

**New York University
Department of Art and Art Professions
Art Education**

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Contemporary Art and Critical Pedagogy: Issues in Identity, Race, and Multiculturalism

Wednesdays 4:55-6:25pm, Barney 403

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“My sense is that the American character lives not in one place or the other, but in the gaps between the places, and in our struggle to be together in our differences. It lives not in what has been fully articulated, but in what is in the process of being articulated, not in the smooth-sounding words, but in the very moment that the smooth-sounding words fail us. It is alive right now. We might not like what we see, but in order to change it, we have to see it.”

— Anna Deavere Smith, *Fires in the Mirror*

In this course we will examine how race relations frame the way we approach teaching and learning as well as our understanding of our neighborhoods, communities, students, and schools in an increasingly global world. Understanding the current discourses on race/racism and how they intersect with gender, social class and sexuality is necessary for envisioning ways of living and teaching within our diverse communities and classrooms today. Utilizing the lens of critical pedagogy we will connect personal narratives with critical theory to derive new ways of thinking about our roles as teachers and students in the field. One lens that we will look through is Critical Race Theory (CRT), which is an approach that emerged in legal studies after the Civil Rights movement to address the complex interplay of race/racism and US law. CRT has increasingly influenced the field of education, women’s studies, humanities, and social sciences. Through readings, artwork, films, and classroom discussions, we will investigate the question: How does race, class, gender, and sexuality affect the ways we move through the world and specifically the ways we teach and learn with our students?

LEARNING GOALS

- Understand the complex nature of identity in relation to race, class, gender, sexuality, and class;
- Analyze the social, cultural, political, and economic factors that shape personal identity (both our own and our students’);
- Employ tools for self-reflection about one’s own identity and one’s teaching practice;
- Develop strategies to nurture positive relationships with others across identity differences;
- Understand how the arts can serve as a platform for significant exploration of identity and culture;
- Utilize the CRT framework to critique and construct meaningful curriculum and learning in the arts.

TEXTS

Wayne Au (2009). *Rethinking Multicultural Education: Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools

Mica Pollock (Ed) (2008). *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real About Race in School*. New York: The New Press.

Additional readings will be available via class Ning site. See Bibliography/Webography/Videography for additional resources and references.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVE READING OF TEXTS

You will be responsible for contributing to class discussions and leading class discussion during the semester. As you think about course readings keep in mind that there are various ways of reading a text. Using certain analytical frames can help you make sense of the text. For this class I want you to adopt the following ways of reading the text:

- **Reading *within* a text:** You should read all texts for the meaning and comprehension with the attempt of first understanding the author's argument and the ways in which she attempts to achieve it. What is the point or argument the author is making? Who says and on what basis?
- **Reading *around* the text:** You should also understand and be sensitive to the context in which the text was written. When and why was this text written?
- **Reading *against* the text:** After you have made sense of the text and situated it within its context, then be critical of the text. How does this text connect and diverge from my own beliefs and knowledge? What is new? How does this article contribute to existing knowledge? Who cares? How and why is this text worthwhile?

You can use the questions above to frame your thinking and analysis for your reading responses and curriculum analysis.

ASSIGNMENTS

#1 Class Participation and Presentation

Everyone should come to class prepared to actively contribute to discussions and to contribute thoughtfully and productively. You will be assigned one week of readings for which you will lead the class discussion, most likely with a partner. Preparation includes starting the class period with an arts-based ice-breaker and/or team building exercise, presenting a brief synopsis of key ideas introduced or addressed in the readings, and finally, facilitating class discussion utilizing at least 3 questions or prompts about some of the central ideas introduced in relation to the weekly theme/questions.

DUE: Presentation will be due on date assigned on the first day of class

#2 Ning participation and Reading Responses: <http://ArtandCriticalPedagogyF12.ning.com>

We will use a private Ning site to communicate and share our ideas and resources with each other outside of class time. Each week you will post a reading response about one or all of the readings and at least 2 critical questions. I will also be prompting everyone to recreate your first and most recent memories of race, gender/sexuality, and class-based identity. You will be prompted to use a different form of representation and discussion to share your responses with the class. More generally we will use the Ning site to share related resources, to participate in ongoing conversations we initiate during class, and to respond to each others weekly reading responses and ideas. I will be looking for weekly participation on the Ning site from everyone.

DUE: Weekly reading responses, plus Race, Gender/Sexuality and Class Memory Responses on Sept. 12, 19, 26, and Oct. 3

#3 Curriculum Analysis

Select a curriculum that integrates contemporary art and artists and analyze it using the critical race theory framework. Think of the curriculum as a racial, classed, gendered, sexualized text that requires you to interrogate it. Who designed the curriculum? Why? For whom? How does it

address and represent race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and/or class? How are students asked to consider, investigate, or make meaning for themselves in relation to race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and/or class? Identify and analyze the overt, hidden, and null curriculum in relation to race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. Does the curriculum perpetuate or challenge the color-blind ideology?

Write a 3-5 page paper that analyzes the curriculum with an abstract. The abstract summarizes your paper in a paragraph. Please bring a paper copy to class as well as post as a Ning blog. Your paper will be handed to others in the class. Curricula will be assigned in class and additional information will be provided.

DUE: October 24

#4 Student Case Study & Final Reflective Artwork

Over the course of the semester you will develop a case study about a single student. Through observation, research, interviews and analysis you will develop a narrative that attempts to dismantle pre-conceived ideas and cultural/racial/gender-based stereotypes in order to construct a more authentic and complicated understanding of a single student. Guidelines and related readings will be provided.

DUE: December 12

STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND ASSESSMENT

Assignment 1 –Class Participation & Presentation	25%
Assignment 2 – Ning Participation & Memory Responses	25%
Assignment 3 – Curriculum Analysis	25%
Assignment 4 – Case Study Final Paper & Artwork	25%

In addition to completing all assignments on time, attending all class sessions, and coming to class prepared, I expect the following from students:

- **Active, thoughtful, and engaged participation:** We are each others' teachers in this class. In order for us to support each other as learners, everyone is expected to come prepared to question, engage, and encourage each other in the spirit of inquiry and curiosity.
- **Depth, structure/organization, and attention to detail in assignments:** As graduate students, I expect that students should be able to clearly express ideas, connect to relevant literature, and that they will submit work that reflects the thoughtfulness and depth with which they have engaged the topics.
- **Inquiry, curiosity, and patience:** I expect that everyone comes to this course with a vested sense of curiosity and inquiry that drives their work. While we may not all be entering the conversation at the same place, we expect that we will have the patience and willingness to learn with and from each other.

Absences: Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Students may request up to two excused absences (for sickness or other emergencies); absences beyond these two will result in a lower grade. Excessive lateness (more than two sessions) will also negatively impact a student's grade.

Grading: All submitted assignments will receive written feedback and a letter grade. I encourage you to pay more attention to the written feedback as I will use this to indicate to you where I believe you could push yourself further and to pose questions that will hopefully assist and encourage you in future assignments. You are welcome to re-submit any assignment for a revised grade but you must indicate to me in advance that you will re-submit assignments so I can plan accordingly and make time for additional reading.

Final grades will be determined based on an overall, holistic assessment of your progress throughout the course, with attention given to criteria above. At the end of the course, you will be given the opportunity to complete a self-assessment of your work that will be considered as part of the final grade.

If, at any time, you have any questions or concerns about your performance, I am happy to discuss with you.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 - Sept. 5

Introductions to the course and each other: Who are we? What is the context and goal of this course? Why are issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality important and how might we think about our relationship to them in the context of our teaching and learning? Setting our ground rules; Telling stories about our names.

Week 2 - Sept. 12

Setting the Stage? Where are we now? Who are we now? Why is this set of conversations important?

Due:

- Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change: Structural Racism and Community Change:
http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/pubs/aspen_structural_racism2.pdf
- Dipti Desai, "The Challenge of New Colorblind Racism in Art Education." In Art Education, 2010
- NYTimes, 'Why Don't We Have Any White Kids?' (May 2012):
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/education/at-explore-charter-school-a-portrait-of-segregated-education.html?smid=pl-share>
- Obama Speech on Race (June 2009): http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-250_162-3947908.html
- Wayne Au, selected chapters in Rethinking Multicultural Education (pp. 1-44)
- First and most recent memories of racial identity (Visual)

Week 3 - Sept. 19

Autobiography and Storytelling - What are the identity stories we tell about ourselves and how do we tell these stories?

Due:

- Ruth Frankenberg, "When we are capable of stopping then we can see" in *Being White, Seeing Whiteness*
- Patricia Williams "Preface" in *White: Whiteness and Race in Contemporary Art* (pp. 17-20)
- Mica Pollack, selected chapters in *Everyday Antiracism* (pp. 70-73, 299-308)
- Lee Bell, "Storytelling for Social Justice (pp. 9-27)
- Gloria Anzaldúa, "Haciendo Caras. Una Entrada" in *Making Face, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras*.
- Artworks: *No Crying in the Barbershop*, Pepón Osorio; *Some/One*, Do-Ho Suh; *Cornered*, Adrian Piper
- First and most recent memories of Gender/Sexual identity (Written)

Week 4 - Sept. 26

How and why do artists explore issues of race and identity? Part I (Autobiography and Representing the Other)

Due:

- bell hooks, "Art on My Mind" in *Art on My Mind* (pp. 1-9)
- Jennifer Gonzalez, "Introduction" in *Subject to Display* (pp. 1-21)
- Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, "Identity" in *Themes of Contemporary Art: Art After 1980*, 2nd Ed.
- Colette Copeland, "Art, Gender, Power, and the F Word: An Interview with Coco Fusco" In *Afterimage*, March/April 2008, Vol. 35 Issue 5, p4-6, 3p
- Josephine Withers, "All Representation is Political: Feminist Art Past and Present"
- Artworks: *Couple in a Cage*, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Pena; *Artifact*, James Luna; *Resident Alien*, Hung Liu
- First and most recent memories of Class identity (Interviews)

Week 5 - Oct. 3

Biography and storytelling: What are the stories we tell about our students? How do we know about our students?

Due:

- Wayne Au, selected chapters in *Rethinking Multicultural Education* (pp. 53-72, 89-96, 207-215)
- Mica Pollack, selected chapters in *Everyday Antiracism* (pp. xvii-xxii, 28-55, 67-73, 174-185,
- Sonia Nieto, "Chapter 1, Why the Case Study Approach? In *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (pp. 1-22)
http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/4176/4277203/Nieto_CasesSnaps_Web.pdf
- Watch *Race: The Power of an Illusion: Part 1*:
<https://dl.dropbox.com/u/31167985/RACE-Episode-1.m4v>
- Artists/artworks: *Coloring Series*, Glenn Ligon; *Constructing History*, Carrie Mae Weems; *The Schoolgirls Project*, *The Skaters Project*, *The Hip Hop Project*, *The Hispanic Project*, *The Punk Project*, Nikki S. Lee

Week 6 - Oct. 10

What is Critical Race Theory (CRT) and why is it important in education? How can CRT inform how we think about the ways we teach and learn with our students?

Due:

- Gloria Ladson Billings, "Just what is CRT and what's it doing in a nice field of education?"
- Tara Yosso, "Towards a critical race curriculum"
- Louise Derman-Sparks, Carol Tanaka Higa, Bill Sparks, "Children, Race and Racism: How Race Awareness Develops"
- Watch *Race: The Power of an Illusion: Part 2*:
<https://dl.dropbox.com/u/31167985/RACE-Episode-2.m4v>
- Artists/Artworks: LaToya Ruby Frazier; Santiago Sierra, Santiago Sierra, *Person remunerated for a period of 360 consecutive hours*; *Trade (gifts for trading land with white people)*, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

Week 7 - Oct. 17

What is whiteness and how do artists explore issues of identity and race? Part II (Whiteness/Representing the Other)

Due:

- Beverly Tatum. "Teaching White Students About Racism: A Search for White Allies and the Restoration of Hope"
- Maryann Dickar, "Teaching in Our Underwear: The Liabilities of Whiteness in the Multicultural Classroom" in *Freirean Pedagogy, Praxis and Possibilities*.
- Maurice Berger, "Invisible Man: An Introduction to Whiteness" in *White: Whiteness and Race in Contemporary Art* (pp. 23-31)
- Carol Mukhopadhyay, "Getting Rid of the Word Caucasian" in *Everyday Antiracism* (pp. 12-16)
- Artworks: *Synecdoche, Black/White Synecdoche*, Byron Kim; *Office Shaman*, John Feodorov; *Guys Who Look Like Jesus*, Nancy Burson

Week 8 - Oct. 24

What did we find when we investigated curriculum through the lens of CRT?

Due:

- Watch *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Part 3:
<https://dl.dropbox.com/u/31167985/RACE-Episode-3.m4v>
- Curriculum Analysis, presentations

Week 9 - Oct. 31

What are the politics of representation? Who can represent who and why?

Due:

- bell hooks, "Reflections on Race and Sex" in *Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics*.
- Fred Wilson, "The Silent Message of the Museum" in *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts*
- Eleanor Heartney, "Identity Politics at the Whitney" in *Art in America*, May 1993 (pp. 42-47)
- Kimberly Pinder, (2001) "Biraciality and Nationhood in Contemporary American Art" in *Third Text*, 14: 53, 43-54.

Week 10 - Nov. 7

What is critical pedagogy? What are classroom strategies for teaching for racial and cultural justice?

GUESTS(?)

Due:

- Wayne Au, selected chapters in *Rethinking Multicultural Education* (pp. 237-243, 255-296)
- Mica Pollack, selected chapters in *Everyday Antiracism* (pp. 18-23, 165-171,
- Olivia Gude, "Drawing Color Lines" from *Spiral Art Education*
- Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, Mariana Souto-Manning, "Teachers Act Up! Practicing Transformative Theatre" in *Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities through Theatre* (pp. 37-61)
- **Optional: selections from "The House That Race Built: Critical Pedagogy, African-American Education, and the Re-Conceptualization of a Critical Race Pedagogy" By Michael E. Jennings & Marvin Lynn

Week 11 - Nov. 14

How do artists explore issues of identity and race? Part III (Artists as Educators/Community Agents)

GUESTS(?)

Due:

- Wendy Ewald in *White: Whiteness and Race in Contemporary Art* (pp. 71-89)
- Mica Pollack, selected chapters in *Everyday Antiracism* (pp. 142-145)
- Dipti Desai, "Unframing Immigration: Looking through the educational space of contemporary art" in *Studies in Art Education*
- Suzanne Lacy with Ann Wettrich, "What it Takes" in *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics 1974-2000* (pp. 222-234)

Week 12 - Nov. 21

What are globalism, cosmopolitanism, and diaspora and what do they have to do with teaching and learning?

Due:

- Kevin Tavin and J. Hausman. 2004. "Art Education and visual culture in the age of globalization" in *Art Education*
- Walker Art Center Roundtable: Interactions/Intersections: Cultural Globalism and Educational Practice
- Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.). 2000. *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews*. New York: Routledge.
- Thea Abuelhaj, "Imagining post-nationalism: Arts, citizenship, education, and Arab American Youth" video project

Week 13 - Nov. 28

How do artists explore issues of identity and race? Part IV (Globalization, Cosmopolitanism & Diaspora)

Due:

- Dipti Desai "Places to Go: Challenges to Multicultural Art Education in a Global Economy" in *Studies in Art Education*. 46(4), 293-308.
- Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbachie, "Ordering the Universe: Documenta 11 and the Apotheosis of the Occidental Gaze" in *Art Journal*, Spring 2005 (pp. 80-89)
- Tate Contemporary Art and Globalization Study Day Parts 6 (Photography and Social Space) & 7 (Travels in the New World): <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/contemporary-art-and-globalisation-study-day-part-6> ; <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/contemporary-art-and-globalisation-study-day-part-7>

Week 14 - Dec. 5

How have popular culture, digital communication, and virtual communities changed the nature of race and the ways that racism is enacted?

Due:

- Mica Pollack, selected chapters in *Everyday Antiracism* (pp. 337-340)
- Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Lisa Wolford, "There Goes the Virtual Neighborhood: A Conversation on Technology, Performance Art and Digital Racism" in *Art Papers* 25 no. 6, N/D 2001
- Olu Oguibe, "On Digital Third-Worlds, An Interview" in Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game*, 2004 (pp. 159-168)

- Anna Holmes, "White Until Proven Black: Imaging Race in Hunger Games, New Yorker Online, March 30, 2012: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2012/03/hunger-games-and-trayvon-martin.html>

Week 15 - Dec. 12

What did we learn this semester from the investigations we made?

Due:

- Final Case Study & Artwork Presentations