

University of Florida
Department of History
Fall 2015

AFA 3930: Black Lives Matter

Professor Lauren Pearlman
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M,W,F: 2 (8:30-9:20)
Turlington Hall, Rm 2334

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Course Description

This course has two goals. First it seeks to place the 2012 Black Lives Matter campaign in a historic context and second, it seeks to make the academy accountable to a political project created by students and young activists around the country. We will accomplish this by raising questions about, offering studied reflection upon, and allocating dedicated institutional space to the failures of democracy, capitalism, the criminal justice system, and local and national leadership. Throughout this course, we will examine the particular historical, geographical, cultural, social, and political ways in which race was and continues to be configured and deployed in the United States. To do so, we will approach readings and discussions from a diversity of disciplines and perspectives. By beginning our analysis in the broader context of institutional injustice and moving to case studies of specific episodes of state violence and disenfranchisement, this course offers some important tools to analyze current events. The hope is that in striking a balance between historical inquiry, interdisciplinary methods, current events, and collective inquiry, you will be better prepared to meld activism with the academy and leave with a more rich understanding of why #blacklivesmatter.

Note: This class is a work in progress. We will build on knowledge of past events and be prepared to interrogate new events as they unfold. Thus your participation as students is central to this collective endeavor as we ask and answer questions about race, structural inequality, and violence together.

Course Objectives: In this course, we will be building a history of a contemporary social movement as it continues to unfold. Here are some of our goals for the semester:

1. You will not only acquire an understanding of key developments in the Black Lives Matter campaign but also understand the context out of which it emerged and the policies that produce and reinforce racial inequality.
2. You will develop the ability to read and analyze primary documents, situate them in historical context, and develop critical interpretations of their significance.
3. You will learn how to think across a number of disciplines, participate in a learning collective, and communicate important, difficult topics to a broad audience.

Required Readings

We will read a variety of books, articles, and primary documents. There are six (6) required texts available for purchase at the UF Bookstore or from an online retailer. Note: Amazon.com offers competitive pricing on many of these books, including the option to rent books and purchase used copies. If you decide to purchase your books online, please make sure that you purchase the correct edition and that you allow enough time for shipping. In addition to these books, there will be various readings, images, and other primary documents available online via Canvas, the course e-learning site, at <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>. These are required readings and will form the basis of many assignments. Whether you print them out as hard copy or not is up to you, but please be sure that you can access them in time for class.

- Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, 2005).
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2014).
- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, 2010).
- Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (New York: Random House, 1991).
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Random House, 2015).

Course Assignments:

- This is an upper-level course. As such, this class requires a serious commitment of time and energy. Please have your syllabus on hand and be sure to keep up with all of the reading and writing deadlines.
- **Readings:** Each week, you will be assigned roughly 100-150 pages of reading. You are expected to read all of the assigned readings before class and arrive in class with

questions, comments, and opinions about what you have read. Make sure to allow enough time in your schedule to read thoroughly and critically.

- You will be responsible for giving a presentation on the day's subject matter once during the course of the semester. We will talk in more detail about this assignment in the beginning of the semester.
- A five hundred (500) word response paper to the podcast "Our National Conversation About Conversations About Race" (available here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/our-national-conversation/id970262104?mt=2> or in iTunes) is due on **September 18**. You may write your response on any episode published since August 2015. We will talk in more detail about this assignment in the beginning of the semester. Late assignments will receive a zero.
- An in-class midterm exam is scheduled for **October 16**.
- A one thousand (1000) word op-ed about an event or episode that unfolds during the course of the semester is due by **November 9**. Please note that you may submit this at any time before the due date. We will talk in more detail about this assignment before the paper is due. Late assignments will receive a zero.
- A ten to twelve (10-12) page research paper incorporating primary and secondary sources is due on **December 16**. Your paper will be graded according to the content of your ideas *and* the quality and accuracy of your prose. Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade for every day that they are late. Further instructions regarding format and content will be distributed before the paper is due.

Generally speaking, I will look for the following in your papers:

1. Analysis. Does the paper make a convincing and coherent argument?
2. Evidence. Is the argument well supported by evidence? Is evidence used effectively?
3. Organization. Is the paper structured in logical way?
4. Content and originality. Does the paper make an original contribution or insight? Does the author's own opinion and voice come through?
5. Mechanics and style. Is the paper free of spelling and grammar errors? Is it clearly written?

Grades: Your grade in this class will be determined largely by your performance on a variety of written assignments and exams. These exercises will allow you to hone your critical thinking and writing skills and allow you to reflect thoughtfully on the long civil rights movement. Improvement over the course of the semester is not only encouraged but also rewarded.

Your grade for this class will be determined as follows:

Participation and Attendance	15%
Class presentation:	10%
Podcast Response Paper:	10%

Op-ed:	15%
Midterm:	20%
Research paper:	30%

UF Grading Scale

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	I	N	G	S	U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A100-94, A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73
B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83	D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-64 F: below 64

Course Policies

- **Assignments:** Please turn your work in on time. It is in your best interest (so that you do not fall behind) and mine (so that I can provide feedback in a timely manner). Plan ahead and keep up with the work for this course.
- **Correspondence:** I will send important course announcements and other correspondence to you via your UF email account. If you do not use this as your primary account, please make sure that you have your UF email forwarded to you.
- **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is required, expected, and central to your learning experience. In addition to showing up for class on time, be ready to articulate and defend your ideas, as well as to listen to and work with the ideas of others. You are allowed two unexcused absences for the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will negatively affect your final participation grade. Six or more unexcused absences will result in failing grade for the class. I will not contact students during the semester to apprise them of their attendance status; it is the responsibility of the students to keep a record of their absences. Religious holidays, UF athletic travel conflicts, and written explanations from a certified health professional are eligible for an excused absence when cleared with the professor ahead of time. See UF attendance policy at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
- **Late Work and Make-up Policy:** Unless stated otherwise, late papers will be penalized one-third-letter grade per day late. If you know you must have an excused absence, contact me beforehand to make arrangements to turn in work before class.
- **Mobile Electronic Device Policy:** Laptops are allowed in class exclusively for note-taking purposes. The use of such electronic devices should not be a distraction to other students or to the instructor. If I feel like the use of electronic devices is detrimental to the learning environment, then I reserve the right to prohibit their use at any time. Please turn your cell phone off prior to the start of class and do not check it during class time.

How to get in touch with the instructor:

- Come to office hours. I truly enjoy getting to know more about students outside of the classroom. You are encouraged to stop by with any questions that you may have about assignments, readings, classroom discussions, or other pertinent topics. If you need to cover material from a missed class, however, please consult a classmate instead. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually agreeable time.

- Email me at lpearlman@ufl.edu. I will get back to you within 24 hours, though my response may be slower during the weekend.
- Talk to me just before or just after class.

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Academic Honesty

The University, as well as your instructor, values and expects academic integrity. Ethical violations include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and academic misconduct (including turning in the work of others as your own and reusing old assignments). These will not be tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment and the risk of an automatic failing grade in the course, and possible expulsion from UF. To avoid plagiarism, you must not copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, or conclusions of another person or source (including Internet sources) without properly crediting the person or source with both quotation marks and a footnote. Make sure that you properly cite direct quotations, paraphrased information, and facts that are not widely known. I will provide you with guidelines for proper citations and formatting prior to your submission of all written work, but you may contact me at any time for clarification. For more information on UF's honest policy, see

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>. For more information on how UF's Judicial Affairs processes cases of plagiarism, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

Student Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Course Schedule

Week One: The Roots of Racism

August 24	None
August 26	Bonilla-Silva, Racism without Racists, ch 1, 1-24; http://blacklivesmatter.com/a-herstory-of-the-blacklivesmatter-movement/
August 28	Bonilla-Silva, Racism without Racists, ch 2, 25-72

Week Two: The Urban Crisis

August 31	Sugrue, Origins of the Urban Crisis, ch 1-2, 17-55
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September 2 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, ch 3-4, 57-123

September 4 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, ch 5-6, 125-177

Week Three: The Urban Crisis cont.

September 7 No Class

September 9 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, ch 7-8, 181-231

September 11 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, ch 9 and conc, 232-271

Week Four: The Logic of Racism

September 14 Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, ch 3-4, 73-119

September 16 Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, ch 5-6, 123-178

September 18 Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, ch 7-8, 179-224

PODCAST RESPONSE PAPER DUE

Week Five: The War on Poverty

September 21 Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, ch 1-2, 17-60

September 23 Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, ch 3-4, 61-116

September 25 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

Week Six: The War on Poverty cont.

September 28 Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, ch 5-6, 117-154

September 30 Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, ch 7-8, 155-186

October 2 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

Week Seven: The War on Education

October 5 Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*, intro and ch 1, 1-48

October 7 Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*, ch 2-3, 49-160

October 9 Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*, ch 4, 161-210

Week Eight: The War on Education cont.

- October 12 Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*, ch 5-6, 211-282
- October 14 NPR, *This American Life*, “The Problem We All Live With, Part One and Two” (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with> and <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/563/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-two>)
- October 16 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week Nine: Toward a History of Mass Incarceration

- October 19 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, intro and ch 1, 1-58
- October 21 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, ch 2, 59-96
- October 23 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, ch 3, 97-139

Week Ten: The New Jim Crow

- October 26 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, ch 4, 140-177
- October 28 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, ch 5 and 6, 178-262
- October 30 NPR, *This American Life: Cops See it Differently, Part One and Two* (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/547/cops-see-it-differently-part-one> and <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/548/cops-see-it-differently-part-two>)

Week Eleven: Trayvon Martin

- November 2 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas
- November 4 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas
- November 6 No Class

Week Twelve: Ferguson

- November 9 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

OP-ED DUE

- November 11 No Class

November 13 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

Week Thirteen: Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Say Her Name

November 16 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

November 18 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

November 20 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

Week Fourteen: Charleston

November 23 Blog posts and articles posted on Canvas

November 25 No Class

November 27 No Class

Week Fifteen: Toward A Post Racial America?

November 30 Bonilla-Silva, Racism without Racists, ch 10-11, 255-315

December 2 Coates, Between the World and Me (first half)

December 4 Coates, Between the World and Me (second half)

Week Sixteen: Reflections

December 7 George Yancy and Judith Butler, “What’s Wrong with ‘All Lives Matter’?” New York Times, January 12, 2015.

December 9 Wrap Up

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE AT NOON WED DECEMBER 16TH. PLEASE SUBMIT
HARD COPY AT MY OFFICE 218 KEENE-FLINT HALL AND VIA EMAIL AT
lpearlman@ufl.edu**