

SOC 321K: Race, Science, and Race Science

Unique Course ID: 44810

Fall 2021

Class Meets

WHEN: Mondays and Wednesday, 2:30pm – 4pm

WHERE: RLP 1.102

Professor: Dr. Robert L. Reece

Office: RLP 3.736

Email: Robert.L.Reece@gmail.com

Office hours:

By appointment on Zoom

Course Description

Race science is the pseudoscientific process of using purportedly scientific methods to classify humans into biological racial groups. The use of race science ranges from the classic eugenics practice of measuring cranial capacity as a way of gauging the average intelligence of racial groups to the widespread belief among medical students that black people feel less pain to the increasingly mainstream practice of using genetic ancestry testing to identify one's "true" race. This course will explore these topics and a wide variety of others. We will do this through paired readings of books and op-eds, where we read one of each from the same author, and in-class discussions culminating in a final research project where students will write their own op-ed and academic research paper. Along the way we will explore strategies for effective writing and hopefully leave the course with a deeper understanding of race and racism and the writing process.

Students must have completed 60 hours of coursework to be eligible for enrollment in this course.

Flags

Cultural Diversity in the United States

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. The purpose of the Cultural Diversity in the United States Flag is for students to explore in depth the shared practices and beliefs of one or more underrepresented cultural groups subject to persistent marginalization. In addition to learning about these diverse groups in relation to their specific contexts, students should engage in an active process of critical reflection. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one underrepresented cultural group in the U.S.

Writing

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Attendance Policy

I encourage you all to attend each discussion section. I do not track attendance in such a way that you will fail if you miss a certain number of classes, however, part of your participation grade depends on your attendance *and* studies show that class attendance is highly correlated with grades so it is in your best interest to attend.

Course Materials

Books:

Fatal Invention by Dorothy Roberts

The Social Life of DNA by Alondra Nelson

Fearing the Black Body by Sabrina Strings

Medical Bondage by Deirdre Cooper-Owens

(note: many of these books are available to read online through the UT library website)

I will supply other course materials through Canvas or links on the syllabus.

Assignments and Grading

Weekly Discussion Questions and Participation – 15%

Beginning Week 2, you will be responsible for submitting **five discussion questions** regarding that week's reading. The questions will be **due by Friday at midnight before each Monday's class** (this is to give me a chance to review your questions in preparation for each class). So, for example, the questions for class the week of September 13 are due on Friday, September 10. Of the five questions, **three should focus on the content of the reading** (clarity and strength of argument, presentation of evidence, etc) **and two should focus on the author's writing**. Submit questions about things you are confused about and want clarity on, things you are interested in and would like to discuss further, or things you seek to criticize. Additionally, **submit your favorite or least favorite paragraph from that week's reading** with a brief 1-2 sentences about why you love or hate that particular paragraph. However, only half of each week's points will come from the questions themselves. The other **half will come from your participation in class discussion**. For example, if you submit discussion questions on Friday but skip class on Monday, you will only receive a 50/100 for the week.

Discussion Question Presentation – 25%

Each of you will be responsible for facilitating class discussion for one week of the semester (either in pairs or trios) as indicated by the groups on the syllabus. This will entail collecting your classmates' discussion questions, grouping them thematically in a handout, and leading our discussion of that week's readings.

Op-Ed vs Research Paper: Op-Ed – 30%; Research Paper – 30%

In their work academics deploy various types of writing, but the two most common are traditional academic research writing geared towards their academic peers and more public facing, shorter manuscripts. We will write one of each, using the same set of research, to explore how differences in audience and goals shape the writing process. Refer to the detailed **assignment guides and rubrics starting on page 5 and ending on page 8 of the syllabus**.

Late Work and Makeup Policy

I understand that sometimes things happen. If you need to make up assignments, please let me know as soon as possible.

Grading Scale

A	94%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	84%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	74%
C-	70%
D	65%
F<	65%

COURSE SCHEDULE**WEEK 1 – AUGUST 25 – INTRODUCTION AND SYLLABUS****WEEK 2 – AUGUST 30, SEPTEMBER 1**

“How to Read Like a Writer” – Mike Bunn

“What is ‘Academic’ Writing” - L. Lennie Irvin

WEEK 3 – NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 6 (LABOR DAY), SEPTEMBER 8

Fatal Invention chapters 1, 2, 3

“Eugenics is still a dangerous idea” by Dorothy Roberts in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

<https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/eugenics-in-america-timeline-medicine-20190501.html>

WEEK 4 – SEPTEMBER 13, 15 – Group 1

Fatal Invention chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

WEEK 5 – SEPTEMBER 20, 22 – Group 2

Fatal Invention chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, conclusion

WEEK 6 – SEPTEMBER 27, 29 – Group 3

The Social Life of DNA chapters 1, 2, 3

“Elizabeth Warren and the Folly of Genetic Ancestry Tests” by Alondra Nelson in *The New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/opinion/elizabeth-warren-and-the-folly-of-genetic-ancestry-tests.html>

WEEK 7 – OCTOBER 4, 6 – Group 4

The Social Life of DNA chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

WEEK 8 – OCTOBER 11, 13 – ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE OCTOBER 8TH (No discussion questions)

“Annoying Ways People Use Sources” - Kyle D. Stedman

“Assessing Source Credibility for Crafting a Well-Informed Argument” – Kate Warrington et al

WEEK 9 – OCTOBER 18, 20 – Group 5

Fearing the Black Body chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

“It’s Not Obesity. It’s Slavery.” By Sabrina Strings in *The New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/25/opinion/coronavirus-race-obesity.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap>

WEEK 10 – OCTOBER 25, 27 – Group 6

Fearing the Black Body chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, epilogue

WEEK 11 – NOVEMBER 1, 3

“Grammar, Rhetoric, and Style” – Craig Hulst

“The Inspired Writer vs the Real Writer” – Sara Allen

“Writing With Force and Flair” – William T. Fitzgerald

“The Evolution of Imitation: Building Your Style” – Craig A. Meyer

WEEK 12 – NOVEMBER 8, 10 – DRAFTS DUE ON NOVEMBER 5TH (No discussion questions)

WRITING WORKSHOP

WEEK 13 – NOVEMBER 15, 17 – Group 7

Medical Bondage chapters Introduction, 1, 2

“COVID-19 reveals a long history of health inequities affecting African Americans” by Deirdre Cooper-Owens in *Houston Chronicle*

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/COVID-19-reveals-a-long-history-of-health-15218565.php>

NOVEMBER 22, 25 – NO CLASS FOR THANKSGIVING

WEEK 14 – NOVEMBER 29, DECEMBER 1 – Group 8

Medical Bondage chapters 3, 4, 5, afterword

WEEK 15 – DECEMBER 6 (Optional; No discussion questions)

Final project Q&A

Final Projects: DECEMBER 15TH

Op-Ed vs Research Paper Assignment Guide

The purpose of this assignment is to help you understand and practice the two most common types of writing academics engage in: formal academic writing aimed at their academic peers and public facing writing aimed at a more general audience. This is an exercise in conducting research and catering writing to various audiences. The assignment is process-based. That means I will guide you and grade you on the entirety of your writing process, including an annotated bibliography, drafts of each manuscript, revisions, and then the final manuscript.

RESEARCH PAPER

The final version of your research paper should be **at least 3000 words**. Your aim is to **evaluate an aspect of race science**, defined as the pseudoscientific process of using purportedly scientific methods to classify humans into biological racial groups (examples of topics we will cover in class include genetic ancestry testing, the “obesity epidemic,” racially targeted medicine).

The argument of your paper should use evidence offered primarily by scholarly sources to address the following questions:

- **What is the phenomenon you’re evaluating?** *For example, genetic ancestry testing.*
- **How does this phenomenon contribute to race science?** *For example, people who use genetic ancestry tests become more likely to believe in biological races.*
- **Why is this contribution to race science troublesome?** *For example, Nazis and white nationalists have used genetic ancestry tests to measure white purity.*
- **How can we minimize the danger?** *For examples, genetic ancestry tests should be clearer about their limitations, particularly the connection between genes and race.*

Annotated Bibliography – Due OCTOBER 8TH

The annotated bibliography is designed to help you think about what other scholars have said about your topic and how their work may contribute to your argument as you prepare to write. You should submit **8-10 sources**, with a short paragraph for each **explaining what the source says and how you plan to use it in your paper**.

Draft – Due NOVEMBER 5TH

The draft of your research paper should lay out a broad idea of the aforementioned questions. At this point you should be refining your primary argument and working to build evidence that supports it. You need not submit a full length paper, but your draft should have enough text that I understand what you are trying to do and can offer substantive guidance as you move forward.

Final Version – Due DECEMBER 15TH

The final version of your research paper should consist of two parts. **First, is the actual manuscript**. Use the comments I provided and other insights from how you’ve refined your ideas to edit your draft to produce a polished document. **Second, is an editorial statement**. Editor’s comments don’t always reflect the vision you, as a researcher and writer, have for your work, and often you will want to push back or veto suggestions. In a one page statement, **explain any changes I suggested that you decided to forgo and offer your reasoning for not incorporating these changes**.

OP-ED

The final version of the op-ed should be **at least 900 words** and convey the **main ideas of your research paper**, transformed for a **general audience**. Pretend you're writing for a general educated audience, such as that of the New York Times, so **avoid academic jargon** as much as possible, try to explain your ideas plainly.

The structure of the Op-Ed should be similar to the following:

- **The "Hook"** – *this is where you draw your audience in with a relevant anecdote or a connection to current events and set the stage for why what you're writing is important and interesting for them to read.*
- **Thesis** – *this is where you explain what your argument is. This can be explicit or implied.*
- **Argument** – *this is the meat of your essay. Here you will present evidence to support your argument, typically building a single paragraph around each piece of evidence.*
- **"To be sure"** – *this is where you head off your critics by addressing any obvious counter-arguments and explaining why your argument stands strong despite these inevitable criticisms.*
- **Conclusion** – *this is where you wrap up your essay. You should reiterate your thesis, perhaps circle back around to your "hook," and if applicable offer a way forward or a call to action.*

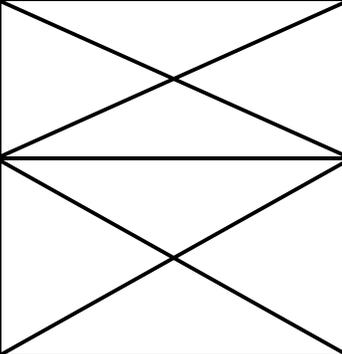
Draft – Due NOVEMBER 5TH

The draft of your Op-Ed should attempt to lay out a **broad idea of your thesis and the evidence** to support it. It doesn't have to be a complete document, but an editor cannot edit blank space so it should contain enough of your idea to allow me to give you comments on how to proceed.

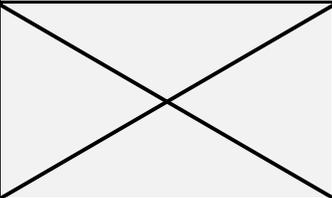
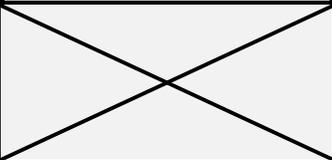
Final version – Due DECEMBER 15TH

The final version of your Op-Ed should consist of two parts. **First, is the actual manuscript.** Use the comments I provided and other insights as you refine your ideas to edit your draft to produce a polished document. **Second, is an editorial statement.** Editor's comments don't always reflect the vision you, as a writer, have for your work, and often you will want to push back or veto suggestions from the editor. **In a one page statement, explain any changes I suggested that you decided to forgo and offer your reasoning for not incorporating these changes.**

RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC

	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	DRAFT	REVISIONS	FINAL PAPER
0 points	No Work	No Work	No Work	No Work
10 points	Sources without annotation	Draft offers no coherent ideas; uneditable	No revisions; final same as draft	Extensive mechanical and grammatical errors make the manuscript unreadable
15 points	Fewer than 6 sources; Minimal annotation		Ignores important revisions; No justification for revisions	Incoherent argument with claims not bolstered by evidence; Mechanical and grammatical errors significantly detract from readability
20 points	8-10 sources with minimal annotation on use; 6-8 sources with clear detail on value and use		Addresses most important revisions; Weak explanations for discarded revisions	Mostly clear argument with mostly strong evidence; Minor mechanical and grammatical errors that may slightly detract from readability
25 points	8-10 relevant sources with clear detail on value and use	Draft offers a relatively clear direction forward; Some primary ideas and sections are present	Addressed all pertinent revisions; Offers strong justifications for any discarded suggestions	Clear argument supported by strong evidence; Minimal mechanical and grammatical errors that do not detract from readability

OP-ED GRADING RUBRIC

	DRAFT	REVISIONS	FINAL ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT	GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS
0 points	No Work	No Work	No Work	No work
10 points	Draft offers no coherent ideas; uneditable	No revisions; final same as draft	Argument incomprehensible or copied and pasted directly from research paper without consideration for audience	Extensive errors make the work unreadable
15 points		Ignores important revisions; No justification for revisions	Argument mostly clear but large parts of the manuscript copied and pasted from research paper without consideration for audience	3-5 errors begin to detract significantly from readability
20 points		Addresses most important revisions; Weak explanations for discarded revisions	Provides an interesting “hook;” Argument mostly clear; Mostly jargon free	2-3 minor errors that only minimally detract from readability
25 points	Draft offers a relatively clear direction forward; Some primary ideas and sections are present	Addressed all pertinent revisions; Offers strong justifications for any discarded suggestions	Provides an interesting “hook;” Clear argument with strong evidence; Jargon free	0-1 errors that do not detract from readability

Appendices and Policies

Student Rights & Responsibilities

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning environment.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded or diminished in any way.

With these rights come responsibilities:

- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others. Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.
- You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well.

Personal Pronoun

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this preference early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited: No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course

University Policies

Safety and Class Participation/Masks

We will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protections against spreading COVID-19 on campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this means that all students are required to follow these important rules:

- Every student must wear a cloth face-covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times.

- Students are encouraged to participate in documented daily symptom screening. This means that each class day in which on-campus activities occur, students must upload certification from the symptom tracking app and confirm that they completed their symptom screening for that day to Canvas. Students should not upload the results of that screening, just the certificate that they completed it. If the symptom tracking app recommends that the student isolate rather than coming to class, then students must not return to class until cleared by a medical professional.

If a student is not wearing a cloth face-covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university's Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for [obtaining an accommodation](#) working with [Services for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: "As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity." **Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT.** Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

University Resources for Students

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. There are also a range of resources on campus:

Services for Students with Disabilities

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. If appropriate, also contact Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329- 3986 (video phone). <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>

Counseling and Mental Health Center

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html>

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Libraries: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

ITS: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

Important Safety Information:

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency