ES 200 Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack: Critical Whiteness Studies  
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Monday-Friday • 9:30 am-12:30 pm • Interdisciplinary Studies (ID) House Classroom  
Office Hours • Tuesday/Thursday • 1:30-2:30 pm • ID House Room 205

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), the scholarly interrogation of the social construction of whiteness, its interaction with gender, socioeconomic status, and other social markers, as well as the historical and contemporary social, cultural, and political resistance to white privilege. The premise of CWS is that historically, as well as in contemporary societies, whiteness, like gender and class, has been a fundamental source of societal stratification. It also recognizes that other forms of inequality have been or are based on age, religion, sexual orientation, and other social markers. Especially in the United States, customs and laws perpetuate discrimination and inequality based on white privilege. Hence, this course will also entail an interdisciplinary and intersectional critique and historical examination of the origins of white privilege in U.S. culture. Throughout the course, students will gauge the economic and political forces responsible for the construction and maintenance of whiteness. In addition, they will critique the multiple axes of race, gender and class in order to gain an understanding of the function of various mechanisms of privilege. The following questions will guide the course:

1. What is Critical Whiteness Studies?
2. What material work is necessary in order to intervene in the assumption that “whiteness always equals terror and racism?”
3. How is whiteness an “unmarked marker?”
4. What historical and social conditions led European immigrants to claim a racial identity?
5. How and why have definitions of whiteness changed over historical time?
6. What are the “wages of whiteness?”
7. How does racism hinder class-based political movements?
8. What is the relationship between working-class identities and epistemological solipsism and middle-class identities, neo-liberalism, and colorblind racism?
9. How does “othering” work as a process of identity denial and formation?

Required Texts


Course Web Page

We will use PROWL for the course. Log in by visiting the PROWL website at: http://prowl.coloradocollege.edu/. Then use your CC username and password to log on. Throughout the block, you should check PROWL, as well as your CC email account, for announcements every evening by 8 pm.

Teaching Methods

I will use a variety of teaching styles throughout the block, as there are several different learning styles. The course will consist of short lectures, group work, reading and writing assignments, class discussions, note-taking, and various other activities. Throughout the block, we will watch a variety of videos related to the content of the course. Some of these videos contain adult content. Like most of the course reading material, some of these videos cover sensitive subject matters. In viewing and discussing these videos, please show respect and consideration for your classmates.
Grading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (16)</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Introductions</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Discussion Questions (10)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Reading Quizzes (10)</td>
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<td>Content Synthesis (3)</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Action Project</td>
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<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Autobiographical Endings</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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Letter Grade | Percentage
A            | ≥ 94
A-           | > 90
B+           | > 87
B            | > 84
B-           | > 80
C+           | > 77
C            | > 74
C-           | > 70
D            | > 60
NC           | ≤ 59

NOTE: Students taking the course Pass/Fail must earn a C or better in order to pass.

Attendance

Missed classes are detrimental to the learning process, especially in the block system. For most of us, effective reading, critical thinking, and good writing requires consistent practice. Therefore, your attendance is required, starting on the first day and running through the last day of class. In the event of your absence, please contact me and/or a classmate to find out what you missed. If you miss more than 1 day of class (equivalent to one entire week in the semester or quarter system), your score will be docked one full letter grade (A- to B-, for example) for every additional day beyond 1 that you miss. If you miss 3 classes, you will be removed from the course. If you experience an extreme emergency that prevents your attendance, please provide me with valid documentation; although, documentation is not a guarantee that you will not be penalized for your absence(s). Please also note that significant absences—excused or otherwise—will be reported to Re Evitt, Associate Dean of the College, and Rochelle Mason, Associate Dean of Students.

Participation

Participation points are worth 5 points for each day of class, starting on the first day. In order to receive participation points, you must do at least one or more of the following during class time: volunteer for reading and/or ask a serious question or make an insightful comment about the course material(s). Excuses such as, but not limited to, “I’m shy” or “I don’t like to talk in public” will not grant you immunity from class participation. You must also avoid doing any of the following: holding disruptive and/or excessive side conversations with classmates, answering cell phones and texting (if you must respond to a phone call due to an emergency, exit the classroom and take your call quietly in the hallway or lounge), playing games, sleeping, reading and/or working on assignments not related to the course, working on course-related assignments at inappropriate times, and/or any other activities deemed disruptive. If you are asked more than once to stop disruptive behavior, you will be asked to leave and you will not earn participation points for the day.
**Alternative Assignments**

If you miss a class, please contact me or a classmate so that you receive class notes. Given the paperless nature of this course, you will be expected to submit all assignments on time. If you absolutely must miss a class on the day an assignment is due, you must submit valid documentation if you wish to avoid penalties. However, submitted documentation does not guarantee immunity from penalties. If you experience an emergency that has been validated with appropriate documentation, you may be given the opportunity to complete an alternative assignment to substitute the participation points you were not able to earn due to your absence. Please consult with me regarding the parameters of this assignment, which, if you are given permission to take advantage of the opportunity, is due 48-hours after the class you missed. For instance, if you miss class on Monday, the assignment must be submitted by Wednesday at 8 pm. Due dates/times may be extended, depending on the nature of the emergency.

**Athletics AND Extracurricular Activities**

While the Colorado College community encourages and supports athletics and extracurricular activities, your first priority is your academic success. Hence, it is and will always be important for you to efficiently balance school with work, athletics, and other activities you may pursue outside the classroom. Please note that all students in this course are held to the same attendance, participation and make-up/late submission policies. If you miss class due to an unavoidable athletic or extracurricular commitment (i.e. games, tournaments), you will not receive participation points due to your inability to participate in class during your absence(s). However, you may (with permission from the instructor) complete an alternative assignment to earn participation (or other) points. Permission to submit an alternative assignment in lieu of participation points must be obtained at least 48-hours before the submission deadline for the original assignment or the class you intend to miss.

**Academic Honesty Statement**

Cheating, plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. If you have any doubts about when to cite sources from research materials, don’t guess. Ask me before you turn in the assignment or consult credible sources, such as the Writing Center. The Colorado College Honor Code calls us all to agree to avoid plagiarism and every other form of academic dishonesty. Students, not faculty, are in charge of administering the Honor Code, but we are all, students and faculty alike, honor-bound to report suspicion of dishonest academic conduct to the Honor Council. To learn more about Honor Code, visit the Honor Council website.

**Extra Assistance**

If you need accommodations for a disability, you must provide me with the appropriate documentation from the College’s ADA Documentation Standards. We are not authorized to provide accommodations without the requisite paperwork. Jan Edwards (227-8285 or disabilityservices@coloradocollge.edu) can help you determine what documentation you need. Her office is located in the TLC in Room 152. We encourage everyone to use the writing center for advice on writing; however, if English is not your first language, you may need to contact Carol Emmer in the Writing Center for additional help.

**Assignment Formatting**

All writing should be professional in appearance. Unless otherwise noted in class, papers are required to be typed in Times New Roman 12 point (or comparable) font and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. You must use an accepted citation style (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.) when formatting all papers, including headings, in-text citations, and bibliographic pages. Papers that egregiously fail to adhere to these guidelines (more than 3 mistakes per page) WILL receive a 0 (zero), and you may NOT have the opportunity to resubmit.
Assignments

Autobiographical Introduction & Oral Presentation

Each student will write and present a 1-page autobiographical introduction that essentially answers the following question: Why did you choose this course at this point in your life? The oral presentation should not exceed 5 minutes. This means you probably will not have enough time to read verbatim from your paper; instead, be prepared to share your essential points/ideas. Here are some guidelines that will help you write your paper:

- You may not use the word “interesting” or a related vague term that really tells us little about who you are and where you have been in your life.
- Avoid talking about your need to fulfill an elective requirement. Probe deeper and justify an interest in this course beyond the usual reasons related to a need for graduation credits.
- Share something interesting about yourself. Consider addressing one or more of the following questions and any details that come to mind:
  - Where are you from originally? What do you do for fun? Why did you come to college? What do you expect to learn in this course? What (public) issues most concern you? What are some of your most important values? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What are your fears?

Oral presentations will not be accepted late. If you are not prepared for the presentation, you may still submit your essay, but time will not be allotted for the presentation. You will only be eligible to receive points for the written portion of the assignment (3 points). You must post your essay to PROWL as a Microsoft Word attachment by 8 pm on the due date.

Autobiographical Ending & Oral Presentation

Near the end of the block, each student will present a 1-page autobiographical ending (double-spaced) that essentially answers the following question: What did you take from this course? What did you give to this course? Your oral presentation should not exceed 2 minutes, and you may not use the word “interesting” or a related vague term that tells us little to nothing about your experience in this course. Oral presentations (2 points) will not be accepted late. If you miss the last day of class and are not prepared for the presentation, you may still submit your essay, but time will not be allotted for the presentation. You will only be eligible to receive points for the written portion of the assignment (3 points). You must post your assignment to PROWL by 8 pm on the due date.

Discussion Questions

By 8 am on days we discuss reading assignments, you will submit 5 questions regarding the course material to PROWL. Do not submit “closed-ended” questions that will yield a “yes,” “no” or otherwise brief response. Your questions should yield deep, thought-provoking responses that will encourage serious critical thinking and discussion. More specifically, these questions should inspire at least a one-paragraph (or 150-word) response. Here some sample questions to consider: In what ways does “selective racism” manifest itself in the lives of American teenagers in the 21st century? What are some of the implications of “selective racism” for both white teenagers and teenagers of color? Explain some of the specific ways in which class compounds “selective racism.” Explain some of the specific ways in which gender compounds “selective racism.” Explain some of the specific ways in which sexuality compounds “selective racism.” Each set of discussion questions is worth 5 points. While there are 11 days of reading, you are only required to submit 10 sets of discussion questions. Submitting more than 8 will NOT earn you extra credit.

Reading Quizzes

On the days we discuss reading assignments, you will take a quiz that ascertains your ability to read and think critically about the written texts we discuss in class. Each quiz will contain 5 short answer questions, but may also include possible fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and multiple choice bonus questions. There will be 11 quizzes total worth 10 points each; however, your lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the block. Quiz questions will be derived from the Discussion Questions submitted by you and your classmates on the previous night.
Content Synthesis

When you were in high school, you were most likely expected to provide your personal opinion in response to the things you read and/or watched. In college, we expect you to think more critically, offering an academic opinion rather than a personal one. By academic opinion, I mean an opinion developed through critical thinking and reading or viewing. These short essays will serve as a space where you can work out your ideas regarding the materials we cover in class. You will not be expected to articulate cogent thesis statements about the material; however, this is not a space for you to merely rant about your frustration, confusion, or even excitement about any given text. Rather, use this space to formulate questions and provide valuable insights, making direct reference to the material in order to illustrate your points and highlight your concerns. Also, be sure not to simply analyze the readings (examining their main points, strengths and weaknesses). Be sure to synthesize them as well, pointing out critical connections between the texts you are reading and/or viewing. Also, be sure to cite at least two passages from the texts that you think are particularly insightful or helpful and explain why. If you find nothing in the texts to be particularly insightful/helpful, cite at least two passages that you think are especially vague/confusing and explain why. Given the page length requirement, it will not be possible for you to address each video, article, or essay. You should, instead, concentrate your responses on 2-3 texts that were especially critical for your learning and academic growth. See "Questions for Consideration" for more information. By 8 pm on the due dates, you must post your 2-page essay to PROWL as an MS Word attachment. Each is worth 10 points.

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations for documents you might consult when preparing your action project. Which style you use will depend on the conventions of your academic discipline (i.e. MLA is most often used in the Humanities and APA in the Social Sciences). Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited regarding your particular project (not generally speaking). You will be required to post an annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources for your final project to PROWL. By "sources" I mean single- or multi-authored texts, not entire edited collections and/or anthologies. Your bibliography must include a book or chapter from a book, a scholarly journal article, a credible website, at least one source from the syllabus, and a credible source of your choice. Your post must be submitted by 8 pm on the due date. This assignment is worth 30 points.

Action Project

By 8 pm on the last day of class, you will submit a 8-10 page written design for an activist project, on or off campus, that challenges white supremacy. The project must include an introduction, a literature review (approximately 2 pages) that outlines the texts/concepts/ideas that contribute to the theoretical framework of your project, a methodology section (approximately 3 pages) that describes and details the ways in which you would implement your project, an evaluation section (approximately 2 pages) that details the ways in which you would evaluate the project’s success, and a conclusion. Your essay must also cite at least a book, a scholarly journal article, a credible website, at least one source from the syllabus, and a credible source of your choice. The project is worth 75 points.

Oral Presentation

On the last day of the block, you will present an 8-10 minute oral presentation to the class that explains your action project. You will not have time to read your paper verbatim, so you would be wise to detail the major points regarding your project. You may use audiovisual equipment for your presentation, but this is not required. This assignment is worth 25 points, and 1 point will be deducted for each 1-minute interval over or under the time guidelines. Hence, it is recommended that you practice your presentation several times in order to insure time accuracy. Presentations will only be given on the assigned day, so it is imperative that you are ready to present when you are (perhaps randomly) selected. If you have an emergency and are unable to present, you must provide valid documentation to support your absence; although, this does not guarantee that you will be granted time to present on another day. For this assignment, there is nothing that must be submitted to PROWL. However, you must provide the class (including me) at least a one-page handout that augments the presentation in any way(s) you find necessary.
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<th>Course Calendar</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings should be completed by the date under which they are listed. This calendar is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor at any time. You will typically be notified at least 24 hours in advance should any changes occur.</td>
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<th>Week One</th>
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| **Thursday** | Introductions/Ice Breaker  
Syllabus Review |
| **Friday** | “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Peggy McIntosh (PROWL)  
View and Discuss, Students on White Privilege (62 minutes)  
Autobiographical Introduction Presentations |

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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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| **Tuesday** | Read and Discuss, Whiteness: An Introduction (100)  
Introduction  
Chapters 1-5 |
| **Wednesday** | Read and Discuss, Whiteness: An Introduction (80)  
Chapters 6-9  
Conclusion |
| **Thursday** | Read and Discuss, Critical White Studies (50)  
Introduction  
Part I |
| **Friday** | Read and Discuss, Critical White Studies (90)  
Part II  
Content Synthesis #1 Due |

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<th>Week Three</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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| **Tuesday** | Read and Discuss, Critical White Studies (120)  
Part III  
Part IV |
| **Wednesday** | Read and Discuss, Critical White Studies (85)  
Part V  
Part VI |
Thursday
Read and Discuss, *Critical White Studies* (85)
   Part VII

Friday
Read and Discuss, *Critical White Studies* (80)
   Part VIII
Content Synthesis #2 Due

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<th>Week Four</th>
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Monday
View and Discuss, *The Pathology of White Privilege: Racism, White Denial & the Cost of Inequality* (57 minutes)
Annotated Bibliography Due

Tuesday
Read and Discuss, *Critical White Studies* (100)
   Part IX
   Part X

Wednesday
Read and Discuss, *Critical White Studies* (60)
   Part XI

Thursday
Read and Discuss, *Between Barack and a Hard Place* (115)
Autobiographical Ending Oral Presentations
Content Synthesis #3 Due

Friday
Action Project Due
Action Project Presentations
Questions for Consideration

Instructions: Consult these questions each night, before and after you engage course materials. Use your responses to these questions to inform your contributions during class discussion.

1. What ends (i.e. goals) do these writers identify? What means do they suggest for attaining these ends?

2. What are some of the advantages of CWS that are outlined, explicitly or implicitly, by these writers? What may be some of the disadvantages, spoken or unspoken (written or unwritten)?

3. In what ways do these writers position themselves? In what ways do they characterize individuals and/or groups based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, etc.? Why might these particular strategies be necessary?

4. What sorts of images, metaphors do these writers employ when characterizing the aforementioned individuals? Groups?

5. What type of rhetorical strategies do these writers employ with regard to audience and language? Why might these particular strategies be necessary, given the goals of the text(s)? How could you compare and contrast the rhetorical strategies employed by various writers?

6. How do the readings build on already-existing conversations (things you’ve already read) about CWS? What may they offer to this discussion that has not been offered before? How do they challenge other elements of the conversation?

7. Do these writers provide substantial, convincing arguments? Why or why not?