

Exploring the American Racial State
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Department of African American and African Studies
Department of Political Science
Spring 2018
MW 4:00-5:20 PM
446 Conklin

Professor James Jones

Office Address: 410 Conklin Hall
Email: james.r.jones@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 5:30-6:30 pm or by appointment

Course Description

To understand the persistence and pervasiveness of racial inequality in American society, this course studies the United States as a racial state. It identifies the state as the progenitor of racial inequality and excavates the constitutive role of race in the American political system. We will consider how race organizes governing institutions and how racial dominance is secured through public policy. Examining different historical epochs and politics on different levels of government, course readings will draw on the insights of racial and ethnic studies, sociology, and political science. This course will provide students with a critical lens to analyze current events as well as offer a theoretical understanding of racial domination.

This course will address four central questions: What is a racial state? How does a racial state operate? What is the relationship between a racial state and racial inequality? What structural interventions would be necessary to deconstruct the racial state and advance racial justice?

We will begin by reviewing political and race theory to build a definition of race, racism, and the racial state. Identifying race as a social construction, we look at how its invention became a necessary ideological tool to build a republic based upon racial subjugation. A critical race perspective identifies the limitations to existing and dominant philosophical arguments for American political development. It illuminates how white supremacy is a political system unto itself and maps onto our understanding of American politics and institutions racial and racist overlays. The development of race and racism is to be understood as being executed as racial projects that require institutional forms and cultural representations. The American political system develops as the necessary institutional space to define racial categories and to appropriately reward or punish individuals based upon their placement in these categories. To this end, after establishing a strong theoretical foundation of the United States as a racialized social and political system, we look at attempts by the government to define race, create a racialized social safety net, and contemporary efforts to erect a racial caste system through the law and carceral system. Finally, we investigate how to deconstruct the racial state in order to advance racial justice while contemplating our racialized political and legal system in the Trump era.

Learning Objectives

Students will gain a critical understanding of the American state and a host of theoretical tools to analyze social inequality. In addition, students will be able to discuss race as a social construction and identify how the government creates and maintains a racialized social system.

Course Requirements

Attendance/Participation/Group Work	20%
Pop Quizzes	15%
Take Home Midterm	25%
Research Paper	
Proposal	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Draft of Paper (not graded, but penalized if not submitted)	0%
Presentation	5%
Final Paper	25%

Citizenship

An important goal for this course is for students to not only become better critical thinkers and consumers of knowledge, but to become better citizens by analyzing class readings and engaging in class discussion. Students are expected to closely follow current events on the local, state, and national levels. Each class will include a discussion that links theoretical and empirical scholarship to what is currently happening in the real world. Students will be graded upon their ability to successfully complete this endeavor.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes.

Excused vs. Unexcused absences: [The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog](#)

The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.

Group Work

At the beginning of the semester, students will have the opportunity to join one of several thematic groups. These groups correspond to topics that we read in class. Students should pick issue areas that they are interested in and where they would like to broaden their expertise. When the class reaches your research areas, students in those areas are expected to closely synthesize readings and be leading discussants in class. In addition, each student is responsible for signing up to give one presentation on course reading. In the presentations, students should contextualize the readings and pose questions for discussion. Students should incorporate visual aids during their presentation. Presentations should last no more than 10 minutes. In addition, students will have the options to further their expertise by writing their research paper on their chosen research area.

Pop Quizzes

During the course of the semester there will be unannounced quizzes at the beginning of the class that will test student's knowledge of the assigned readings for that class period. There will no opportunities to make up quizzes if students are not present.

Midterm

The midterm will be a take-home exam due on Wednesday, February 21st.

Research Paper

In lieu of a final exam, students are required to complete a 10 -12-page essay due May 9th by 3pm. Student must hand in a hard copy at 410 Conklin Hall and an electronic version on Blackboard. The research paper should use theoretical frameworks from class reading to analyze an institution or policy on the local, state, or federal level of government as a project of the American racial state. Students should focus on a topic that corresponds to their research area/group, but have the option to write on another subject with my permission.

To ensure that you adequately prepare for your final assignment, students will be required to submit a paper proposal on March 7th, an annotated bibliography on April 2nd, and draft of the final paper on April 16th. The proposal should include a research question and thesis. The annotated bibliography should contain a list citations suitable for an academic paper and short description of how you are using these citations to advance your thesis. The draft should be equal to at least ½ half of the final paper requirement. Late proposals and bibliographies will be penalized one-half of a letter grade per day. Late drafts and incomplete submissions will be penalized on the final paper grade. Finally, students will present their papers during the last week of class. Presentations should be 5-8 minutes long and incorporate visual aids.

Required Texts

Michelle Alexander (2010) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press), ~\$20. ISBN: 9781595586438.

Ira Katznelson (2005) *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold Story of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton), \$15. ISBN: 9780393329516.

Douglas A. Massey and Nancy A. Denton. (1993). *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), ~ \$28 ISBN: 0674018214.

Grading Rubric

A: Outstanding

A-: Outstanding, with one or two areas of improvement

B+: Very good

B: Good

B-: Good overall, with some significant weaknesses
C+: Satisfactory, with some potential for improvement
C: Satisfactory, but needs significant development
C-: Barely satisfactory
D: Poor: overwhelming flaws
F: Failing: doesn't complete assignment

Final Grades

89.45+ = A, 84.44-84.45= B+, 84.44-79.45= B, 79.44-74.45=C+, 74.44-69.45=C, 69.44-65.45=D, 65.44-Below= F

All exams and papers are evaluated for content, grammar, and logic.

For assistance on your writing assignments, please consult the [University Writing Center](#). Tutors can help students: clarify an assignment, generate ideas and writing, review and revise drafts, improve grammar and usage, and strengthen reading and editing skills.

Blackboard

All class communication will be through Blackboard. **This syllabus is subject to revision and updated version will be posted to the course site.** Please check the site regularly for notification. All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard.

Course Materials

All required books are available at Barnes and Nobles Rutgers- Newark (42 Halsey Street). All other required readings are available via the Blackboard site.

Electronics Policy

Electronic media is a welcome tool to aid learning in the modern classroom. However, used irresponsibly it can also be detrimental to learning when students lose the ability to focus on lectures or distract other students with it. Use of electronic media is therefore a student privilege, not a right, and may be revoked by the instructor under certain conditions. During class time certain electronic media—laptop computers and tablets, not cell phones—may be used only for the following purposes:

- 1) to read required course texts (E-books or texts posted on Blackboard)
- 2) to type notes on lectures and classroom discussions

Electronic media may NOT be used to browse the internet, answer email, check social media, or for any use that is not directly related to the course. If any student is found to be in violation of the electronics policy—as witnessed by the instructor or as reported by fellow classmates—that student will be banned from using any electronic media for the remainder of the course. If the student continues to use electronic media despite the ban, his or her final grade will be reduced a full letter grade at the conclusion. In extreme cases I reserve the right to ban the student from the classroom altogether. The student will be notified in writing if s/he has lost the privilege of using electronic media. Cell phones must be turned off during class time or set to “vibrate”.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, for which a student may receive a range of punishments, including failing the course, a permanent record on his or her final transcript, suspension or even expulsion from the University. Please familiarize yourself with the University's definition of plagiarism by reviewing the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity, here: <http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>.

If I suspect any student of plagiarism I will bring it to his/her attention and report it to the administration. We faculty have a professional obligation to report all instances of plagiarism in our classes. Failure to do so promotes inequity among the student body, given that honest students have not had the advantage of using external sources in preparing their work.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment."

Disability Services and Accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact Kate Torres at (973)353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

Course Schedule

Syllabus is subject to change

1/17: Introduction

Part I: The Theoretical foundation for understanding the Racial State

1/22: Race and Political Theory

Mills, Charles. 1997. *The Racial Contract*. Pp. 1-19.

*1/23 *Last day to drop a course*

1/24: Race and Political Theory

Mills, Charles. 1997. *The Racial Contract*. Pp. 19-40.

1/29: The Social Construction of Race

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Chapter 4

[Interview with Historian Nell Painter about the history of whiteness.](#)

1/30: The Racial State

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Chapter 5

2/5: Race and the Early Republic

King, Desmond, & Smith, Rogers. 2005. *Racial Orders in American Political Development*. *The American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 75-92

2/7: Race and the Early Republic

Feagin, Joe. 2010. *Racist America: Roots, current realities, and reparations*. Chapter 1.

2/12: Race and the Early Republic

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2015. *Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender Formation*. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. Vol. 1(1) 54–74.

2/14: Mapping the Racial State

Kimberley Johnson. 2015. "The Color Line and the State: Race and American Political Development," *Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, eds. Richard Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert Lieberman.

2/19: Midterm Review- No reading

2/21: **Midterm Due**

Part II: Defining Race and Constructing a Racial Hierarchy

2/26: Constructing the Racial Order

Hochschild, Jennifer and Powell, Breanna. 2008. Racial Reorganization and the United States Census 1850–1930: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race. *Studies in American Political Development*, 22(1), 59-96.

2/28: Constructing the Racial Order

Lopez, Ian Haney. 2006. *White by Law: The legal construction of race*. Chapter 2 and 4.

3/5: Constructing the Racial Order

Lopez, Ian Haney. 2006. *White by Law: The legal construction of race*. Chapter 5. Never Before Podcast with Janet Mock and Brandon Miller aka Joanne the Scammer Available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

3/7: The Changing Racial Order

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2010. *Racism Without Racism*. Chapter 8.

Paper Proposal Due

SPRING BREAK- No Class on 3/12 and 3/14

Part III: Race and Public Policy

3/19: Race and the White Welfare State

Katznelson, Ira. 2005 *When Affirmative Action Was White*. Chapter 2 and 3.

3/21: Race and the White Welfare State

Katznelson, Ira. 2005 *When Affirmative Action Was White*. Chapter 4 and 5.

3/26: Race and the White Welfare State

Katznelson, Ira. 2005 *When Affirmative Action Was White*. Chapter 6.

Paul, Mark, William Darity, and Darrick Hamilton [Why We Need a Federal Job Guarantee](#) *Jacobin Magazine*. February 4, 2017.

Long, Heather. 2018. There's a serious proposal to give babies born in the United States \$20,000 (or more). Washington Post.

**Last day to withdraw from the course and receive a W grade*

3/28: Race and Housing Policy

Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. **Chapter 2.**

4/2: Race and Housing Policy

Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* Chapter 3

Annotated Bibliography Due

4/4: Race and Housing Policy

Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Chapter 4

4/9: Segregation and Reparations

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2014. "[The Case for Reparations](#)," *The Atlantic*,
Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2017. "[The Resegregation of Jefferson County](#)," *The New York Times Magazine*

4/11: Race, Criminal Justice, and Mass Incarceration

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*. Chapter 2

4/16: Race, Criminal Justice, and Mass Incarceration

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*. Chapter 3

First draft of research paper due

4/18: Race, Criminal Justice, and Mass Incarceration

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*. Chapter 4
The Ferguson Report (Read Executive Summary Only)

4/23: Deconstructing the Carceral System

Angela Davis. 2003. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Excerpts
Vision for Black Lives Policy Demands Booklet

4/25: Deconstructing the State, Catch up and Class Presentations

4/30: Class Presentations

Final papers due May 9th by 3pm. Please submit a hard copy to Conklin 410 and electronic version on Blackboard