

Conversations on Race: Fall 2006

EDUC U212

Class Meetings: 2:30 – 5:15 P.M. Thursday

INSTRUCTORS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Goals: The goals of this class are to (1) develop a better understanding of ourselves as racial beings in a social context; (2) honestly listen and begin to validate the racial experiences of others; (3) build a stronger commitment to a community that appreciates and takes full advantage of living in a diverse community; (4) identify the individual, cultural, and institutional racism that exists in our communities and develop strategies for changing personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate racism in all of its forms; (5) create strong interracial dialogue habits.

Flexibility: The syllabus that follows is not necessary set in stone. Depending on the classes level of understanding and the direction in-class discussions take us, adjustments in readings or activities could be possible. You will receive ample notice and most alterations will be subject to class discussion. Each of you comes to this class with very different experiences and we would like to honor those the best that we can while also providing challenges that stimulate your learning.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Participation: Forty percent of your grade is based on participation and attendance. This doesn't mean that you need to fight over who gets to talk but you do need to speak up, ask questions, come to class prepared, and spend quality time reflecting in your in-class journal.

Readings: During half of the weeks you will receive an article or articles to read. In order to fully participate in the class it is essential that you read all of the materials. For the weeks with readings due you may (1) be asked to lead a discussion about the articles; (2) bring discussion questions with you to class – these would be collected; (3) or be asked to do an in-class writing assignment about the articles.

Reflections: At the end of every class period you will be given approximately 5 minutes to reflect on the class period. This will be in writing and turned in before leaving. We are looking for quality. There are no bad ideas, thoughts, or questions.

Interview: To reach the goals of this class it is important that you begin to honestly listen to someone else's story at a deeper level than might be usually. We need to know not only how we experience race but how that is similar or different for other individuals. You will be assigned an interview partner and we will talk about questions in class. You will need to turn in list of the questions you talked about and be ready to report in class on what you learned.

Current Events: Issues of race happen everyday all around us. Some are obvious and others are subtle and frequently labeled something else. You should identify a current issue that deals with race; prepare a poster about the issue to display for the class; and write a two page paper about your thoughts regarding the issues.

Cultural Experience: Contact with someone different from you is not enough. It is important that you interact with them in a deeper way. Details of what should be included in this assignment will be discussed in class but this assignment includes each partner taking the other to something they feel

represents their culture. You will both turn in a **two page reflection** paper about this activity and report on it in class.

TV Audit: We receive very strong messages from the media and entertainment industry about racial identity, the role of race and racism in American culture, and potential avenues for disrupting the silence and cycles of oppression that permeate our daily lives. Sometimes these perpetuate inaccurate stereotypes and other times help us to dispel them. This can happen simply as a result of presence or lack of presence of different racial beings, the characters they play, or the activities/actions they are typically involved in. To complete a TV Audit you should watch 3 hours of prime time television on the same network. Then give each show you watched and the network a grade based on the diversity present and the diversity of character types. In addition you should turn in a typed two page reflection paper about what you viewed. Make sure to comment on what kind of racial messages the viewer might receive from the treatment of race both explicitly and inexplicitly. **DON'T** watch three hours of shows you would not ordinarily watch.

Final Project: This final project is meant to be something very creative. Use words, art, action, music, imagines, etc., you should address one or a combination of the following:

- what you've learned from this class (about yourself, others, or race relations)
- what's on your mind, what questions do you have, or what are you more aware of now than you were before the class
- what action are you willing to commit to that will dispel stereotypes, create a larger dialogue about race relations, avenues for your further learning.

Extra Credit:

Film Review: Films, like television, send strong social messages related to race. At the end of this syllabus there is a list of movies from which you may choose one to view as a class assignment. We encourage you to view something you have not already seen. Movies currently in the theater might also be used but would need approval. You **MUST** type up a two page reflection concerning the movie (not a review).

Programs/Current Events: Frequently there are programs or events on campus that are filled with potential learnings related to this course. To attend one of these for extra credit you should check with one of your instructors to make sure it would count and then following the program turn in a typed two page reflection paper.

NOTE ABOUT PAPERS – All papers should be typed; double spaced; in 11 point Times font; no more than a 1 inch margin on all four sides; align left (don't justify); and spell check. Clarity is important!

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

August 31 – Who Am I?

Assignments: Readings (1)
Interview
Cultural Experience Assignment (Due 9/28)

September 7 – The Complexity of Issues

DUE: Readings (1)
Interview
Assignments: TV Audit

September 14 – Exploring the Very Real Differences

DUE: TV Audit
Assignments: Current Event Paper/Presentation

September 21 -- Voicing Our Feeling

DUE: Current Event Paper/Presentation
Assignments: Final Project (Due 10/20)
Cultural Experience – Reminder!

September 28 – The Meaning of Perceptions

DUE: Cultural Experience
Assignments: Readings (2)

October 5 – Conscience and Unconscious Perpetuation

DUE: Reading (2)
Assignments: Readings (3)

October 12 – Where To From Here?

DUE: Readings (3)
Assignments: Final Project – Reminder!

October 20 – A Personal Commitment

DUE: Final Project

GRADING

Activity	Points	Final Grade	Point Range
Participation/Reflections (max. 3 pts ea. wk)	24	A+	98-100
Attendance (2 points ea. wk)	16	A	93-97
Readings (3 wks x 4 pts ea.)	12	A-	90-92
Interview	6	B+	88-89
Current Event Project	8	B	83-87
TV Audit	8	B-	80-82
Experience/Paper	12	C+	78-79
Final Project	14	C	73-77
Total	100	C-	70-72
Extra Credit (3 pts ea.; max 6)		D+	68-69
		D	63-67
		D-	60-62
		F	Below 60