

HIST 50B:

Race and America: Perspectives on United States History, Origins to the Present

Summer Session 2: Monday, July 8 to Friday, August 9, 2024

Days/Times: M, T, W, Th 11:20 AM – 1:40 PM

Instructor: Professor Rafael Abrahams

Classroom: TBD

Office Hours: Rabb 247, Tuesday and Thursday 10-11 AM and by appointment

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Introduction:

This is a lecture and discussion course on race and America we will undertake together at a time in the 21st century dubbed a "racial reckoning," though the substance of that reckoning is unfinished. In our endeavor to probe the past, we will put the history of slavery and freedom (*1619 Project*) and the study of race in America (*Caste*) at the center of the conversation. We will grapple with how slavery made race in America, and how that shaped the political utility of racism. This reverberated through the racialization of other marginalized groups. We will engage questions of gradual evolutionary changes versus sudden revolutionary change. We will think critically about how and where we identify systemic power and human agency. We will sit in informed discomfort to confront heavy shared inheritances and hauntings of racial injustice. We will think deeply about how in studying change over time, we better understand how change is possible in our society today.

Readings:

The texts for this course are all available through LATTE as linked e-books or excerpted PDF files. You will also read LATTE forum posts by your classmates before each class.

Assignments:

- 1. LATTE posts:** Before class, please post one reflection or question about the reading as a contribution to the conversation. These posts serve as a launchpad to class discussion.
- 2. Event Response Papers:** Each student will submit four (4) one-page responses to events/talks/panel discussions/docu-videos. The response paper should provide: a summary of the talk, its speaker, the main points of the talk/event AND an analytical engagement with the subject of the talk/event.
*SUGGESTION: Write this as though you were publishing this in *The Justice* as a write-up of the event for the broader Brandeis community readership. Be clear, concise, and engaging. Please submit the one-page response paper within a week of the event (or your viewing of the event video).
*Late papers will receive the penalty of one half-grade reduction for each day late.
- 3. Exams:** There will be a midterm and final exam. Exams include short answer questions and a long essay. There will be review sessions for each exam.
*Midterm: Thu. July 25
*Final: Thu. August 8

Evaluation:

Attendance & Class Participation — 20%

LATTE Posts (Reading Reflections) — 20%

Writing Assignment (4 Event Response Papers) — 20%

Midterm Exam — 20%

Final Exam — 20%

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**Accommodations for Documented Disabilities**

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you have a letter of accommodation, or if there is any circumstance I should be aware of that may affect your learning this semester, please see me after class or come to my office hours. I want to support you.

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually in section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Potential sanctions include failure on the essay, failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

**Artificial Intelligence**

In this class, we will use writing as a way to sharpen both our critical thinking and analysis skills as well as to develop communication skills that allow us to clearly communicate our ideas. While it is appropriate to use artificial intelligence (AI) for tasks like checking spelling or grammar and brainstorming ideas, you may not use AI to generate full sentences, paragraphs, or papers. For example, you may not use AI to generate pre-drafts and drafts/revisions, reflections, in-class exercises, peer letters, or communications with your instructor. This is because claiming the work of others as your own, whether created by another human or by AI, is regarded as plagiarism and therefore will be subject to the penalties outlined in the “Academic Honesty” section of the syllabus. If you have any questions about appropriate or inappropriate use of AI, please don’t hesitate to ask.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

In this course, we will work together to ensure that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives will be well served. The diversity and identities which students bring will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. To this end, we will engage with materials and activities that respect and honor each student’s unique experiences and perspectives. If anyone says something in class that makes you feel uncomfortable, angry, threatened, and/or excluded, please talk to me about it (anonymously, if you prefer). Furthermore, if you feel like your performance in this class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I want to be a resource for you.

**Laptops**

Bring your laptops to class so that you can access materials on Latte.

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

### **Week 1: Theories of Race, Origins of Race in America, Slavery and its Legacies**

Mon. July 8  
Introduction

Tue. July 9  
Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins Of Our Discontents* (2020)

Wed. July 10  
*The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (2021):  
Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Democracy”  
Dorothy Jones, “Race”  
Khalil Gibran Muhammad, “Sugar”

Thu. July 11  
W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction* (1935)

### **Week 2: African American Experiences: Segregation, Citizenship, Institutional Racism**

Mon. July 15  
Alaina Roberts, *I’ve Been Here All the While: Black Freedom on Native Land* (2021)

Tue. July 16  
Andrew Kahl, *The Land Was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South* (2012)

Wed. July 17  
*The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (2021):  
Wesley Morris, “Music”  
Jeneen Interlandi, “Healthcare”  
Kevin Kruse, “Traffic”

Thu. July 18  
Outing: Rose Art Museum

### **Week 3: Native American Experiences: Dispossession, Cultural Genocide, Historical Trauma**

Mon. July 22  
Maurice Crandall, *These People Have Always Been a Republic: Indigenous Electorates in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands 1598-1912* (2019)

Tue. July 23  
George Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (1993)

Wed. July 24:

Marissa Yellow Horse Brave Heart and Lemyra DeBraun, "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief" (1998), Midterm Exam Prep

Thu. July 25:

In-class Midterm Exam

#### **Week 4: Latin American, Asian American, and Muslim American Experiences**

Mon. July 29

Laura Gomez, *Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism* (2020)

Tue. July 30

Arisa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (2015)

Wed. July 31

Saher Selod, *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War* (2018)

Thu. August 1

Outing: Cultural Event TBD

#### **Week 5: Whiteness and White Privilege**

Mon. August 5

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (1999)

Tue. August 6

Julia Ott, "Tax Preference As White Privilege in the United States, 1921–1965" (2019)

Wed. August 7:

Portfolio Presentations, Final Exam Prep

Thu. August 8:

In-class Final Exam