

COM 275: Racism, Colonialism, and Communication

The University of Nevada, Reno
Spring 2020

Professor: Dr. Jenna N. Hanchey
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Office Hours: MW 1-2pm
Office Location: Lincoln Hall 306

Course Time: MW 2:30-3:45pm
Course Location: LME 316

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The contemporary U.S. moment is characterized by struggles against racism and colonialism, from Standing Rock to Charlottesville to Puerto Rico. In this course, we will study the development of racism and colonialism as interconnected systems throughout the history of the United States, in order to understand their manifestations in public life today. By taking a particularly communicative approach, we will examine how racist/colonialist systems and institutions are built and maintained by communicative processes, and how communication may also be used for social change. Thus, in addition to studying racist and colonialist structures, we will also explore how communication may be used to undermine these structures, and work toward equality in U.S. social life.

This course satisfies Silver Core CO10, Diversity and Equity:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

At the conclusion of the course, students will have achieved the following SLOs. Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of relationships between diversity, inequality, and power in, or through a comparison with, the United States.
- Understand contemporary social issues and current events using theories of diversity and equity.
- Connect histories of racism and colonialism to their contemporary manifestations in the United States
- Discuss the intersections of race and colonization in current U.S. affairs, events, and relations with other nations

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Online readings on the syllabus or announced in class, posted to WebCampus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Quizzes (10 x 10pts. = 100pts.)

100 pts.

On ten random days throughout the semester, we will begin class with a short reading quiz. These quizzes will ask specific questions about the day's assigned reading and your own thoughts on it. Your answers should refer clearly to the reading and demonstrate that you read thoroughly and attentively.

Show & Tell Reflections (3 x 100pts. = 300pts.)

300 pts.

Three times during the semester, you not have any reading for class. Instead, I expect you to spend the week finding an object, image, or short media clip (30s or less) that reflects how the topics we have discussed in class connect to your own life and experience.

Show & Tell 1 will address Slavery & Anti-Blackness

Show & Tell 2 will address Settler Colonialism or Coloniality & Imperialism

Show & Tell 3 will address Whiteness

You will be required to come to class with a 3 minute prepared explanation of your reflections over the course material and how it connects to the object and your life. Your explanation should include references to the course reading(s) and previous class discussion. In addition, you will turn in a more detailed explanation of your Show & Tell object and its relation to class. Your Show & Tell will be graded both on (1) your in-class presentation and (2) the written explanation handed in to the professor.

Toolkit Group Project

100 pts.

The final projects will be aimed at providing paths for building better anti-racist and anti-colonial futures. Working in groups, you will research and develop an online toolkit that can help a broad, public audience learn about and take action on a contemporary racial or colonial issue. The point of this assignment will be to take what you have learned in the class, do more in-depth research on a particular topic, and create materials that can help others to take action to against racism and colonialism. More detailed instructions will be forthcoming.

GRADING

Grades are determined based on the number of points earned out of a maximum of 500 points. There is no extra credit given in this class, and there will be no rounding or curving of grades. Final grades are calculated as follows:

A	93%-100%	465-500 pts
A-	90%-92.9%	450-464 pts
B+	87%-89.9%	435-449 pts
B	84%-86.9%	420-434 pts
B-	80%-83.9%	400-419 pts
C+	77%-79.9%	385-399 pts
C	74%-76.9%	370-384 pts
C-	70%-73.9%	350-369 pts
D+	67%-69.9%	335-349 pts
D	64%-66.9%	320-334 pts
D-	60%-63.9%	300-319 pts
F	0%-59.9%	0-299 pts

In each assignment, you will earn a grade based on the following guidelines:

- A = Exceeds course requirements. Exceptionally well-prepared and executed completion of assigned work, indicating significant effort, individualized creative style, and demonstrating a thorough grasp of the material. For written assignments: writing is insightful and error-free; message is communicated clearly; research is exceptional; your argument is creative and nuanced.
- B = Meets and sometimes exceeds course requirements. Student demonstrates fundamental mastery of the material. Work is well-prepared and demonstrates considerable effort. Is distinctly superior to an average or "C" effort. For written assignments: writing is generally effective with respect to clarity, directness, and conciseness; some uneven or awkward passages are apparent, as are a few errors in grammar or punctuation. Research slightly exceeds the requirements.
- C = Meets course requirements. Satisfactory completion of assigned work at a level of effort and competency normally expected of the majority of students (i.e., basic completion, average performance, reasonable effort and preparedness). Student demonstrates minimum mastery of the material. This is average work that fails to stand out in any way. For written assignments: writing is reasonably clear, concise, and direct; uneven or awkward passages are apparent, as are multiple errors in grammar or punctuation. Minimum research done.

- D = Basic course requirements are only partially met. Student does not demonstrate minimum mastery of the material. Receiving this grade indicates the unsatisfactory completion of assigned work, either through misperceived objectives or the failure to grasp key concepts. This work is below average. For written assignments: The message is not communicated clearly, directly, or concisely. There is considerable unevenness or awkwardness in passages, and work is characterized by errors in grammar or punctuation.
- F = Basic course requirements are not met. Student demonstrates little or no mastery of the material. Receiving this grade indicates either a failure to complete the assigned work, or failure to grasp key concepts due to lack of reasonable effort. Work is below the minimum level of acceptance. For written assignments: Writing lacks style, content, and format associated with a college-educated individual.

COURSE POLICIES

All written assignments must be typed in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced, with 1 in. margins (check these—sometimes margins are automatically set to 1.25 in, and must be changed). **Late work will be marked off 10% each day for the first three days it is late. After three days, late work will be given a 0.**

You are expected not only to be present, but to contribute to class discussion through analysis of the readings, reflections on your own experiences, and participation in other activities. Classroom discussions offer a unique opportunity and environment to “unpack” complex questions about race and coloniality. In order to participate well, you will need to complete the reading. I expect you to come to class having read thoroughly and formed incisive positions and/or questions about the topics being investigated in class that day. Class activities and discussion will revolve around your thoughts and ideas about the readings – you have to *have* thoughts and ideas in order for it to work! That does not mean you have to understand everything you read; we will work through complex concepts and situations in class.

Readings must be completed on the day they are listed on the course schedule. Be sure to read thoroughly, and take notes while reading; some of these readings are very theoretically and conceptually challenging. In-class discussions are intended to *complement* (not duplicate) the readings. Do your best to approach a text with an open mind toward a given author’s disposition and message. This means trying to understand how and why they are arguing what they are, which is typically more time-consuming than simply comprehending an author’s message. Give each author a generous reading!

Communication for this course will be maintained exclusively through WebCampus. Please make sure you are checking it often for updates from me, as well as readings, assignments, and grades.

Discussion of Graded Assignments

It is your right and responsibility to take an active interest in how you are evaluated in this or any class. If you believe you have been graded unfairly, please come visit me in office hours to talk about it. Be prepared to make a well-developed case regarding the evaluation. Your argument must be related to your assignment as presented, and based on how it compares with the criteria for the assignment (not how hard you tried, how you think it compares with someone else’s work, or how it will affect your final grade in the class or GPA). **Any grade appeals must occur or be scheduled no sooner than 24 hours after but no later than one week after receiving the evaluation.**

Attendance

This course is heavily discussion based. Failure to attend class and/or engage in class dialogue on a regular basis may result in a lower course grade. In order to be excused from a day of class, you must contact me *before* the class, unless it is a case of emergency. Excused absences may include illness, emergency, institutionally approved activities (sports/clubs), and religious holy days (detailed in University Policy below). You must provide documentation for all absences within a week of their occurrence. You will not be excused for doctor’s appointments, work, or transportation issues (unless they are emergency related).

Classroom Behavior

People and ideas must be treated with respect. It is taken as a baseline assumption in this class that racism and colonialism exist as structuring constructs in the contemporary world and have violent and destructive ramifications on multiple groups of people in our society. Any behavior in the classroom that is disrespectful of the way these violences have impacted other people will not be accepted. However, this does not mean that you have to come into the class already knowing and understanding what racism and colonialism look like—questions, mistakes, and misunderstandings are all a part of learning. I hope this classroom acts as a space to work through difficult concepts and questions from a variety of starting points.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious offense in this course. University policies on academic dishonesty (see below) will be strictly enforced. Using the words and ideas of others is borrowing something from those individuals. It is always necessary to identify the original source of supporting information; you must cite the source of any material, quoted or paraphrased, that you use in your work. Proper documentation requires both referencing these sources in the text of your writing, and in a reference section at the end of your essay.

Putting your name on a piece of work indicates that the work is *yours* and that the praise or criticism is due to *you* and no one else. Putting your name on a piece of work in which any part is not yours, is *plagiarism*—unless the borrowed thought or wording is clearly marked and the work is fully identified. Keep in mind that plagiarism is a form of theft. Taking words, phrasing, sentence structure, or any other element of another person's ideas, and using them as if they were your own, is stealing. Simply paraphrasing the work of another without acknowledging the information source is also plagiarism. Merely restating another individual's ideas in different words does not make the ideas yours. ALL assignments are to be your original work. Using papers or presentations from previous semesters or other classes, even if they are your own, is still considered plagiarism.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include filing a final grade of "F"; reducing the student's final course grade one or two full grade points; awarding a failing mark on the coursework in question; or requiring the student to retake or resubmit the coursework. For more details, see the [University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog](#).

Absence Policy

It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class as soon as possible. Except as specified in this policy, the instructor shall make the final determination on allowing alternate assignments or whether missed work can be done at a time other than during the regularly scheduled class period.

Students are expected to attend classes in which they are enrolled unless absent for institutionally approved activities or other reasons allowed under institutional policy. Instructors may set course attendance requirements, which may include consequences for absences that are not institutionally approved, but such requirements must not conflict with institutional policies governing student absences. As indicated in [UAM 6,501](#), it is the instructor's responsibility to state course-specific policies regarding late work and make-up exams in the course syllabus.

Absence due to religious holy day observance

It is the policy of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to be sensitive to the religious obligations of its students. Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall, whenever possible, be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor in advance in writing, according to the policy of the institution offering the

class, if the student intends to participate in a religious holiday that does not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the assignment at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the institution that could not be reasonably have been avoided.

Absence due to university approved extracurricular activity

For absences due to university-approved extracurricular activities, it is the student's responsibility to consult with the instructor in advance and as soon as possible regarding the absence to arrange for the completion of all missed coursework. University-approved extracurricular activities are defined as those sanctioned by a college dean and/or the Executive Vice President & Provost, and may include, but are not limited to, intercollegiate athletics, band, drama, forensics, and recruitment. Students who represent the University at such events shall be provided with alternate, timely make up exams, quizzes, or other coursework missed as a result of their participation.

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for written notice from the appropriate college dean or the Office of the Provost to their instructor of their participation in university-approved extracurricular activities within the first week of the academic term or as soon as the student is aware of the potential need to miss class.

Absence due to illness, family emergency, bereavement, or other compelling reason

In cases of absences due to extended illness, family emergency, bereavement, or other compelling reason, students should notify their instructors as soon as possible and within one week of the start of the absence. In such cases faculty are encouraged to develop plans and deadlines for students to complete alternate assignments that substitute for the missed components of the final course grade. Faculty have the right to request formal, written documentation in such cases as they deem appropriate.

In the case of extended absence, students should review [General Catalog](#) policies for incomplete grades ([4.2 Records and Grading: Grades, Marks, and Grade Point Average](#)), withdrawal from the university ([4.1 Registration: Withdrawal from the University](#)), or grade appeal due to improper withdrawal ([4.2 Records and Grading: Grade Changes, Grade Replacement, and Grade Appeals](#)). Students are advised to check with the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships on the implications of these actions.

Appeal

Any student who is denied a make-up assignment after appropriately notifying the instructor of a class absence, as described in the policies above, shall have the right to appeal that decision through the Academic Complaint System.

Disability Services:

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the [Disability Resource Center](#) (Pennington Achievement Center Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Audio and Video Recording

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Harrasment and Assault

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the

University's Equal Opportunity & Title IX office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#) page.

Academic Success Services

Your student fees cover usage of the [Math Center](#) (775) 784-4433, [Tutoring Center](#) (775) 784-6801, and [University Writing Center](#) (775) 784-6030. These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to change with sufficient advance notice.)

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments & Activities
<i>INTRODUCTION TO RACISM AND COLONIALISM</i>			
W 1/22	Introduction and Course Expectations		
M 1/27	Connecting Race & Coloniality		<i>Racism: A History (Part I)</i>
W 1/29	Combatting Race & Coloniality	Kendi, "My Racist Introduction" and "Definitions"	
<i>HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND CONTEMPORARY EFFECTS</i>			
M 2/3	Slavery & Anti-Blackness	Hartman, "Come, Go Back, Child" Laymon, "Terrors"	
W 2/5	Slavery & Anti-Blackness		<i>I Am Not Your Negro</i>
M 2/10	Slavery & Anti-Blackness	Browne, "Everybody's Got a Little Light Under the Sun"	
W 2/12	Slavery & Anti-Blackness	Browne, "B@anding Blackness"	Guest Speaker: Dr. Simone Browne
M 2/17	NO CLASS – PRESIDENT'S DAY		
W 2/19	Slavery & Anti-Blackness		Show & Tell 1
M 2/24	NO CLASS – DR. HANCHEY'S AT A CONFERENCE		
W 2/26	Settler Colonialism	King, "What is it About Us You Don't Like?"	
M 3/2	Settler Colonialism	Black, "Native Resistive Rhetoric and the Decolonization of American Indian Removal Discourse"	
W 3/5	Settler Colonialism	Tuck & Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor"	
M 3/9	Settler Colonialism	Ono & Buescher, "Deciphering Pochahontas"	
W 3/11	Settler Colonialism		FIELD TRIP TO THE STEWART INDIAN SCHOOL
<i>SPRING BREAK</i>			
M 3/23	Coloniality & Imperialism		<i>Guava Island</i>
W 3/25	Coloniality & Imperialism	Wanzer-Serrano, "Dirty Love"	
M 3/30	Coloniality & Imperialism	de Onís, "Energy Colonialism Powers the Ongoing Unnatural Disaster in Puerto Rico"	
W 4/1	Coloniality & Imperialism	Na'puti, "Archipelagic Rhetoric"	
M 4/6	Coloniality & Imperialism		Show & Tell 2
W 4/8	Whiteness	Roediger, "Irish-American Workers and White Racial Formation in the Antebellum United States"	
M 4/13	Whiteness	DiAngelo, "White Fragility"	
W 4/15	Whiteness	Warren, "It Really Isn't About You"	
M 4/20	Whiteness	Hanchey, "All of Us Phantasmic Saviors"	

W 4/22	Whiteness		Show & Tell 3
<i>BUILDING ANTI-RACIST AND DECOLONIAL FUTURES</i>			
M 4/27	Building Better Futures	LeGuin, The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas Jemisin, The Ones Who Stay and Fight	
W 4/29	Toolkit Workshop		
M 5/4	Toolkit Workshop		
EXAM			Toolkits Due and In-Class Presentations

References

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