

Professor Vivian Nguyen

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| **General**  Course: Topics of Race and Racism in America  Instructor: Professor Vivian Nguyen  Email: [vivian.nguyen@tcu.edu](mailto:vivian.nguyen@tcu.edu)  Phone: …  Virtual Office Hours: Mondays 9-11am on Zoom or by appointment | **Suggested Social Media Follows**  Cornel West (Instagram brothercornelwest)  Ta-Nehisi Coates (Instagram tanehisipcoates)  Julissa Natzely Arce Raya (Instagram julissaarce)  Edna Chavez (Instagram ed.naaaa)  Tim Wise (Instagram speakoutwithtimwise)  Spoken Word Poetry (Instagram wanpoetry) |
| **Tools for Writing Help**  <https://site-205673-2269-8658.mystrikingly.com/writing-resources>  [www.Grammarly.com](http://www.Grammarly.com)  TCU Center for Writing <https://wrt.tcu.edu/> | **Important Class Meeting Dates**  Zoom dates: Monday 3/1 at 6pm and Monday 4/19 at 6pm  On-campus face-to-face dates: Monday 1/25 at 6pm and Monday 4/5 at 6pm  Rest of class: online and asynchronous |

**Communicating with Professor**

The best way to reach me is by emailing me at [vivian.nguyen@tcu.edu](mailto:vivian.nguyen@tcu.edu). Because I have many students, always let me know what class you are in and put something in the Subject line of the email that is connected to your question.

**Course Overview**

This course focuses on the issues of race and racism in America through various viewpoints to illustrate the complexity of the problem. We will learn about race as a social construct and how historical beliefs have come to influence and impact marginalized communities in our society. We will dive into discussions about how racial discrimination is perpetuated in social, political, economic, educational, and legal systems and serve to collectively place pressure upon certain members in society. Ultimately, we will learn of how intersectionality may serve to increase the level of racial discrimination faced by an individual.

The required course materials listed below are a few brief readings to help illustrate the course goals as well as provide the student with exposure to different forms of literature and story-telling. The two books listed best demonstrate our course objectives, however, many other articles will be provided in addition to them for broader understanding.

**Required Course Material**

The Truth About Stories by Thomas King (ISBN: 978-0-88784-696-0)

They Called Us Enemy by George Takei (ISBN: 978-1603094504)

*All other required readings will be provided as hyperlinks to students.*

**Student Learning Outcomes / Course Objectives**

Understand the various methods of story-telling in society.

Describe critical race theory and intersectionality and apply it to various works in the course.

Develop methods for examining race and racism in our society and connect readings and discussions to modern day examples.

Partake in civil discussion about race and racism while effectively arguing for or against a specific viewpoint.

Establish a stronger understanding of microaggressions, subtle/modern racism, and systemic racism.

**My Teaching Philosophy**

I believe that it is imperative that we engage in productive conversation about race and racism and foster a community of respect and professionalism. While it is important for everyone to express their opinion on matters discussed in the course, no one should be made to feel as though their opinion is invalid nor should they be treated differently as a result.

The purpose of this course is to be able to have a rewarding and vigorous discussion about the complexities of race and racism, and ultimately to educate each other and embrace our differences.

**Professionalism and Classroom Etiquette**

The Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable.

*In this specific course, your Professionalism/Participation grade is worth 25% of your final grade.*

Please be mindful of the following expectations and guidelines for class engagement:

Be present and active in class. Refrain from using email, social media, and completing other course

assignments during the seminar.

Come to class prepared (complete all readings and assignments prior to class)

Respect the ideas and questions of others and do not speak when someone else is speaking

Refrain from using electronic devices, unless they are being used for note taking and/or learning

needs. All phones should be on silent or a low vibration in case of emergencies.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor may direct the student to leave class for

the remainder of the class period.

Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to

university disciplinary proceedings.

**Netiquette**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and chats. If I deem any of them to be inappropriate or offensive, I will forward the message to the Chair of the department and the online administrators and appropriate action will be taken, not excluding expulsion from the course. The same rules apply online as they do in person. Be respectful of other students. Foul discourse will not be tolerated. Please take a moment and read the following link concerning "netiquette": <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>

**Attendance**

* Following university policy, that regular and punctual class attendance is essential and that no assigned work is excused because of absence, no matter what the cause, students are expected to be at every class meeting. The exception is an official university absence for students representing TCU at an athletic or academic event. If students miss class due to medical or a death in the family, then please make me aware.
* **For face-to-face classes, students are allowed two “free” absences**. After those two absences, your Professionalism grade will begin to be affected. A student can be dropped from the course if they exceed four absences.
* **For online classes, students will be expected to interact with the course** by using TCU Online, participating in discussion boards, and participating in video discussions. Your Professionalism Grade will be directly connected to course interaction.

**Spring 2021: during this semester, attendance in the two Zoom meetings and two face-to-face sessions is required; missing any of those sessions will negatively affect your Professionalism grade. If you must miss the face-to-face meetings (on campus) for whatever reason, you must advise the professor at least a week prior to the meeting**

**Access & Inclusion**

I aim to make this class as accessible as possible to students with physical and mental disabilities, chronic illnesses, and learning disabilities. If the classroom space, course materials, discussions, or assignments are not compatible with your learning needs, please notify Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services and I will make any necessary accommodations. Student Disabilities Services aims to increase the retention of those with learning disabilities, mobility limitations, vision and hearing impairments, and other disabilities, via individualized support services. For more information, contact Student Disabilities Services at: http://acs.tcu.edu/disability\_services.asp or by phone at: (817) 257-6567.

**On Diversity and Belonging**

You belong in this space.

Your ideas, contributions, and life experiences make you uniquely qualified to offer substantive insight

into our course material. The act of learning is communal, and you are each recognized as a valuable

source of knowledge and expertise. As such, we will need to make sure that we foster a community

where we recognize each other’s differences and respect each other’s contributions.

**Department Statement**

We respectfully acknowledge all Native American peoples who have lived on this land since time

immemorial. TCU especially acknowledges and pays respect to the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, upon

whose historical homeland our university is located.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, falsifying documents, and unauthorized collaboration, are strictly forbidden. Students caught in violation of the university’s standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary actions, including failure of the course and suspension or expulsion from the university. For more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty and integrity please see TCU’s academic misconduct policy: [https://tcu.codes/code/index/3-prohibited-conduct/3-4- academic-misconduct/](https://tcu.codes/code/index/3-prohibited-conduct/3-4-%20academic-misconduct/)

**TCU Center for Writing**

The William L. Adams Center for Writing is an instructional service available to all TCU students. Writing consultants are available for one-on-one consultations to offer support in the following areas: style, organization, clarity, grammar, and research documentation styles. Please do not hesitate to make use of this service if you are having difficulty with writing development.

**Emergency Preparedness**

Please be sure to review the university’s public safety and emergency preparedness website at: https://publicsafety.tcu.edu/prepare-for-emergencies/. Additionally, all TCU students should be enrolled in the TCU Alert System.

**Final Grade Rubric**

| **Percent / Point Value** | **Item** |
| --- | --- |
| 5% | Professionalism/Discussion Grade |
| 10% | Discussion Presentation |
| 10% | In-Class Assignments |
| 15% | Group Presentation |
| 15% | Essay Grade |
| 20% | Online Assignments |
| 25% | Final Project |
|  |  |
| 100% | TOTAL |

**Final Numerical/Letter Grade Calculation (+/-):**

| **Grade** | **Score** |
| --- | --- |
| A | 94-100 |
| A- | 90-93 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 84-86 |
| B- | 80-83 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 74-76 |
| C- | 70-73 |
| F | 0-69 |

**Course Calendar**

*In-Class Discussions are held on a weekly basis. Much of your participation and coursework grades will be dependent on your ability to attend and engage in classroom discussions.*

**Each week, a pair of students will be assigned to lead the discussion of the week and bring supplemental information to better develop the class’ understanding of the topics. This will also play a major role in your grade.**

| Week | Date | Topic | Materials | Assignment /  Class Activity |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 1/19 | Course Introductions  How to Have Productive Discussions About Race | Notes: What Makes a Conversation Productive?  Notes: Critical Race Theory  **In-Class:**  Read and sign a contract agreeing that we will respect each other during all in-class discussions. | Introductions and Ice Breaker  **Listening to Absorb vs. Listening to Respond Activity.** |
| 2 | 1/25\* | **SECTION ONE: Key Concepts and History of Racism**  Race as a Social Construct | Assigned Readings: <https://time.com/5891138/critical-race-theory-explained/>  <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/06/16/how-fluid-is-racial-identity/race-and-racial-identity-are-social-constructs>  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings. Answer the following questions: *1. What is Critical Race Theory? 2. How is race socially constructed? 3. Do you think racism will ever be eradicated?* | **10 Minute, Free Writing Assignment**  In-Class Discussion |
| 3 | 2/1 | Colorblind Racism  The Fear of Being Labeled as a Racist | Assigned Readings: <https://sociologyinfocus.com/im-not-racist-im-colorblind-2/>  <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/opinion/coates-the-good-racist-people.html>  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings. Answer the following questions: *1. What does it mean to be “colorblind”? What are your thoughts on this? 2. How has racism evolved? Do racists still exist?* | **10 Minute, Free Writing Assignment**  In-Class Discussion over the readings |
| 4 | 2/8 | Optional Ethnicities and Privilege | Assigned Readings: <http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~jc3962/COR/Racism/Racism_1.pdf>  <https://www.salon.com/2013/08/01/why_privilege_is_so_hard_to_give_up/>  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. Describe how ethnicities may be optional for some people in America. 2. What is Symbolic Ethnicity? Provide your own example. 3. Define privilege. List the ways in which you experience privilege and the ways in which you might not.* | In-Class Discussion  **Privilege Walk Activity** |
| 5 | 2/15 | Group Project PreparationWeek | No Assigned Readings.  Notes: Rubric for Group Project Assignment  **BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROJECT:**  *We will be getting into groups to create a presentation on one of the topics discussed thus far. Students are expected to create a PowerPoint Presentation followed by an in-class activity for their peers to partake in similar to our “Privilege Walk” activity last class. Presentations must be 12-15 minutes long with 5-7 minutes for the activity.* | **10 Minute, Free Writing Assignment**  **Group Project due in class on 2/22/21** |
| 6 | 2/22 | Group Project Presentations | No Assigned Readings.  **IN-CLASS WORK:**   1. Listen to other groups’ presentations and grade them based on the rubric given in class. 2. Grade group members on their performance | **Reflection on Group Projects due on D2L by next class.** |
| 7 | 3/1\* | **SECTION TWO: Racial Literature and Artistic Work** | Assigned Readings:  *They Called Us Enemy* (first half of the book)  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Reflection on Group Projects  AND  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. Is George Takei’s use of illustration effective? Why or why not. 2. If you were to create a book of your own, what would you write about and how might you choose to illustrate it?* | In-Class Discussion  **In-Class Activity:** Creating your own artistic work in regards to racism. |
| 8 | 3/8 | Racism in legal systems | Assigned Readings:  *They Called Us Enemy* (second half of the book)  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. Using examples from the book, describe how legal systems might perpetuate racism. 2. Research another instance of when legal systems have racially discriminated towards a population and describe it.*  *\*be prepared to discuss your specific instance in class\** | **10 Minute, Free Writing Assignment**  In-Class Discussion |
| 9 | 3/15 | White Narratives and Counter Storytelling | Assigned Readings:  *The Truth About Stories* (first chapter)  Notes: White Narratives/Counter Storytelling  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. What is the cultural significance of storytelling? 2. Describe a story told to you by your parents about your family history. How might the perspectives of the story influence your thinking today?*  AND  Choose a quote from the chapter that you liked the most and prepare to share it in class. | **10 Minute, Free Writing Assignment**  In-Class Discussion |
| 10 | 3/22 | Digital Media and Poor White Americans | Assigned Readings:  <https://anchoreditions.com/blog/dorothea-lange-censored-photographs>  [*http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/lange/*](http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/lange/)  Notes: Pictures are worth a thousand words  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. What does the audience gain from seeing photos? What aspects of a photo may help convey the argument? 2. How might poor white Americans experience discrimination? Do they still have privileges? Explain why or why not.*  AND  Choose a picture to bring to class that has some significance with race/racism in America and be prepared to present what the argument of the photo might be. | In-Class Discussions  **Digital Media Activity around campus** |
| 11 | 3/29 | Essay One Prep | No Assigned Readings.  **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ESSAY:**  Student must compose a 5 page essay (before photos/art) accompanied by some form of creative illustration. The essay may employ any of the topics discussed thus far in the course to create an argument about racism in America and a proposal on how to fix the issue. Photos and art content must effectively engage the reader and enhance the overall argument. Students must also use at least two secondary sources from the TCU Database and 5 sources total (it can be from course readings as well). | **Essay One due by 4/5/21** |
| 12 | 4/5\* | **SECTION THREE: Cultural Appropriation and Appreciation**  Cultural Appropriation | Assigned Readings:  <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/25/opinion/sunday/who-gets-to-write-what.html>  <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/the-dos-and-donts-of-cultural-appropriation/411292/>  Notes: Cultural Appropriation and its Complexity  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. What does it mean to culturally appropriate and culturally appreciate something? 2. Do you agree with the NY Times piece, why or why not? 3. Do you agree with the Atlantic piece, why or why not?* | In-class Discussion  **Gatekeeping vs Holding Others Accountable Activity** |
| 13 | 4/12 | Cultural Appreciation and More Media | Assigned Readings:  This Is America – Childish Gambino  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYOjWnS4cMY>  The Hamilton Mixtape: Immigrants (We Get The Job Done)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_35a7sn6ds>  Cultural Appreciation: 7 Women on Embracing Their Heritage Through Their Style  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZFPIc3bJS8>  **DUE BEFORE NEXT CLASS:**  Writing Response (On D2L) regarding the readings.  Answer the following questions: *1. For each of the videos, describe your initial reaction to the title of the video and your final reaction after having watched the video.*  AND  Bring a cultural item to class to present during discussion. We will be embracing each other’s culture, so feel free to bring anything that has significance to you. | **Cultural Show and Tell**  In-Class Discussion |
| 14 | 4/19\* | Begin Working on Final Project | No Assigned Readings  **BRIEF SUMMARY OF FINAL PROJECT:**  Students must develop 5-8 page essay with photos or other media describing and arguing any of the topics from the second half of the semester. We will follow similar guidelines as with the previous essay.  Additionally, they must create a PowerPoint presentation or something similar to present in class based off of the essay produced. We will also follow similar guidelines as with the Group Presentation Project earlier in the semester. | Final Project due next class |
| 15 | 4/26 | Final Project Presentations | No Assigned Readings  **IN-CLASS WORK:**   1. Listen to others’ presentations and grade them based on the rubric given in class. 2. Reflection Assignment on your own project outlining its strengths and weaknesses. 3. Reflection Assignment on your understanding of race and racism in America. | Final Project Due |

**Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT)**

**Towards the end of the term, you will receive an email asking to complete your SPOT for this course.** I appreciate your thoughtful and reflective feedback to help make this course successful for future students. You can fill out the SPOT by clicking on the link in the email or in TCU Online when SPOTs open.