

GOVT 3947/ASRC 3947
RACE AND WORLD POLITICS
Fall 2023

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Race, operating over the past centuries as a foundational category that is at once material and phantasmic, has been at the root of catastrophe, the cause of extraordinary psychic devastation and of innumerable crimes and massacres.”
Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, 2017

“Room has to be made for race as both real and unreal: that race can be ontological without being biological, metaphysical without being physical, existential without being essential, shaping one’s being without being in one’s shape.” Charles W. Mills, *Blackness Visible*, 1998

This course introduces students to questions and debates around the role and effects of race and racism in international politics. Scholars of international politics have long neglected such questions in world affairs, even though the origins of international relations – as an academic discipline – can be traced back to the early years of the 20th century, when questions of imperialism and governance over different races necessitated the development of new ways of thinking about inter-state and inter-racial relations. Over the past two decades, however, prompted by insights from post-colonial theory and cultural studies but also by continued Western military engagements in the Middle East and Africa, new scholarly publications have sought to bring back the analysis of “the color line” into our conversations about global politics. The major themes covered in this course include critical debates around the meanings and salience of race; colonialism; race and IR; decolonization and Third Worldism; race and war on/and terror; and race and international law and climate justice.

A word of caution: This course focuses on race and racism and their role and effects on world politics. As such, much of the class themes are related to episodes in human history marked by brutal violence. The topics and discussions may be intellectually and emotionally triggering and exhausting. I invite you to speak with me, privately, if the class materials and discussions become emotionally overwhelming. However, please note that due to the subject of this course, students who enroll in it are expected to be able to reasonably handle the course materials, attend class sessions, and complete the assignments.

HOW IS THIS CLASS ORGANIZED?

This class is built around major themes, each covering one or a few weeks. The class sessions are conducted in a manner that mixes both lectures and discussions sessions, inviting active engagement from all students. Students are expected to read all assigned materials *before* coming to class. The assigned readings (and audiovisual materials) have two main purposes. First, they familiarize you with things that you may not have already known. To that extent, they “teach” you facts, ideas, and theories and for that, you must read them closely and take notes. Second, while reading the texts, you must also read with, along, or sometimes against the author(s). Therefore, the materials help you

also develop skills on how to critically engage with (sometimes difficult) texts, ideas, theories, and the world around you. This is where your own analysis and interpretation comes into play, and you are encouraged to share those during class lectures, discussion sections, and in your essays.

SCHEDULE

I- WHAT IS RACE? CONCEPTS, THEORIES, DEBATES

Week 1

Tu 8/22 Course introduction

Th 8/24

- Stuart Hall, “Teaching Race” (1980)
- “Race” in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1998)
- Wendy D. Roth, Elena G. van Stee, Alejandra Regla-Vargas, “Conceptualizations of Race: Essentialism and Constructivism” *Annual Review of Sociology* 2023 49:1, 39-58

Week 2

Tu 8/29

- Achille Mbembe, “The Subject of Race,” from *Critique of Black Reason* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017)
- Stuart Hall, “Race, The Floating Signifier: What More Is There To Say about “Race”?” (1997)

Thu 8/31

- Richard Dyer, “The Matter of Whiteness,” in Paula Rothenberg (ed.) *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2005)
- Charles W. Mills, “Revisionist Ontologies: Theorizing White Supremacy,” in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)

Week 3

Tu 9/5

- Kalwant Bhopal, “Critical Race Theory: Confronting, Challenging, and Rethinking White Privilege” *Annual Review of Sociology* 2023 49:1, 111-128
- Stuart Hall, “The Multicultural Question” (2000)

Th 9/7

- Raoul Peck, *I Am Not Your Negro* – Film

II- COLONIALISM

Week 4

Tu 9/12

- Mamdani, “The Indian Question in the United States,” from *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2020)

Th 9/14

- Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000) [pp. 29-79]

Week 5

Tu 9/19

- Randolph B. Persaud, “Colonial Violence: Race and Gender on the Sugar Plantations of British Guiana” in Alexander Anievas, Nivi Manchanda, Robbie Shilliam (eds) *Race and Racism in International Relations*, (New York: Routledge, 2015)
- Adam Hochschild, “In the Heart of Darkness,” *New York Review of Books*, October 6, 2005

Th 9/21

- Jonneke Koomen, “The Land of The Freed People”, *Africa Is A Country*, 26 May 2022
- Anton De Kom, excerpt from *We Slaves of Suriname*, *Collabo* 21(3), 1998
- Anton de Kom, excerpt from *We Slaves of Suriname* (chapter “The Era of Slavery”)

III- RACE, RACISM, AND IR

Week 6

Tu 9/26

- Oumar Ba, “Race and IR” in Cameron Ties (ed.), *Handbook of International Relations* (forthcoming)
- Olivia Umurerwa Rutazibwa. 2016. “From the Everyday to IR: In Defence of the Strategic Use of the R-Word.” *Postcolonial Studies* 19(2): 191–200.

Th 9/28

- Randolph B. Persaud, and R. B. J. Walker. 2001. “*Apertura*: Race in International Relations.” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26(4): 373–76.
- Sankaran Krishna. 2001. “Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations.” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26(4): 401–24.
- Robert Vitalis, “The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations,” *Millennium* 29(2), 2000

Week 7

Tu 10/3

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution As a Non-Event” in Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall (ed) *A Haitian History: New Perspectives*, (New York: Routledge, 2012)
- Cecilia Lynch, “The Moral Aporia of Race in International Relations,” *International Relations* 33:2, 2019
- Sankaran Krishna, “Race, Merit, and the Moral Economy of International Relation”, *Millennium*, 51:1, 2023

Th 10/5

- Siba N’Zatioula Grovogui, “Come to Africa: A Hermeneutics of Race in International Theory.” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 26:4, 2001
- Robert Vitalis, “The Birth of a Discipline” in David Long and Brian C. Schmidt (eds) *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005)
- Errol A. Henderson, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26(1), 2013

Week 8

Tu 10/10 Fall Break- No Class

Th 10/12

- W. E. B. Du Bois, “The African Roots of War,” *The Atlantic*, 1915
- Amitav Acharya, “Race and Racism in The Founding of the Modern World Order,” *International Affairs*, 98:1, 2022
- Peter Vale and Vineet Thakur, “IR and the Making of the White Man’s World.” In Arlene B. Tickner and Karen Smith (eds.), *International Relations from the Global South: Worlds of Difference*, (Routledge, 2020)

IV- DECOLONIZATION AND VIOLENCE

Week 9

Tu 10/17

- Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence,” from *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963)
- *Concerning Violence: Nine Scenes from the Anti-imperialistic Self-Defense* – film (dir. Göran Hugo Olsson, 2014)

Th 10/19

- Zohra Drif “Between Our Life and Our Mother Algeria, We Choose Our Mother,” from *Inside the Battle of Algiers: Memoir of a Woman Freedom Fighter*, (Charlottesville: Just World Boks, 2017) [pp. 103-107]
- Fanon, “Why We Use Violence” in *Alienation and Freedom* (Bloomsbury, 2018)

Week 10

Tu 10/24

- *The Battle of Algiers* – film (dir. Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966)

Th 10/26

- Fanon, “Colonial Wars and Mental Disorders” in *The Wretched of the Earth* pp. 249-316

V- RACE, SECURITY, WAR ON/AND TERROR

Week 11

Tu 10/31

- Somdeep Sen, “The Colonial Roots of Counter-insurgencies in International Politics,” *International Affairs*, 98(1), 2022
- Amal Abu-Bakare, “Exploring Mechanisms of Whiteness: How Counterterrorism Practitioners Disrupt Anti-Racist Expertise,” *International Affairs*, 98(1), 2022
- Alexander Barder, “Civilizational Conflict as Race War: From the 1990s to the Global War on Terror” from *Global Race War: International Politics and Racial Hierarchy* (Oxford University Press, 2021)

Th 11/2

- Himadeep Muppidi, “Shame and Rage: International Relations and the World School of Colonialism,” in Riley, R.L., Inayatullah, N. (eds) *Interrogating Imperialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- Rhys Machold and Catherine Chiniara Charrett, “Beyond Ambivalence: Locating The Whiteness of Security,” *Security Dialogue* 52(1), 2021
- Anthony Anghie, “On Making War on The Terrorist: Imperialism as Self-Defence,” In *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

VI- BANDUNG, THE THIRD WORLD, NON-ALIGNMENT

Week 12

Tu 11/7

- Mustapha K. Pasha, “The ‘Bandung Impulse’ and International Relations” In Sanjay Seth (ed.) *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2012)
- Siba Grovogui, “Remembering Bandung: When the Streams Crested, Tidal Waves Formed, and an Estuary Appeared,” In Phạm, Q.N. and Shilliam, R. (eds), *Meanings of Bandung: Postcolonial Orders and Decolonial Visions* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016)

Th 11/9

- Melissa Lefkowitz, “Revolutionary Friendship: Representing Africa during the Mao Era”, in Kathryn Batchelor and Xiaoling Zhang (eds.), *China-Africa Relations: Building Images Through Cultural Co-Operation, Media Representation and Communication* (Routledge, 2017)
- Jelena Subotic and Srdjan Vucetic, “Performing Solidarity: Whiteness and Status Seeking in Non-Aligned World,” *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 22:3, 2017

VII- RACE, INTERNATIONAL LAW AND JUSTICE

Week 13

Tu 11/ 14

- Oumar Ba, “International Justice and the Postcolonial Condition” *Africa Today*, 63:4, 2017
- Oumar Ba, Jo Bluen, and Owiso Owiso, “The Geopolitics of Race, Empire, and Expertise at the ICC” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2023

Th 11/16

- “International Law and The Question of Palestine: Imperial Exceptionalism, Third World Resistance, and the Entanglement of Law and Politics,” a dialogue with Noura Erakat, *TWAIL Review*, 2019
- “Quilombolas and the Black Butterfly,” an interview with Siba N’Zatioula Grovogui, *TWAIL Review*, 2021
- Kamari M. Clarke, “Up Down the Escalator: #TheorizingWhileBlack and the Politics of International Legality,” *TWAIL Review*, 2021

VIII- RACE, COLONIALISM, AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Week 14

Tu 11/21

- Abraham Lustgarten, “The Barbados Rebellion: An Island Nation’s Fight for Climate Justice”, *New York Times*, 27 July 2022
- David Gelles, “A Powerful Climate Leader From A Small Island Nation”, *New York Times*, 14 December 2022
- Olúfẹ̀mi Táíwò, “The Arc of the Moral Universe” in *Reconsidering Reparations*, Oxford University Press, 2022

Th 11/23 Thanksgiving Break (No Class)

IX- IN CONCLUSION

Week 15

Tu 11/28

- Robbie Shilliam, “Race and Racism in International Relations: Retrieving a Scholarly Inheritance.” *International Politics Reviews* 8(2): 152–95, 2020

Th 11/30

- Charles W. Mills, “Unwriting and Unwhitening the World,” In Robbie Shilliam, Alex Anievas and Nivi Manchanda, *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Color Line* (London: Routledge, 2015)