

DRAFT SYLLABUS

Topics in Critical Race Theory: Race, History, Literature
ENGL 3204G/GSWS 3324G/ARTHUM 3390G
Winter 2022

Dr. Jason Sandhar

Course Description

BLM. #IdleNoMore. George Floyd. 215. Clearly, race matters. To think clearly about race, however, we must consider history, class, gender, and ideology, topics best taken up by literature and theory. We will thus join Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe as they debate English-language literature in 1960s Africa, pay heed to an Indian street sweeper's life history, board a nineteenth-century opium ship with an unruly crew of Chinese, African, and Bengali labourers, and take a trip to Mars with an Indigenous veterinarian and her puppy. Our goal is not to make conclusive claims about race or racial justice in our current milieu, but to engage with texts that trouble our assumptions about race in the 2020s.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:
demonstrate the entanglements between race, class, gender, language, and history
analyze how literature complicates popular assumptions about racial difference
approach "race" from a global perspective

Course Materials

Readings MAY include:

Chinua Achebe. "English and the African Writer"
Billy Ray Belcourt. *NDN Coping Mechanism*
Amitav Ghosh. *Sea of Poppies*.
Heinemann Book of African Women's Poetry (selections)
Hanif Kureishi. "Borderline"
Lisa Lowe. "The Intimacies of Four Continents"
Darcie Little Badger. "Né !e!"
Daya Pawar. *Baluta*
Vijay Prashad. "Race on the Edge of Indian Thought"
Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism* (selections)
Leanne Simpson. *As We Have Always Done* (selections)
Vandana Singh. *The Woman Who Thought She Was a Planet* (selections)
Gayatri Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?"
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind*.

Methods of Evaluation

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

Seminar presentation (20 min.)	20%
Seminar self-assessment	5%
Short response papers (2 pp; 2 total)	10% (5% each)
Annotated Bibliography (min. 5 citations)	15%
Final paper	35%
Participation	15%

Seminar Presentation and Group Assessment (20 min.)

Presentation: In groups of 3, you will deliver a 20 minute presentation on the week's readings. While you are required to both EXPLAIN and ANALYZE the source material you look at, the content and style of the presentation is up to you (viz. you can deliver a seminar-style paper, an interactive lecture, a panel, a multimedia installation, etc.). You are not required to do additional research.

Group Assessment: For the following week, please submit a 1-2 page report that:

briefly describes how your group developed your project;

assesses how you and your peers worked as a team.

You might wish to consider such issues as team dynamics or unexpected challenges. What worked?

What surprised you about the experience? How did your team negotiate the inevitable challenges that come with collaboration and presentation development?

Again, the assessment is due one week after your presentation.

Response Papers (2 total; 2pp. each)

Due Feb 1; March 1

Please write a short (2 pages MAX), informal response to one of the course readings we have thus far covered. Since you do not have a lot of space, I suggest that you use your two pages to critically mull over something in the reading that has caught your attention. While the response paper is not a formal essay, you may use it as an opportunity to develop ideas for your final written assignment.

Annotated Bibliography for Final Paper (5-10 scholarly citations)

Due March 15

While you may draw on course readings for your final paper topic, please seek out a minimum of five scholarly sources for the annotated bibliography. If you are working with a case study from popular cultural, include the entry in addition to the five scholarly sources.

Final Paper (10-12 pp)

Due April 5

Please submit a research essay on a topic of your choice that engages with the course themes.

Proposed Timetable (subject to change)

Unit I: Foundations: Between Scholarship and Activism

Week 1

Said. Short selections from Culture and Imperialism (Please read ahead of our first meeting)

Week 2

Kureishi. "Borderlines."

Selections from Heinemann African Women's Poetry

Unit II: Ngũgĩ and Achebe: We Were Decolonial Before it Was Cool

Week 3

Ngũgĩ. Decolonizing the Mind.

Week 4

Achebe. "English and the African Writer."

Unit III: Claiming Power from Below

Week 5

Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Pawar. Baluta

Week 6

Prashad. "Race on the Edge of Indian Thought."

Pawar. Baluta

Unit IV: Migration | Borders | History

Week 7

Lowe. "The Intimacies of Four Continents"

Week 8

Ghosh. Sea of Poppies

Week 9

Ghosh. Sea of Poppies

Unit IV: Indigenous Thought and Action

Week 10

Simpson. As We Have Always Done (selections).

Belcourt. NDN Coping Mechanisms.

Unit V: Indigenous Thought | Writing Race Through Speculative Fiction

Week 11

Singh. "The Woman Who Thought She Was a Planet"; "Delhi"

Little Badger. "Né ʔe!"

Week 12

No readings assigned