# Media, race, and identity     Comm 5221 / Spring 2023

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## Overview

The US remains a nation deeply divided along racial faultlines, and race continues to matter tremendously to the distribution of education, jobs, housing, healthcare, justice, political power, and more. One of the main arenas where racial politics manifest themselves is the media. We will spend the semester studying how this thing we call "race" both shapes and is shaped by various media practices and policies. In particular, we will examine:

- the social construction of race and racial identity,
- the nature of racial identity formation and self-awareness,
- the public discourses around racial/ethnic assimilation and integration,
- the politics of media representation and invisibility,
- the history of interracial cultural borrowing and theft,
- the interplay between media and government(s) with respect to maintaining racial hierarchies, and
- the variability of racial formations across different geopolitical contexts.

If these questions had easy answers, racism would have disappeared long ago. As such, soundbite approaches to the issues at stake (e.g., "can't we all just get along?") will not serve you well. What you learn will depend on (1) your ability to think **critically** about racism and media in contemporary society, and (2) your ability to **argue** your positions on those issues persuasively, rather than your ability to memorize and repeat the "right" answers.

## Contact

The most reliable way to reach me is email (rodman@umn.edu). I try to respond to student emails within 24 hours after I first see them (which may be several hours after you contact me, especially if you do so after 10:00 pm). It is also possible to reach me via Canvas (both through the Canvas messaging system and by responding to feedback/comments I've left for you there), but Canvas notifications will reach me **much** slower than email does, so please don't use Canvas for time-sensitive messages.

## Content warning

This is, without question, the toughest course I teach. That's not simply a way of saying that there's a lot of hard work involved (though that's also true). Rather, it's a warning that the substance of this course is often emotionally challenging. Systemic injustice is not pretty to look at. And we will spend a lot of time looking intensely at systemic injustices that intersect with all our lives in difficult ways. Put more bluntly:

- For white students, this course often opens their eyes to a lot of ugliness that they have never been aware was all around them -- and often much closer to home than they expect. This can be a valuable awakening experience, but it is rarely comfortable.
- For students of color, this course focuses on a lot of ugliness that they have to wrestle with every day of their lives, whether they want to or not. And while (again) it can be helpful to engage with those issues in intellectual and analytical ways, this is (also again) not always a comfortable experience.

It's important to acknowledge up front that this course deals with very tough issues. At the same time, there are several things we can all do to minimize the emotional stress of addressing those issues:

- **Debate the issues, rather than personalities.** You can -- and should -- express your disagreement with what someone else has said or written without attacking them personally.
- **Be extra patient with each other.** Recognize that making mistakes is an important part of the learning process, and that those around you (as well as yourself, of course) may say and write things that seem wrong. You don't have to be silent at such moments, but any intervention you make should aim for something closer to "helping them see the light" than to "calling them out."
- **Show mutual respect to each other.** We need to share the spaces of the course (both physical and virtual) and work together productively. It is unlikely that we will all agree on all the major issues at stake, but we can still treat each other with the same care and respect that we would want for ourselves.

## Philosophy

Any course is like a gym membership: what you get out of the experience will largely depend on how much time and effort **you** put into it. Ideally, there are at least three kinds of things that you will learn in this class:

- new facts (i.e., information about the world that you have not encountered before)
- new viewpoints (i.e., ways of seeing and understanding the world that are different than your own)
- new skills (i.e., techniques and abilities that are either new to you or that help you improve existing skills)

To make this kind of learning happen, you will need to:
- **Read a lot.** Most of those new facts and viewpoints come from the readings. If you read too casually, you'll find it hard to contribute to our discussions and to write well-informed, persuasive essays and DCs.
- **Speak a lot.** While you can learn a lot by listening to what you classmates have to say, in order to get this benefit, **everyone** (including you) has to **contribute** to our discussions on a regular basis.
- **Listen a lot.** More precisely, listen carefully and respectfully. You should pay attention to what **everyone** in the class says, and treat it with the same care and respect that you want for yourself.
- **Write a lot.** Any college graduate should be able to write clearly and persuasively. And the best way to learn this skill is by practicing it. No one becomes a better writer without actually writing a lot.
- **Expect to make mistakes.** Mistakes are a **normal** part of learning -- and life. You will make mistakes, and that's perfectly okay . . . as long as you learn from them in productive ways.

# Time
You should plan on **working at least 9 hours/week** on this course (including time in class). This figure is both an **estimate** (actual reading/writing speeds vary) and an **average** (the workload varies from week to week), and it reflects the **minimum** amount of work needed to earn a passing grade.

**Don't overburden yourself.** 12-15 credit hours translates into ~36-45 working hours/week: i.e., a full-time job. There are only 168 hours in a week. If your schedule requires 80+ hours/week for school, work, and other responsibilities (e.g., jobs, internships, family care), then you may want to find ways to ease your load.

**Plan ahead.** Deadlines for written assignments are automatically enforced by Canvas. In particular, please note that Canvas will **lock** the discussion forums at the end of each Block, and you need to **complete** and **submit** any posts before the deadline in order for Canvas to accept them.

The course is organized in 7 two-week Blocks, each of which will use the following schedule:
- Day 1 (1st Tue)      9:00 am         Block begins // Discussion forums open for business
- Day 1 (1st Tue)      11:15 am        In-person class meeting #1
- Day 3 (1st Thu)      11:15 am        In-person class meeting #2
- Day 7 (1st Mon)      5:00 pm         DC "halftime" deadline
- Day 8 (2nd Tue)      11:15 am        In-person class meeting #3
- Day 10 (2nd Thu)     11:15 am        In-person class meeting #4
- Day 14 (2nd Mon)     5:00 pm         Block ends // Discussion forums automatically locked

# Canvas
Log in to the U's main Canvas page and select "COMM 5221" from either the Dashboard or the Courses menu. Canvas offers additional information about how to use the platform in both text and video formats.

We will use Canvas for several things this semester:
- access to the official course documents
- access to all the required readings / videos
- discussion forums where you will contribute posts and comments about the course material
- a repository for various media examples relevant to our required readings
- the delivery point for your major writing assignments
- business-related announcements about the course

There are Canvas apps for both Android and iOS, though these are **not** the most efficient way to use the platform. They can push notifications and reminders to you, and they can help you access (some) course content. But even the folks who make Canvas advise people **not** to use these apps as the primary platform for navigating a course.

# Graduate students

If you are a graduate student, the basic rules in this syllabus vary slightly for you:

- Unless we make an explicit agreement to the contrary, you are required to attend all regular class meetings and do all the assigned readings.
- We will hold extra meetings every 3-4 weeks (dates, times, and modalities t.b.d.) to discuss additional graduate-level readings (also to be determined). These meetings and readings are all required.
- Your major work for the course will be to research and write a paper that (a) fits the course theme, (b) is **at least 6250 words** long and (c) is suitable for submission to a scholarly conference and/or journal. You must meet with me no later than **21 Feb** to discuss your proposed paper topic, submit a formal topic proposal no later than on **28 Feb**, and submit a final version of your paper by **10 May**.
- You are **not** required to complete the RE, the SS, or the SAE assignments described below. We will negotiate your participation in the course discussion forums early in the semester.
- I assume that grad students are more invested in the course's core issues than in grades -- to the point where grades are potentially counterproductive. As such, successfully completing the graduate-level requirements above will earn you an A for the course. That said, if you are clearly slacking off, I reserve the right to go deeper into the alphabet when I submit final grades.

Undergraduates who believe they can handle the extra work of the graduate-level requirements are welcome to meet with me to discuss the possibility of taking the course with those rules. That meeting must happen no later than **7 Feb**, and you should come prepared to convince me that you can perform at graduate student level.

# Grades

Grades don't mean what most people think they mean, and they're less important than most people think they are. It is possible to learn a lot in a course, but still fail (e.g., by not turning in a major paper). It's also possible to learn relatively little in a course, but still wind up with a high grade (e.g., by keeping information in your short term memory just long enough to do well on exams). More importantly, your grades will rarely -- if ever -- matter again once you have earned your degree. What you learn, however, potentially has lasting value for decades to come.

You will assign yourself a final grade for this course. Sort of. There are **baseline requirements** that you **must** meet in order to earn a final grade of C- (i.e., the minimum for the course to count toward degree requirements):

- 20+ participation credits (PCs)
- 14+ discussion credits (DCs) accumulated over 4+ Blocks
- 1 Reflection Essay (RE) of 1000+ words
- 2 fifteen-minute Zoom meetings with me (1 during Blocks #1-2, 1 during Blocks #6-7)
- 2+ Syllabus Supplement (SS) assignments of 1000+ words each
- 1 Self-Assessment Essay (SAE) of 1500+ words

For any grade above a C-, you should produce a quantity and quality of work above and beyond those baseline requirements that matches the University standards (quoted on p. 9 below). [Bonus tip: The easiest (though not the only) path to justifying any grade above a C+ involves earning credit for more than 2 CSs.]

My working assumption is that the grade you assign yourself will be the grade that I officially assign you at the end of the semester -- but that assumption depends on your backing up your claim with solid evidence and a persuasive argument. I reserve the right to assign you a different final grade -- higher or lower -- if there is a significant gap between the grade you assign yourself and your actual performance.

If you fall short of **any** of the baseline requirements, the highest grade you can earn for the course is a D+. In such a scenario, what grade you will earn will depend on how far short of those requirements you fall.

# Participation credits (PCs)

This is **not** a lecture-based course. Our class meetings will be structured around discussions, so you'll need to:

- attend class regularly,
- do the required readings carefully,
- come to class prepared to discuss those readings in thoughtful ways,
- contribute to in our in-class discussions/exercises in a non-trivial fashion.

On any given day, I will do my best to make sure that everyone gets a chance to make meaningful contributions to our conversations. This may mean that I will call on you if you have been extra quiet or, alternately, that I will ask you **not** to speak for a while if you have been extra talkative and other students have not been heard from.

We have 28 scheduled class meetings this semester, each of which allows you to earn 1 PC, and you need **at least 20 PCs** in order to meet the baseline requirements for passing the course.

Your in-class participation needs to be significant, thoughtful, and on-topic. Simply occupying a seat in the room and/or offering a few vague generalities during our discussions is not enough. For grading purposes, if you are "present in name only" (PINO) for one of our class meetings, you will **not** earn PC for that day. As the name implies, a PINO day happens when you are physically present, but you do not contribute to our discussion in a substantive fashion. This includes (but is not limited to) days when:
   • you are present for less than half of a given class meeting,
   • you have clearly not done the assigned reading, and/or
   • you are primarily a passive spectator during our in-class activities.
Decisions about what counts as a PINO day will be based on my assessment of your in-class performance, and I will email you about any such decision within 24 hours of the class meeting in question.

Ideally, everyone will be present for -- and contribute productively to -- every class meeting all semester long. In reality, this never happens, and the ongoing pandemic makes it even less likely. It **is**, however, still a worthy goal. The course is set up to minimize the impact that missed classes will have on your grade, but the impact of missed classes on your learning experience is much harder to compensate for. Here are important guidelines for how to handle any classes you miss, regardless of why you do so.
   • **If you feel sick, stay home.** Being in class is important for your learning experience. But your health -- and the health of those around you -- is more important than that.
   • **Contact me.** I don't need (or want) documentation for your absences, and I can't re-enact everything that happened in class for you. But staying in touch will help you stay on top of things.
   • **Don't panic.** You can miss 8 class meetings (the equivalent of 4 weeks) and still pass the course. Ideally, no one misses that much time. But, by design, there's **lots** of slack built into the system.
   • **Post extra DCs.** Missing a class means that you miss an opportunity to earn PC. For any missed class, you can make up for that lost opportunity with 1 extra DC. That extra DC can happen at any point in the semester. [N.B.: You can **not** use extra DCs to make up for PINO days.]
   • **Support each other.** There's no substitute for being part of an in-person discussion, and there are limits to what someone can tell you about what a room full of people said and did during 75 minutes of class. That said, it's still a good idea to have a "buddy" who can share their notes for classes you miss.

## Discussion contributions (DCs)
Each Block has its own discussion forums, which will be open for your contributions from 9:00 am on Day 1 (1st Tuesday) until 5:00 pm on Day 14 (2nd Monday). Canvas will automatically lock the forums at the end of each Block (i.e., 5:00 pm on Day 14).

Our online discussions work best when they are interactive conversations among the group, rather than a series of "one-way" messages that no one responds to. But that conversation can't happen if everyone waits until the end of the Block to share their DCs. As such, each Block has a "halftime" deadline (5:00 pm on Day 7 (1st Monday)). As long as you earn 1 DC credit before that deadline, you can earn as many DC credits as you like for that Block. If you miss that deadline, the maximum number of DC credits you can earn for that Block is 2.

In order to earn credit, any given DC:
   • must be **at least 250 words** long (quotations and "filler" prose will **not** count toward that total)
   • should take a clear position on a **major course-related issue** raised by whatever you are responding to
   • should support that position with a **persuasive argument**

There are 4 types of DCs you can make, and each of types #1-3 has its own forum within each Block.
   • Type #1: respond to **one** of the current Block's required **readings**
   • Type #2: respond to an in-class **exercise or discussion**

- Type #3: respond to **at least two** of the required **readings** (at least one from the current Block) in ways that put those readings in **productive** conversation with each other
- Type #4: respond to a DC made by one of your **classmates**

For any given Block, you can only earn credit for more than one DC of any particular type if you have also earned credit for each of the other 3 types during that Block.

The following approaches to DCs will **not** earn credit:
- **Extended summaries:** Your audience has done the reading, been part of the in-class discussion, or read the DC that you are responding to. They don't need you to repeat those things, but they can benefit from you offering a persuasive argument that helps them see the course material in a new light.
- **Mere (dis)agreement:** You should have something more substantial to say than simply expressing your (dis)approval with what someone else has said or written. This is especially true if your (dis)approval consists mostly of summary (cf. the point directly above) and/or "filler" prose.
- **Simple comparisons:** This is especially important for Type #3 DCs. Merely pointing to similarities and differences between two readings is **not** the same thing as making an argument of your own about the main issues addressed in those readings.
- **Off-topic detours and "small" talk:** Know the difference between the core arguments from a reading or discussion, and the various side issues that might be found in it. Your DCs need to focus on the former, rather than the latter.

**Tips:**
- Good DCs involve more formal prose than the average in-class discussion, but are less formal than a research paper. You should craft your DCs with enough care and thought for them to be productive additions to a larger conversation. Think about what you want to say **before** you start writing. After you've written something, re-read and edit it for clarity and style before you post it.
- In order to respond to your classmates' DCs appropriately, you will need to read them with the same care and thought that you give to the required readings. You are **not** obligated to read every DC that gets posted, but you should still do your best to follow as much of the conversation as you can.
- Your DCs should be respectful and constructive -- especially (though not exclusively) if you are disagreeing with something one of your classmates has written.

# Reflection essay (RE)

In a well-crafted and thoughtful essay of **at least 1000 words**, explain what you (think you) already know about the relationship(s) between media, race, and identity. This is **not** a research paper. It is a deliberately open-ended essay in which you summarize your current knowledge, opinions, and questions you have about the course's central theme. It will provide a useful touchstone when you write your Self Assessment Essay at the end of the semester. Some questions that you might want to consider in your RE include:
- What is **your** assessment of the current state of racial politics in the US? Is it healthy? Unhealthy? Improving? Declining? Why do you think this? What evidence can you point to that supports your claim?
- What is **your** assessment of the role played by "the media" (broadly defined) with respect to US racial politics? Is the media (in whole or in part) a potential solution to current racial problems? Is it (again, in whole or in part) a major contributor to those problems? Why do you think so? What evidence can you point to that supports your claim?
- What (if anything) do **you** think needs to happen in order to significantly improve the racial climate in the US? What (if anything) needs to change? Who (if anyone) needs to do the work here?

To be clear, this isn't an exhaustive list of questions to think about, nor are you obligated to address them all.

This paper is due by **5:00 pm on 30 Jan**. Please remember that the RE is one of the **baseline requirements** you **must** meet for the course. To that end, the following rules also apply:
- Every day (or fraction thereof) that your RE is late will add 1 DC to the total that you will need in order to meet the baseline requirements.
- Every 100 words (or fraction thereof) that your RE falls short of the 1000 word requirement will add 1 DC to the total that you will need in order to meet the baseline requirements.

- REs that stray too far from the prompt will **not** count as successful fulfillment of the requirement, and you will need to submit a fresh RE that addresses the prompt properly. That "second chance" RE will be subject to the same penalties described above for lateness and/or shortness.

# Syllabus supplements (SSs)

Each SS requires you (1) to find a reading that you think should be added to future versions of this course and (2) to write an essay of **at least 1000 words** that makes a **persuasive argument** explaining how/why the course would be significantly improved by your suggested addition. You need to earn credit for **at least 2 SSs** in order to meet the baseline requirements for passing the course.

Any reading you submit must:
- have a **direct connection** to the course theme,
- be **at least 2500 words** long (for printed sources) or **10 minutes** long (for audio/video sources),
- **not** be written/created by an author who's already on our syllabus, and
- **not** appear on syllabi from previous versions of this course.

The essay that accompanies your SS **must** speak directly to the **substantive connection(s)** you see between your suggested reading and **at least 2 readings** on our current syllabus. Precisely what those connections are will vary. In some cases, your suggested reading may extend, update, and/or improve on arguments found in our current readings. In other cases, your suggested may function as a necessary correction and/or productive counterpoint to our current readings.

Along with your essay, you **must** submit a digital copy of the reading you are suggesting. Some important rules for doing that properly:
- If your reading already exists as a PDF, you should upload that file to Canvas with your essay, rather than providing a link to a PDF.
- Any PDF you provide must be complete (e.g., no missing pages) and legible (e.g., not a blurry scan or a heavily marked-up document), and it should not require additional editing (e.g., don't provide an entire book for the sake of a single chapter).
- If your reading is not a shareable file, you should provide its **public-facing** URL (e.g., do **not** provide the URL that's connected to your UMN login from a library search).
- Any online reading **can not** be located behind a paywall or registration requirement, with the sole exception of materials that require a UMN login for access. This rule is **especially** important for video/audio "readings" of any sort (e.g., videos found on most streaming services).

You **must** submit **at least 2** successful SSs in order to meet the baseline requirements for the course. You can submit as many additional SSs as you like -- and should almost certainly do so if you are aiming for a course grade higher than a C-. The final -- firm and non-negotiable -- deadline for all SSs is **5:00 pm on 10 May**.

SSs will **not** be assigned formal grades -- either they meet the requirements and earn credit, or they don't -- but I will return SSs submitted prior to 10 Apr with constructive feedback. In the event that an SS submitted prior to that deadline does not earn credit, you will have the chance to revise and resubmit it in ways that bring it in line with the assignment's requirements. Such revisions will be due by **5:00 pm on 10 May**.

At least one SS is due by **5:00 pm on 20 Mar**. Please remember that this is one of the **baseline requirements** you **must** meet for the course. To that end, the following rules also apply:
- Every day (or fraction thereof) that your first SS is late will add 1 DC to the total that you will need in order to meet the baseline requirements.
- Every 100 words (or fraction thereof) that any SS falls short of the 1000 word requirement will add 1 DC to the total that you will need in order to meet the baseline requirements.

**Other SS rules/tips:**
- Choose your suggested reading(s) carefully.
  - Readings that **enhance** or **extend** the existing reading list in productive ways will work much better for this assignment than ones that merely fit the course theme.

- Readings that (a) make **persuasive arguments** of their own and (b) **address significant social, cultural, and/or political issues** are much better choices than ones that simply describe or explain a phenomenon related to the course theme.
- Scientific and/or statistical articles are usually **not** a good choice for this assignment. Unless you are able to evaluate the quality of a scientific study and/or the accuracy of its results -- e.g., do you know statistics well enough to interpret the data tables? do you know enough about the underlying methodologies to assess the quality of the study's design? -- your ability to make a case for why future students in this course would benefit from such a reading is likely to be limited.
- Be **very careful** when it comes to TED Talks (or similar video mini-lectures). Some of them will work well for this assignment. But many of them embody the structural problems represented in [this parody](). Please make sure that there's a strong, substantive argument in any such video you suggest, rather than just a pretty slide show and a smooth-talking presenter.

- Think about your argument in relational terms. In which of our existing Blocks do you think it belongs, and how does it fit into the Block in question? How does it fit into the syllabus as whole? What does it bring to the course that makes it an especially valuable addition?
- Your argument should speak to the **specific** value of the reading you are suggesting, rather than some general value that could plausibly be found in dozens (hundreds? thousands?) of other readings.
- Focus on the **main** argument(s) in the readings/sources in question. An argument you try to build around a single paragraph from a 20-page article (for instance) will only work well if that paragraph is absolutely central to the article as a whole. If the author's main argument still holds up without that paragraph, then it's not important enough for you to put it at the center of your essay.
- Your argument needs to do more than simply point out that there's nothing about topic X on the current syllabus, and that your chosen reading fixes that problem. If this is the core of your case for a particular reading, you need to make a persuasive case for how topic X complements the existing topics covered by the syllabus, **and** why your suggested reading is a particularly **strong** way to fold topic X into the mix.
- Your essay should **not** simply compare your reading to those on the syllabus, or point to major similarities/differences between them. A comparison is not the same thing as a persuasive argument.
- Your argument should focus on the **content** of the readings, rather than their modality. Video (for instance) is not inherently better (or worse) than print at presenting facts or making strong arguments.
- Do **not** structure your essay by walking your readers through your thinking/research process. Telling the story of how you came to choose a particular reading for this assignment is **not** the same thing as a persuasive argument for how and why that reading would improve the course.

## File formats

REs, SSs, SAEs, and copies of your suggested SS readings must be **submitted via Canvas** as **uploaded files**. Acceptable formats for your essays are

- LibreOffice (.odt)
- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Rich Text Format (.rtf)

Essays submitted in other formats (PDFs, Microsoft Works, etc.) or as links to online files (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.) will **not** be accepted. (Formats for your suggested SS readings have more leeway, but still need to be files that I can access. If you aren't sure about a particular file/format, ask me about it in advance.)

## Revisions

Any SSs that you submit prior to 10 Apr will come back to you with feedback from me no later than 3 May, and you can -- if you so desire -- revise and resubmit those SSs in order (a) to meet the baseline requirements and/or (b) help justify a higher final grade for the course. Any such revisions are due by **5:00 pm on 10 May**.

In general, the kind of revision that you should aim for involves more substantial work than just minor proofreading or copy-editing corrections. Precise details will vary, but you should assume that any suitable revision will involve reorganizing and/or restructuring your original essay, discarding sections that didn't work well, writing fresh prose, rethinking key pieces of your original argument, and/or undertaking fresh research. Put simply, if your initial version of an essay is so strong that all it really needs to improve it is for you to fix a few typos (or something similarly minor), I will tell you so explicitly in my feedback.

# Zoom meetings

You are **required** to have at least 2 one-on-one Zoom meetings with me (see Canvas for the link): a Check-In meeting during Blocks #1-2, and a Progress meeting during Blocks #6-7. There is no formal grade or evaluation for these meetings, but they are **not** optional. When setting these up, please suggest specific days/times that fit your schedule, keeping the following guidelines in mind:

- My schedule is generally most open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm. Please aim for those days/times first if you can.
- You should block out 15 minutes for each of these meetings. If you want/need more time than that, please tell me so when setting your meetings up.
- These meetings are **in addition to** those required for the Capstone project. If you want to fulfill both requirements at once, please tell me this when scheduling, and set aside 45 minutes instead of 30.
- **Do not wait** to set these up. They need to be **completed** (not just scheduled) by the listed deadlines, and the best way to get days/times that fit your schedule is to set up your meetings in advance.
- **Do not miss the deadlines.** Every day (or fraction thereof) that you are late in completing one of these meetings will add 1 DC to your baseline requirements, and I can not guarantee that my post-deadline schedule will be empty enough to keep any such penalty to a single day.

### Check-In meeting (17 Jan - 13 Feb)

This meeting is an opportunity to touch base early in the semester, and to help make sure that you get off to a strong start. This would be a good moment for you to raise any questions or concerns that you have about the course (including the readings, the assignments, the in-class discussions). If you have an accommodations letter from the DRC, this meeting would be a good time to discuss that (though if this applies to you, please make sure to send me a copy of that letter at least 24 hours prior to our meeting).

### Progress meeting (4 Apr - 1 May)

This meeting is an opportunity for you to make sure that you finish the course well. This would be a good moment for you to raise any questions or concerns that you have about the work you need to do to complete the course successfully and/or to justify the final course grade you are aiming for.

# Self-assessment essay (SAE)

In a well-crafted and thoughtful essay of **at least 1500 words**, tell me the final course grade that you deserve, and make a **persuasive argument** to support that claim. Important issues to consider in your SAE include:

- **The quantity of the work you did.** How far above and beyond the baseline requirements did you go? If you trickled past them (e.g., 21 PCs, 15 DCs, and 2 SSs), you'll have a much harder time justifying an A than if you clearly exceeded them by a lot (e.g., 29 PCs, 40 DCs, and 5 SSs).
- **The quality of the work you did.** Did you write exceptionally strong and polished DCs? Or did you do just enough to meet the technical requirements? Did my feedback on your SSs describe them as excellent, or did I suggest that they needed significant revisions?
- **The kind of "extra" work you did.** There's no simple formula for how much "weight" to apply to the different kinds of work required of you, but it's generally safe to say that SSs are worth significantly more than DCs, and that DCs are worth a little more than PCs. (SSs require you to do research and write a polished essay that's considerably longer than a DC. A good DC generally requires more thought and effort than what is necessary to earn 1 PC.)
- **What you actually learned.** Reread your RE before you start writing your SAE. Remind yourself of what you knew (or didn't know) in January, and then compare that to what you know in May. One way to make a strong case for a particular grade is to evaluate the distance you've traveled between the start and end of the semester and/or to write an essay that visibly demonstrates what you've learned.
- **The University's official standards for grades.** You can find these below. Did you go merely meet the course requirements (e.g., earn a C), or was your work outstanding (e.g., earn an A)?

[N.B.: This is not an exhaustive list of issues to cover in your SAE, nor are you obligated to address them all.]

Your SAE is due by **5:00 pm on 10 May**. Please remember that the SAE is one of the **baseline requirements** you **must** meet for the course. To that end, every 100 words (or fraction thereof) that your SAE falls short of the 1500 word requirement will result in a penalty of a fractional grade deducted from your course grade (e.g., if you otherwise would have earned a B, but your SAE is only 1420 words long, you will receive a B- for the course).

This course follows the University's published standards for A-F grading:
- A: "achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements"
- B: "achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements"
- C: "achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect"
- D: "achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements"
- F: "signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed"
- I: incompletes will only be given under "extraordinary circumstances" (i.e., major life emergencies)
- S/N: only students who have registered for the course on an S/N basis are eligible for these grades

# Capstone project (optional)

If you're hoping to fulfill the Capstone project requirement in connection with this course, you must write a well-researched, argumentative essay of 2500+ words on a topic that fits the course's central theme (i.e., media and race). Because this project results in a separate grade and earns you an extra credit hour, it involves work **above and beyond** the course requirements.

There are several **mandatory** deadlines designed to (1) keep you from procrastinating too much, (2) give me enough time to provide constructive feedback, and (3) give you enough time to act on that feedback productively:

| | |
|---|---|
| 30 Jan | Register for Comm 3999W-005 |
| 7 Feb | Topic meeting (via Zoom) |
| 14 Feb | Topic proposal / 10-item bibliography |
| 28 Feb | Thesis paragraph draft |
| 4 Apr | Rough draft |
| 3 May | Progress meeting (via Zoom) |
| 10 May | Final paper |

Except for 30 Jan, all the deadlines above are **5:00 pm** deadlines. They are also all "drop dead" deadlines: i.e., failing to meet **any** of them (which includes failing to meet their minimum requirements) means that you are no longer eligible to fulfill your Capstone Project requirement in Comm 5221 this semester.

# Word counts

The word count listed for any given assignment represents the **minimum** amount of writing necessary to produce acceptable work. Your main goal should be to write **strong** DCs and essays, rather than ones that simply trickle past the required word count by a few words.

Word count rules/tips:
- The minimum word count requirement for any given assignment is **firm**. If what you've written falls short of the required word count by even a single word, you will **not** receive credit for that assignment.
- Different apps/programs use different rules for counting words. Submitting work that is just barely long enough comes with the risk that what looks long enough on your end will fall short of the minimum requirement on my end -- and the latter is the count that matters.
- Don't pad out your work with "empty" words. If more than 10% of any given text you submit consists of filler prose (e.g., extended summaries of the readings, generic greetings, etc.), **only the non-filler words will count** toward meeting the requirement in question: e.g., a 1200-word SS essay that includes 200 words of summary and another 200 words of filler will count as an 800-word essay.
- **For DCs:** Only your own words count: e.g., 175 words from you plus 150 words quoted from elsewhere will count as 175 words, rather than 325.
- **For the RE, SSs, and the SAE:** Only the main body of your text counts. Headers, footers, titles, and reference lists do not count. Quotes from other sources **do** count, but **only** if those quotes are trimmed to an appropriate length (e.g., do **not** quote a 75-word passage from one of our readings if only 10 of those words are actually necessary for your argument to work well).

# Scholastic dishonesty

The following is a partial list of examples of scholastic dishonesty:
- plagiarism in any of its forms
- copying another student's work (in whole or in part)

- having someone else do any of the course's required work on your behalf
- knowingly assisting someone else in their efforts to engage in any of the above practices

Penalties for scholastic dishonesty range from no credit for an assignment to a final course grade of F.  These penalties are independent of any that might be imposed by the U.  For more details, please see the U's student conduct code and the information page on potential consequences for code violations.

# Miscellaneous

- We will cover topics that may evoke strong differences of opinion.  I don't expect the group to agree on everything, but I do expect our discussions to be characterized by mutual respect and collegiality. Strong opinions are acceptable, but verbal bullying and personal attacks will **not** be tolerated.
- Significant disruptions of the normal flow of course-related business -- e.g., using cell phones in class, excessive side chatter, premature leave-taking behavior -- may result in grade penalties.
- The content of this course -- both in-person and online -- is not intended for public circulation or distribution.  You can make audio and/or video recordings of class meetings for your personal use, provided you do so without disrupting the ordinary flow of the class.  You can download copies of online materials to help you complete the course successfully, but not otherwise.  The purchase and/or sale of either written notes or recordings of class meetings is strictly prohibited.
- I will do my best to accommodate your needs relating to religious holidays and/or documented disabilities.  By University policy, you **must** provide me with written notice (for religious holidays) and/or official documentation (for disabilities) with **enough lead time** for such accommodations to be arranged.
- Please pay attention to the U's official notices regarding:
    ○ policy statements for syllabi
    ○ policy regarding makeup work
    ○ COVID-19 policies and guidelines
  In particular, please note that the last link is subject to updates if the pandemic situation changes.

# Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| **Block #1** | **Definitions / Terminology / Frameworks (17-30 Jan)** |
| **17 Jan** | no reading |
| **19 Jan** | American Anthropological Association, "Statement on 'Race'" |
| | Tatum, "Defining Racism" |
| | McIntosh, "White Privilege" |
| | |
| **24 Jan** | Hall, "Race, the Floating Signifier" |
| | Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes" |
| **26 Jan** | Marable, "Structural Racism and American Democracy" |
| | Rodman, "What We (Still) Need to Learn" |
| | |
| **Block #2** | **History / (In)Visibility (31 Jan - 13 Feb)** |
| **31 Jan** | *I Am Not Your Negro* [video] |
| | Lipsitz, "From *Plessy* to Ferguson" |
| **2 Feb** | Haslett, "Magic Actions" |
| | McCoy, "After Floyd" |
| | |
| **7 Feb** | Coates, "Notes From the Fifth Year / Fear of a Black President" |
| | Coates, "The First White President" |
| **9 Feb** | Ontiveros, "No Golden Age" |
| | Newman, "The Forgotten Fifteen Million" |
| | |
| **Block #3** | **Politics of Representation (14-27 Feb)** |
| **14 Feb** | Bird, "Imagining Indians" |
| **16 Feb** | hooks, "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination" |
| | Jhally & Lewis, "White Responses" |

**21 Feb**       Sammond, "Biting the Invisible Hand"
                 Hayes & Rodman, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Film"
**24 Feb**       Stabile, "Criminalizing Black Culture"
                 Williams, "The Distribution of Distress"


**Block #4**     **Appropriation / Borrowing / Influence (28 Feb - 20 Mar)**
**28 Feb**       hooks, "Madonna: Plantation Mistress or Soul Sister?"
                 McLeod, "Copyright, Authorship and African-American Culture"
**2 Mar**        Shimakawa, "Mind Yourself"
                 Cadogan, "Black and Blue"


**14 Mar**       Michaels, "Bad Aboriginal Art"
                 Pang, "Copying *Kill Bill*"
**16 Mar**       Pham, "Racial Plagiarism and Fashion"
                 Rodman, "Lions and Writers and Birds, Oh My: The Racial Politics of Copyright"


**Block #5**     **Institutions / Meritocracy / Technologies (21 Mar - 3 Apr)**
**21 Mar**       Rose, "Fear of a Black Planet"
                 Gray, "Jazz Tradition, Institutional Formation, and Cultural Practice"
**23 Mar**       Littler, "#Damonsplaining and the Unbearable Whiteness of 'Merit'"


**28 Mar**       Dyer, "The Light of the World"
**30 Mar**       Marable, "Race, Class, and the Katrina Crisis"
                 Lipsitz, "The Hip Hop Hearings"


**Block #6**     **Ethnicities / Globalization / Borders (4-17 Apr)**
**4 Apr**        Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities"
                 Chvany, "Do We Look Like Ferengi Capitalists to You"
**6 Apr**        Rivera, "The Brown Threat"
                 Anzaldúa, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"


**11 Apr**       Ang, "Indonesia on My Mind"
                 Liu, "The Oriental Riff"
**13 Apr**       Farred, *Phantom Calls: Race and the Globalization of the NBA* [selections]


**Block #7**     **Futures / Solutions(?) (18 Apr - 1 May)**
**18 Apr**       Coates, *Between the World and Me*, pp. 1-71
**20 Apr**       Awkward, "Burying Don Imus"


**25 Apr**       Coates, *Between the World and Me*, pp. 72-152
**27 Apr**       Bell, "Racial Realism -- After We're Gone"

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**10 May**       **Final deadline for all SSs and SAE**
**5:00 pm**