

## ANT 4930 Whiteness

Tuesday, 12:50 – 1:40 p.m (TUR 2342); Thursday, 12:50 – 2:45 p.m. (TUR 2333)  
Online

**Dr. Clarence C. Gravlee**

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### Course Description and Objectives

Problems of race and racism are often treated as if they pertain only to Black people or other people of color. In a narrow sense, that's true: Most white people in the United States do not experience race and racism as everyday concerns. Yet the safe distance most white people feel from race deserves scrutiny as both a benefit and instrument of oppression.

In this advanced undergraduate seminar, we examine the historical, political-economic, and sociocultural context of whiteness. We consider: Where does the category *white* come from, and what does it mean to possess this status? How should we understand the relations between whiteness, white supremacy, and anti-Black racism? How have the boundaries of whiteness changed over time? What legal structures have regulated who counts as white and which privileges—material, ideological, political—this status entails? How does whiteness operate as identity, as property, as power, as terror?

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and explain key concepts required for a social-scientific understanding of whiteness.
2. Critically evaluate scholarly arguments and public discourse about race, racism, and whiteness.
3. Demonstrate skill in analyzing and presenting written and oral arguments.
4. Create an independent research project grounded in social scientific concepts, methods, and argumentation.

### Course Format

The course is an advanced undergraduate seminar, emphasizing discussion and group activities. You are expected to have completed reading assignments prior to class, so that our class time can be more interactive. You should be prepared at any given time to offer a summary or to discuss and debate assigned readings and other material.

### Course Materials

#### Required Readings

There are five required books, available at the UF Bookstore or your favorite bookseller.

Anderson, C. (2016). *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA. [paperback: 9781632864123]

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [paperback: 9780816622580]

Lipsitz, G. (2018). *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. [paperback: 9781439916391]

Metzl, J. M. (2019). *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland*. New York: Basic Books. [paperback: 9781541644977]

Roediger, D. R. (1998). *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White*. SCHOCKEN Books. [ebook: 9780307482297]

Additional required readings will be made available via e-Learning ([elearning.ufl.edu](http://elearning.ufl.edu)).

## Course Outline

1. Introduction and overview
2. Whiteness and white supremacy
3. Confronting whiteness
4. Whiteness as property
5. The white world
6. Whiteness, gender, and sexuality
7. White women, race matters
8. Whiteness and the law
9. How whiteness works
10. Whiteness and neoliberal society
11. Reconstruction and Jim Crow
12. White rage and terror
13. Politics of racial resentment
14. The harms of whiteness for white people
15. Synthesis and integration

## Course Requirements and Grading

1. *Class participation (25%)*. The success of any seminar depends on active participation of its participants. Consequently, I expect you to attend each class meeting and to take an active part in discussions and activities. Active participation requires that you read all assigned readings and prepare thoughtful questions and critical discussion points. I will evaluate your class participation on the quality of your contributions, not just on how often you speak in class. The purpose is to facilitate your grasp of the material by encouraging you to prepare for class and by promoting thoughtful analysis and discussion. Occasionally, there will be short in-class writing exercises (5-10 minutes) in which you will be asked to summarize or analyze assigned readings, suggest questions or topics for discussion, or to express your point of view on a topic discussed in class. These exercises are designed to sharpen your ability to summarize your thoughts, and they help me to assess your comprehension of the readings, lecture, and discussion. In-class writings will be graded on a pass/fail basis as part of your participation grade.
2. *Short reading reflections (25%)*. There will be five brief, written reflections (300-400 words) to facilitate your critical engagement with assigned texts. For each response, you will select one assigned text (article, excerpt, or chapter) and analyze it in the context of that week's readings and the course. Your goal is not merely to summarize the text but rather to assess its contributions to our understanding of whiteness. You may select any five texts from the assigned readings. Each reflection is due on the day the relevant reading is assigned.

3. *Research paper* (40%). You will be write a research paper on a topic of your choice related to whiteness. The paper should be approximately 2500–3000 words. References must be consistently formatted with an appropriate bibliographic style (e.g., [\*Chicago Manual of Style\*](#)).
  - a. *Proposal for paper topic*. You will submit a 250-300 word proposal defining the topic of your research paper by **January 28**. The proposal should frame your topic idea as a question and identify why it is important. Do some preliminary library research to help you determine if the topic is too broad or too narrow.
  - b. *Annotated bibliography*. An annotated bibliography with at least 10 carefully selected references from the scholarly literature is due on **February 18**. The references should clearly relate to your paper topic. Your annotations should briefly evaluate the content of the source and identify how, it at all, it will contribute to your research paper. Consult the guidelines for [how to identify scholarly sources](#) and [how to make an annotated bibliography](#) in the Guide to Library Research from Cornell University.
  - c. *First submission of paper*. A complete draft of your paper is due on **March 25**. This draft should reflect your best effort to develop your thesis statement into a well-organized argument that is supported by your literature review. You will have an opportunity to revise the draft after receiving feedback from your peers (see below).
  - d. *Final, revised paper*. The final, revised version of your paper is due on **April 26**. Along with your paper, you should submit a revision memo that summarizes feedback you received from peers and describes the changes you made since the first draft. Your paper will be evaluated based on the quality of the literature review, the quality of analytic effort, the organization and writing style, and the quality of improvement in response to peer review. Further details and suggestions will be distributed in class.
4. *Peer review* (10%). For each stage of the research paper, you will work in peer response groups to provide feedback on one another's developing research papers. You will provide written feedback on the submitted drafts of students in your group, using guidelines that will be distributed in class. You will be expected to read the papers carefully and to provide comments that are thoughtful, respectful, and constructive. Peer review is essential to the development of your final research paper. In addition to the direct benefit of getting feedback on your paper, you will also find that the process of reading and thinking critically about others' work will help you analyze and refine your own writing. Your grade for the peer review requirement will be based on your peers' evaluation of the quality of feedback you provide and on my evaluation of your written feedback.
5. *Course web site*. You are responsible for all materials posted on e-Learning ([elearning.ufl.edu](http://elearning.ufl.edu)) including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material.

	Dates	% of Total
Class participation		25
Reflections		25
Research paper		
Proposal	January 28	5
Bibliography	February 18	5
Draft paper	March 25	10
Final paper	April 26	20
Peer review		10

Total		100
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Final grades will be A (100–94), A- (<94–90) B+ (<90–87), B (<87–84), B- (<84–80) C+ (<80–77), C (<77–74), C- (<74–70), D+ (<70–67), D (<67–64), D- (<64–61), E (<61).

The University's current policies on grading and assigning grad points are available from <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

## Attendance

Your presence in class is a prerequisite to your participation. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade in addition to your learning. In general, acceptable reasons for absence include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligations, religious holidays, or participation in official university activities. Students who know they will have such absences must provide me with documentation of the circumstances as soon as possible, but no later than one week after the absence. For more on the University's attendance policy, please see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

## Late Assignments

You are expected to complete all assignments by the stated due dates. Late assignments will lose one half-letter grade for each day past the deadline. The only make-up opportunities will be for the kind of reasons articulated in the policy on absences and consistent with general university policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). I will not assign grades of "incomplete" except in the most unusual circumstances of incapacitating illness, death of family members, or other university-approved excuses with appropriate documentation.

## Academic Honor Code

Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else's published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) or multiple submissions (submitting the same paper in different courses) will lead to the Department's and the University's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the university's Honor Code (available online at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>).

## Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important to share your accommodation letter with me and discuss your access needs as early as possible in the semester.

## Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas

course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

## UF Health and Wellness Services

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [umatter.ufl.edu/](http://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit [counseling.ufl.edu/](http://counseling.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit [shcc.ufl.edu/](http://shcc.ufl.edu/).
- *University Police Department*: Visit [police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

## Academic Resources


- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services [career.ufl.edu/](http://career.ufl.edu/).
- *Library Support*: [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/) ask various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)

## Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

## Course Schedule and Readings

### Week 1 Introduction and overview

 **Tuesday, January 12**

Syllabus review

 **Thursday, January 14**


[Fears](#), "Hue and Cry on 'Whiteness Studies'," June 20, 2003

[Vought](#), "Memo on Training in the Federal Government," Sept. 4, 2020

[Trump](#), "Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping," Sept. 22, 2020

hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (p. 1–22)

### Week 2 Whiteness and white supremacy

 **Tuesday, January 19**

Mills, "White Supremacy as Sociopolitical System: A Philosophical Perspective"


 **Thursday, January 21**

Gibbons "The Five Refusals of White Supremacy"

Bonilla-Silva, "'New Racism,' Color-Blind Racism, and the Future of Whiteness in America"

### Week 3 Confronting whiteness

 *Research paper proposal due, January 28*

 **Tuesday, January 26**

Du Bois, "Dialogue with a White Friend" [1940] (*Black on White*)

hooks, "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination" [1992] (*Black on White*)

 **Thursday, January 28**

"Ethiop" (Wilson), "What Shall We Do with the White People?" [1860] (*Black on White*)

Schuyler, "Our White Folks," [1927] (*Black on White*)

Rogers, "Debating the Senator" [1917] (*Black on White*)

[Briggs](#), "The Unbearable Whiteness of Storming the Capitol," Jan. 7, 2021

## Week 4      Whiteness as property

### Tuesday, February 2

Hurston, "Blacks, Whites and Work" [1935] (*Black on White*)

Harris, "Whiteness as Property" [1993] (*Black on White*)

### Thursday, February 4

Baraka, "White Wages" [1978] (*Black on White*)

Hughes, "White Man" [1936] (*Black on White*)

Bell, "White Superiority in America" [1988] (*Black on White*)

## Week 5      The white world

### Tuesday, February 9

Morrison, "From *Playing in the Dark*" [1992] (*Black on White*)

Ellison, "What America Would Be Like Without Blacks" [1970] (*Black on White*)

### Thursday, February 11

Baldwin, "On Being 'White' ... and Other Lies" [1984] (*Black on White*)

De Bois, "The Souls of White Folk" [1920] (*Black on White*)

## Week 6      Whiteness, gender, and sexuality

✉ *Research paper annotated bibliography due, February 18*

### Tuesday, February 16

Baldwin, "Going to Meet the Man" [1965] (*Black on White*)

Douglass, "Mrs. Auld" [1845] (*Black on White*)

Jacobs, "The Jealous Mistress" [1861] (*Black on White*)

### Thursday, February 18

Wells-Barnett, "The Case Stated" [1895] (*Black on White*)

Wright, "On White Women Workers" [1945] (*Black on White*)


Harris, "White Men as Performers in the Lynching Ritual" [1984] (*Black on White*)

Gordon "From *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism*" [1995] (*Black on White*)

## **Week 7      *White women, race matters***

 **Tuesday, February 23**


Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*

 **Thursday, February 25—*No class: Recharge Day***

## **Week 8      Whiteness and the law**

 **Tuesday, March 2**

Lipsitz, Introduction–Ch. 2 (p. xxi–54)


 **Thursday, March 4**

Lipsitz, Ch. 3–4 (p. 55–110)

## **Week 9      How whiteness works**


 **Tuesday, March 9**

Lipsitz, Ch. 5–6 (p. 111–146)

 **Thursday, March 11**

Lipsitz, Ch. 7–9 (p. 147–198)

## **Week 10      Whiteness and neoliberal society**


 **Tuesday, March 16**


Lipsitz, Ch. 10–11 (p. 199–245)

 **Thursday, March 18**


Lipsitz, Ch. 12–13 (p. 246–284)

## **Week 11      Reconstruction and Jim Crow**

 ***Draft of research paper due, March 25***

 **Tuesday, March 23**

Anderson, Prologue–Ch. 1

 **Thursday, March 25**

Anderson, Ch. 2–3



## Week 12 White rage and terror

📖 **Tuesday, March 30**

Anderson, Ch. 4

📖 **Thursday, April 1**

Anderson, Epilogue

Baldwin, "White Man's Guilt" [1965] (*Black on White*)

Painter, "Slavery and Soul Murder" [1995] (*Black on White*)

Ellison, "A Party Down at the Square" [c. 1940] (*Black on White*)

## Week 13 Politics of racial resentment

📖 **Tuesday, April 6**

Metzl, Introduction and Part I (p. 1–117)

📖 **Thursday, April 8**

Metzl, Part II (p. 121–188)

## Week 14 The harms of whiteness for white Americans

📖 **Tuesday, April 13**

Metzl, Part III (p. 189–267)

📖 **Thursday, April 15**

Metzl, Conclusion and Afterword (p. 269–290)

[Podcast](#): 'Dying of whiteness' during the coronavirus pandemic

## Week 15 Synthesis and integration

📖 **Tuesday, April 20**

TBD

📧 *Final, revised paper due Monday, April 26*