

**Race and Politics (RPOL)**  
**Course Outline**  
**Center for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins University**

**Texts**

*Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World: A Brief History with Documents* by Sue Peabody  
*Starting With "I": Personal Essays by Teenagers* by Youth Communication  
*A Larger Memory: A History of Our Diversity* by Ronald Takaki  
*White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* by Tim Wise  
Additional Readings as assigned

**Course Description**

The debate surrounding the presidential run of Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton and the degrading racist and sexist remarks of Don Imus regarding the Rutgers Women's Basketball team are only a few of many ways in which issues of race can be witnessed in our society today. The influence of race and racism reaches into all aspects of American life including education, popular culture, economics, inter-personal relationships and how groups interact with one another. In addition, the concept of race has created a very real impact in the realm of politics both through traditional avenues and extra-political means. From the historic founding of the nation to the latest in hip hop race is a factor and has a substantial political impact.

In this course, students examine the concept of race and how race, has shaped and continues to influence life in America including law and policy from the local level to the world stage. Students will begin by gaining an understanding of racial oppression and key terms including institutional racism, white privilege and prejudice. They will also explore various constructions of racial identity including biological, cultural, and political. Students will use contemporary issues as a springboard for exploring the historical function of race and racism within politics. This class will utilize a multiplicity of voices and communities to explore significant historical moments in American history as they relate to race and politics. Students will research, analyze and discuss Native American/European relations in early America, the role of slavery in the creation of the Constitution, the Dred Scott case, eugenics and Whiteness in the late nineteenth century, Jim Crow America, Japanese interment during WWII, the Civil Rights Movement and several current events among other topics. Material studied will be interdisciplinary and include historical writings, essays, poetry, autobiographical excerpts, music, and photographs. As they draw sophisticated connections between issues of race and politics, students read critically both primary and secondary sources, participate in discussions and debates, and write analytical essays.

The instructors will make an attempt to build in as much choice as possible and in return students should always be ready to tag along on the journey in a creative and dedicated way. Remember the course outline is simply a guide and may expand or contract as we move forward.

**Assignments**

Students will be evaluated and receive regular feedback on the following assignments;  
**Community Participation-** Our classroom should be seen as a community. Students will spend the majority of their day with the instructors and other students in their class. The success of our class depends on the level of comfort and safety that we create as a community in our space. Students are expected to treat all community members with respect and courtesy at all times. In addition, *all* students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate in discussions and assignments as fully as possible. Our class will be fluid and students should be prepared to participate as learners/teachers and presenters/listeners daily.

**Reading-**There will be a fair amount of reading in this course. We will gather most of our information in this course through reading books, handouts, web articles, poetry, etc. **Reading** all assigned material is also essential for community building. *Please note:* the autobiographical work *White Like Me* will be read by students throughout the course of the class. Students will have many opportunities to read this in addition to the work assigned. Use it in a supplemental way. When you finish early or have extra time read a chapter. There will be a discussion/writing reflection of this book on the second to last day of class.

**Visual Text-** Students will be asked to create a visual text throughout the course of the class. The visual text may be created using any medium available to the student (paint, coloring, drawing, collage) and will respond to weekly and/or daily questions and themes through art. This “visual text” will be made individually by students and will also function as both a map of their journey in the class as well as an assessment of their understanding of the material and concepts covered in the class.

**Weekly Current Event Presentation-** Students will travel to the library once a week to gather current events via newspapers and the web that relate to the focus of our class. Students will write a short reflection paper and present these current events once a week.

**In Class Reflection/Writing Assignments/Presentations-** A variety of in class assignments will be expected of students throughout the course. These assignments will be thoroughly explained and will vary from journal reflections (which students will keep daily) to poetry to brief analytical essays. Most of these assignments are written into the course calendar.

**Final Research Project-** Students will be asked to write an eight to ten page final paper and a presentation. This presentation will incorporate the student’s visual text and a summary of his or her paper along with whatever else the student feels is important for their final presentation.

**Kindness, patience and an open mind are also course requirements.**

**This course will be largely focused on discussion and critical thinking. The courage to add to the dialogue, being sometimes right and sometimes wrong, is also essential. Respect for diverse opinions and the opportunity for civil discourse are expected.**

**Constructive criticism is the only kind welcome in our community.**

## Course Calendar

Day	Session	Focus/Questions	Activity/Exploration
<b>Week 1- Introduction/Race in Early America</b>			
Day 1 Intro to Course	Morning	How can we build a positive classroom community? What is race/racism? What are the key terms for our course exploration? How does it operate in the modern day? How do they influence politics?	Introductory activities: TA Icebreakers Pre-assessment Personal Cultural His/Herstory Reading exploration of articles focused on key concepts and terms. Five minute response/ Read Around, lecturette and discussion of key terms and concepts.
	Afternoon	What is identity? How does race influence identity? What understanding of race and politics do I bring to the course?	Watching slam poets (Valle, Sia, Hammad) /Discussion Reading exploration of articles focused on key concepts and terms. Five minute response/ Read Around, lecturette and discussion of key terms and concepts.
	Evening	Reading Prep for next class	Write in Reflection Journal Read Takaki 31-44, Starting with "I" Essays Nash handout on Native Americans.
Day 2 Red, Black and White in Colonial America	Morning	What are the forms of oppression and how do they impact race and politics?	Morning group check in TA icebreaker Cultural Chest Activity (students bring in items that represent their social and cultural identity) Short lecture and reflection on in class reading of forms of oppression Create a machine that represents your form of oppression in groups Discussion of research project. Class lecture and discussion on the Pequot War.

Day	Session	Focus/Questions	Activity/Exploration
	Afternoon	What were the experiences of Europeans, Africans and Native Americans during the colonial America? How did Native American removal/genocide become law?	Quiz on Nash Reading Watch and discuss the excerpt of <i>Mystic Massacre</i> Discuss/begin Visual Text
	Evening	Reading Prep for next class	Write in Reflection Journal Read Encarta handout Peabody 11,16, 17 Takaki Diversity 100-108 Black History handouts
Day 3 Enslavement	Morning	What were the characteristics of North American enslavement?	In class reading reflection. TA icebreaker (10 minutes) Webquest in computer lab on slavery. Short lecture/discussion on reading and politics (60 minutes) Work in groups on first hand documents about slavery.
	Afternoon	How did slavery in America become race-based?	Screening of excerpt from <i>Unchained Memories</i> . Discussion. In class reading of <i>Race and the Founders</i> excerpt Visual text question.
	Evening	Reading prep for next class	Write in Reflection Journal Read Founders handout, Peabody 12, Blk history handout.
Day 4 Race and the Founders	Morning	What were the Founders ideas about race? How did these ideas reflect those of society? How did they find their way into the Constitution?	QRT(Quiet Reading Time) Discussion of race, the Constitution and the founders Lecture/Discussion on the election of 1800 Icebreaker-TA Prep for 3/5 compromise math activity Students work in groups to identify the influence that the “slave vote” had on the pivotal election of 1800.

Day	Session	Focus/Questions	Activity/Exploration
	Afternoon	What were the arguments for and against the inclusion of slavery in the Constitution?	Continue 3/5 activity Continue constructing visual text
	Evening	Reading prep for next class	Reflection Journal Readings on Dred Scott in groups
Day 5 Dred Scott Historical Case study/Research Project	Morning	How does our class relate to current events?	Research in the computer lab on current events and final research project.
	Afternoon	Why is the Dred Scott trial a turning point in the history of race and politics in America?	Mock Dred Scott Trial/Presentations on Dred Scott
Sunday Session	Evening	Reading Prep for next class	Watch an excerpt of "Race the Power of Illusion" /discussion
<b>Week 2- Race in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century</b>			
Day 6 Eugenics/ American Imperialism	Morning	What is Eugenics? How did the concept of "whiteness" develop? How is this connected to American imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century?	Brief lecture of key concepts. Class will research via Eugenics archive website and others Class will go to computer lab for web research in order to present group presentations on Eugenics.
	Afternoon	What is your understanding of Eugenics? How did it impact race and politics in 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> century America?	Students present and teach a lesson on Eugenics in small groups to the rest of the class. Each group will be assigned a set of key terms and important people for whom to present) Current Event Read Around
	Evening	Reading Prep for next class	Watch a clip of "Banished" Guided discussion QRT on the Tuskegee Experiment
Day 7 Race, Politics, and Bioethics	Morning	Where do the topics of race and politics and bio-ethics meet?	Complete reading for Tuskegee Institutional racism web activity Teams prep for joint class with bio-ethics on Tuskegee Experiment

Day	Session	Focus/Questions	Activity/Exploration
	Afternoon		Students attend joint class with bio-ethics Give presentations on race and politics.
	Evening		Discussion of bio-ethic joint class Discuss Jim Crow Images Read aloud of Piri Thomas story QRT -Read Autobiographical excerpts from DuBois, Colon, X, Plessy handout and Wright. Poetry from Hughes.
Day 8 Jim Crow America	Morning	In what way is WWII a watershed moment for race and politics? Why were the Japanese interned during WWII and did race play a role? How did race impact gender roles and economics in WWII?	QRT-Takaki handout on WWII Lecture. Discussion of Japanese internment. <i>First Yank in Tokyo</i> excerpt screened. Students will write letters to Japanese internment survivors- What does it mean to be an American? Group round table discussion on WWII Work on visual text
	Afternoon	Begin Final research project research	Research in Library for final paper
	Evening	Reading Prep for next class.	Reflection Journal Read documents for Civil Rights Movement
Day 9 Civil Rights Movement	Morning	Why was the Civil Rights Movement so important for race and politics in America? How did extra-legal and political tactics translate into political change?	Lecture on the chronology of the Civil Rights Movement Discussion Excerpt form <i>Eyes on the Prize</i>
	Afternoon		Begin analytical essays on the tactics of the civil rights movement.
	Evening		QRT-Freedom Summer Meet in groups to plan Civil Rights Re-enactments

Day	Session	Focus/Questions	Activity/Exploration
Day 10 Library research	Morning	Library Trip	Work in the library on analytical essay. Gather research.
	Afternoon	Where graphic novel and race and politics meet?	Students will create graphic representations of key civil rights actions with the graphic novel class.
Sunday Session	Evening	Reading Prep for next class/ Check in about research	Read Freedom Summer handout, , BPP Platform, SNCC position paper, Black Power Movement/ read Wise Prep for re-enactment
<b>Week 3- Race and Politics in Modern America</b>			
Day 11 Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement	Morning	How did Freedom Summer, a non-violent strategy during the CRM symbolize a shift in ideology and tactic by the CRM? Did the push for integration result in political gains?	Brief lecture. Take a Mississippi literacy test/Discussion Perform Civil Rights Movement sketches. Work on individual analytical essays on tactics of Civil Rights Movement. Discussion/Explore the push for integration vs. political power through voting?
	Afternoon	How did the Black freedom struggle's focus change from a call for Civil Rights to a call for Black power? How did the art of the era reflect their political agenda?	Finish prepping for re-enactments Lecturette on the move to Black Power. Read Black Panther Party Platform/view images of BPP in groups. Present re-enactments.
	Evening	Discussion about research progression/ troubleshooting	Library trip for research/ Read Wise
Day 12 Final Project Construction/Research/Writing.	Morning	Library Research	Library Research
	Afternoon	Research/Writing	Students will be given time to research and write independently as well as work on their visual text
	Evening	Reading Prep for following class	Reflection Journal Excerpts from Takaki immigration handout

Day	Session	Focus/Questions	Activity/Exploration
Day 13 US Immigration Today	Morning	What is America's policy on immigration? Does race influence it?	Brief lecture on American immigration. Compare/Contrast images of immigration throughout American history. (Students will construct an immigration timeline. Students will spend time in the library preparing for debate on immigration. (1.25)
	Afternoon	What are the various experiences and opinions on American immigration? How does this translate into social/political actions and law?	Students prep for immigration debate (45 minutes) Immigration Debate(1 hour)
	Evening	Reading Prep/ Final Research	Read Takaki 302-320/ Bensonhurst handout
Day 14 Current events in Race and Politics	Morning	How does race influence politics and society in modern America?	Lecture on current events including affirmative action, 1992 L.A. riots, and popular culture. In class reading of Debating Diversity handout. Integration of music into lecture. Discussion/debate over current "hot topics" including analysis of the current presidential race and <i>White Like Me</i> . Final free write on current events. What is your vision of American equality? What would be your advice to America to achieve your vision?
	Afternoon	Research/Writing	Post assessment/ Students will be given much needed time to tie up their final project.
	Evening	What have we learned?	Screening of <i>the Color of Fear</i> /Discussion
Day 15 Course Celebration/ Presentations	Morning	What conclusions did you reach in your final projects? What will you take with you from this course?	Final Celebration/ Presentations

**“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, however, if faced with courage, need not be lived again.” –Maya Angelou**