



HONR 3375: Honors Seminar

Fall 2017

Difficult Dialogues:

Understanding Whiteness: Historic and Contemporary Views on White Privilege

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Course Overview and Objectives

The term "white privilege" is commonly heard around the United States. But, to what extent do you understand what it means, how it works, and how it applies to you? How might white people better understand white privilege and their potential role in dismantling systemic racism?

This seminar - "Understanding Whiteness: Historic and Contemporary Viewpoints on Privilege" challenges students to understand white privilege from historic and contemporary perspectives. Topics covered include: the role of race in one's life; examination of white racial identity; the social construction of whiteness; how whiteness operates within institutional structures; systemic privilege and oppression; intersectionality; key historic events and movements advancing white privilege (eugenics, global colonization, holocaust); and current dialogues about whiteness in 21st century United States. Students enrolled in this course will: (a) engage in personal self-reflection and critical dialogues; (b) analyze readings and digital media to enhance historical and contemporary knowledge and racial awareness; (c) develop white racial literacy and self-efficacy in acting upon systemic racism; and (d) educate others about white privilege through action research projects and community engagement initiatives.

IDEA Objectives

As a result of enrolling in and completing *Understanding Whiteness*, students should achieve the following IDEA objectives:

Essential

Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, and other cultures.

Important

Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)

Developing skill in expressing myself orally and in writing.

Statements on Inclusion

This is an inclusive classroom space. We honor multiplicity, pluri-identities and intersectionality, and will create an environment free from racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, Islamaphobia, anti-Semitism, other religious or spiritual intolerance, classism, ageism, nationalism, ableism, anti-fat bias, and other forms of discrimination.

We are all speakers. We are all human~becomings.

HAVEN: The faculty are members of HAVEN, a campus-wide network of faculty and staff educated about and supporting students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, as well as their allies.

Veterans: Veterans and active duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate in advance, if possible, any special circumstances (e.g. upcoming deployment, drill requirements).

Important Resources

SHSU Counseling Center: Students are eligible for up to 12 free counseling sessions per year. If you need assistance or to schedule an appointment, call 936.294.1720 or visit the Counseling Center next to Old Main Market.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify Professor Peaton or Dr. Bustamante if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide any resources that we may possess.

SHSU Food Pantry: The SHSU Food Pantry supports students who suffer with food insecurity. The SHSU Food Pantry is located in AB III, Room 113. For more information, e-mail foodpantry@shsu.edu

Weekly Course Outline

Because of the dynamic nature of this course, we will be using Blackboard to upload readings, multimedia, and other sources of information - such as news and resources. Students are encouraged to check Blackboard frequently.

We will attempt to follow a certain flow to each week's class; but this is subject to change based on our course dynamics and the topics of the day. Tentatively we will follow the following structure:

- 1:00 - 1:30 PM: Check-in/News and Racial Observation Notebooks
- 1:30 - 2:20 PM: Content~Activities Part I
- 2:20 - 2:30 PM: Break
- 2:30 - 3:20 PM: Content~Activities Part II
- 3:20 - 3:40 PM: Debriefing Circle
- 3:40 - 3:50 PM: Free Write

August 24: Introductions, Overview, & Boundary-Breaking

August 31: The Role of Race in One's Life Part I

September 7: The Role of Race in One's Life Part II

September 14: Theoretical Underpinnings Part I

September 21: Theoretical Underpinnings Part II

September 28: Historical Roots of Whiteness Part I

October 5: Historical Roots of Whiteness Part II

October 12: Social Construction of Whiteness Part I

October 19: Social Construction of Whiteness Part II

October 26: Systemic and Institutional Whiteness Part I

November 2: Systemic and Institutional Whiteness Part II

November 9: Contemporary Issues in Whiteness Part I

November 16: Contemporary Issues in Whiteness Part II

Holiday Break

November 30: From Awareness to Action Part I

Individual Action Plan Presentations

December 1: From Awareness to Action Part II

Individual Action Plan Presentations

Closing Reflections

Assignments & Grading

Attendance

This course is experiential and dialogic. In addition, the course only meets once per week. Therefore, consistent attendance is important for you to meet the objectives of the class. Please be on time to class, prepared to start right at 1:00 PM, and be prepared to stay the whole time. If you need to be absent, late, or leave early, please inform Professor Peaton and Dr. Bustamante in advance. Missing a significant number of classes, or being tardy/departing early may impact your final grade.

Active Participation

We consider active participation students being engaged in conversation; present; not engaged in tech devices unless we are asking you to do so explicitly; asking questions; and speaking your truth. In addition, active participation means you demonstrate engagement with reading materials, multimedia materials, and other resources. If you are not actively engaged, your final grade may be affected.

Racial Observation Notebooks [12 x 10 Points each = 120 Points]

Each member of the class will receive a physical notebook from the instructors. These will serve as Racial Observation Notebooks (RONs). You should carry this around with you and document when you observe Whiteness, race or privilege impacting your life, others' lives, the environment, etc. When do you notice race, whiteness, and privilege specifically? In media? Images? On Social Media? In your classes? Books? Jokes? Racist behavior? Racist attitudes? Overtly? Covertly?

We will spend time in class each week debriefing our racial observation notebooks and discussing the implications of our observations on whiteness and race.

Reflective Mini-Papers [13 x 10 Points each = 130 Points]

Writing and reflecting are critical components of coming to understand our relationship to whiteness, race, and privilege. Writing also provides critical space for thinking.

You will turn in a 1-2 page, single spaced (1" margins) mini-paper each week at the beginning of class. Students must bring hard copies of their papers to class. These papers serve as reflections and critical interrogations of course topics, including: discussions from class; assigned readings; multimedia; additional reflections from outside work you read/engage with; personal reflections on whiteness, race, or privilege.

We will provide 10 minutes at the end of each class as a free write period - providing prompts to help you get started with your writing. You do not need to write about the prompts - these simply provide a way for you to begin your thinking.

We will return any papers we feel are not engaging critically or substantively. Students should feel free to write their truth - these papers are about your reflecting on whiteness, race, and privilege. We are less concerned with quality of writing and more concerned with depth and engagement.

Collective Antiracism Project [50 Points]

Due November 9, 2017

You will be placed into teams of 3-4 to put together a conference presentation proposal for SHSU's *Diversity Leadership Conference*, to be held February 24, 2018 at SHSU. Students should mark this date now and plan to attend this conference.

We will provide more details on writing conference proposals and this assignment as the term progresses.

Individual Cartographic Action Plan [100 Points]

By mapping out our experiences as racialized beings, we can gain a sense of where we come from, who we are becoming, and where we are going in ways that guide our learning and future actions. We will do this by creating personal cartographies and action plans. Further guidance will be given throughout the class. The plan has two parts.

Part 1: Final Personal Cartography (map) Due October 12 [25 points] will involve mapping out influences and experiences related to race (specifically whiteness) in your life. This will be modeled and drafted in class. Your cartography must then be referred to and incorporated into your final presentation.

Part 2: Final Presentation (action plan presentation) Due November 30 [75 points] is an opportunity to map out what you personally plan to do as you continue on your life path to learn more about and address racism (specifically white privilege). You will share your plan with the class using music, art, photography, spoken word, podcast, videos, or another creative approach. Powerpoint, Prezi, and infographics will not be permitted for this project presentation.

News Forum on Blackboard

Our Blackboard site has a News Forum, where we encourage you to post and discuss news stories related to Whiteness, privilege, and race. Actively participating in the news forum through posting and discussing enhances your experience in this course by relating the course topic to current events.

Resources on Blackboard

Throughout the semester we will be posting additional resources on Blackboard. We encourage you to visit this section of the course Blackboard site frequently. There will be links to articles, podcasts, media, and other resources that will enhance your understanding of Whiteness, privilege, and race.

Additional Course Policies and Procedures

Official Course Hashtag

This course will utilize an official hashtag: #SHSUWP. Students are encouraged to post thoughts, insights, and communicate with peers on and through social media utilizing this official hashtag.

Late Assignments

Except in extreme circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted. Extreme circumstances include but are not limited to death in the family, extreme illness, and natural disasters.

If you are encountering problems with turning in assignments on time, please contact Professor Peaton or Dr. Bustamante at pweaton@gmail.com or rmb007@shsu.edu

Academic Support

Any students requiring academic support to complete the requirements of this class are encouraged to take advantage of the many services offered at SHSU. A few include:

- Distance Learning Services at Newton Gresham Library (NGL) at <http://library.shsu.edu/services/distance/index.html>
- SHSU Writing Center at <http://www.shsu.edu/~wctr/>

University Policies

- SHSU Academic Policy Manual-Students
 - o [Procedures in Cases of Academic Dishonesty #810213](#)
 - o [Students with Disabilities #811006](#)
 - o [Student Absences on Religious Holy Days #861001](#)
 - o [Academic Grievance Procedures for Students #900823](#)
- SHSU Academic Policy Manual-Curriculum and Instruction
 - o [Use of Telephones and Text Messagers in Academic Classrooms and Facilities #100728](#)
- Visitors in the Classroom- Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance.
- Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic performance should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in the SHSU Lee Drain Annex (telephone [936-294-3512](tel:936-294-3512), TDD [936-294-3786](tel:936-294-3786)) to request accommodations.

Course Evaluation

Near the end of the semester, students are asked to take part in the University's adopted course evaluation system, IDEA. The assessments are completed online and instructions are emailed to each student. Students' assessments of courses are taken are systematically reviewed by the Dean, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and individual faculty members. Only after the semester has completed are faculty members allowed to view aggregated results of non-personally-identifiable student responses.