

SOC/AFRS I010: Deconstructing Racism

Fall 2019 | Mondays and Wednesdays | 2:50 am – 4:15 pm | Searles 313

REVISED 09/09/19

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Office: Adams Hall, Room 310

Pronouns: He/Him/His

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am and by Appointment only (SEE BELOW)

Course Website: <https://courses.bowdoin.edu/sociology-I010-fall-2019/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Racism. Perhaps no other word generates as much frustration, anxiety, and division in contemporary American life. Every day, we confront issues around race and racism. Does voting for Donald Trump make a person racist? What about a bystander calling the police on a black family picnicking in a park? Or a film awards season that includes zero nominations for artists of color? Is claiming “Black Lives Matter” discrimination against white people? These questions highlight significant contradictions about the persistence of racism. In the generations since the Civil Rights Movement, few Americans self-identify as “racist.” And yet, even as many of us espouse anti-racist values, the mere suggestion of “racism” mobilizes defenses, rendering many tongue-tied and crippling conversation.

In truth, racism is far more complicated than random acts of racial animus. Racism infiltrates much of America's political, cultural, economic, and social life. It structures our institutions, influencing religion, sports, art, entertainment, medicine, and even our sex lives. It shapes our daily interactions and our significant relationships. More troubling, racism evolves and changes. As soon as we defeat old racial injustices, new and more ambiguous ideologies emerge, maligning once socially acceptable practices as racially insensitive and divisive. Whether we “make everything about race,” defend the dawn of a “post-racial” America, or ignore discussing it for the sake of civility, racism permeates the lives of every single American. No one can escape its powerful impact.

This seminar does not attempt to solve the problem of racism (no class can accomplish that). However, by understanding how race and racism “work” in contemporary American society, this course begins meaningful conversation. We will not only explore how these systems evolved but also how their legacies continue to define the institutions that scaffold our lives. Confronting some of today’s most controversial and misunderstood issues, we will investigate the factors that undermine productive conversations around racism and inhibit its complete annihilation. Finally, we will explore the various strategies people deploy to challenge and uphold racial injustice and inequality. Drawing on a panoply of academic and popular scholarship, this seminar seeks to arm students with a “cultural toolkit” to contemplate, debate, and write about one of our country’s most enduring and vexing moral and social problems.

COURSE READINGS

These books are available for purchase through the Bowdoin Virtual Bookstore (although you might also find less expensive versions through Amazon). Other assigned readings are available electronically through the course website.

Beydoun, Khaled A. *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN: 978-0520297791.

Clay, Andreana. 2012. *The Hip-Hop Generation Fights Back: Youth, Activism, and Post-Civil Rights Politics*. New York: New York University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0814717172

DiAngelo, Robin. 2018. *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Boston: Beacon Press. ISBN-13: 978-0807047415

Flores-Gonzalez, Nilda. 2017. *Citizens, But Not Americans: Race and Belonging Among Latino Millennials*. New York: NYU Press. ISBN: 978-1479840779

Haldipur, Jan. 2018. *No Place on the Corner: The Costs of Aggressive Policing*. New York: NYU Press. ISBN-13: 978-1479888009

Noble, Safiya Umoja. 2018. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York: New York University Press. ISBN: 978-1479837243.

Van Cleve, Nicole Gonzalez. 2017. *Crook County: Racism and Injustice in America's Largest Criminal Court*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1503602786.

ABOUT THE COURSE

Discussions about race and racism are never easy. They can often create awkward and uncomfortable social interactions, and as a result, people prefer to remain silent than to fear offending others. The seminar requires you to challenge that impulse. We will confront material in this class that might make you feel uncomfortable. You might not understand certain ideas or concepts that others expect you to know. You might make a comment or ask a question that might make yourself and others uncomfortable. There are times where you will disagree with the readings, with your fellow classmates, and yes, sometimes even with me.

And that is okay.

This seminar prioritizes critical engagement over titillation. The enterprise of generating vibrant class discussion necessitates that you cultivate your sociological imagination. This sometimes means presenting half-baked ideas (including ideas that sounded better in your head than out of your mouth) and asking clarifying questions to gain mastery of the course material. We will work on building an environment that welcomes and respects others' ideas and experiences. Disagreement (with each other and with the professor) is welcome; judgment and personal attacks are not. **To those ends, I encourage students to focus their comments and analysis on the common readings. Students are certainly welcome to share personal experiences and anecdotes, but they should not become substitutes for critical engagement with assigned material or broad analytical thinking.** I also encourage students to listen actively to their peers' comments and ask for clarification as needed; or respond to specific comments by referring to the course material. Discussions can be personal without analysis becoming personalized.

COURSE FORMAT AND READINGS

Each class will begin with a “mini-lecture” that situates the material in its sociocultural, political, and economic contexts. We will then collectively discuss assigned readings, anchored by students’ discussion questions. It therefore behooves you to complete all assigned readings before coming to class.

This course has a rather heavy reading load. Some of the readings may pose a challenge, requiring additional or a closer reading. I do not expect you to read every single word (informed skimming is a vital skill that can prove useful to you in this course); however, I do expect that you have a **conversational command of the material**. That means, for each of the assigned readings, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is (are) the motivating question(s) for the reading(s)?
- 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 answer(s) persuasive? What additional questions do(es) the readings raise for you?

Without proper documentation, no laptops, tablets, and cell phones are allowed. PowerPoint slides will be made available through the course website within 48 hours following the lecture.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Your final grade is determined as follows:

Attendance and Informed Participation	10% of final grade
Course Expert	20% of final grade total
Discussion Leader	10% of final grade
Response Blog	10% of final grade
Two Midterm Essays	20% of final grade
Midterm Essay #1 (due Friday, October 4)	10% of final grade
Midterm Essay #2 (due Friday, November 8)	10% of final grade
“Racism at Bowdoin” Project	50% of final grade total
Prospectus	5% of final grade
Essay	15% of final grade
Final Paper	20% of final grade

Attendance and Informed Participation

Attendance and Pop Quizzes	5% of final grade
Blog Responses	5 % of final grade

Attendance will be taken for each class and is mandatory. Students who are unable to attend class must notify me in advance and in writing. More than two absences will negatively impact your grade in the course. The only exceptions to the two-absence limit are religious holidays, serious family emergencies, and documented illnesses.

Students are required to complete all assigned readings and come to class actively prepared to critically and analytically engage the material. Informed participation includes making connections between our readings, discussions, and relevant current events; taking an active part in in-class exercises (when applicable); and asking thoughtful questions about readings and lectures. Successful participation in this course depends on both the frequency and quality of a student’s contribution to in-class discussions. This does not necessarily mean always providing the right answers, but rather demonstrating an active engagement with the course material and the in-class discussion.

Pop Quizzes: I reserve the right to administer random “pop quizzes” throughout the semester to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading. These “pop quizzes” will figure into your participation grade.

Blog Responses: Throughout the semester, you are responsible for responding to at least three of the blogs posted by your colleagues on the course website. A minimum of one response should be completed by the end of the first half of the semester.

<u>Course Expert</u>	<u>(20% of your final grade)</u>
Discussion Facilitation	10% of your final grade
2 Critical Response Blogs	10% of your final grade

To facilitate our discussions, each student will sign up for two classes during the semester in which s/he/they will be “the expert.” For the classes you select as “the expert,” you are responsible for the following:

- Twice during the semester, you will co-facilitate the class discussion with another student. Consulting with the professor, you will draft discussion questions to frame our conversation based on the readings/topic and engaging the class in what is compelling, interesting, or controversial about the assigned texts.
- Within a week of your assigned “Expert” Day, you are to post a blog (between 500 – 750 words) on the course’s website (<https://courses.bowdoin.edu/sociology-1010-fall-2019/>) that connects the course readings with key themes introduced in lecture or during class discussion. The goal of these blogs is not to summarize the readings (although a brief summary might be necessary), but rather to think about any lingering questions that the material raises for you, or to consider ideas presented in class or in the readings that merit further consideration. You are also welcome to situate the readings for your day in conversation with other theories or empirical studies we have explored in the class.

<u>Midterm Essays</u>	<u>20% of your final grade</u>
Midterm Essay #1 (due by 5 pm on Friday, October 4)	10% of your final grade
Midterm Essay #2 (due by 5 pm on Friday, November 8)	10% of your final grade

You will write two 3 to 5- page midterm essays, answering a question provided one week in advance of the paper’s due date. Papers are designed to demonstrate your mastery of the course material and will likely require you to analyze contemporary social phenomena using concepts/course readings.

“Racism at Bowdoin” Project	50% of your final grade
Prospectus (due by 5 pm on Friday, October 18)	5% of your final grade
Annotated Bibliography (due by 5 pm on Friday, November 1)	5% of your final grade
“Racism at Bowdoin” Essay	15% of your final grade
Draft due by (5 pm on Friday, November 15)	
Final Essay due by Friday, November 27	
Final Research Paper (due by 4:30 pm on Tuesday, December 17)	25 % of your final grade

2019 is a landmark year at Bowdoin College, commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Africana Studies, the African American Society, and the John Brown Russwurm African American Center. This commemoration reflects a complicated history of race and race relations at the College, which long predates John Brown Russwurm’s arrival to campus. For this project, you will draw on the themes of the course to consider the legacy of race and racism at Bowdoin College.

Under consultation with the professor and research librarian Beth Hoppe, you will design a research project that will use the data you have collected to write two different papers. The first paper will be a reflection essay geared toward a general audience that will become part of a class website that we will put together in honor of the 50th Anniversary Celebrations. The second paper will be an extensive 8 to 10-page research paper geared toward an academic audience.

NB: All papers must be submitted via One Drive in a Word Processing Format (e.g. Word, Pages, or Google Docs). PDFs are not acceptable (and submitting a PDF will be penalized as a late paper).

GRADING SCALE

NB: I eschew rounding up borderline grades (e.g. rounding an 89.5 (B+) to a 90 (A-)). In these cases, I reserve the right to round up or round down based on a student’s overall performance in the course (participation, consistent performance or signs of improvement over the semester).

	A: 93% – 100%	A-: 90% – 92%
B+: 87% – 89%	B: 84% – 86%	B-: 80% – 83%
C+: 77% – 79%	C: 74% – 76%	C-: 70% – 73%
	D: 64 % – 69%	
	F: below 64%	

ABOUT MY AVAILABILITY

I usually do not maintain a consistent set of office hours. When I am on campus, and I am not in a meeting, I am available to meet with students. To maximize availability, I use an online calendar, which you can access my calendar through the course’s website, the course’s webpage (see above), and through Bowdoin faculty page (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/profiles/faculty/tgreene/>). You are welcome to schedule up to 30-minutes to meet with me. You will receive an email confirmation of the meeting. If you need to cancel an appointment, you can only do so through the website. There is no need to send a confirmation of the appointment you make or the cancellation; the system automatically generates an email notifying me of the cancellation.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to a standing meeting I must attend on Mondays, I may be required to leave immediately after class. To accommodate any lingering questions or concerns, I am holding a **SOC 1010 Open Hour on Tuesdays, from 9:30 am – 10:30 am. During this hour, you are welcome to stop by without making an appointment.** If you have any issues that require immediate attention, please send me an email.

During midterms and finals, I offer additional office hours. Days and times for supplemental hours will be announced in advance.

A WORD ABOUT ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are expected to abide by the College's Academic Honor Code. The honor code is located in the student handbook.

STUDENTS SEEKING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities seeking accommodation must provide documentation to Lesley Levy, Director of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (llevy@bowdoin.edu). Students are encouraged to address any special needs or special accommodations at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs.

Additional information regarding the accommodations process for students with disabilities is available at <https://www.bowdoin.edu/accessibility/student-accessibility-office/index.html>. All information will remain confidential.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NB: The professor reserves the right to adjust, eliminate, or substitute readings on this list to accommodate the intellectual needs of the class. Students will ALWAYS be advised of changes in class and in writing no later than 48 hours in advance.

**denotes readings available through our course website.*

PART ONE

DEVELOPING THE "RACIAL TOOLKIT"

4 September

Introduction – NO READING

9 September

Defining and Talking about Race and Racism

*Anderson, Elijah. 2015. "The White Space." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1(1): 10 – 21.

*DiAngelo, Beverly. 2018. "The Challenges of Talking to White People about Racism" (pp. 7 – 14) and "Racism and White Supremacy" (pp. 15 – 38) in *White Fragility: Why is it So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism?*

*Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2017. "Defining Racism" (pp. 83 – 98) in *Why are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race.*

11 September

Thinking about Race and Racial Identity

*Anderson, Elijah. 2012. "The Iconic Ghetto." *The ANNALS of Political and Social Science.* 642: 8 – 24.

*Mills, C. Wright. [1959] 2000. "The Promise" (pp. 3 – 13) in *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2017. "The Complexity of Identity" (pp. 99 – 110) in *Why are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*.

PART TWO THE INVENTION OF RACE(ISM)

16 September

Historical Perspectives on Race and Racism

*Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. "Racial Formation," (pp. 53 – 76) in *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.

*Sussman, Robert. 2014. "Early Racism in Western Europe" (pp. 11 – 42) in *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea*. Cambridge: Harvard.

18 September

Race as Biological Myth

*Roberts, Dorothy. 2011. "Separating Racial Science from Racism" (pp. 25 – 64), "The Allure of Race in Biomedical Research," (pp. 104 – 121) and "Embodying Race" (pp. 123 – 146) in *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Recreate Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: The New Press.

20 September

Diagnostic Essay Submitted via One Drive by 5 pm

PART THREE RACISM IN A POST-RACIAL SOCIETY

23 September

Racism without Racists

*Hagerman, Margaret A. 2018. "Race Doesn't Really Matter Anymore": Growing Up with Privilege (pp. 9 – 23), "We're Not a Racist School" (pp. 64 – 96), and "'It Was Racism: White Kids on Race" (pp. 141 – 160) in *White Kids: Growing Up with Privilege in America*.

25 September

White Privilege(?)

*Sherman, Jennifer. 2009. "The Place I Found: An Introduction to Golden Valley" (pp. 25 – 54) and "Workers and Welfare: Poverty, Coping Strategies, and Substance Abuse (pp. 55 – 100) in *Those Who Work, Those Who Don't: Poverty, Morality, and Family in Rural America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

30 September

White Fragility

DiAngelo, Robin. 2018. *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Chs. 8 – 12.

2 October

Research Workshop – Visit with Beth Hoppe/Racialization in the 21st Century

Beydoun, Khaled A. *American Islamophobia*, Chs. 1 – 2, 5-6

- 4 October Midterm I due via One Drive by 5 pm.
- 7 October Visit to Special Collections (Bowdoin Library)
Meet in Nixon Lounge (3rd Floor, Library)
- 9 October Racializing “Illegality”
Flores-Gonzalez, Nilda. *Citizens, But Not Americans*, Chs. 2 – 5.
- PART FOUR RACISM AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
- 14 October FALL BREAK – NO CLASS
- 16 October Racism and Education
*Warikoo, Natasha. 2016. “Beliefs about Meritocracy and Race (pp. 11 – 42), “Making Sense of Race” (pp. 43 – 62), “Merit and the Diversity Bargain” (pp. 87 – 113) in *The Diversity Bargain and Other Dilemmas of Race, Admissions, and Meritocracy at Elite Institutions*.” Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Zabala, Pamela. 2017. “Hypercultural White Space: Resisting Inclusivity Efforts on College Campuses.” *The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal*, 143 – 147.
- 18 October Final Project Prospectus Due Submitted through One Drive by 5 pm
- 21 October The Inheritance of the Ghetto
* Sharkey, Patrick. 2013. “The Inheritance of the Ghetto,” (pp. 24 – 46), “Neighborhoods and the Transmission of Racial Inequality” (pp. 91 – 116) and “The Cross-Generational Legacy of Urban Disadvantage” (pp. 117 – 135) in *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress Toward Racial Equality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 23 October Economic Opportunity and Racism
*Lung-Amam, Willow S. 2017. “The New Gold Mountain” (pp. 19 – 52) and “A Quality Education for Whom” (pp. 53 – 97) in *Trespassers? Asian Americans and the Battle for Suburbia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 28 October Thinking About Data Workshop – Beth Hoppe
- 30 October Racializing Policing
Haldipur, Jan. 2018. *No Place on the Corner*.
- 1 November Annotated Bibliography Submitted via One Drive by 5 pm
- 4 November Racism and the Justice System
Van Cleve, Nicole Gonzalez. *Crook County*, Introduction, Chs. 1 – 2.
- 6 November Racializing a Defense
Van Cleve, Nicole Gonzalez. *Crook County*, Chs. 3 – 5.

8 November

Midterm Essay #2 due via One Drive by 5 pm.

PART FIVE

RACISM IN CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

11 November

#MOVIEINDUSTRYSOWHITE

*Erigha, Maryann. 2019. "Representation and Racial Hierarchy," (pp. 23 – 52), "Labeling Black Unbankable" (pp. 52 – 81), and "Manufacturing Racial Stigma" (pp. 141 – 161) in *The Hollywood Jim Crow: The Racial Politics of the Movie Industry*. New York: New York University Press.

13 November

The Politics of Cultural Appropriation

*Rodriguez, Jason. 2006. "Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35(6): 645 – 688.

*Cultural Appropriation Packet

15 November

Racism at Bowdoin Essay Draft Due

18 November

Racism and Technology, Part One

Noble, Safiya, Umoja. 2018. *Algorithms of Oppression*, Chs. I – 3.

20 November

Racism and Technology, Part Two

Noble, Safiya, Umoja. 2018. *Algorithms of Oppression*, Chs. I – 3

25 November

Sexual Racism

*Buggs, Shantel Gabriel. 2017. "Dating in the Time of #BlackLivesMatter: Exploring Mixed-Race Women's Discourses on Race and Racism." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3(4): 538 – 551.

*Han, Chong-suk and Kyung-Hee Choi. 2018. "Very Few People Say 'No Whites': Gay Men of Color and the Racial Politics of Desire." *Sociological Spectrum* 38(3): 145 – 161.

*Spell, Sarah. 2017. "Not Just Black and White: How Race/Ethnicity and Gender Intersect in Hookup Culture." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3(2): 172 – 187.

27 November

THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS

28 November

Racism at Bowdoin Final Essay Draft Due

PART SIX

FIGHTING BACK

- 2 December Racializing Politics
 *Haney López, Ian. 2015. “Getting Away with Racism” (pp. 127 – 146), “What’s the Matter with White Voters? Commonsense Racism” (pp. 169 – 190) and “Conclusion – To End Dog Whistle Politics” (pp. 211 – 232) in *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- *“Today’s American Voter Under President Trump” Reading Packet.
- 4 December White Frustration and White Rage
 *Kimmel, Michael. 2017. “Angry White Boys” (pp. 69 – 98) in *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*. New York: Nation Books.
- *Stern, Alexandra Minna. 2019. Selections from *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate: How the Alt-Right is Warping the American Imagination*. New York: Beacon Press.
- 9 December Anti-Racism and The Hip-Hop Generation
 Clay, Andreana. *The Hip Hop Generation Fights Back*, Chs. 1 (skim), 2 – 3, 6
- 11 December Reimagining Racial Oppression
 Clay, Andreana. *The Hip-Hop Generation Fights Back*, Chs. 4 – 5, 7

RESEARCH PAPER TO BE SUBMITTED VIA ONE DRIVE BY 4:30 PM ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17.