

**Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism**  
**University of Southern California**  
**Fall 2017**

**COMM 458: Race & Ethnicity in Entertainment and the Arts**  
**Mondays/Wednesdays 10:00-11:50am**  
**ASC 240**

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 2:00PM – 3PM & by appointment

**Course Description**

In this course we examine histories of racism, race, and racial/ethnic/national formation and identity in America (certainly one of the much-discussed, yet misunderstood, aspects of history, subjectivity, identity and identifications) through the portals of, primarily, American and European entertainment, media, art, and popular culture. Of concern to us is:

- 1) The vital role that media, art and entertainment institutions have played and continue to play in the cultivation and maintenance of racial hierarchy and racial hegemony.
- 2) How social movements and communities of artists, storytellers, producers, entrepreneurs, and executives of past and present have treated these institutions as important sites to contest structural and representational inequity, and create works of art, entertainment and culture that challenge us, and give us pleasure and joy.

We will decipher how race and ethnicity operate historically, materially and discursively, that is within institutions of power and representation, as well as within systems of signs and symbols that are both persistent and shifting – all of which work to structure, influence, and impact our experience and perspectives in the world. By interrogating a range of historical and contemporary representations, and examining various contexts of change within American and global life, we will develop theoretical tools to analyze media, entertainment, and the arts, and moreover the work of racism, race and ethnicity in buttressing and transforming American power and identity/subjectivity-making.

**Course Requirements and Attendance**

This course will mix lectures and discussions. Class will begin with a 30-45 minute lecture and will be followed by discussion, films, and presentations. This course will require you to actively and critically read and engage course materials and focus on developing your research and analytical skills. This is an upper division seminar, and there is a significant reading load, thus students are required to attend class regularly, to contribute to class discussions, and to do all weekly reading. My lectures will distill the main ideas and help you make concise study notes; therefore attendance in lecture is vital. **You are allowed only three absences without explanation**, after which there is a **deduction of half a grade off the final grade** for each unexcused absence.

Again, you are expected to critically analyze the readings and come to class prepared to contribute and share your ideas and opinions. Students are also encouraged to use the classroom as a space and community to voice their opinions and share their theoretical concerns and areas where their research and scholarship can be enhanced. It is vital that we create a space where diverging points of view and mutual respect are celebrated, so disrespect of any kind will not be tolerated. Lastly, there are several writing assignments for this class, and because the lectures, discussions, reading assignments and course assignments are all vitally linked, it is critical that you keep up with the schedule.

You will receive details about each assignment in a separate document. All assignments must be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction (1/3 of a grade per day including weekends). If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the term to sort things out.

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

1. the level of your engagement with the class materials (as evidenced in your written work, research, efforts in multimedia argumentation and design, and class participation)
2. your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate forms (whether written or visual)
3. your ability to creatively explore those theories and methodologies

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:

1. how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class
2. how well it articulates and structures its argument

**A more clear and detailed description of how your assignments will be graded and evaluated will be handed out at a later date.**

### **Final Grade Distribution**

Class participation (not based solely on attendance)	10%
Response Papers	30%
Reading Summary/Posts & In Class Writings	15%
Tumblr posts	15%
Group Presentations/Projects	10%
Final Paper/Project	20%

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. Failure to complete ONE OR MORE of them will result in an F in the class.

### **Course Grading Policy**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A                    outstanding, thoughtful and enthusiastic work

B+/B           above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment  
B-/C+          needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow-through  
C and below   fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

A =	100-94	C =	76-74
A- =	93-90	C- =	73-70
B+ =	89-87	D+ =	69-67
B =	86-84	D =	66-64
B- =	83-80	D- =	63-60
C+ =	79-77	F =	59-0

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

### **Required Texts**

- Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning America* (can be found at the University Bookstore and online at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)).
- Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (can be found at the University Bookstore and online at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)).
- All other readings listed as “BB” can be found on Blackboard at: <https://blackboard.usc.edu/>

### **Annenberg School for Communication Academic Integrity Policy:**

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed as a major.

In addition to the formal academic integrity policy, our pedagogical policy is based on mutual respect; all students are encouraged to use the classroom as a space in which to speak and to voice their opinions. Our expectation is that you will respect not only the professors but also your fellow classmates when they are participating in discussion.

**It is vital that you always bring a notebook/notepad, paper and pen to every class. We will frequently spend small segments of class time working on in-class writing assignments and you will have to periodically hand in these documents.**

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the Annenberg [Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that **use of computer in the classroom is a privilege**. You may use a computer in the classroom ONLY for taking notes or for class presentations. If you abuse this privilege by checking email or going on the Internet, updating Facebook profiles, IM-ing friends, or playing solitaire, you will be marked as absent for that class period. All other electronic devices (cell phones, MP3 players, etc.) must be turned off and put away during class time. If this kind of activity gets to be a problem, laptop computers will not be allowed in the classroom.

### **Plagiarism**

#### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication school administrators.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### **Stress Management**

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

### **Sexual Assault Resource Center**

The Center for Women & Men and the Sexual Assault Resource Center are one and the same. Student Counseling Services is a separate place that also offers confidential counseling and support groups on a variety of other topics. To schedule an appointment with Student

Counseling Services, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or visit the Engemann Student Health Center on the University Park Campus.

### **Schedule of Classes, Topics & Readings**

#### **RACE/RACISM, MODERNITY, & THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION**

##### **WEEK 1**

*Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>*

- Coco Fusco, "Beyond Visibility." (BB)
- Barnor Hesse, "Counter Racial Formation." (BB)

*Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>*

- Cedric Robinson, Preface to *Forgeries of Memory & Meaning* (BB and in book purchased for class)
- WJT Mitchell, "The Moment of Theory: Race as Myth and Medium," (BB)

##### **WEEK 2**

*Monday August 28<sup>th</sup>*

- Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Imagery of Eurocentrism." (BB)
- Richard Dyer, "The Matter of Whiteness." (BB)

*Wednesday August 30<sup>th</sup>*

- John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Chapter 5 (BB)
- Olly Wilson, "Black Music as an Art Form." (BB)

**This Week's Films: *Ways of Seeing, Episode 4***

#### **THE ORIGINS OF U.S. ENTERTAINMENT & POPULAR CULTURE**

##### **WEEK 3**

*Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup> – No CLASS*

- Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, Chapter 1

*Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>*

- Michelle Wallace, "The Imperial Gaze: Venus Hottentot, Human Display, and World's Fairs." (BB)

##### **WEEK 4**

*Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>*

- Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, Chapter 2 & Chapter 4 (pg. 180-202)

*Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>*

- Ann McClintock, "Soft Soap Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising." (BB)

**This Week's Film: *I Am Not Your Negro***

## Week 5

Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup> – Visit to USC Fisher Museum of Art w/ artist Ray Courtney

- Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “White Negroes.” (BB)
- Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, Chapter 3

Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>

- Michelle Hilmes, “Radiating Culture.” (BB)
- Gail Sweeney, “The King of White Trash Culture: Elvis Presley and the Aesthetics of Excess.” (BB)

## Week 6

Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

- Kent Ono & Vincent Pham, “The Persistence of Yellow Peril Discourse.” (BB)
- Pete X Feng, “Asian American Media Studies and the Problem of Legibility.” (BB)

**This Week’s Film: *Chinese Hollywood***

Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>: Visit to the California African American Art Museum

- Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, Chapter 4 (pg. 225-271)

## MINING THE GAPS: ART/ENTERTAINMENT, PROTEST, AND OPPOSITIONAL GAZES

## Week 7

Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Claudia Rankine, “III” from *Citizen: An American Lyric Meaning* (pg. 39-55)
- Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts.” (BB)
- Hilton Als, “GWTW.” (BB)

Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>:

- Alexandra Raengo, “Introduction,” from *Liquid Blackness: Black Ontology and the Love of Blackness*. (BB)
- Kara Walker, “Chronology of Black Suffering: Images and Notes, 1992-2007.” (BB)
- Jacqueline Stewart, “Defending Black Imagination: The L.A. Rebellion School of Black Filmmakers”

## Week 8

Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>

- Ondine Chavoya & Rita Gonzalez, “Asco and the Politics of Revulsion.” (BB)
- Coco Fusco, “The History of Intercultural Performance.” (BB)

Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>

- Leigh Raiford, “Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory.” (BB)
- T.N. Phu, “Shooting the Movement: Black Panther Party Photography and African American Protest Traditions.” (BB)

**This Week’s Film: *Through A Lens Darkly***

## THE CURRENT-DAY CONTEXT OF U.S. ENTERTAINMENT & POPULAR CULTURE

### **Week 9**

*Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>*

- Herman Gray, “Television and the Politics of Difference.” (BB)
- Jeff Chang, “All the Colors in the World: The Mainstreaming of Multiculturalism.” (BB)
- Steve Stoute, “The Tanning of America.” (BB)

*Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>*

- Evelyn Alsultany, “Arabs and Muslims in the Media after 9/11: Representational Strategies for a “Postrace” Era.” (BB)
- Vani Kannan, “Model Minority” or Potential Terrorist? Affective Economies, Rhetorics of Silence & the Murder of Sunando Sen.” (BB)

### **Week 10**

*Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>*

- Claudia Rankine, “II” from *Citizen: An American Lyric* (pg. 21-37)
- Sarah Banet Weiser, “Hoop Dreams: Professional Basketball and the Politics of Race and Gender.” (BB)

*Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>*

- Alexandra Sastre, “Hottentot in the age of reality TV: sexuality, race, and Kim Kardashian’s visible body.” (BB)

### **Week 11**

*Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup>*

- Eve Ewing, “Horror Movie Pitch & Horror Movie Pitch 2.”  
<http://therumpus.net/2017/01/the-rumpus-inaugural-poems-eve-ewing/>
- Claudia Rankine, “VI,” from *Citizen: An American Lyric* (pg. 81-135)

*Wednesday, Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>*

- Safiya Noble, “Teaching Trayvon: Race, Media and the Politics of Spectacle.” (BB)

### **Week 12**

*Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup>*

- Safiya Noble, “Missed Connections: What Search Engines Say About Women.” (BB)
- Jesse Daniels, “The Trouble with White Feminism: Whiteness, Digital Feminism, and the Intersectional Internet.” (BB)

*Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>*

- Tricia Rose, “Hip Hop Wars.” (BB)

### **Week 13**

*Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>*

- Robin Kelley, “Empire State of Mind.” (BB)
- Herman Gray, “Subject(ed) to Recognition.” (BB)

*Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>*

- Lisa Nakamura, “‘Allookthesame?’: Mediating Asian American Visual Cultures of Race on the Web.” (BB)
- Brendesha Tynes, Joshua Schushke, & Safiya Noble, “Digital Intersectionality Theory and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement.” (BB)

### **MINING THE GAPS: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?**

#### **Week 14**

*Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>*

- June Jordan, “Of Those Close Beside Me, Which Are You?” (BB)
- Claudia Rankine, “VII,” from *Citizen: An American Lyric* (pg. 137-161)

*Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>*

**THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

#### **Week 15**

**TBD**