EPSY 490EUI: Whiteness and the University
Ethnography of the University Initiative
Wednesdays 1:00-3:45 pm
37 Education Building
Fall 2009

Instructor:
Lisa B. Spanierman, PhD
188T Education Building
217-244-0787
lbspan@illinois.edu (best chance of reaching me)
Office hours: Tuesdays 4-5pm and by appointment

Course Description:
This course offers an introduction to the interdisciplinary critical whiteness studies literature and addresses concepts such as white privilege, white racial identity development, and white anti-racism. It also focuses on various qualitative research methods that scholars use in the empirical investigation of whiteness. Throughout the course, we will consider the ways in which the various content and methods may apply to understanding whiteness at predominantly white universities.

Course Objectives:
As part of the Ethnographic University Initiative, we will work together to establish a collegial research community in the class. Thus, as you develop your independent research projects we all will have opportunities to give and receive feedback throughout the semester. My hope is that you will strengthen your understanding of the research process and your self-efficacy as researchers. By effectively investigating some aspect of whiteness at the University of Illinois, we will contribute in meaningful ways to understanding how whiteness operates in one of the contexts in which we live. Specific objectives include:

• Gaining a basic understanding of key constructs in critical whiteness studies and applying theoretical perspectives to the University of Illinois context
• Enhancing your existing research aptitude and developing new skills (e.g., learning interview techniques, formulating a practical research question, designing an investigation to answer your question, and collecting pilot data)
• Presenting your research at the Ethnography of the University Student Conference
Unit I (Introduction to Course and Critical Whiteness Studies)

Week 1 (Aug 26): Introduction to Course
- Review Syllabus and view Ethnography Short video

Week 2 (Sept 2): Orientation to EUI
- Ethnography of the University Initiative
  - Nancy Abelmann, Co-Director
  - IDEALS ARCHIVES (identify 2 interesting projects that relate in some way to whiteness and the university)

Week 3 (Sept 9): Critical Whiteness Studies Overview
  - Barrett, J. E. & Roediger, D. How white people became white.
  - Dyer, R. The matter of whiteness.
  - hooks, b. Representations of whiteness in the Black imagination

Week 4 (Sept 16): Reviewing the Literature
- Meet at Education & Social Science Library; BRING LAPTOPS
  - Nancy O’Brien: Lecture on searching the literature and utilizing library resources
Unit I: Additional Suggested Readings:


Towards a Bibliography of Critical Whiteness Studies

Unit II (Exploring White Privilege)

**Week 5 (Sept 23): White Privilege**


  • McIntosh, P. *White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack.*

  • Wildman, S. M. & David, A. D. *Making systems of privilege visible.*


  • Watch: White Privilege (What’s That?) - Investigating the Invisible (1 hr)

**Week 6 (Sept 30): White Privilege continued**


  • Submit annotated bibliography

  • Schedule interview, focus group, or other means of data collection
**Unit II Additional Suggested Readings:**


http://academic.udayton.edu/Race/01race/whiteness05.htm (check out link for resources)

**Unit III (White Racial Attitudes and Identity)**

**Week 7 (Oct 7): White Racial Identity Development Models**

Helms, J. E. (1992). A race is a nice thing to have: A guide to being a white person or understanding the white persons in your life. Topeka, KS: Content Communications.


- EUI Guest Lecture on Research Ethics and IRB
- Submit Concept Paper

**Week 8 (Oct 14): Costs of Racism to Whites**


In-class workshop for literature review, if needed

**Week 9 (Oct 21): Interview / Focus Group Methods**
- Introduction to focus group methodology; Readings TBA
- **In-class workshop: Developing your research plan**
  - Interview/focus group protocol
  - Practice interview/focus group
- Submit Literature Review Draft (10.26.09)

**Week 10 (Oct 28): Color-blind Racial Ideology**
- Workshop research projects (1:00 – 2:15)
- Guest lecture on color-blind racial ideology (2:30-3:45): Helen A. Neville, Educational Psychology and African American Studies


- Pilot data must be collected by Oct 28

**Unit III Additional Suggested Readings:**


Lewis, Heather:  


**Unit IV (White Anti-racism / White Allies)**

**Week 11 (Nov 4): Moving to Antiracism Action**


- Submit transcription & key themes (pilot data); workshop one aspect of your data
Week 12 (Nov 11): White Anti-racist Allies
• Video: Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible

Unit IV: Additional Suggested Readings:
White Antiracism Community Action Network: http://www.wacan.org/

Week 13 (Nov 18): Preparing Your Poster
• Merinda Hensely presents: Guidelines for preparing your research poster
• Peer feedback on your research and individual meetings with instructor

Week 14 (Fall break, no class)

Week 15 (Dec 2 & Dec 3): Poster Presentations
• DEC 2: Meet for 1 hour in class to review posters/presentations
• DEC 3: Present poster at Ethnography of the University Student Conference (3-8pm)

Week 16 (Dec 9): Wrap-Up
• Submit Research Proposal
• Final reaction paper
• Reflections
Course Grade:

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<th>Points</th>
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<td>Participation/Reaction Papers</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Concept Paper</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review Draft</td>
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<td>Pilot Study (Interview/Focus Group)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Poster Presentation</td>
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<td>Final Research Proposal</td>
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Grading Scale:

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Class Participation and Weekly Reaction Papers

We are co-creating a collegial intellectual community in which we develop as researchers of whiteness. Thus, it is essential that you complete the readings for each class and actively participate in group discussions.

You will be asked to write a short reaction paper (2-5 pages) to each set of weekly readings. While it is not necessary to comment on every reading, I am hoping that the collection of readings will inform your reaction. In your papers, please address personal reactions (thoughts or emotions) that you experienced as a result of the readings and class discussions, as well as provide suggestions for research projects that emerge from your understanding of the concepts.

Annotated Bibliography

You will complete an annotated bibliography of 8-10 scholarly writings (i.e., book chapters and peer reviewed journal articles) on whiteness. Ideally, you will select readings in a specific area of critical whiteness studies that will inform the development of your research questions. See handout for annotation specifics.

Concept paper

Please provide an approximately 2 page discussion of your research idea. Your job is to describe your idea succinctly and to “sell” it to me. Topics may include, but is not limited to the following: What is your general topic? What specific questions are you thinking of investigating? Are you familiar with any prior work in this area? Why is this of interest to
you? Why might this topic be of interest to others (to the field of critical whiteness studies)? What are some potential implications of examining this topic?

**Literature Review Draft**

Upon completing your annotated bibliography, you will search additional literature and develop a brief literature review (15 pages maximum, double-spaced, APA style) that links to your pilot study and research proposal. You will provide an explanation of the “problem” under investigation and delineate a compelling argument for how your design will address the problem. In addition to workshops during class, I encourage each of you to meet with me to discuss the development of your literature review.

**Pilot Study (interview, focus group, and/or observation)**

See handout

**Poster Presentation**

See handout

**Final Research Proposal (must relate to your pilot study in some way)**

See handout for complete proposal requirements

Potential proposal topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Is whiteness visible to white students at Illinois? If so, what does it mean to be white?
- Are psychological models of white racial identity development relevant for Illinois students?
- How do white students perceive race-relations on campus?
- How do white students make sense of racialized-theme parties on campus?
- What are students’ perceptions of white privilege?
- What differences (if any) do we see among white students across different majors? What about those who complete racialized communities studies courses (and/or gender and women’s studies courses)?
- In what ways (if any) does gender or social class interact with whiteness?

**Academic Integrity:**

If you are unclear as to any of the university policies about standards of academic integrity, please review Article 1, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Academic Integrity: [http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part1_1-101.html](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part1_1-101.html). You are responsible for knowing your rights, potential infractions, and penalties.

I am committed to the education of each student in this course. If you find yourself having difficulty, please contact me immediately. Do not wait until an assignment is due, or until the end of the semester. I encourage you to attend office hours, make an appointment, or contact me via email.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:**

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and require assistance, please notify me immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.