

Exploring the American Racial State
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Department of African American and African Studies
Fall 2017
MW 4:00-5:20 PM
352 Conklin Hall

Professor James Jones

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Office Hours: Mondays 5:30-6:30 pm or by appointment (Maybe set up link)

Course Description

To understand the persistence and pervasiveness of racial inequality in American society, this course studies the United States as a racial state. It identifies the state as the progenitor of racial inequality and excavates the constitutive role of race in the American political system. We will consider how race organizes governing institutions and how racial dominance is secured through public policy. Examining different historical epochs and politics on different levels of government, course readings will draw on the insights of racial and ethnic studies, sociology, and political science. This course will provide students will a critical lens to analyze current events as well as offer a theoretical understanding of racial domination.

This course will address four central questions: What is a racial state? How does a racial state operate? What is the relationship between a racial state and racial inequality? What structural interventions would be necessary to deconstruct the racial state and advance racial justice?

We will begin by reviewing political and race theory to build a definition of race, racism, and the racial state. Identifying race as a social construction, we look at how its invention became a necessary ideological tool to build a republic based upon racial subjugation. A critical race perspective identifies the limitations to existing and dominant philosophical arguments for American political development. It illuminates how white supremacy is a political system unto itself and maps onto our understanding of American politics and institutions racial and racists overlays. The development of race and racism is to be understood as being executed as racial projects that require institutional forms and cultural representations. The American political system develops as the necessary institutional space to define racial categories and to appropriately reward or punish individuals based upon their placement in these categories. To this end, after establishing a strong theoretical foundation of the United States as a racialized social and political system, we look at attempts by the government to define race, create a racialized social safety net, and contemporary efforts to erect a racial caste system through the law and carceral system. Finally, we investigate how to deconstruct the racial state in order to advance racial justice while contemplating our racialized political and legal system in the Trump era.

Learning Objectives

Students will gain a critical understanding of the American state and a host of theoretical tools to analyze social inequality. In addition, students will be able to discuss race as a social construction and identify how the government creates and maintains a racialized social system.

Course Requirements

Attendance/Participation/Discussion Questions	25%
Midterm	35%
Final Exam	
Proposal	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Presentation	5%
Final Paper	25%

Discussion Questions

Please submit a discussion question before each class meeting that may be used to advance our discussion of course readings. Questions are due to the instructor via Blackboard by 10am on the day of class. Discussion questions will be graded; excellent questions will reflect comprehension of the central arguments in the reading and a synthetic understanding of the larger arc and themes of the course. Late discussion questions will not be accepted.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes. Excused vs.

Unexcused absences: The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog

The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.

Midterm

The midterm will be an in-class exam. A review sheet will be posted one week prior to the exam. The exam will consist of identifying key terms and completing short answer essays.

Final Paper

In lieu of a final exam, students will be required to complete a 15 to 20-page essay due December 20th at 5pm. Student must hand in a hard copy at 410 Conklin Hall and an electronic version on Blackboard. The final paper should use theoretical frameworks from class reading to analyze an institution or policy on the local, state, or federal level of government as a project of the American racial state.

To ensure that you adequately prepare for your final assignment, students will be required to submit a paper proposal on October 30th and an annotated bibliography on November 15th. The proposal should include a research question and thesis and a list of five citations suitable for an academic paper. Late proposals and bibliographies will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day.

Finally, students will be required to present on their papers during the last week of class. Presentations should be 5-8 minutes long and incorporate visual aids.

A detailed description of the final paper will be handed out after the midterm.

Required Texts

Michelle Alexander (2010) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press), ~\$20. ISBN: 9781595586438.

Ira Katznelson (2005) *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold Story of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton), \$15. ISBN: 9780393329516.

Grading Rubric

A: Outstanding

A-: Outstanding, with one or two areas of improvement

B+: Very good

B: Good

B-: Good overall, with some significant weaknesses

C+: Satisfactory, with some potential for improvement

C: Satisfactory, but needs significant development

C-: Barely satisfactory

D: Poor: overwhelming flaws

F: Failing: doesn't complete assignment

Final Grades

94.45= A+, 89.45-94.44= A, 89.44-84.45= B+, 84.44-79.45= B, 79.44-74.45=C+, 74.44-69.45=C, 69.44-65.45=D, 65.44-Below= F

All exams and papers are evaluated for content, grammar, and logic.

For assistance on your writing assignments, please consult the [University Writing Center](#). Tutors can help students: clarify an assignment, generate ideas and writing, review and revise drafts, improve grammar and usage, and strengthen reading and editing skills.

Blackboard

All class communication will be through Blackboard. This syllabus is subject to revision and updated version will be posted to the course site. Please check the site regularly for notification. All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard.

Course Materials

All required books are available at Barnes and Nobles Rutgers- Newark (42 Halsey Street) and have been placed on reserve at Dana Library. All other required reading are available via the Blackboard site.

Course Schedule

Assigned readings are subject to change

9/6: Introduction

Part I: The Theoretical Foundation for Understanding the Racial State

9/11: Race and Political Theory

Mills, Charles. 1997. *The Racial Contract*. Pp. 1-19.

*9/12 Last day to drop a course

9/13: Race and Political Theory

Mills, Charles. 1997. *The Racial Contract*. Pp. 19-40.

9/18: Race as an Ideology

Fields, Barbara J. 1990. Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America. *New Left Review* (May-June).

9/20: The Social Construction of Race

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Chapter 4.

9/25: The Racial State

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Chapter 5.

9/27: Mapping the Racial State

Kimberley Johnson. 2015. "The Color Line and the State: Race and American Political Development," *Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, eds. Richard Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert Lieberman.

10/2: Race and the Early Republic

King, Desmond, & Smith, Rogers. 2005. *Racial Orders in American Political Development*. *The American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 75-92

10/4: Race and the Early Republic

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2015. *Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender Formation*. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. Vol. 1(1) 54-74.

10/9: Midterm Review- No reading

10/11: **Midterm**

10/16: Race and the Early Republic

Feagin, Joe. 2010. *Racist America: Roots, current realities, and future reparations*.

Part II: Defining Race

10/18: The Legal Construction of Race

Lopez, Ian Haney. 2006. *White by Law: The legal construction of race*

10/23: The Legal Construction of Race

Lopez, Ian Haney. 2006. *White by Law: The legal construction of race*

10/25: The Legal Construction of Race

Harris, Cheryl. 1993. Whiteness as Property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707-1791.

10/30: Constructing Racial Orders

Hochschild, Jennifer and Powell, Breanna. 2008. Racial Reorganization and the United States Census 1850–1930: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race. *Studies in American Political Development*, 22(1), 59-96.

Paper Proposal Due

Part III: Race and Public Policy

11/1: Race and the Welfare State

Katznelson, Ira. 2005. *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

11/6: Race and the Welfare State

Katznelson, Ira. 2005 *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

[*Last day to withdraw from the course and receive a W grade](#)

11/8: Race and the Welfare State

Katznelson, Ira. 2005 *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

11/13: Race and Housing Policy

Rosenstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

Annotated Bibliography Due

11/15: Race and Housing Policy

Rosenstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

11/20: Race and Mass Incarceration

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*.

11/22: THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS

11/27: Race and Mass Incarceration

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*.

11/29: Race and Mass Incarceration

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*.

12/4: The Contemporary Racial State

The Ferguson Report

12/6: Reparations

Ta-Nehisi Coates. 2014. "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*,

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

12/11: Catch up and Class Presentations

12/13: Class Presentations

12/20: Final papers due by 5pm. Please submit a hard copy to Conklin 410 and electronic version on Blackboard.

Electronics Policy

Electronic media is a welcome tool to aid learning in the modern classroom. However, used irresponsibly it can also be detrimental to learning when students lose the ability to focus on lectures or distract other students with it. Use of electronic media is therefore a student privilege, not a right, and may be revoked by the instructor under certain conditions. During class time certain electronic media—laptop computers and tablets, not cell phones—may be used only for the following purposes:

- 1) to read required course texts (E-books or texts posted on Blackboard)
- 2) to type notes on lectures and classroom discussions

Electronic media may NOT be used to browse the internet, answer email, check social media, or for any use that is not directly related to the course. If any student is found to be in violation of the electronics policy—as witnessed by the instructor or as reported by fellow classmates—that student will be banned from using any electronic media for the remainder of the course. If the student continues to use electronic media despite the ban, his or her final grade will be reduced a full letter grade at the conclusion. In extreme cases I reserve the right to ban the student from the classroom altogether. The student will be notified in writing if s/he has lost the privilege of using electronic media. Cell phones must be turned off during class time or set to “vibrate”.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, for which a student may receive a range of punishments, including failing the course, a permanent record on his or her final transcript, suspension or even expulsion from the University. Please familiarize yourself with the University’s definition of plagiarism by reviewing the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity, here: <http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>.

If I suspect any student of plagiarism I will bring it to his/her attention and report it to the administration. We faculty have a professional obligation to report all instances of plagiarism in our classes. Failure to do so promotes inequity among the student body, given that honest students have not had the advantage of using external sources in preparing their work.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

Disability Services and Accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site

at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact Kate Torres at [\(973\)353-5375](tel:9733535375) or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.