



MACALESTER

**THE DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES
EXPLORATIONS OF RACE AND RACISM
AMST 101 (4 CREDITS)
SPRING 2020
W 7-10 PM
HUMANITIES BUILDING 212**

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“Whereas for most whites racism is prejudice, for most people of color racism is systemic or institutionalized.” –Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

**“never trust anyone who says they do not see color. that means to them, you are invisible.”
–Nayyirah Waheed**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will help students understand how race and ethnicity are embedded within the broader structures of history, culture and social institutions. It is designed to make students critical thinkers about race and racism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Gain an understanding of historical racism and the ways it shapes contemporary narratives of race, ethnicity and racism.
2. Identify the various modes of operation that occur between race, ethnicity and privilege and the ways white supremacy, as an ideology of power, shapes these relationships.
3. Become familiar notions of “whiteness” and the politics of being “white.”
4. Engage with theories of intersectionality in order to see the ways race intersects with gender, class, sexuality, etc.

5. To improve one's skills in writing, critical thinking, oral presentations, and class discussions involving race and ethnicity.

OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS

1. All racial categories are socially constructed and have to do with relationship to power.
2. Rules surrounding race and the meanings associated with each race are learned.
3. Race and racism operate in multiple ways and various levels.

REQUIRED TEXTS*

1. *Learning to Be White: Money, Race, and God in America* by Thandeka
2. *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb* by David Kushner
3. *Prison Writings: My Life is a Sun Dance* by Leonard Peltier
4. *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas
5. *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People 1st Edition* by Helen Zia
6. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* by Dorothy Roberts
7. *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction* by Elena R. Gutiérrez

*Supplemental readings will be uploaded to Moodle

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity: Macalester College has no tolerance for academic dishonesty. Cheating and plagiarism is prohibited. You must always properly cite and acknowledge your sources because they are not your ideas. Students who are suspect of academic dishonesty will be required to meet with us to determine the disciplinary outcome of the violation in question, which may include failing the assignment or the course. If you want to learn more about Macalester's policies on academic dishonesty we suggest you read and understand the definitions found [here](#).

Class Attendance: Attendance is required. Students are allowed one **unexcused absence**. 5 points will be deducted from the final grade each **unexcused absence** after the first. Approved, documented university absences are exempt from this rule. Athletes are required to submit Athletic Department forms **prior** to their absence for the absence to be considered excused.

Classroom Etiquette: All cell phones must be turned off. Any devices used to listen to music or access the internet are prohibited in class. Earphones are not allowed, unless there is a documented disability.

Disability Accommodations: We are committed to providing assistance to help you succeed in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability.

Please visit Macalester's Disability Services site for more information on the accommodations process [here](#).

Grading:

Attendance	20%
Critical Thinking Papers (2/12, 3/11)	40%
Group Presentations (2/19, 4/15-4/29)	40%

Note: A half letter grade will be deducted for each day work is late

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities for extra credit, to be announced. **Students are allowed 2 extra credit assignments.** Each extra credit assignment is worth 5 points toward the student's overall final grade.

Stylistic Requirements for Written Assignments (including Extra Credit)

- A heading right justified, formatted as follows:

Student's Name
AMST 101
9/6/2017

Learning to Be White by Thandeka
Assignment #1

- Standard 1-inch margins, standard 12-point font, double spaced, Times New Roman, 5- pages (extra credit assignments are 1-2 pages)
- A title – Be creative
- A well formulated, specific and clearly identified thesis statement
- Textual evidence to support the argument
- Explains the quotes after citing them in the paper
- In text citations are appropriately cited (Ex. author's name page #) or (Ex. page # only if the author's name is integrated in the sentence)
- Paper ends with a strong conclusion that revisits the main argument and reminds the reader of its significance.

Visit the MAX Writing Center, Kagin Commons (first floor) for writing support.

AMST 101 READING AND CLASS SCHEDULE

Assignments are subject to change; changes will be communicated in advance and in class.

1/29

- In class viewing of documentary “Little White Lie.”

2/5

Field Trip to the Penumbra Theater during class time. You are responsible for your own transportation. <https://penumbratheatre.org/event/the-white-card/>

2/12

- Class Discussion: *Learning to Be White: Money, Race, and God in America*
- **Critical Thinking Project/Paper #1 Due**

In the tradition of Thandeka, write an intellectual autobiography keeping in mind a flexible definition of the term “intellectual.” How have significant experiences, challenges, events, and people influenced your own sense of identity in terms of race?

2/19

- Class Discussion: *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb*
- **Critical Thinking Project/Paper #2 Due: Levittown**

Integrating Levittown Digital Humanities Project:

In 2003, the State Museum of Pennsylvania mounted an exhibit to mark Levittown, Pennsylvania's fiftieth anniversary. Levittown, like many northern suburbs in the middle of the twentieth century, excluded African Americans, a fact only briefly mentioned in the exhibit. In 1957, Daisy and Bill Myers desegregated Levittown.

Exhibit Revision: Working in teams, use newspaper articles, letters, photographs, and short excerpts written by scholars to determine where and how to integrate the Myers's story into the exhibit.

Students should select and annotate photographs, texts, and artifacts and literally put their “revised exhibit” on the wall. After students have viewed one another's version of the exhibit, they should discuss how including the story of Levittown's desegregation affects the exhibit's general message and how Levittown's racial exclusions and efforts to integrate the community affect their understanding of racial inequality and the Civil Rights Movement.

2/26

- Class Discussion: *Down These Mean Streets*

3/4

- Class Discussion: *Prison Writings: My Life is a Sun Dance*

3/11

- **Critical Thinking Project/Paper #3 Due**

Piri Thomas and Leonard Peltier

Pick one question from the four provided below to complete this written assignment.

1. Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is routinely described as one of the poorest counties in the nation. What are the similarities and differences between Piri Thomas and Leonard Peltier's homes?

2. What is the difference between a political prisoner and a criminal? Which category would you place Piri Thomas and Leonard Peltier? Why?

3. Consider the "Traditionals" vs. the "Progressives" at Oglala. Compare this to divisions within the Puerto Rican community in New York. What is the impact of these conflicts in their respective communities?

4. When two federal agents died at Oglala, 350 agents and 200 investigators came to the scene, and 4000 pieces of evidence were collected. In the previous year, there were 60 unsolved murders on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Discuss these facts in relation to judicial system and Native Americans?

- Class Discussion: *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People*
- In Class viewing: "Who Killed Vincent Chin?"

3/18 SPRING BREAK

3/25 LIBRARY NIGHT

- In class: Librarian will attend class to explain how to conduct research for group projects.
- **Critical Thinking Project/Paper #4 (Assigned):**
 - Students will form groups for presentations to be presented on 4/15, 4/22, and 4/29
 - Presentations will be 20 minutes and groups are required to submit slides of their presentations on the day they present. More information will be provided.
 - Group 1: People's Republic of China, particularly the Cultural Revolution 1966-1976
 - Group 2: Algeria: Frantz Fanon & "The Wretched of the Earth"
 - Group 3: Karl Marx's "The Communist Manifesto"
 - Group 4: Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution

4/1

- Class Discussion: *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*

4/8

- Class Discussion: *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction*

4/15, 4/22, 4/29

IN-CLASS Presentations