



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM

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:

Holloway, Kali. 2020. “The Whitelash Next Time.” *The Nation*, September 8, 2020,

<https://www.thenation.com/article/society/black-lives-matter-backlash/>.

Ibram X. Kendi. 2020. “American Nightmare,” *Vox*, audio podcast with transcript, June 1, 2020,

<https://www.vox.com/2020/6/1/21277220/george-floyd-protests-ibram-x-kendi-today-explained>.

Blake, John. 2014. “The New Threat: ‘Racism without Racists.’” *CNN*, November 27, 2014,

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/26/us/ferguson-racism-or-racial-bias/>.

Baker, Elna. 2008. “Matchmakers. Act Three: Babies Buying Babies,” *This American Life*, audio

podcast, January 18, 2008, <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/347/matchmakers#play>.

Regan, Margaret. 2007. The Irish Orphan Abduction. *Tucson Weekly*, March 15, 2007.

<http://www.tucsonweekly.com/gbase/Currents/Content?oid=oid%3A93635>.

Additional Readings/Videos:

California Newsreel. 2003. *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Chapter 1: The Difference Between Us. Documentary. [accessible through Kanopy, through the public library]

Graves, Joseph L. 2004. Introduction: The Problem, Simply Stated, in *The Race Myth: Why We Pretend Race Exists in America*. New York: Dutton. ix-xvi.

Haney López, Ian F. 1998. Chance, Context, and Choice in the Social Construction of Race, in *The Latino/a Condition: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. New York: New York University Press. 9–16.

Lewis, Elliott. 2006. The Science and Folly of Race, in *Fade: My Journeys in Multiracial America*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers. 43-52.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 1997. Defining Racism: “Can We Talk?” in “*Why Are All Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*” *And Other Conversations about Race*. New York: Basic Books. 3-17.

Hill, Jane H. 2008. The Persistence of White Racism (chapter 1), in *The Everyday Language of White Racism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. 1–30.

Evans, Gavin. 2018. "The Unwelcome Revival of 'Race Science.'" *The Guardian*, March 2, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/02/the-unwelcome-revival-of-race-science?CMP=share_btn_link.

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

October 8

Recommended Readings/Videos:

Kendi, Ibram X. 2020. "The American Nightmare." *The Atlantic*, June 1, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/american-nightmare/612457/>.

Miraya Ross, Kihana. 2020. "Call It What It Is: Anti-Blackness." *New York Times*, June 4, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/opinion/george-floyd-anti-blackness.html>.

Perry, Imani. 2020. "Racism is Terrible. Blackness is Not." *The Atlantic*, June 15, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/racism-terrible-blackness-not/613039/>.

Roth-Gordon, Jennifer. 2020. "White America Has Never Learned to Care for Black People." *Visible Magazine*, June 20, 2020, <https://visiblemagazine.com/white-america-has-never-learned-to-care-for-black-people/>.

Martinez, Domingo. 2012. The Mimis (chapter 10) in *The Boy Kings of Texas: A Memoir*. Guilford, TX: Lyons Press. 85-98.

Vox. 2016. "Color Film was Built for White People. Here's What It Did to Dark Skin." *YouTube*, September 18, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d16LNHIEJzs>.

Additional Readings/Videos:

Vox. 2018. "Why the Market for Skin Whitening is Growing." *YouTube*, January 4, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cjzvvgmg1NU>.

McIntosh, Peggy. 1998. White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, ed. by Paula S. Rothenberg. New York: St. Martin's Press. 165-169.

Conley, Dalton. 2001. Universal Freckle, or How I Learned to Be White, in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, ed. by Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica, and Matt Wray. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 25-42.

Montoya, Margaret E. 1998. Masks and Acculturation, in *The Latino/a Condition: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. New York: New York University Press. 435-441.

Tan, Amy. 1995. Mother Tongue, in *Under Western Eyes: Personal Essays from Asian America*, ed. by Garrett Hongo. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday. 313-320.

Puri, Sunita. 2004. 1984, in *Asian American X: An Intersection of 21st Century Asian American Voices*, ed. by Arar Han and John Hsu. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 19-25.
Trask, Haunani-Kay. 2007. From a Native Daughter, in *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, ed. by Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. 45-52.

Delpit, Lisa. 1999. A Letter to My Daughter on the Occasion of Considering Racism in the United States, in *Racism Explained to my Daughter*, by Tahar Ben Jelloun. New York: The New Press. 174-193.

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=krfcq5pF8u8>. [watch time: 1h 40m]

Dreier, Peter. 2019. "After a Century of Delays, The Senate Finally Votes to Outlaw Lynching." *The Nation*, January 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/senate-lynching-congress-racism/>.

Equal Justice Initiative. 2016. "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror," *YouTube*, October 11, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=aS61QFzk2tI.

Additional Readings/Videos:

Brave New Films. 2017. "How Much is Your Freedom Worth?" *Brave New Films*, August 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTJASsq_MCs.

Jay-Z. 2016. "The War on Drugs is an Epic Fail." *The New York Times*, September 15, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/15/opinion/jay-z-the-war-on-drugs-is-an-epic-fail.html?smid=fb-share&r=0>.

Abdelfatah, Rund, Ramtin Arablouei, and John Poole. 2020. "History of Policing: How Did We Get Here?" *NPR*, July 8, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/08/888174033/video-history-of-policing-how-did-we-get-here>.

Smith, Christen. 2013. "An Open Love Note to My Son: On Mourning, Love, and Black Motherhood." *The Feminist Wire*, July 14, 2013, <https://thefeministwire.com/2013/07/an-open-love-note-to-my-son-on-mourning-love-and-black-motherhood/>.

Chevalier, Zoé. 2020. "The Prisoners Who Were Convicted by Hung Juries." *The Nation*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/louisiana-non-unanimous-juries/>.

Burton, Orisanmi. 2015. To Protect and Serve Whiteness. *North American Dialogue* 18(2):38–50.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. "The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration." *The Atlantic*, October, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/10/the-black-family-in-the-age-of-mass-incarceration/403246/>.

Razack, Sherene H. 2020. Settler Colonialism, Policing and Racial Terror: The Police Shooting of Loreal Tsingine. *Feminist Legal Studies* 28:1–20.

García, Armando. 2019. Disposable Subjects: Staging Illegality and Racial Terror in the Borderlands. *Critical Philosophy of Race* 7(1):160–166 (excerpt).

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

Recommended Readings/Videos:

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2015. "The Problem We All Live With" (part 1). *This American Life*. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one>.

Carpenter, Zoe. "What's Killing America's Black Infants? Racism is Fueling a National Health Crisis." *The Nation*, February 15, 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/whats-killing-americas-black-infants/>.

Washington, Harriet A. 2020. "How Environmental Racism is Fuelling the Coronavirus Pandemic." *Nature*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01453-y>.

Smith, Barbara. 2020. "How to Dismantle White Supremacy." *The Nation*, August 21, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/how-to-dismantle-white-supremacy/>.

Additional Readings/Videos:

Education:

Anderson, Carol. 2016. Burning *Brown* to the Ground (chapter 3) in *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury USA. 41–59.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2014. "Segregation Now: How 'Separate and Equal' is Coming Back." *The Atlantic*, May 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/05/segregation-now/359813/>.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2015. "The Problem We All Live With" (part 2). *This American Life*. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/563/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-two>.

Joffe-Wolt, Chana. 2020. "Nice White Parents." *Serial and The New York Times*, Podcast (5 episodes), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/23/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial.html>.

Borr, Tamara Gilkes. 2019. "How the War on Drugs Kept Black Men out of College." *The Atlantic*, May 15, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/05/war-drugs-made-it-harder-black-men-attend-college/588724/>.

Love, Bettina L. 2019. "'Grit is in our DNA:' Why Teaching Grit is Inherently Anti-Black." *Education Week*, February 12, 2019, <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/02/13/grit-is-in-our-dna-why-teaching.html>.

Millhiser, Ian. "American Schools are More Segregated Now Than They Were in 1968, and the Supreme Court Doesn't Care," *Think Progress*, August 13, 2015, <https://archive.thinkprogress.org/american-schools-are-more-segregated-now-than-they-were-in-1968-and-the-supreme-court-doesnt-care-cc7abfb6651c/>.

Health:

Williams, Patricia J. 2020. "The Color of Contagion." *The Nation*, August 24, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/covid-race-disparity/>.

Vox. 2017. "The US Medical System is Still Haunted by Slavery." *YouTube*, December 7, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfYRzxeMdGs>.

Martin, Nina, ProPublica, and Renee Montagne. 2017. "Nothing Protects Black Women from Dying in Pregnancy and Childbirth." *ProPublica*, Dec. 7, 2017, <https://www.propublica.org/article/nothing-protects-black-women-from-dying-in-pregnancy-and-childbirth>.

Khazan, Olga. 2018. "Being Black in America Can Be Hazardous to Your Health." *The Atlantic*, July/Aug, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/07/being-black-in-america-can-be-hazardous-to-your-health/561740/>.

Chen, Michelle. 2018. "The State Where Black Women are Twice as Likely to Die of Cervical Cancer as White Women." *The Nation*, December 17, 2018, <https://www.thenation.com/article/cervical-cancer-healthcare-alabama/>.

Edwards, Stassa. 2014. From Miasma to Ebola: The History of Racist Moral Panic over Disease. <http://jezebel.com/from-miasma-to-ebola-the-history-of-racist-moral-panic-1645711030>.

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

Lopez, Mark and Richard Rothstein. 2019. “Segregated by Design.” *Silkwork Studio*. <https://www.segregatedbydesign.com/>. [see also: <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/segregated-by-design/> for additional resources and teaching materials]

California Newsreel. 2003. *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Chapter 3: The House We Live In (especially minutes 25-45). Documentary. [accessible through Kanopy, through the public library]

Vox and Netflix. 2020. “Explained: Racial Wealth Gap.” *YouTube*, April 27, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqrhn8khGLM>.

Gross, Terry. 2017. “A ‘Forgotten History’ of How the U.S. Government Segregated America.” *NPR Fresh Air*, May 3, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america>.

The Environment:

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2019. “The Land of Our Fathers, Part 1.” *NYTimes 1619 Podcast*, October 4, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/04/podcasts/1619-slavery-sugar-farm-land.html>.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2019. “The Land of Our Fathers, Part 2.” *NYTimes 1619 Podcast*, October 11, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/11/podcasts/1619-slavery-farm-loan-discrimination.html>.

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

October 29

Recommended Readings/Videos:

Loewen, James. 2018. The Importance of Sundown Towns (intro) in *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York, NY: New Press. 3–23.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2014. Introduction: The Land (chapter 1), *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1–14.

Kaufman, Alexander C. 2020. “How the South Botched Spanish-Language Outreach on COVID-19.” *Huffington Post*, August 12, 2020, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/spanish-covid-south_n_5f33e90ac5b6960c066f1533.

Mystal, Elie. 2020. “There’s Only One Possible Conclusion: White America Likes its Killer Cops.” *The Nation*, May 27, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/white-america-cops/>.

Holloway, Kali. 2020. "Ahmaud Arbery's Killers Understood White Freedom Perfectly." *The Nation*, May 15, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/ahmaud-arbery-killing/>.

Additional Readings/Videos:

AJ+. "Why So Many Black People in the U.S. Can't Swim," AJ+, 10:56, August 13, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjC2Ucpr_E.

Vox. 2019. "The Massacre of Tulsa's 'Black Wall Street.'" *YouTube*, February 27, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-ItsPBTFO0>.

Vox. 2019. "The Dark History of 'Gasolines Baths' at the Border." *YouTube*, July 29, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkD6QfeRil8>.

Vox. 2019. "How the US Stole Thousands of Native American Children." *YouTube*, October 14, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGqWRyBCHhw>.

Deal, Gregg. 2018. "Indigenous in Plain Sight." *TedxBoulder*, June 26, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3FL9uhTH_s.

AJ+. 2018. "What You Don't Know about The Black Panthers." *YouTube*, February 11, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4e7gm5JZc9M>.

LastWeekTonight. 2020. "U.S. History: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)." *YouTube*, August 3, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsxukOPEdgg>.

Biewen, John. 2017. "Seeing White." *Scene on Radio*, Podcast series (Season 2, 14 episodes, esp. episode 5: Little War on the Prairie and episode 9: A Racial Cleansing in America), <https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/>.

McIntosh, Janet. 2016. *Unsettled: Denial and Belonging Among White Kenyans* (excerpt). Oakland: University of California Press. 1–15.

Smith, Andrea. 2016. Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy, in *Are All the Women Still White? Rethinking Race, Expanding Feminisms*, ed. by Janell Hobson. Albany: State University of New York Press. 61–71.

Anderson, Carol. 2016. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury USA. (whole book recommended for history buffs)

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

November 5

Recommended Readings/Videos:

Mystal, Elie. 2020. "The Inevitable Whitelash Against Racial Justice Has Started." *The Nation*, August 31, 2020. <https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/blake-white-people-backlash/>.

Harris, Cheryl. 2020. "What is Critical Race Theory and Why is Trump Afraid of It?" *The Nation*, September 17, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/trump-critical-race-theory/>.

Williams, Johnny E. 2020. "I Tweeted 'Whiteness Is Terrorism' and Was Condemned for It. Here's Why I'm Right." *Hartford Courant*, February 28, 2020, <https://www.courant.com/opinion/op-ed/hc-op-reconnecting-williams-whiteness-is-terrorism-0228-20200228-nvrnyhfyn5aqfndbtbm7dxlhl4-story.html>.

Webber, Nahliah. 2020. "If You Really Want to Make a Difference in Black Lives, Change How You Teach White Kids." *Education Post*, June 29, 2020, <https://educationpost.org/if-you-really-want-to-make-a-difference-in-black-lives-change-how-you-teach-white-kids/>.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2020. "Breonna Taylor and Bearing Witness to Black Women's Expendability." *Level*, October 9, 2020, <https://level.medium.com/breonna-taylor-and-bearing-witness-to-black-womens-expendability-472abf5f6cee>.

Wise, Tim. 2010. Color Blind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity (part 1). *YouTube*, October 15, 2010, [watch from: **minute 56-the end**, 14 minute clip] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kMNa3uK77k>.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2020. "What is Owed." *New York Times Magazine*, June 30, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/24/magazine/reparations-slavery.html>.

Additional Readings/Videos:

Gelardi, Chris. 2020. "It's Time for Italian Americans to Give Up on Columbus." *The Nation*, October 12, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/christopher-columbus-racism/>.

Gay, Roxane. 2017. "I Don't Want to Watch Slavery Fan Fiction." *The New York Times*, July 25, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2tFFpbW>.

Shabazz, Jamel, The Nation, and Magnum Foundation. 2020. "Now More Than Ever, We Need Images of Black Dignity and Resistance." *The Nation*, June 15, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/photos-black-dignity-shabazz/>.

Grundy, Saida. 2017. A History of White Violence Tells Us Attacks on Black Academics Are Not Ending (I Know Because It Happened to Me). *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40(11):1864–1871.

Wise, Tim. 2005. Loss, in *White Like Me*. Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press. 119–149 (selections).