

Department of English & Writing Studies

Critical Race Theory¹
ENGL 3204G/WS 3324G
Winter 2021

Instructor: Dr. Jason Sandhar
Office: UC XXXX

Course Date/Time:

Course Location: UC-XXXX

Prerequisite(s): 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 Beyoncé Knowles, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Western alumna Eternity Martis. 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.

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) queer theory, disability studies, and Indigenous resistance

Course Materials

Required Texts

Esi Edugyan, *Washington Black*
Jamil Jivani, *Why Young Men*
Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Anti-Racist*
Lisa Lowe, *Intimacies of the Four Continents*
Eternity Martis, *They Said this Would be Fun*

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

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

Methods of Evaluation

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

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|---|---------------|
| • Seminar presentation (20 min.) | 20% |
| • Seminar self-assessment | 5% |
| • Short response papers (2 pp; 2 total) | 10% (5% each) |
| • Annotated Bibliography
(min. 5 citations; due March 2) | 15% |
| • Final paper (due date TBA) | 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:

1. briefly describes how your group developed your project;
2. assesses how you and your peers worked as a team.
 - a. 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?

Response Papers (2 total; 2pp. each)

Due date

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 certainly use it as an opportunity to develop ideas for your final written assignment.

Please submit your response papers in hard copy form at the beginning of the class in which they are due.

Annotated Bibliography (5 citations)

Due date

Please submit your annotated bibliography in hard copy form at the beginning of class.

Final Paper (10-12 pp)

Due date

Again, hard copy at the beginning of class, please.

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>.

Course Timetable

Unit I: Foundations

Week 1

Presentation sign-up

Frantz Fanon. "The Fact of Blackness."

Week 2

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: Intersectionalities

Week 3

Patricia Hill Collins. "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas."

Jennifer Nash. "re-thinking intersectionality."

Week 4

Chandra Talpade Mohanty. "Under Western Eyes."

Beyoncé Knowles. "Flawless."

In-class screening: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. "We Should all be Feminists."

SHORT PAPER NO. 1 DUE

Unit III: Migration I Borders

Week 5

Lisa Lowe. "Introduction: The Intimacies of Four Continents"

Edugyan. *Washington Black*

Week 6

Lisa Lowe. "Autobiography out of Empire" (in *Intimacies of the Four Continents*)

Edugyan. *Washington Black*.

Week 7

Reading Week

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

Unit IV Confronting Institutional Racism

Week 8

Martis. *They Said this Would be Fun*.

Week 9

Martis. *They Said this Would be Fun*.

Kendi. *How to be an Anti-Racist*.

Unit VI: Critical Interventions

Week 10

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

In-class screening: *Black Snake Killaz: a #NoDAPL Story*.

ANNOTATED BIBLIO DUE.

Week 11

Selections from [Summary of the Final Report of the TRC](#): pp. 37-58; 71-121.

Letter from Russ Moses.

SHORT PAPER NO. 2 DUE.

Week 12

Jivani. *Why Young Men*.

Week 13

Jivani. *Why Young Men*.

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.