

Syllabus
Race and Ethnicity in the United States (Honors)
HIST 288-02H
Online

Contact:

Prof. Lee Willis
477 CCC
Office hours: T, W, 10:00-11:00 AM on Zoom
Email: lwillis@uwsp.edu

Required texts:

Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Back Bay, revised edition, 2008). (text rental)

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, 10th Ann. Edition, 2020). (For purchase at bookstore; e-book available in Canvas.)

Additional readings and links to websites and documentaries are also posted in Canvas.

Course description:

This class is an exploration of United States history from the perspective of immigration and multiculturalism. Through the lens of race and ethnicity, we will seek to understand the peopling of colonial America and the United States. More specifically, we will investigate how racial and ethnic definitions are rooted in historical context and how these constructs have changed over time.

This is an entirely online course. We will not have synchronous class meetings, but rather you will have the flexibility to complete all reading and written assignments within your own schedule. At the beginning of each week I will post announcements and video(s) on the weekly schedule and upcoming assignments.

Learning outcomes:

This course meets the General Education Program requirement for Historical Perspectives and U.S. Diversity. By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Describe how people and institutions in the United States have constructed diverse identities and cultures.
2. Explain how individuals in the United States have responded to the experience of discrimination and inequality.
3. Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural perspectives in the United States.
4. Use primary sources as evidence to answer questions about historical change.
5. Describe differences among interpretations of colonial North America and United States history.
6. Analyze institutional and cultural change in American society.

Grading and evaluation:

Grades in this course will consist of two exams, a book precis (a concise analytical review), four reaction papers based on primary source readings and eight reflection papers based on reading in Takaki. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Two exams: 50% (25% each)

The New Jim Crow paper: 10%

Reaction papers (4 total): 20%

Reflection papers (8 total): 20%

Grading scale: (percentages)

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

Assignments and responsibilities:

Reading: Most weeks we will read a chapter in the Takaki textbook. Pay close attention to the larger points Takaki is making each chapter and how each chapter section reinforces this larger theme. In the second half of the semester we will read Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. This work describes the problems of structural racism, segregation, and disfranchisement that still pervade our society today.

Reflection papers: On eight occasions in the semester you will write reflection essays on the Takaki reading. I will provide a prompt or series of questions to consider as you write your essay. These assignments will help you focus on the big picture and make larger connections in the history of race and ethnicity. The assignments will also prepare you for the midterm and final exams.

Reaction papers: These assignments are designed to develop your skills in analyzing primary sources. I will provide a primary source (a piece of evidence from the historical period under investigation) and ask you a series of questions to frame your analysis.

Analytical review: You are required to write a precis (a concise analytical review) on Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. Detailed instructions for this assignment are posted in Canvas.

UWSP Burial Site Project: As a way to deepen our understanding of how race and ethnicity has shaped local history, we will read and discuss documents related to a Native American burial site on campus. These readings are embedded throughout the semester and will include an assignment in which you will visit the site yourself.

Exams: We will have a midterm and final exam in essay format. The essay questions will be posted one week before the due date. The questions will ask you to discuss larger course themes with specific examples, including the UWSP Burial Site Project. Reflection essays and reaction papers will help you prepare for these tests.

Late penalties: Please make every effort to turn in assignments on time. A late penalty of one-letter grade will be applied for every day an assignment is late.

Schneidkies happen: If you are dealing with difficulties in your life that are interfering with your ability to work on this course please let me know. We can work out alternative arrangements if need be.

Course outline and assigned readings:

Week of January 25: Why we need “a different mirror.” Read pp. 3-20 in Takaki. Reflection essay #1 due Thursday, January 28 at 11:00 PM.

Week of February 1: The Native American and European Encounter. Read pp. 23-48 in Takaki and explore website “Nations in Wisconsin” from the Milwaukee Public Museum (link available in Canvas). Reflection essay #2 due Wednesday, February 3 at 11:00 PM.

Week of February 8: The Development of Racial Slavery in the 17th and 18th centuries. Read pp. 49-71 in Takaki and watch “The Black Atlantic” documentary (link is available on Home section in Canvas). Reaction paper #1 due on Wednesday, February 10 at 11:00 PM.

Week of February 15: Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears. Read pp. 75-97 in Takaki and Goc, *Land and Lumber* (PDF available in Home section of Canvas). Reflection essay # 3 due on Wednesday, February 17 at 11:00 PM.

Week of February 22: Racial Slavery in the 19th century. Read pp. 98-130 in Takaki and watch “The Age of Slavery” documentary in Canvas. Reaction paper #2 due on Wednesday, February 24 at 11:00 PM.

Week of March 1: Irish immigration. Read pp. 131-154 in Takaki.

Midterm exam: Due Friday, March 5 at noon.

Week of March 8: Manifest Destiny and Mexico. Read pp. 155-176 in Takaki. Reflection essay #4 due on Friday, March 12 at 11:00 PM.

Week of March 15: Pacific Immigration and the Chinese. Read pp. 177-205 in Takaki. Reflection essay #5 due on Wednesday, March 17 at 11:00 PM.

Week of March 22: NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK

Week of March 29: Native American Wars in the West. Read pp. 209-231 in Takaki and Reser, “Report on Burial Site” in Canvas. Reaction paper #3 due on Wednesday, March 31 at 11:00 PM. Class visit to site TBD.

Week of April 5: The Rise of Jim Crow and the Great Migration. Read pp. 311-335 in Takaki and begin reading Alexander. Reflection essay #6 due on Wednesday, April 7 at 11:00 PM.

Week of April 12: Eastern European and Jewish immigration. Read pp. 262-291 in Takaki and watch the documentary "Race: The Power of an Illusion" in Canvas. Reflection essay #7 due on Wednesday, April 14 at 11:00 PM.

Week of April 19: Mexican immigration in the 20th century. Read pp. 292-310. Finish Alexander and begin working on precis. Reflection essay #8 due Wednesday, April 21 at 11:00 PM.

Week of April 26: Mexican immigration in the 20th century, continued. Reaction paper #4 due on Wednesday, April 28 at 11:00 PM.

Week of May 3: The Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century. Read pp. 341-382 in Takaki. **Precis on Alexander due Friday May 7 at 11:00 PM.**

Week of May 10: Civil Rights in the 21st Century: disillusion or progress? Read pp. 382-439 in Takaki.

May 19: Final Exam due at 12:00 noon.