

Alex Madva (ammadva@cpp.edu, alexmadva@gmail.com)

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:15PM-5:15PM, and by appointment; Building 1, Room 329

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to historical and contemporary issues in the philosophy of race and racism. Many people now say that race is “socially constructed,” but what does this mean? What *is* race? Where do our ideas about race come from? Even if it is socially constructed, race still seems to have important consequences in the world. What are the moral, social, and political implications of race and racism? How do questions about race intersect with questions about ethnicity, gender, and class? What does it mean to have a “mixed” racial identity? What sort of non-racist world should we strive for, and what are the best practices and policies for getting us there?

### **Course Goals**

- Become familiar with competing conceptions of race, racial identity, and racism.
- Understand the relations between conceptions of race, history, and social institutions, including slavery, segregation, and mass incarceration.
- Appreciate the distinctive forms of prejudice, discrimination, and institutional oppression faced by particular racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.
- Consider the intersections of race and racism with other dimensions of social identity, such as gender and class.
- Assess competing views of racial justice, such as assimilationism, color blindness, and multiculturalism.
- Evaluate various strategies and movements for achieving racial justice, including integration (desegregation), reparations, and identity politics.

### **Required Readings**

Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*

- This course will also draw on a variety of other sources from the humanities, social sciences, and popular media. All additional sources will be accessible on Blackboard, the CPP Library website, or the web. I will provide attachments and links to these materials via email.

### **Course Grading and Requirements**

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Quizzes: 20%

First Paper: 15%

Second Paper: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

## **Course Grading and Requirements continued**

Attendance & Participation (20%): This includes attendance, participation, and in-class assignments. **Attendance is mandatory, as is arriving on time.** Excused absences require signed documentation from a doctor or dean. **Participation and preparation are crucial.** There are a variety of ways to participate, including: actively contributing to discussions, demonstrating reflection on the readings, listening carefully to others' contributions (not dominating discussion), and showing respect toward classmates. There will also be **in-class debates and group work**. There may be a peer-review workshop in which you give each other constructive feedback on a paper draft.

Quizzes (20%): Most classes will begin with a 10-minute quiz on the assigned reading.

Papers (35%): There will be two short paper assignments (600-700 words). Due dates to be announced.

Final Exam (25%): A cumulative final exam, during the scheduled exam period, that will include some short-answer questions, an essay, and questions about your personal experiences and reactions to the material in this course.

**Academic Integrity**: The University trusts each student to maintain high standards of honesty and ethical behavior. I will observe Cal Poly Policies on Honesty and Plagiarism. While teamwork is encouraged, any kind of cheating is unacceptable. **Students that fail to observe honesty and plagiarism policies will fail the course, and their cases will be reported to the Judicial Affairs Committee.** I will distribute a handout on academic integrity for each student to sign and return to me.

### **Topics and Readings**

**Note**: the readings and schedule are **tentative and subject to change**. I will confirm the specific upcoming readings in every class and immediately after class via email.

**Week 1 (9/24)**: Hello

### **Histories, Ideas, Races**

#### **Week 2**

9/29: Eduardo Mendieta, "Race and Racist Institutions"  
Jay Smooth, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race"  
Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formations," selections  
Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections"

10/1: Racial "Mixing" and Pigmentocracy in the Americas  
Simón Bolívar, "Jamaica Letter" and Inaugural Address to Venezuela, selections  
José Martí, "My Race," and "Our America," selections  
Ginetta Candelario, "Color Matters: Latina/o Racial Identities & Life Chances"  
Edward Telles & Liza Steele, "The Effects of Skin Color in the Americas"  
Martha Menchaca, "Latinas/os and the *Mestizo* Racial Heritage of Mexican Americans"

### **Week 3**

- 10/6: Constructing the “Model Minority” Myth and the Asian American Experience  
William Petersen, (New York Times, 1966), “Success Story, Japanese-American Style”  
U.S. News & World Report, 1966 “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.”  
Rosalind Chou interview on “The Myth of the Model Minority”  
Rosalind Chou & Joe Feagin, “The Reality of Asian American Oppression” and  
“Everyday Racism,” pp.28-37  
Rosalind Chou, “Why Asian American Sexual Politics?” selections
- 10/8: Early History of Racism and Resistance in the U.S.  
Michelle Alexander, *New Jim Crow*, Preface, Introduction, Ch.1, “The Rebirth of Caste”  
Toni Robinson & Greg Robinson, “The Limits of Interracial Coalitions: Mendéz v.  
Westminster *Reexamined*”  
Neil Foley, “‘God Bless the Law, He Is White’: Legal, Local, and International Politics  
of Latina/o and Black Desegregation Cases in Post-World War II California and Texas”

### **Week 4**

- 10/13: Race, Mass Incarceration, and the International War on Drugs  
Alexander, Ch.2, “The Lockdown”  
Suzanna Reiss, *We Sell Drugs: The Alchemy of US Empire*, Ch.3 “Raw Materialism:  
Exporting Drug Control to the Andes”  
Reiss, Ch.5, “The Chemical Cold War: Drugs and Policing in the New World Order”
- 10/15: Racist Institutions with or without Racist Intentions  
Alexander, Chs.3-4, “The Color of Justice” and “The Cruel Hand”  
Sally Haslanger, “Oppressions: Racial and Other”  
Sheila Bedi, “The Constructed Identities of Asian and African Americans: A Story of  
Two Races and the Criminal Justice System,” selections

### **Week 5**

- 10/20: Social Movements for Racial Justice?  
Alexander, Chs.5-6, “The New Jim Crow” and “The Fire This Time”

### **Moral and Political Questions**

- 10/22: Discrimination, Inequality, and Race  
Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, Chs.1-2, “Segregation and Social  
Inequality” and “Racial Segregation and Material Inequality in the United States”

### **Week 6**

- 10/27: Social and Psychological Structures of Racism  
Anderson, Chs.3-4, “Segregation, Racial Stigma, and Discrimination” and “Racial  
Segregation Today: A Normative Assessment”
- 10/29: Political Ideals, Democratic Participation, and Racial Justice  
Anderson, Ch.5, “Democratic Ideals and Segregation”  
Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail, selection  
John Rawls, “Civil Disobedience”  
Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Nonviolence as Compliance”  
Anderson, Ch.6, “The Imperative of Integration”

## **Week 7**

### 11/3: Affirmative Action

Earl Warren, Majority Opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education*

Anderson, Ch.7, "Understanding Affirmative Action"

Antonin Scalia, "The Disease as Cure"

Thomas Sowell, "Affirmative Action: A Worldwide Disaster"

Angelo Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience*, Ch.7, "Law and Racial Hierarchy"

### 11/5: Color Blindness and Obstacles to Integration

Anderson, Chs.8-9, "The Folly and Incoherence of Color Blindness" and "The Ordeal and Promise of Integration"

John Dixon and colleagues, "Beyond prejudice: Are negative evaluations the problem and is getting us to like one another more the solution?"

## **Week 8**

### 11/10: Race and Economic Justice

José Carlos Mariátegui, "The Problem of the Indian," *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, selection

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations"

### **From Politics to Identity**

### 11/12: The Nature of Social Identity

Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities*, Preface, Intro, Ch.1, "The Pathologizing of Identity"

## **Week 9**

11/17: Alcoff, Chs.2-3, "The Political Critique" and "The Philosophical Critique"

11/19: Alcoff, "Real Identities"

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, selections on "Double Consciousness"

Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change"

## **Week 10**

### 11/24: Particularities and Intersections of Identities

Alcoff, Ch.9, "The Whiteness Question"

Jorge Gracia, "What Makes Hispanos/Latinos Who We Are? The Key to Our Unity in Diversity"

Gloria Anzaldúa, "*La conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness*," selections

Alcoff, Ch.10, "Latinos and the Categories of Race"

## **Week 11**

12/1: Alcoff, Ch.11, "Latinos, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary"

Ancheta, Ch.8, "Race and Identity"

Alcoff, Ch.12, "On Being Mixed", Conclusion

12/3: Make-up class