

Department of English & Writing Studies

Critical Race Theory¹
English 3204G-001/WSFR 3324G-001
Winter 2020

Instructor: Dr. Jason Sandhar

Course Date/Time: Monday 4:30-7:30 pm

Course Location: UC-2110

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

“Critical race theory is the most exciting development in contemporary legal studies,” writes Kimberlé Crenshaw. Indeed, the field’s forceful rebuke of classical liberalism—which heralded a seismic shift in how scholars theorize the intersections of race, gender, and power—marked a turning point in the culture wars of the 1980s and 90s. In this course, we will link the classic texts that defined the field with fresh interventions by theorists and cultural figures including Bhanu Kapil, Ibram X. Kendi, Kendrick Lamar, and Leanne Simpson. By bringing culture and theory into dialogue, we will investigate how CRT equips us to navigate urgent questions of race, gender, and power amidst a global resurgence of xenophobia, populism, and misogyny at the turn of the decade.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Define and identify “critical race theory” as a discrete intervention in critical theory and legal scholarship;
- Articulate how CRT challenges and critiques classical liberalism;
- Apply CRT’s theoretical interventions to contemporary problematics of race, gender, and power through relevant cultural examples;
- Connect CRT to new theoretical/social interventions including (but not limited to) (dis)ability studies, DesiCrit, and Indigenous resistance.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

Bhanu Kapil, *Schizophrene*

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Anti-Racist*

Lisa Lowe. *Intimacies of the Four Continents*

M. NourbeSe Phillip. *Zong!*

NB! All of the other assigned readings will be posted on OWL

¹ This syllabus is subject to change. Any/all changes will be announced ahead of time, in class.

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

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|---|---------------|
| • Seminar presentation (15 min. max) | 20% |
| • Short response papers (ongoing; 3 total) | 15% (5% each) |
| • Annotated Bibliography
(min. 10 citations; due date TBA) | 15% |
| • Final paper (due date TBA) | 35% |
| • Participation | 15% |

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Timetable

Unit I: Foundations

Week 1 – Jan. 6

No assigned reading; presentation sign-up

Week 2 – Jan. 13

Kimberlé Crenshaw. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.”

Derrick Bell. “The Space Traders.”

Unit II: Controversies: CRT | Liberalism

Week 3 – Jan. 20

Farber et al. *Beyond all Reason*: “Introduction”; “Radical Multiculturalism and its Discontents.”

Kathryn Abrams. “How to have a Culture War.”

Week 4 – Jan. 27

Curry, Tommy J. (2009). “Will the Real CRT Please Stand Up: The Dangers of Philosophical Contributions to CRT”

Unit III: Migration | Borders

Week 5 – Feb. 3

Leonarda Carranza. “The McGill Experiments.”

Martinez, Paloma. “Does the arrest of 12 Mexican migrants violate our country’s laws?”

London, ON. “Free of Fear Services for All Policy.”

Week 6 – Feb. 10

Lisa Lowe. *Intimacies of the Four Continents* (selections TBA).

M. NourbeSe Philip. *Zong!*

Week 7 – Feb. 17

Reading Week

No assigned readings, but I do suggest you spend some time with the Kendi as we’ll discuss it next week.

Unit IV Dispossession | Resistance/CRT After Black Lives Matter

Week 8 – Feb. 24

Kendi. *How to be an Anti-Racist*

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. “Race to the Bottom.”

Week 9 – March 2

Kendi. *How to be an Anti-Racist*

Kristen L. Simmons and Kaya Naomi Williams. “i was dreaming when i wrote this.”

Kendrick Lamar. “The Blacker the Berry.”

Kendrick Lamar. “XXX.”

Unit VI: Critical Interventions

Week 10 – March 9

Coulthard, Glen. *Red Skin, White Masks*. “The Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts.”

Government of Canada. “Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada on National Aboriginal Day.” [Online](#).

Week 11 – March 16

Simpson, Leanne. “Nishnaabeg Resurgence.”

Week 12 – March 23

Mel Y. Chen. “Language and Mattering Humans.”

Bhanu Kapil. *Schizophrene*.

Week 13 – March 30

Bhanu Kapil. *Schizophrene*.

Harpalani, Vinay. “DesiCrit: Theorizing the Racial Ambiguity of South Asian Americans.”