

ENGL 4399 *Voicing Resistance: African-American philosophy, culture, politics, and art in 'post-racial' America*

Dr. Ingram

Spring 2019 TR 9:30-10:40

Classroom: TH 23

Office Hours: T 11-12:30 or by appointment

Office: CAR 410

Email: pingram@uta.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we will read a variety of *contemporary* voices on the subject of race in America. These critics consider ways to define, theorize, and live a black life in an America increasingly hostile to black bodies. We will begin by exploring the ‘question of blackness’ today from political, sociological, philosophical, and activist perspectives. We then turn to pop culture texts by contemporary filmmakers (Jordan Peele, Ryan Coogler, and Spike Lee) and by musicians (Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar), who are examining similar questions in their own mediums.

Required Reading:

Political

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility* (2018)

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy* (2017)

Tim Wise, *Colorblind* (2010)

Cultural/Social

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness* (2012)

Aph Ko and Syl Ko, *Aphro-ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism from Two Sisters*. (2017)

Philosophical

George Yancy, “The Perils of Being a Black Philosopher” (2016)

R.L., “Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death” (2013)

Hartman and Wilderson, “The Position of the Unthought” (2003)

Artistic/Social

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014)

Music of Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar

Films and videos to be watched outside of class:

Get Out (2017) Dir. Jordan Peele

Black Panther (2018) Dir. Ryan Coogler

Blindspotting (2018) Dir. Carlos Lopez Estrada

BlacKkKlansman (2018) Dir. Spike Lee

Additional readings and podcasts can be accessed through links in the syllabus, or in pdf format on Blackboard.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Gain a critical understanding of how ideologies of race undergird historical and contemporary political debate
- Define the concept of antiblackness, recognizing how this concept informs the theories of Afro-Pessimism and Afro-Optimism
- Apprehend the relationship between racialization and state violence
- Recognize the work done by black activists and artists to challenge and resist systemic racism
- Engage critically, through reading and writing, with political, cultural, philosophical, and artistic texts.

Your Grade: This course requires active and consistent participation from all members of the class. The breakdown of your final grade is as follows.

- Response Papers (4 of these) **25%**
- Bibliography and Abstract for Final Paper **10%**
- Presentation & Paper **25%**
- Final Paper **40%**

RESPONSE PAPERS

You are required to write **four** response papers for the course. The papers will be 3-4 pages double-spaced and will be submitted via BB. You should also bring a hard copy with you to class.

The papers will be responses to readings and/or podcasts, sometimes both. A good paper will examine the key premise/s of the text/s in question and situate that text in relation to the issues of the unit. For example, Paper #2 due on 2/14 requires you to listen to two podcasts and read one article on free speech vs. hate speech on campus. You should feel free to approach your paper in your own way, but you do need to identify and define the key issues and respond to them. This assignment is included in the politics unit, so you should also consider how it relates to the other themes already discussed in the unit.

- This is a formal piece of writing. It is **NOT a journal or diary entry. Do not** just explain why you do or don't agree with or like the text/podcast.
- **These should be typed in Times New Roman 12pt. font, double-spaced, 3-4 pages.**
- They should be uploaded to Blackboard before 9:30 on the day they are due.
- **No late papers, except in the case of documented illness, will be accepted.**

PRESENTATION

One of the key components of this course is examining the various ways that concepts of racial hierarchy structure the political and social life of the United States. But we are also interested in how communities of color, specifically the Black community, responds and resists structural, systemic racism through philosophy, art, and culture. You should examine the methods and choices your artist/activist/film makes in relation to representations of race and think about the influence that the art might have had or seeks to have on public discourse or perceptions about race.

- The presentation should last 20 minutes and include a powerpoint slideshow or equivalent.
- You must include media clips in your formal presentation
- You should include research related to the topic and cite your sources on the presentation.

Presentation Paper

PLEASE NOTE: You must hand in a written paper on the day of your presentation. It should represent the content of the presentation, but will be a formal piece of writing, NOT bullet points. Do NOT read your paper during the presentation. You may refer to it, of course, but don't read it word for word, please. Late presentation papers will not be accepted.

Length: ~5 pages double-spaced.

ABSTRACT

A one-paragraph abstract and preliminary bibliography of your paper is **due 4/11 via BB**. I will assess the viability of your text and give you feedback on your thesis.

FINAL PAPER

Due: 5/6 via BB

Length: 10-12 pages

For your final paper you must choose a film that we have NOT studied in class. Your film should speak to the themes of the course, specifically how contemporary black filmmakers use the medium of film to represent, interrogate, and/or resist racism. You should use the secondary materials that we have read in class AS WELL as other peer-reviewed sources relevant to the themes and text. Remember that films set in other time periods can still be understood to comment on the political and social moment in which they are produced. You should always consider the context of a film's production. Why is this film being made now?

Possible Films to consider:

12 Years a Slave (2013)

Fruitvale Station (2013)

Dear White People (2014)

Beasts of No Nation (2015)

Birth of a Nation (2016)

Hidden Figures (2016)

Moonlight (2016)
Detroit (2017)
Fences (2017)
Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks (2017)
Mudbound (2017)
Hate U Give (2018)
If Beale Street Could Talk (2018)
GreenBook (2018)

Attendance:

I will take attendance every day. During the semester you are permitted **two** absences. Doctor's visits, surgeries, meetings with advisors, friends' weddings, etc. will be taken from your absence total.

I will only excuse university related absences (sports trips if you are on the team and military duty) that are fully documented. Other absences do not require documentation. **Each absence after the second one will result in a 2 point penalty per absence off your final grade.** If you miss more than five class periods, you will have effectively missed two and a half weeks of class. This is unacceptable and will adversely affect your grade.

If you are absent from class you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate, completing the work you have missed, and for being on schedule when you return. I will not provide my lecture notes to you if you miss class.

Tardiness:

You must arrive to class on time. Not only do you disrupt the class, but you can miss important information which will not be repeated. Repeated tardiness may be counted as an absence.

Classroom/email etiquette:

I expect each member of the class to behave respectfully towards each other and towards me. Some of you may find the material we will discuss in class to be controversial, but not everyone will share your opinion. Please be mindful of this fact during discussions and in email correspondence. Please be conscious of the following policies.

1. **Turn off your cell phones when you come into class and put them away.** This means **no texting in class**. If a student persists in sending text messages during class, he or she will be dismissed from class for the day. Attention to discussion and showing respect for your instructor and classmates is part of being present.
2. Unless you have discussed doing so ahead of time with me, please **do not use your laptop in class**.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

PLAGIARISM

In both oral and written communication, the following guidelines for avoiding plagiarism must be followed:

1. Any words quoted directly from a source must be in quotation marks (for a written assignment and referenced for an oral presentation) and cited.
2. Any paraphrasing or rephrasing of the words and/or ideas of a source must be cited.
3. Any ideas or examples derived from a source that are not in the public domain or of a general knowledge must be cited.
4. All papers and presentations must be the student's own work.

Students who are confused about what constitutes plagiarism should meet with me.

Academic Honesty is expected of all students. Cheating and plagiarism are violations of academic honesty. Any student caught violating the academic honesty code will be failed for the entire semester and the matter will be reported, with documentation, to the Office of Student Conduct for further disciplinary action.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or earlier if accommodations are needed immediately. Bring a copy of all relevant paperwork to the meeting. If you do not have a notification for accommodations but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities, 102 University Hall,

2-3364.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is directly to your left after exiting. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty

members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Assignment Schedule (subject to change)

Readings are due on the date recorded and should therefore be completed BEFORE the corresponding class day.

DATE	ASSIGNMENT DUE/CLASS ACTIVITIES
Week 1 1/15	Introduction to the course Raoul Peck's <i>I am Not your Negro</i> (2017)
1/17	Defining "Race": Social and Scientific Perspectives PDF Readings on BB Alondra Nelson, Introduction to <i>The Social Life of DNA</i> K. Fields and B. Fields, Introduction to <i>Racecraft</i>
Week 2 1/22	DiAngelo, <i>White Fragility</i> . Introduction through chapter 4, pp. 1-69.
1/24	<i>White Fragility</i> , ch. 5-end, pp. 71-154 Response Paper #1 due
Week 3 1/29	Obama Effect: Political Analyses Coates, <i>We Were Eight Years in Power</i> . Introduction through Chapter 5, pp.xiii-147
1/31	<i>We Were Eight Years in Power</i> , chapter 6 through 7, pp. 151-281
Week 4 2/5	<i>We Were Eight Years in Power</i> , chapter 8 through epilogue, pp. 285-367
2/7	Tim Wise, <i>Colorblind</i> , chapter 1
Week 5 2/12	Tim Wise, <i>Colorblind</i> , chapter 2
2/14	Response paper #2 due Listen to episode 41 and episode 45 on Free Speech-- <i>Speak Out with Tim Wise</i> podcast https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/speakoutwithtimwise/episodes/2018-07-03T09_19_25-07_00 https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/speakoutwithtimwise/episodes/2018-08-14T12_53_21-07_00 and read: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/free-speech-or-hate-speech-campus-debates-over-victimhood-put-university-officials-in-a-bind/2017/10/20/7f610dfe-aa07-11e7-92d1-58c702d2d975_story.html?utm_term=.74628a9db671

Week 6 2/19	Racialization and State Sanctioned Violence Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> pdf excerpt on BB.
2/21	Response paper #3 due: Listen to episode 37, “Before you Call the Cops” of <i>Speak Out with Tim Wise</i> podcast https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKeITMzMn7w https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/speakoutwithtimwise/episodes/2018-05-30T12_23_23-07_00 And episode 47, “The Psychological Effects of Police Violence” https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/speakoutwithtimwise/episodes/2018-09-04T14_22_32-07_00
Week 7 2/26	Afro-Pessimism vs. Afro-Optimism: Philosophical Perspectives https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/04/18/the-perils-of-being-a-black-philosopher/ http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death
2/28	Hartman and Wilderson, “Position of the Unthought” pdf on BB
Week 8 3/5	Aph Ko and Syl Ko, <i>Aphro-ism</i> , Author’s Notes through Chapter 12, pp.xiii-75.
3/7	<i>Aphro-ism</i> , Chapter 13-Afterword, pp. 76-149
Week 9 3/12-14	SPRING BREAK
Week 10 3/19	Social Resistance Colin Kaepernick https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2018/09/the-risky-business-of-branding-black-pain/570025/ https://www.aaihs.org/colin-kaepernick-and-the-power-of-black-silent-protest/ (this link doesn’t always load the first time—keep trying) https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/04/opinion/colin-kaepernick-amnesty-international-speech.html

	<p>Response Paper #4 Listen to episode 9 of <i>Speak Out with Tim Wise</i> podcast (available free on iTunes or other podcast provider)</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>
3/21	<p>Beyoncé Listen and watch <i>Lemonade</i> album https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB5zLq1zcdo&list=PLsg7GulH1NBVXi72O7-qISAySLQoVBY_B https://www.npr.org/2016/02/08/466036710/beyonces-formation-is-a-visual-anthem https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/08/politics/beyonce-super-bowl-black-lives-matter/index.html https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/23/entertainment/beyonce-controversy-feat/index.html</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>
Week 11 3/26	<p>Kendrick Lamar Listen to <i>To Pimp a Butterfly</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZTYgg4EoRo&list=PLiS2mJ84ArqbAogNE5G4HawR9euoqMRJM (not all videos are here) Grammy Performance 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZTE2WgGbWc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ihni6W52Lwo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWR0wCD86HA https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/are-you-not-entertained-kendrick-lamar-black-resistance-n520026 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/03/23/the-political-theory-of-kendrick-lamar/?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-monkey-cage%3Akendrick-lamar%3Ahomepage%2Ft&hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-monkey-cage%3Akendrick-lamar%3Ahomepage%2Ft&utm_term=.800c17073e32</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>

3/28	Claudia Rankine, <i>Citizen: An American Lyric</i>
Week 12 4/2	Gerald Sim, "Key Developments in Critical Race Studies" pdf on BB
4/4	Guerero, "Black Film in the 1990s" and Gillespie, "We Insist. The Idea of Black Film"
Week 13 4/9	<p><i>Get Out</i> (2017) Dir. Jordan Peele https://www.indiewire.com/2017/05/get-out-video-essay-jordan-peeel-white-fragility-racial-relations-1201831586/ Student Presentation</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>
4/11	<p><i>Get Out</i> continued https://www.indiewire.com/2017/05/get-out-featurette-jordan-peeel-daniel-kaluuya-1201830192/ https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2016/oct/06/get-out-horror-film-jordan-peeel-black-men Final Paper Abstract and Bibliography Due</p>
Week 14 4/16	<p><i>Black Panther</i> (2018) Dir. Ryan Coogler https://www.rollingstone.com/movies/movie-features/ryan-coogler-why-i-needed-to-make-black-panther-203737/ Student Presentation</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>
4/18	<p><i>Black Panther</i> continued https://blackyouthproject.com/waiting-wakanda-black-joy-film-epic-resistance/ https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottmendelson/2018/02/22/black-panther-the-key-box-office-lesson-that-hollywood-refuses-to-learn/#4d2c6b03159c</p>
Week 15 4/23	<p><i>Blindspotting</i> (2018) Dir. Carlos Lopez Estrada https://filmschoolrejects.com/how-blindspotting-makes-the-personal-political/ https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/07/204978/blindspotting-movie-review Student Presentation</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>

4/25	<i>Blindspotting</i> continued
Week 16 4/30	<p><i>BlaKkkKlansman</i> (2018). Dir. Spike Lee</p> <p>“Spike’s Place” pdf on BB</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Student Presentation</p>
5/2	<p><i>BlacKkKlansman</i> continued</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/aug/26/blackkkklansman-review-spike-lee-blistering-return-to-form</p> <p>https://thegrio.com/2018/08/10/spike-lee-breaks-down-why-blackkkklansman-needed-to-open-on-charlottesville-anniversary-watch/</p>