

Senses of Brown (Fall 2021)

Instructor: Manu Chander

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

While it has become increasingly common to talk of brownness as a racial and cultural category in the U.S., brownness remains largely under-theorized. This course invites students to take part in an emerging conversation about the meanings of brownness, its conceptual and material histories from the nineteenth century, which witnessed the popularization of race science and rapid colonial expansion, to the present day. In what ways, if any, does the idea of brownness cohere as a concept, and how does it relate to more commonly discussed ideas of whiteness and Blackness? In what ways does the term work for or against rigid notions of racial difference? And, perhaps most important, what, if any, emancipatory potential does the term offer us?

Required Books

Links to library copies/e-books provided where available

1. Richard Rodriguez, [*Brown: Last Discovery of America*](#) (ISBN 9780142000793)
2. Kamal Al-Solaylee, *Brown: What Being Brown in the World Today Means* (ISBN 9781443453806)
3. José Esteban Muñoz, [*The Sense of Brown*](#) (ISBN 9781478011033)
4. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lee Lott, eds., [*The Idea of Race*](#) (ISBN 9780872204584)

Additional readings by Nitasha Tamar Sharma, Joshua Javier Guzmán, Kevin Young, Andrea Canaan, Hiram Pérez, José Esteban Muñoz, Vijay Prashad, and others will be made available on the course Canvas site.

Course Requirements

Course Requirements:

1. Weekly reading responses will count for 35% of the final grade. These responses, approximately 250 each, will be posted to our course Canvas site and should be reviewed before our synchronous class meetings.
2. 1 in-class presentation will count for 25% of the final grade. The presentation will focus on the week's reading and can be informal (no need to memorize notes, for example). Presenters are responsible for preparing discussion questions and facilitating conversation for roughly 40 minutes of class time.
3. 1 15-20 pp. paper due at the end of the semester will count for 30% of the final grade. Students are encouraged to combine creative output in any medium/genre with critical analysis. One could, for instance, present part of a memoir or work of fiction; a work of visual art; or a playlist accompanied with liner notes that explore

the relationship between the texts and the theories of brownness considered in over the course of the semester.

4. Prior to submitting your final project you will submit a 2-pp. proposal with an annotated bibliography that contains at least 5 secondary sources. This will be worth 10% of your final grade.

Grading Scale

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

Final grade averages scored between

90% and 100% will equal A

85% and less than 90% will equal B+

80% and less than 85% will equal B

75% and less than 80% will equal C+

70% and less than 75% will equal C

60% and less than 70% will equal D

0% and less than 60% will equal F

Academic Integrity

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found [here](#).

Disciplinary action for violations of academic integrity may include a failing grade or expulsion. Any work that you submit should be your own and any and all sources should be cited correctly. When you submit an exam or assignment, you need to abide by the honor pledge of "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

Resources

Rutgers University Newark is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support.

Student Advising

[RU-N4Success](#) connects you with a network of advisors (e.g., academic advisor, financial aid, student accounting representative, career counselors) who can help support your pursuit of academic goals. Access the platform with your NetID to make and manage appointments and send messages to advisors.

Food Pantry

[PantryRUN](#), the campus food pantry, was established to help students who have difficulty affording enough healthy food to stay focused on their studies and stay healthy. Some students may only need help once or twice during the semester, for others it may be a weekly need.

Serving Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found [here](#). Contact ODS: 973-353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations

Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: 973-353-5063 or DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

Counseling Services

[The Rutgers Newark Counseling Center](#) provides free and confidential support. Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall. For more information call 973-353-5805 or email counseling@newark.rutgers.edu.

Student Crisis Support

The [Rutgers University-Newark Campus Awareness Response and Education \(CARE\) Team](#) is committed to promoting campus safety and wellness. Through collaborative efforts we identify, assess and respond to student concerns on campus; assisting students who may be in crisis. The CARE Team develops a support plan for students to help them deal effectively with personal situations that might impact their academic performance.

Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries

Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance [here](#).

Students Who are Pregnant

The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: 973-353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment

Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: 973-353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incident reports may be submitted [here](#). To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does NOT have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance 973-353-1918 or run.vpva@rutgers.edu or text the WeChat text-based Helpline at 973-339-0734.

Bias Incidents

[The Bias Education and Response Team \(BERT\)](#) at Rutgers University - Newark envisions a safe, affirming, and inclusive community for all students to learn and work together in alignment with the University's commitment to champion diversity of thought, experience, and identity. BERT exists to provide support-related resources to individuals who have experienced a bias incident.

Rutgers University Libraries

Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email and chat. Please review the Introduction to Rutgers Libraries Library Guide. For more specific information about library resources for distance learning, review this two-minute video.

Learning Resources

1. The [Writing Center](#) offers writing tutoring and workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers, Newark campus.
2. [The Writing Program](#) offers tutoring and other services for multilingual learners.
3. [Rutgers Learning Center](#) provides tutoring services.