ENGL A294-051: RACE, MEDIA & CULTURE

Fall 2014 | MONDAYS 4:55-7:35 | Loyola University
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“‘...race’ is a set of cultural and historical fictions...that help to produce and maintain a hierarchical racial formation—and...media remain one of the primary sets of institutions where such stories circulate.” – Gilbert Rodman

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we will explore the intersections of race, media, and culture. In what ways, that is, does race—as a social construct and category—function as a “fiction,” a contrived dynamic, that simultaneously informs and impacts the realities of individuals’ lived experiences? How does race manifest in various media and cultural productions, wherein circulate particular narratives, representations, discourses, and ideas of what constitutes “normative” identity? And, how do certain technologies and media culture—mediated reality, web series, and social media platforms to video streaming, films, reality television, and user-generated video hosts, among others—digitize race, while also serving as alternative locations for voices otherwise marginalized in customary or “mainstream” contexts? Drawing on race and media theories, scholarship, and different types of media and new technologies—alongside analysis of media treatments that range from #Ferguson and Orange Is the New Black to web series Misadventures of an Awkward Black Girl—we will explore fundamental questions to more fully and critically understand how race is inscribed and interpolated in contemporary media, culture, and society.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


**Other requisite readings and course materials will be available on Blackboard (BB)**

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course will enable students who apply themselves in an engaged manner; demonstrate a vested interest in the course materials and principles; and fulfill requisite assignments and course obligations to...

- Develop and strengthen skills in critical analysis, application, discussion, and presentation
- Enhance analytical and critical reading, writing, thinking, and interpretive skills
- Gain a fuller, richer understanding of race, media, culture, as well as the issues and debates regarding media, mediated socialization, and culture
- Become conversant in and gain a greater understanding of the discourses, theories, methodologies, and scholarship in critical race and media studies
- Develop a critical awareness of the ways media produce narratives about race, alongside gender, sexuality, nation, class, and other subject positions and identity markers, and how individuals utilize various media forms to contest, subvert, or perpetuate such narratives

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

On a fundamental level, your commitment to this course—to the readings, critical analyses and discussions, intellectual engagements and assignments—is integral to your success and, equally significant, to your developing a deeper understanding of race, media, and culture.
**Attendance & Punctuality:**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, be punctual, and come prepared (with the day’s assignments read/completed in their entirety beforehand) to contribute to class discussions. Attendance is mandatory, especially since this class meets once weekly. Missing more than two (2) classes, the equivalent of two weeks, may result in automatic failure and, therefore, an overall course grade of “F” due to excessive absence.

Also, class sessions begin promptly. Not being present during roll call constitutes a late arrival. While students who arrive late for a quiz or other graded assignment will be allowed to take it, they will not receive extended or additional time to compensate for their tardiness. Moreover, please note that an absence or tardiness is no excuse for any missed assignments, so students are responsible for all assignments covered during their absence or tardiness.

Any student absent on the day of a scheduled paper, quiz, or other graded assignment forfeits her or his right to complete it and will, as such, receive a failing grade of zero (0) “F.” This does not apply, however, to students who give prior notification and receive my approval beforehand. Only in extenuating circumstances (ex. documented illness, bereavement, official academic and/or athletic excursion, etc.) will a student be allowed to make-up a missed and/or late graded assignment; and, the opportunity to make-up such an assignment is conditional: the student must provide documentation: one form from a legitimate source (ex. medical doctor, coach or athletic director, etc.) and an additional written statement or email from her or his academic advisor.

**Participation & Classroom Conduct:**

Students should be aware of the importance their participatory role plays in not only class discussion, but also in the learning process itself. While open dialogues, as well as diverse viewpoints, ideologies, and interpretations, are encouraged and especially welcome, students should always respect the opinions and subject positions of all students and faculty, whether or not they are in accord with your own. Offensive, inappropriate, derogatory, and/or politically incorrect comments or language will not be tolerated. Moreover, in the spirit of general respect and protocol, students should refrain from speaking while other students and the instructor are speaking. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced and stowed away; and, unless students have received prior permission from the instructor to use laptops in the classroom, students should refrain from using those in class.

**Assignments:**

- Journal/Critical Reflections
- Media Project + Paper (4-5 pgs.)
- Presentation/Reading Discussion Lead
- Critical Paper (4-5 pages)
**Academic Integrity & Intellectual Honesty:**

All work you submit must represent and constitute your own work. Plagiarism and other forms of intellectual dishonesty, such as cheating, are very serious offenses that will not be tolerated.

**Students with Special Need Accommodations:**

All students regardless of ability or background are entitled and welcome to fully engage in my course and the academic, social, and intellectual life of Loyola. As per the university guidelines, if you are a student with a disability and wish to receive accommodations, please contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services, at 865-2990. If you wish to receive test accommodations (e.g. extended test time), you will need to give the course instructor an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services (Monroe Hall 405).

**Emergency and Evaluation**

In the event that there is an interruption to our course due to the cancellation of classes by the university as a result of an emergency, we will continue our course on Blackboard within 48 hours after cancellation. All students are required to sign on to Blackboard and to keep up with course assignments within 48 hours of evacuation and routinely check for announcements and course materials (under “Course Materials.”) Students should be familiar with their responsibilities during emergencies, including pre- and post-evacuation for hurricanes. Information is available on the Academic Affairs web site: [http://academicaffairs.loyo.edu/studentsemergency-responsibilities](http://academicaffairs.loyo.edu/studentsemergency-responsibilities). Additional info is also available at: [http://academicaffairs.loyo.edu/emergency-planning](http://academicaffairs.loyo.edu/emergency-planning).

**GRADING POLICY:**

Final course grades will be calculated accordingly:

- Journal/Blog/Critical Reflections (10 entries): 20%
- Critical Paper (4-5 pages): 25%
- Presentation/Reading Discussion Lead: 15%
- Media Project (Video/Website) + Paper (4-5 pages): 40%

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**Note:** This syllabus is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. In such an event, students will be given prior notification and/or revised documentation.
SCHEDULE OF COURSE MEETINGS:

Aug. 25  Introduction to the Course — Overview, Framework, and Terminologies
♦ “Howard Koplowitz, “#IfTheyGunnedMeDown: Mike Brown Shooting Spurs Powerful Twitter Hashtag on Black Youths’ Portrayal in Media”:
  Media: Melissa Harris-Perry, Tribute to Dead Black Men

Sept. 1  **NO CLASS!! - LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

Sept. 8  Internet, Digital/Social Media & Media Coverage
♦ Hall, Representation: “Why Does ‘Difference’ Matter?” [BB]
♦ Stabile, “Criminalizing Black Culture,” Race & Media Reader
♦ Bosman & Goldstein, “Timeline for a Body: 4 Hours in the Middle of a... Street”:
♦ Zara, “Mike Brown Shooting: Seeking Justice for Black Missouri Teen Killed by Ferguson Police, Facebook, Twitter Users Rally”:
♦ Bell, “What I Did after Police Killed My Son”:
  http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/08/what-i-did-after-police-killed-my-son-110038.html#.U_oMVit14fi
♦ Nebehay, “UN Condemns U.S. Police Brutality, Calls for ‘Stand Your Ground’ Review:
  Media: Lauren Hill, "Black Rage"
  Jesse Williams, CNN
  President Obama, Iraq & Ferguson Press Conference

Sept. 15  Social Media, Journalism, Ethics & the News Media
♦ “Introduction” & “Concepts and Definitions”
♦ Omi & Winant, “Racial Formation”
♦ Dyson, “Unnatural Disasters: Race and Poverty”
♦ “Who’s a Looter? In Storm’s Aftermath, Pictures Kick up a Different Kind of Tempest”:
  http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/05/business/05caption.html?_r=0
♦ Yassin, “Demonizing the Victims of Katrina: Coverage Painted Hurricane Survivors as Looters, Snipers and Rapists”:
  http://fair.org/extra-online-articles/demonizing-the-victims-of-katrina/
  Media: Spike Lee, When the Levees Broke, Part III & IV
  John H. Bracey Jr., "Cost of Racism to White People"
Sept. 22  **Movies & Digital/Visual Narrative of Race**
♦ Hall, “Stereotyping as a Signifying Practice” [BB]
♦ Hall, “The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies & the Media”
♦ Omi & Winant, “Racial Formation”
♦ Tatum, “Defining Racism: ‘Can We Talk?’”

*Media: Paul Haggis, Crash
  Spike Lee, Bamboozled*

**CRITICAL PAPER OPTION 1**

Sept. 29  **Original Shows, Television & Media Medium Convergence**
♦ Kellner, “Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism & Media Culture” [BB]
♦ McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
♦ Jhally & Lewis, “White Responses: The Emergence of ‘Enlightened’ Racism”

*Media: Jenji Kohan, Orange Is the New Black (S1, E1: "I Wasn’t Ready")*

Oct. 6  **Popular Music, Internet Age Recordings/MP3s & File Sharing/Stream & Cloud**
♦ “Power & Fantasy” (251) [BB]
♦ Rose, “‘Fear of a Black Planet’: Rap Music & Black Cultural Politics…”
♦ Gilbert, “Race...& Other Four Letter Words: Eminem & the Cultural Politics…”
♦ David, “More Than Baby Mamas: Black Mothers & Hip-Hop Feminism” [BB]
♦ Rose, “There Are B*tches and H*oes” [BB]
♦ Lambe, “The Making of Macklemore”:

*Media: Byron Hurt, Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes
  Beyoncé, Digital/Visual Album release*

Oct. 13  **NO CLASS!! – FALL BREAK**

Oct. 20  **Reality TV & (Domestic) Comedies**
♦ Hall, “Representation, Difference & Power” [BB]
♦ Lee & Moscowitz, “The ‘Rich B*tch’: Class & Gender on the Real Housewives...” [BB]
♦ Smith, “Critiquing Reality-Based Televisual Black Fatherhood: A Critical Analysis of Run’s House & Snoop Dogg’s Father Hood” [BB]
♦ Drew, “Pretending to Be ‘Postracial’: Spectacularization of Race in Reality TV’s Survivor” [BB]

*Media: Modern Family
  Real Housewives
  16 & Pregnant / Teen Mom 2*

**CRITICAL PAPER OPTION 2**
Oct. 27  **Webseries & User-Generated Video Hosts**
♦ Lull, “Hegemony” [BB]
♦ Croteau, Hoynes & Milan, “The Economics of the Media Industry” [BB]
♦ bell hooks, “Introduction,” *Black Looks: Race & Representation* [BB]

*Media: Issa Rae, *Misadventures of an Awkward Black Girl*

Nov. 3  **Advertising, Media, Commercial & Visual Culture (Post) 9/11**
♦ Sharma, “Taxi Cab Politics & the Production of Brown Space after 9/11”
♦ López, “‘Everybody else just living their lives’: 9/11, Race, and the New Postglobal Literature”
♦ Melancon, “‘Reading Race and the Difference It Makes’: (Post) 9/11, Black Performance, and Cultural Production.”

*Media: President George W. Bush, The Post-9/11 Interview  
Lupe Fiasco, "Words I Never Said"*

Nov. 10  **Media Texts, Comedy, & “Political” Humor Broadcast**
Warner, “Political Culture Jamming: The Dissident Humor of *The Daily Show with John Stewart*”

*Media: Syke / Rock / Noah / May / Ansari / Lopez / Stewart*

Nov. 17  **Sports, Competition & Gaming**
♦ Farred, “Phantom Calls: Race & the Globalization of the NBA [Selections]”
♦ Yu, “How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes: Post-Nationalist American Studies ...” [BB]
♦ McKay & Johnson, “Pornographic Eroticism & Sexual Grotesquiere in Representations of African American Sportswomen” [BB]
♦ Bertozzi, “‘You Play Like a Girl!’ Cross-Gender Competition & the Uneven Playing Field” [BB]
♦ Nakamura, “‘Don’t Hate the Player, Hate the Game’: The Racialization of Labor in World of Warcraft” [BB]
♦ Sanbonmatsu, “Video Games & Machine Dreams of Domination” [BB]

*Media: TBA*

Nov. 24  **Sexuality, Print & Popular Culture, Politics of Representation**
♦ Melancon, *Unbought & Unbossed: Transgressive Black Women, Sexuality & Representation*

Dec. 1  **Global, International & “Post/Racial”**
♦ Ontiveros, “No Golden Age: Television News & the Chicano Civil Rights Movement”
♦ Bird, “Imagining Indians: Negotiating Identity in a Media World”
♦ Anzalduá, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”

*Media: Brot für Die Welt (Germany) / Haiti / Arab Spring*

Dec. 8  Final Projects | Synthesis & Summation