Whiteness and Racial Violence in America
Community Classroom Course, University of Arizona
Professor Jennifer Roth-Gordon
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Course Description

This six week online course is designed for people of all backgrounds who are interested in: 1) learning more about racial violence and how it works in conjunction with other forms of structural racism, 2) making connections between past and present experiences/situations of racial inequality, and 3) unpacking the ways that we are constantly bombarded with messages that uphold white superiority and racial hierarchy. The course is focused on a critical examination of whiteness and the role that it plays in shaping American society and all people’s understandings of themselves (often by way of contrast). We explore the various sources of white power and privilege in order to shed light on how situations of severe racial inequality are created and maintained. We will take up an anthropological focus which will offer insight into how to read the cultural messages we are surrounded by through a critical lens. Regardless of whether you have just started to learn more about racial inequality and are hoping to better understand the powerful protests surrounding George Floyd’s brutal murder, or whether you have been living these issues your whole life, this course will offer deeper insight on how race and whiteness structure our world and our daily lives and how you can use this insight in the fight for racial justice.

Weekly Schedule

This will be a flipped classroom! You will be sent a pre-recorded lecture each week (1-1.5 hours) and given approximately 2 hours of selected readings/videos/podcasts as recommended resources. Then we’ll spend the synchronous session (Thursdays, 4:30-6:00) in a lively discussion/Q&A. Additional resources will be provided for each class session so that you can dive deeper if you have more time, either during the course or afterwards.

Instructor Bio

Jennifer Roth-Gordon is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Arizona where she has taught racial and social justice classes to thousands of undergraduates. Her first book, Race and the Brazilian Body: Blackness, Whiteness, and Everyday Language in Rio de Janeiro, is based on over 20 years of research on racial inequality in Rio and has been taught in undergraduate classes around the country. Her next book project, entitled Precious White Lives: Middle-Class Parenting and the Protection of Whiteness in Rio de Janeiro, tells the
story of how “good parenting” entails the shoring up of racial privilege through the hyper-
valuation and protection of white life.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Race, Racism, and Racial Hierarchy

October 1

Recommended Readings/Videos:


Additional Readings/Videos:


**Week 2: Whiteness and White Supremacy (not just the KKK)**

*October 8*

**Recommended Readings/Videos:**


**Additional Readings/Videos:**


**Week 3: Racial Violence: From Lynching and Slavery to Police Violence and Mass Incarceration**

*October 15*

**Recommended Readings/Videos:**

DuVernay, Ava. 2016. 13th: From Slave to Criminal with One Amendment. Available on Netflix or YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5F8u8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5F8u8). [watch time: 1h 40m]


**Additional Readings/Videos:**


**Week 4: Structural Racism: Housing, Health, Education, the Environment, and the Economy**  
October 22

**Recommended Readings/Videos:**


**Additional Readings/Videos:**

**Education:**


Health:


Housing and the Economy: From Residential Segregation and Redlining to the Racial Wealth Gap


The Environment:


Week 5: The Role of White People: White Privilege, White Ignorance, and the Protection of White Life

October 29

Recommended Readings/Videos:


Additional Readings/Videos:


**Week 6: From Black Lives Matter to All Lives Matter: Colorblindness, Anti-Racism, and the Backlash to Anti-Racism**

**November 5**

Recommended Readings/Videos:


Additional Readings/Videos:


