AMST 401T
Race in American Culture

AMST 401T
Fall 2010
Tuesdays 4:00-6:45pm
EC011

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Course Description

Debates over the meaning of "race" have been at the center of American culture since the seventeenth century. In this course, we will examine some of these discussions, focusing on major turning points in the construction and revision of American racial ideologies. We will explore a number of key themes, including: the impermanence of racial categories; the link between understandings of race and interpretations of American citizenship; the influence of racial stereotypes on social experience; the relationship between constructions of race, gender and the law; and the role that cultural production plays in constructing mainstream notions of race. By using a variety of sources and cultural texts, this course will allow us to analyze the relationship between changing constructions of race and the development of modern American culture.

Assigned Texts

The following books are required for this course. They can be purchased at Little Professor Text Books – 725 North Placentia Avenue, Fullerton.

T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *"Myne Owne Ground": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go: A Novel*

Wendy Rouse Jorae, *The Children of Chinatown: Growing Up Chinese American in San Francisco, 1850-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Renee Romano, *Race-Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Other readings are marked with an asterisk (*) on the syllabus, and will be available on Blackboard.

Assignments and Grading:
The term paper (8-12 pages for undergraduates and 12-15 pages for graduate students) represents 50% of your final grade. The assignment gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your abilities as a cultural analyst. Since AMST 401T is the capstone for our undergraduate major, you should show me what you have learned thus far. Although you have the responsibility of defining the parameters of your project, I will assist you in any way that I can. You will be graded on your proposal and your progress over the course of the term, as well as the content and presentation of the final draft.

Attendance and class participation represents 30% of your final grade (20% for graduate students). Therefore, informed participation in class discussions is essential for the successful completion of this course.

Each student will be required to complete two 2-3 page response papers (10% each) over the course of the term. The papers should assess and interrogate the week's assigned readings, and raise questions for class discussion. You may write on any session you like You may be asked to present your papers/questions to the rest of the class.

If you are a graduate student, you also need to write a critical review of an approved academic work (approximately 4 pages) central to the topic of your final paper, and present that work to the class. The review will be worth 10% of your final grade. The expectation is that you will situate the study within the relevant scholarly literature and evaluate its main arguments. You should integrate ideas from our seminar's common readings whenever possible. I will provide a list of books if necessary.

Plus/minus grading will be used in this course.
Breakdown of percentages: A+ = 97-99; A = 94-96; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = 0-59
Breakdown of grade points: A+ = 4.0; A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0; C- = 1.7; D+ = 1.3; D = 1.0; D- = .07; F = 0

*Please note: I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time.

By enrolling in this class, you agree to abide by the following code of conduct:
1) Students are expected to attend class regularly.
2) Students must complete the assigned reading for the class session before the start of class, bring the assigned texts to class, arrive for class on time, and contribute to class discussions.
3) Students should keep up with the material covered in class lectures. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the notes from a classmate.
4) Obviously, I expect that all written work will be your own. Instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Judicial Affairs, and may result in a failing grade for the course. For more information on academic dishonesty, consult the University Catalog.
5) Students are expected to maintain basic standards of civility during class time. (No texting, cell phone conversations, web surfing, wandering in and out, etc.)

6) Students are encouraged to discuss any questions about the coursework, or concerns about their performance with me. My office hours are on Wednesdays from 11:00am-2:00pm and by appointment.

Students with Special Needs

If you have a disability or special need for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please inform the instructor and contact the Disabled Student Services Office, located in University Hall101, as early as possible in the term. For more information, the Disabled Student Services Office can be reached by calling (657) 278-3117 or visit their website at http://www.fullerton.edu/disabledservices/.

Course Outline

Unit I: Race, Slavery and Citizenship

8/24 Introduction

8/31 Red, White and Black in the Atlantic World
Readings: *Winthrop Jordan, "First Impressions," *The White Man's Burden*, 3-25
*Alden T. Vaughan, "From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian," *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience*, 3-33

9/7 Race in the Colonial World
Readings: T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*

9/14 Slavery and Citizenship
Readings: *Winthrop Jordan, "Thomas Jefferson: Self and Society," *The White Man's Burden*, 165-193
*Query XIV from Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*
In-Class Film: *Unearthing Secret America*
Paper Proposals Due to Partner

Unit II: Race, Immigration and National Identity

9/21 Race and Immigration
Readings: Wendy Rouse Jorae, The Children of Chinatown, chapters 1 and 2
Return Revised Proposals to Partner

9/28 Segregation and Slumming
Readings: Wendy Rouse Jorae, The Children of Chinatown, chapters 4 and 6
Revised Proposals w/bibliographies Due

10/5 Race, Whiteness and the Law I
Readings: Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*, pages 1-19, 34-64, 96-108.

10/8 Race and Class on the Border
Readings: Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*, 65-79, 179-318

Unit III: Constructing Race in the Civil Rights Era

10/12 Race, Whiteness and the Law II
Film: *A Class Apart*

10/19 Jim Crow in the West
Reading: Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*

10/26 Race and Marriage
Readings: Romano, *Race Mixing* chapters 1 and 2

11/2 Race and Rights
Readings: Romano, *Race Mixing* chapters 5, 6 and 7
Graduate Student Reviews Due

Unit IV: The Stories We Tell Today: Representing Race in Contemporary America

11/9 Dealing with the Challenge of History
Readings: Romano, *Race Mixing*, Chapter 8 and Epilogue
Film: *Lonestar*
First Drafts Due to Partner

11/16 *Rich Benjamin, *Searching for Whitopia*, excerpts
*Melani McAlister, "Military Multiculturalism in the Gulf War and After, 1990-1999," Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000, 235-265
Edited Drafts Returned

11/23 Thanksgiving Recess

11/30 Race and Class in Contemporary America
Film: *Trouble the Water*

12/7 **Research Presentations**

Final Essays Due Tuesday, December 14