01.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**

Richard Dyer, “The Matter of Whiteness,” in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., White Privilege, pp 9 - 14

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

**Group Presentation** on Brodtkin

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.

**Oct 31      Melvin Oliver & Thomas Shapiro, “A Sociology of Wealth and Racial Inequality,” Chapter 2 in Black Wealth / White Wealth, pp 35 – 54**

**Group Presentation** on Oliver & Shapiro

Academic Integrity Workshop with Misty Beck

**Nov 5      Incarceration: “The Prevailing System of Control”**

Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow, Introduction & Chapter 1, pp 1 – 58

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 of racial control.

**Nov 7** Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow, Chapter 2, 3, & 4 pp 59 – 177

**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** Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow, Chapters 5 & 6 pp 178 - 261

**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.