

# AMS 200 Intro to Critical Race/Ethnic Studies

## Syllabus

Fall 2022, Section 71755

Tuesdays - 01:50 PM- 3:15 pm; Thursdays - asynchronous

New York City Campus | 1 Pace Plaza | Room E304

\* \* \*

INSTRUCTOR: Beto O'Byrne

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

OFFICE LOCATION: Zoom/Teleconference only (*also available for short meetings after class*)

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 01:00-03:00 PM - Office hours by appointment.

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as an introduction to Critical Race and Ethnicity Studies, an interdisciplinary academic field organized around the insight that race and ethnicity are major ideological and experiential frameworks that inform every aspect of human experience, from the formation of the individual to the organization of diverse societies. This course will introduce students to the robust academic and practical field of Critical Race Theory. By the end of the semester, successful students are conversant in both the historical development of this field and its present manifestations.

### II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

**AMS 200 aims to fulfill these course learning objectives:**

- To develop a facility with significant vocabulary and major themes in the critical study of race/ethnicity, with an emphasis on emerging theories and current debates in the field.
- To study and apply comparative frameworks for thinking about race/ethnicity as social formations that produce *affects* or feelings that are collectively experienced and which therefore hold political value. While there are as many affects as there are names for them, our syllabus is divided into three units that activate a range of feelings under the banner of seeming opposites: Guilt/Innocence, Hate/Love, and Fear/Solidarity.

**The graded assignments in this course aim to fulfill these university core learning outcomes:**

- Communication about the role of race/ethnicity in generating personal and collective forms of motivation, including resistance;
- Analysis of experiential claims to knowledge, with an orientation to race/ethnicity as theory;
- Valuing these diverse claims to knowledge and the paradoxes that can result for the individual;
- Information Literacy and Research, by evaluating contemporary representations of race/ethnicity as modes of affect and discourse, with consideration for the exercises of power that produce them.

### **Approaches to Teaching and Learning**

This class is a seminar, meaning it will be driven by your questions and observations about the assigned readings, and you will have an equal share in facilitating discussion about examples or case studies of your own choosing. While you will be graded on your analytical and reflective responses (both of which I take as intellectual work), we will respect the difference between civil discourse in public (or classroom) space and conversations that belong in safe spaces by reserving two (or more, if necessary) meetings for “closed” group discussions, i.e., open only to participants who self-identify with the group. By focusing on affect, we affirm that no one is wrong to feel as they do: no matter your position, there is certainly a community in this country that believes you are right—but as representatives of those communities in this class, our task is to glean knowledge from those feelings, theorize about how

### **III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

For this class, you will need the following:

- An ability to read PDFs and online materials
- A notebook and writing materials (laptops and phones are not used in class as a rule)
- A willingness to explore new ideas and ways of thinking

#### **Text and Reading Materials**

My goal is to minimize the purchase of textbooks, source materials, etc. You will receive digital copies of plays, articles, etc, or be pointed to where to find them online.

This being true, I want to uplift the value that how we spend our money, or not, is a reflection of our values, and there may be times when you are asked to do so. This will always be presented with thoughtful intention, and you are welcome to engage in conversation we can also work to provide alternatives if you have any issues.

### **IV. GRADING POLICY**

Because this is school, we must have grades. I think a lot about how we “grade” ourselves in any course. Ultimately it is always a journey that we all start at different places.

I think about your grade as the contract between us. It is a way to evaluate our accountability to one another. What this means will be different for all of us. Hopefully, we can agree on a few key elements:

1. We must exert effort to be successful
2. We must show up for ourselves and our peers
3. We must set ourselves challenges and work to achieve them

As such, the following Grading Policies are in place for this class:

#### **GRADING DISTRIBUTION**

- 0-30 points **Class Attendance** (15 class sessions @ 2 points each)
- 0-30 points **Weekly Homework** (10 reading/viewing/commenting assignments @ 3 points each)
- 0-20 points **Case Studies** (3 short papers plus 1 presentation @ 5 points each)
- 0-25 Points **Group Projects** (5 group projects @ 5 points each)
- 0-10 points **Final Project** (various creative projects and traditional essay options)

#### **COURSE GRADING SCALE:**

A 95-100 | A- 90-94 | B+ 87-89 | B 83-86 | B- 80-82 | C+ 77-79 | C 73-76 | C- 70-02 | etc.

#### **GRADING VALUES AND LATE WORK POLICIES**

**Class Attendance:** 2 points for active listening and discussion participation during synchronous class meetings. To safeguard our freedom of speech and personal privacy, classes will not be recorded. **Students have ONE EXCUSED ABSENCE.**

Students docked ½ a letter grade for each no-call/no-show absence. For all other unexcused absences where you identified and made clear your decision not to attend, students have docked an appropriate percentage of your overall attendance grade. The determination of these is ultimately at the discretion of the professor and is non-negotiable.

**Weekly Homework:** 4 points for meeting the posting requirements on Discussion Forum and/or Perusall by 9am on Tuesdays; 3 points for incomplete but on-time homework; 2 points for complete but late homework; 1 point for late and incomplete homework.

**Case Studies:** To conclude each of our 3 units, you will write a 2-3 page double-spaced paper (500-750 words) that applies the theory we're reading to a real-world example or cultural case study of your own selection. For one of the units, you will also sign up for a 5-10 minute presentation (i.e., read your short paper aloud and spark some class discussion) on Case Study Day. Whether or not you're presenting, your 2-3 paper is due by the start of class on Case Study Day. Late consequences: up to 1 point deducted per day.

**Final Project:** Choose from creative project options and a traditional essay (5-7 double-spaced pages) option, and submit your final by Wednesday, 12/22 at 11:59pm. We will develop a grading rubric for the final project together.

## **V. Course Accountability**

Any effort to understand and undo the power race and racism has on society requires organized communities willing to risk their comfort, their positionality, and sometimes their very lives. That work begins with the simple act of being present. Your work in this class is no different. Assumptions can't be challenged if we don't hold each other to the highest standard.

So we have to show up. For ourselves and for our community. The revolution desperately needs you, whether it realizes it or not. Because your work can inspire others to action, dissolve oppressions, and illuminate unforeseen truths.

The ugly truth of it is that there are powerful forces that are designed to block you from doing so. Some of these are systemic: Jobs. Other classes. Subways that are always late. Some are our own blocks that we put up. My work wasn't good enough to share. I'm just not up to it today. All the things. Right?

But it's those times when the above blocks appear when our work really begins. When it's the most important. When it matters most.

As such, we have an accountability system for this class. That accountability system is as follows:

- We agree to attend all in-person classes, online sessions, and all other programming to our fullest ability.
- We agree to fully participate and share the experience of being in this class with our peers and instructor to our fullest ability.
- We agree to hold ourselves to the highest standard and will meet the demands of work, including when, how, and what we present.

So what does "fullest ability" mean? It means that we recognize that there are going to be times when life makes attending and participating impossible. Or possibly harmful. This class is not our sole priority. But it is a priority. Attending and Participating are the norm. It is the expectation that our activism, our revolutionary selves, and our deep-down-chakra-selves demand. And as such, when we don't attend, when we don't participate, we accept our accountability when we fail ourselves and our community.

So we agree to the following:

### **Attendance Agreement**

We agree that there is ONE EXCUSED ABSENCE. If I do not attend class, I will notify the instructor to the best of my abilities and at least 24 hrs (if possible) of this absence.

If I miss a class beyond this point:

1. I will be docked the appropriate grading points as detailed above in the Grading Policies section
2. I will not receive any credit for participation
3. I am responsible for determining what I missed and will talk with others in the class to find out what I missed (the instructor is not responsible for catching me up if I miss class)
4. If an assignment was due or to be presented, I will not receive credit
5. If an assignment was accomplished in class, I will not receive credit
6. If I miss more than three classes, I have not been accountable to myself or my community. I will not be able to pass this class and will remove myself from the class.

## **Participation**

**We agree to fully participate in all discussions as best as we can:**

1. I will provide feedback on shared work and engage in conversations in class with openness, kindness, and grace to the creators
2. When asked to respond, I will do so without fear.
3. I will have my camera and audio on and available as the norm, not the exception
4. If I have an issue in class, If I feel unsafe, I will contact the instructor. If I am not comfortable doing so, I will seek the support of the department or the school.
5. If I do not honor these agreements, I will be held accountable. I may be asked to address this in class. I may need to discuss this with the instructor outside of class, and it is possible I may be asked to remove myself from the class, which will result in me not receiving credit for the course.

## **Assignments Due Date and Late Assignments**

**We all agree to turn in assignments on time, to hold ourselves accountable, and to support the work of our peers and the instructor.**

If I do not turn in my work on time, my work will be docked 25% points. After three days, students may turn in the paper by the end of the class with maximum availability of 50% of the total.

## **Plagiarism**

**I will only submit my own work. To submit someone else's work as my own is one of the most disrespectful acts I can commit in an academic environment. I will not do it.**

If I am caught for plagiarism, I agree to leave the class immediately. I will not receive credit. I am aware that the instructor will inform the appropriate individuals at Pace, who will determine what further actions to take. From that point, the instructor will not be involved and is not responsible for what happens.

## **Course Schedule and Assignments**

For the complete schedule, please refer to **AMS200: Course Schedule**, available via the following link and will also be on our online platform:

- [AMS200: Course Schedule:](#)  [AMS 200 Fall 2022 Course Schedule](#)

Please note that Tuesdays are IN-PERSON and Thursdays are a mix of online classes, field trips, group conversations, and one-on-one conferences, and independent study.