

**Carleton University
Winter 2021
Department of English**

**ENGL 1400a: Literature, Art and Culture
Topic: #BlackLivesMatter**

Prerequisites: none

Preclusions: ENGL 1000, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1600, and FYSM 1004

Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 1 pm – 2:30 pm

Location: online (CULearn)

Format: asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Esther Post

Email: estherpost@cunet.carleton.ca

Office hours: via Zoom; hours TBD; also by appointment

Course description:

What began as a social media hashtag created in 2013 by three Black women has now become a major cultural movement in protest against systemic anti-Black racism in America. In addition to the mass protests taking place across thousands of cities throughout the United States and around the world on a daily basis, literature, poetry, music and music videos, visual art, and film provide further evidence of the significance of #BLM. This course will introduce students to the history of the movement and other protest cultures from which it grew, and will analyze, from an interdisciplinary perspective, some of its chief concerns and demands, particularly those related to the policing of and state-sanctioned violence against Black bodies. We will begin by studying how racism became institutionalized in America during slavery, and how segregationist laws, federal drug policies, and the prison industrial complex have continued to reinforce systemic racism and injustice against Blacks in the 21st Century. We will explore and reflect upon these issues through reading fictional and non-fictional literature, poetry and spoken-word poetry/slam poetry, watching films and music videos, and listening to music, podcasts, and TedTalks by Black academics and activists.

TW: Please note that we will be discussing potentially triggering issues throughout this course. By “triggering,” I do not mean that someone may be offended, uncomfortable, or mildly upset by sensitive or graphic content, but rather, an individual may experience a traumatic response. The history of Blacks in America and systemic racism is obviously not light subject matter, so be prepared to feel uncomfortable and perhaps even anxious or upset reading our subject material. Having said that, you can skip any readings or videos that may be triggering for you, and I will give specific trigger warnings for each text each week.

Required Texts:

Ta-Nehesi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Colson Whitehead, *The Nickel Boys*

Nic Stone, *Dear Martin*

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*

Ava DuVernay (dir.), *The 13th* (documentary film; available on Netflix)

*optional/recommended: *American History X* (film)

*Our required texts will be available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave. by the first week of classes and may be ordered online at <https://octopusbooks.ca/shop?course=ENGL1400>. You may also purchase or order books from anywhere else you'd like, including Amazon and Indigo-Chapters.

All other readings, including essays, visual art, poetry, etc. will be available on our course page at CULearn via ARES.

Course Format:

This course will be taught online in an asynchronous format. Each week at our scheduled class times, I will post recordings of lectures, PowerPoint slides to accompany the lectures, and discussion questions in our discussion forum on CULearn. Lectures /videos will be recorded in small segments, around 20 minutes each. Students must remain up to date with the reading and assignment schedule, ensuring that readings are completed before our scheduled class time, and that deadlines are met for all assignments. Students will also have the opportunity to connect with me and other classmates for discussions using Zoom. More information on these optional meetings will be provided.

Technical Requirements:

Students will need a computer with high-speed Internet access to view videos, lectures, slides, and handouts on CULearn, and to submit assignments. Ideally, students will have a webcam and mic to meet with the instructor and/or other students virtually.

Evaluation

Participation (ongoing, in weekly discussion forums)	15%
Critical Response (3-4 pages; due 11:59 pm Fri. Feb. 12)	20%
Outline for final essay/project (1-2 pages; due 11:59 pm Fri. Mar. 26)	15%
Final essay/project (due 11:59 pm Mon. Apr. 12)	25%
Final exam (formally scheduled by the university during the exam period in April)	25%

***detailed information and instructions for each of these components will be posted to CULearn**

Please note: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

Please note: all course materials, including recorded lectures, PowerPoint slides, assignments, essay topics, and discussion prompts are copyright of the instructor and are made available only to students registered in the course. Any reproduction or distribution of any of the course material is strictly prohibited.

COURSE POLICIES:

Essay style, format, and submission policies:

- All essays and other written assignments must be double spaced, formatted in Times New Roman font 12, with one-inch margins on all sides, and must conform to MLA style and documentation guidelines. Please consult the MLA style and documentation guidelines at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html.
- All assignments must be submitted through CULearn as digital copies and as a Word Document (**no pdfs, google docs, or any other format will be accepted**). Please note that as a Carleton University student, you have free access to Microsoft Word 360 (<https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/get-microsoft-office-for-students/>).

Late policies:

- There are no deadlines for participating in discussion posts (ie. responding to posts from other students, asking questions, etc.); however, you should be posting regularly/on a weekly basis to gain full participation marks (15%).
- Given the less-than-ideal circumstances in which many of us our learning/teaching this year, I will be extremely flexible with deadlines. However, submitting assignments on time or at least early on the term is important for students to receive timely feedback so they can improve their work before the next assignment. Additionally, waiting until April to do all your work, on top of studying for exams and working on final assignments for other courses, will undoubtedly be overwhelming and stressful. Having said that, you basically have until the very end of the term to submit all assignments, with the exception discussion forum posts, which need to be made on a regular basis (ie at least once weekly) throughout the course). The university has mandated that all final term work (including your final essay/project) is due by **Apr. 14. 2021**.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** Assignments submitted **one week after the due date** will be given a grade, but may not receive many or any detailed comments.

Plagiarism: There will be a policy of ZERO TOLERANCE for plagiarism. The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf> and <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS and CLASSROOM NETIQUETTE

- Students are expected to have read the assigned material before our scheduled class time, and to respond to discussion prompts before our scheduled class time.
- **CULearn:**
 - You will be required to use CULearn on a regular basis, as all relevant documents related to our course, including the syllabus, assignment instructions, lectures, etc. will be uploaded to this page. **Most importantly, treat this syllabus as your bible for this course**, as it provides all necessary information in terms of reading and assignment schedules, submission policies, etc.
 - You should also **frequently check the announcements** on our course page at CULearn, as this is where I will post important announcements and information
- **“classroom “netiquette/discussion forums/chats:** I will be discussing this in more detail in my intro lectures, but these are some of the most important principles:
 - Always remember that there are real people behind screens and be respectful
 - No harassing, racist, homophobic, sexist, or transphobic language will be tolerated
 - Avoid using all caps, as it often comes across as shouting at and/or bullying
 - Emoticons can be helpful to convey tones, but avoid using them too much
 - Avoid dominating discussions online so that everyone gets the chance to participate
 - Always read over your posts before sending them
 - Be careful when using humour or sarcasm and ensure that your tone is properly conveyed
 - Keep an open mind, so that you are prepared to have your thinking challenged
 - Debates are certainly welcome, but again, ensure that you are respectful of others'

opinions

Contact with the instructor:

- The best way to get in contact with me is by email (EstherPost@cunet.carleton.ca). I check email at least once a day, and will respond to emails within 48 hours, though it could take longer on weekends.
- When emailing, please be professional. Do not use text speak, do not begin your email with an informal greeting such as “hey!”, and identify yourself by your full name as well as the course code.
 - Emails should be reserved for clear, precise questions; they should not be used to ask questions such as, “what should I read for next week?” or anything else that simply requires you to read the syllabus.
- My office hours will be offered by Zoom for one hour per week (to be determined by the Jan. 18). Otherwise, I am available to meet with students at another time by request. Please email me if you would like a meeting or have any questions or concerns.
 - We will also have a TA who will be able to meet with students virtually and help with course material, assignments, and writing skills.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Reading Schedule (*subject to revisions)

Dates	Topic	Readings/viewings
Week 1: Mon. Jan 11 and Wed. Jan. 13	What is #BLM?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “About #BlackLivesMatter.” https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/ • “Six Years Strong.” https://blacklivesmatter.com/six-years-strong/ • “HerStory.” https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/ • “An Interview with the Founders of Black Lives Matter.” <i>TedTalks</i>, Oct. 2016. • Music videos: • Childish Gambino, “This is America” (2018) • Kendrick Lamar, “Alright” (We Gon Be Alright”) (2015) • Grand Master Flash, “The Message” (1982) • Run the Jewels featuring Pharrell Williams and Zack de la Rocha, “JU\$T” (2020). • Sam Cooke, “A Change is Gonna Come” (1964)
Week 2: Mon. Jan. 18 and Wed. Jan. 20	Violence Against Black Bodies in America in the 21 st Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ta-Nehesi Coates, <i>Between the World and Me: Part One</i> (p. 5-71) • Don Lemon (CNN), “Trayvon Martin Shooting, Minute by Minute” (Dec. 3, 2012) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia0w_dOj7R4 • Nightline (ABC), “George Zimmerman Jury Sees Slain Trayvon Martin Photos.” (Jun. 26, 2013). *NB: misleading title – no graphic photos are shown

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy Now, "Black Lives Matter: Ferguson Erupts After Grand Jury Clears Officer in Michael Brown Killing." (Nov. 25, 2014)
Week 3: Mon. Jan. 25 and Wed. Jan. 27	The Legacies of Slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>
Week 4: Mon. Feb. 1 and Wed. Feb. 3	Racial Segregation and Jim Crow Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colson Whitehead, <i>The Nickel Boys</i>
Week 5: Mon. Feb 8 and Wed. Feb. 10	The Civil Rights Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" (Aug. 28, 1963) • Malcolm X, (TBD) • Norman Rockwell, "The Problem We All Live With" (1964) (painting) • Lisa Whittington, "Emmett Till: How She Sent Him and How She Got Him Back" (2012 painting) • * Critical Response Paper (20%) due 11:59 pm Fri. Feb. 12*
BREAK Mon. Feb. 15 and Wed. Feb. 17		
Week 6: Mon. Feb. 22 and Wed. Feb. 24	Situating #BLM in Social Protest Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle "Guante" Tran Myhre, "Five Things Art Taught Me About Activism." <i>TedTalks</i>. (Dec. 2017) • Paolo Gerbaudo, <i>Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism</i> (2012) (2010) (excerpts) • Documentary (excerpts) re Stonewall Riots (TBD)
Week 7: Mon. Mar. 1 and Wed. Mar. 3	Racism and the Law I: Incarceration of Blacks as Enslavement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ava DuVernay, Dir. <i>The 13th</i> (documentary film, available on Netflix) • Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness</i> (2010) (excerpts) [ARES] • Angela Davis, <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> (2003) (excerpts) [ARES]
Week 8:	Racism and the Law II: Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ta-Nehesi Coates, <i>Between the World and Me: Part 2</i> (p. 73-132)

Mon. Mar. 8 and Wed. Mar. 10	Brutality and Racial Profiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nic Stone, <i>Dear Martin</i>
Week 9: Mon. Mar. 15 and Wed. Mar. 17	Intersectionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kimberle Crenshaw, "The Urgency of Intersectionality." <i>TEDTalk</i>. Dec. 7, 2016 Treva B. Lindsey, "Post-Ferguson: A 'Herstorical' Approach to Black Viability." <i>Feminist Studies</i> 40.1 (2015): 232-237. [JSTOR] Beyonce, <i>Lemonade</i> (songs/videos from album OR film, available on Tidal) The GW Hatchet (George Washington University), "How is Pride Month Connected to Black Lives Matter?" (Jun. 25, 2020) Recommended/optional: Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." <i>Stanford Law Review</i> 43.6 (July 1991): 1241-1299. [JSTOR]
Week 10: Mon. Mar. 22 and Wed. Mar. 24	White Fragility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robin DiAngelo, <i>White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism</i> *Outline for Final Essay/Project due 11:59 pm Fri. Mar. 26*
Week 11: Mon. Mar. 29 and Wed. Mar. 31	White Supremacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Danez Smith, "Dear White America." (spoken word poetry). (2014). Daryl Davies, "Why I, As a Black Man, Attend KKK Rallies." (Dec. 8, 2017). Optional film/recommended: <i>American History X</i>
Week 12: Mon Apr. 5 and Wed. Apr. 7	The Future of #BLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ta-Nehesi Coates, <i>Between the World and Me:</i> Part 3 (p. 133-152) Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation." In <i>From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation</i>. Haymarket: 2016. 191-220 Damon Davis, "Courage is Contagious." <i>TedTalk</i>. (2017) Danez Smith, "Alternate Heaven for Black Boys." (spoken word poetry). (2016). (similar version published as "summer, somewhere" in <i>Don't Call Us Dead</i> (2017)) Major Jackson, "On Disappearing" (poem). (2013).

LAST CLASS: Mon. Apr. 12	Course Review and Exam Prep	**Final Essay/Projects Due **
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