

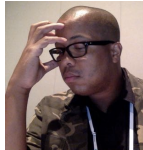


SOC/AFRS 1010:
DECONSTRUCTING RACISM

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
FALL 2019

COURSE INFORMATION

- Professor Theo Greene (lgreene@bowdoin.edu)
- Preferred Pronouns: He/Him/His
- Office: Adams Hall, Room 310
- Telephone: x5038
- Course Website: (<https://courses.bowdoin.edu/sociology-2202-fall-2019/>)
- Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30 - 10:30 and **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**



COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand how racism “works” in the 21st century.
- Explore the evolution of race and racism in American society.
 - How do their legacies continue to define the institutions that support our society?
 - What factors undermine our collective ability to discuss these issues?
 - What factors contribute to its persistence over time?

COURSE TEXTS

All electronic readings available on [Blackboard](#).



ABOUT THE READINGS

- **FORMAT:**
 - Orientation to the Material
 - No technology allowed without permission of the professor.
 - Discussion
 - Come to class prepared.
 - One type of wrong answer!

- The difficulties of finding a textbook.
 - As a result, this course takes a great books approach to the readings. I tried to find readings that were interesting, accessible, fun.
- This makes it all the more important that you come to class; my lectures are designed to provide the necessary background to help you build the connections to the readings. We will then attempt to move into discussion, tying the readings to major themes in the course.
- This will also mean that there will be moments in the class where you may disagree with the course material, with me, and/or with each other. That's fine. Please bring your points of view with the material. My job is to help you channel that in ways that can/will spark your sociological imagination.
 - Feel free to bring your personal experiences to bear on the readings. Be prepared for me to turn those experiences back on you.

MANAGING THE READINGS

- **GOAL:** Conversational command of the readings.
 - What is the motivating question of the reading?
 - What is the bottom line/thesis/answer to that motivating question?
 - How does the author mobilize his/her evidence? How do they answer the question?
 - Is (Are) the author's answers persuasive? What questions/issues do the readings raise for you?

- There are two components to this course: the lecture and the discussion. We may not always follow that format entirely; in fact, something I say during the lecture may spark discussion on one of more of the readings.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Attendance and Informed Participation (10% of final grade)
- Course "Expert" (20% of final grade)
- 2 Midterm Essays (10% of the final grade each; 20% total)
- "Racism at Bowdoin" Project (50% of the final grade total)
 - Prospectus (5% of final grade)
 - Annotated Bibliography (5% of your final grade)
 - "Racism at Bowdoin" Essay (15% of your final grade)
 - Research paper (25% of final grade)

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Attendance and Active Participation (10%)
 - Attendance and Pop Quizzes (5%)
 - Blog Responses (5%)

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Course Expert
 - Discussion Facilitation (10%)
 - Lead discussion twice during the semester
 - Write 2 Critical Response Blogs (10%)
 - 500 - 750 words
 - Connecting discussion to the readings
 - What lingers from our conversation?

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Midterm Essays (20% of final grade; 10% each)
 - 3 - 5 page paper based on readings/lecture material
 - Questions distributed the week before due date.
 - Submitted via One Drive by **5 pm** on
 - **Friday, October 4**
 - **Friday, November 8**

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- **"Racism at Bowdoin" Project (50% of your final grade)**
 - Prospectus (5%)
 - Annotated Bibliography (5%)
 - Racism at Bowdoin Essay (15%)
 - Draft #1 (due by 5 pm on November 15)
 - Final draft due by 5 pm on November 27
 - Research Paper (25%)
 - Due by 4:30 pm on Tuesday, December 17

REMINDERS

- All papers are submitted electronically through One Drive (Word or Pages formats).
- Note that assignments are NEVER due on class days.
- Late papers will be downgraded (e.g. A- to B+).
- Extensions possible with proper documentation.
- Citations (Chicago Style or MLA formats).

- Then, go over syllabus.
- Answer any preliminary questions.
- Introduce Theo.

DIAGNOSTIC PAPER

- An Introduction to yourself and your writing
- Ungraded assignment.
 - Topic comes out next week.
 - Due by 5 pm on Friday, September 20.
 - Schedule a meeting with me during the week of September 23 to discuss your paper.

Does America have a "race" problem?



Does America have a "race" problem?

Millennials Are Less Racially Tolerant Than You Think

By Sean Wilentz



The problem with these rosy sentiments is that they're at least partly false. Those who claim that the rise of the millennials will usher in a new age of racial harmony are cherry-picking or misreading statistics. They're doing so primarily in two ways: by lumping together all millennials when they report survey findings rather than breaking out white millennials' views on racial issues, or by focusing narrowly on a small set of questions about explicit racial beliefs that don't tell the full story. The fact of the matter is that millennials who are white — that is, members of the group that has always had the most regressive racial beliefs, and who will constitute a majority of U.S. voters for at least another couple of decades — are, on key questions involving race, no more open-minded than their parents. The only real difference, in fact, is that they think they are.



what do we mean by racism?

RACISM

- a social system (ideology) or set of beliefs about the claimed superiority of one racial/ethnic group over another.
- it shapes relationships (defined through social relations)
- it is used to justify unequal social arrangements between dominant and majority groups.
- THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS **REVERSE RACISM!!**



5 FALLACIES ABOUT RACISM

1. THE INDIVIDUALISTIC FALLACY

- **FALLACY:** Racism is restricted to a specific set of ideas.
 - **prejudice:** thoughts and feelings about a racial or ethnic group that is unlikely to change regardless of evidence against it.
 - **discrimination:** harmful or negative acts (not mere thoughts) against people deemed inferior on the basis of their racial/ethnic category regardless of individual merit.

1. THE INDIVIDUALISTIC FALLACY

- **FALLACY:** Racism is restricted to a specific set of ideas.
- **REALITY:** Racism is everywhere, not just in individuals.
 - Embedded within institutions
 - can be habitual, unintentional, and well meaning.

2. LEGALISTIC FALLACY

- **FALLACY:** Abolishing racist laws (laws in principle) automatically leads to the eradication of racism in everyday life (racism in practice).
 - **de jure legal progress:** "based on the law"
 - **de facto:** "based in fact."

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 - **de facto:** "based in fact."
- **REALITY:** Changes in law does not mean changes in attitudes.
 - e.g. Segregation

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- **FALLACY:** The presence of people of color in influential positions means the eradication of race-based obstacles.
 - People of color (not society) are to blame for their own failures.
- **REALITY:** Despite the inroads a lot of African Americans (and other marginalized populations) have made, progress for all is extremely slow.
 - A disproportionate number remain disadvantaged in a lot of areas.

4. AHISTORICAL FALLACY

- **FALLACY:** This history of racism in the United States is inconsequential.
 - Events in the recent past may matter, but events in the far distant past (slavery) does not matter ("they" should get over it).

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- **FALLACY:** "RACE" and "RACISM" are fixed, immutable concepts.
 - It does not change across space and time.
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