

Introduction to Critical and Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies

Spring 2014

TTh 2:15-3:35pm/RAB 207

Professor Sylvia Chan-Malik

OH: TTh 4-5pm RAB 108C

Course Description

This course explores the study of race and racism within the United States, with a strong focus on anti-racist social justice movements and freedom struggles of the 20th-21st centuries. We will consider the production of race within and through the law, politics, and culture, alongside the ways people of color in the U.S. have responded to and challenged trajectories of racial formation. Issues of gender and sexuality are integral categories throughout the course, and we will pay close attention to how they function and interact with discourses of race and racialization. The class will also offer a broad introduction to the scholarly discipline of Ethnic Studies, and its attendant fields of Asian American, Latina/o American, Native American, and Arab/Muslim American Studies. Through our readings and discussions of novels, poems, films, digital media, and scholarly texts, we will develop a critical vocabulary to address issues of racial formation, racism and antiracism, and the critical intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion.

Learning Goals

The central learning goals of the course are to:

- (1) develop a working vocabulary to discuss race and racism in the U.S.
- (2) provide an overview of ethnic studies as a scholarly field
- (3) offer an historical overview of antiracist movements of the late-20th/ early-21st century

Required Texts

Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (IPG, 1999)

Junot Diaz, *This Is How You Lose Her* (Penguin USA, 2012)

Bushra Rehman, *Corona* (Sibling Rivalry, 2013)

All books available at Barnes and Noble/Rutgers University Bookstore

Grading Rubric

Attendance and Participation	15 pts.
Short Papers (3)	45 pts.
Midterm	10 pts.
Group Presentation	5 pts.
Final	25 pts.

Assignments and Course Policies

- 1) **Attendance and Participation** (15 pts.): This is an interactive, discussion-centered course. Its success (and your success in it) hinges on active engagement with the texts, issues, and questions at hand, both in class discussion and written assignments. Students will complete all readings and assignments on time, and come to class ready, willing, and able to discuss their own ideas and observations. Diligent attendance and active, informed participation are mandatory. *Unexcused absences will lower your attendance grade.* If you must miss class, please let me know in advance (i.e., before class). You will not, however, be excused from preparing the assignments. You must also use the University absence reporting website to indicate the date and reason for your absence (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>). An email is automatically sent to me.
- 2) **Short Papers** (30 pts.): Short paper topics will be derived from course readings and discussions. We will go over format in class.
- 3) **Midterm** (10 pts.): In-class exam consisting of reading identifications, short answers, and an essay.
- 4) **Group Presentations** (5 pts.): Students will present on course readings in groups to be determined on the first day of class. *Tip: Visual media greatly enhances presentations*
- 6) **Final** (25 pts.): In-class exam consisting of reading identifications, short answers, and an essay.
- 7) **Academic dishonesty:** Cheating on a quiz or test and claiming credit for work not done or done by others (plagiarism) are violations of university policy and may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion.
- 8) **Classroom conduct:** The classroom is a forum for inquiry and the exchange of ideas, regardless of how unpopular, controversial, or disconcerting they may be. All members of a class—students and teacher(s) alike—are expected to treat one another with respect. If a student feels that s/he is not being treated in this manner, I urge her/him to talk to me immediately.