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Fall 2024: Monday 10:20 AM - 1:20 PM, RAB 003

Office Hours: by appointment

### **16:070:547 – Globalization and Neoliberalism: Racial Capitalism**

*“So what did Robinson mean by “racial capitalism”? Building on the work of another forgotten black radical intellectual, sociologist Oliver Cox, Robinson challenged the Marxist idea that capitalism was a revolutionary negation of feudalism. Instead capitalism emerged within the feudal order and flowered in the cultural soil of a Western civilization already thoroughly infused with racialism. Capitalism and racism, in other words, did not break from the old order but rather evolved from it to produce a modern world system of “racial capitalism” dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide. Capitalism was “racial” not because of some conspiracy to divide workers or justify slavery and dispossession, but because racialism had already permeated Western feudal society. The first European proletarians were racial subjects (Irish, Jews, Roma or Gypsies, Slavs, etc.) and they were victims of dispossession (enclosure), colonialism, and slavery within Europe. Indeed, Robinson suggested that racialization within Europe was very much a colonial process involving invasion, settlement, expropriation, and racial hierarchy. Insisting that modern European nationalism was completely bound up with racist myths, he reminds us that the ideology of Herrenvolk (governance by an ethnic majority) that drove German colonization of central Europe and “Slavic” territories “explained the inevitability and the naturalness of the domination of some Europeans by other Europeans.”*

*To acknowledge this is not to diminish anti-black racism or African slavery, but rather to recognize that capitalism was not the great modernizer giving birth to the European proletariat as a universal subject, and the “tendency of European civilization through capitalism was thus not to homogenize but to differentiate—to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into ‘racial’ ones.”*

*-Robin D. G. Kelley, “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?”*

### **Course Description and Goals**

Activists and scholars across and in between the disciplines have debated the relationship between race and class, culture and politics, and economy and society for centuries. These arguments are not merely academic – they are rooted in concrete struggles for freedom and equality across the globe. This course takes as its premise that race, class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of human difference and social structure are not separate phenomenon but are fundamentally bound up with each other and co-produced. Furthermore, the course will prompt students to interrogate capitalism(s) as an economic, cultural, and political phenomenon without privileging one level over another, asking questions such as – how are labor, freedom, and domination co-animated? How do capitalism(s) define the individual vs. the social? And, what can anthropologists, as such, add to these debates and struggles?

Beginning with a selection of literature loosely affiliated with the study of “racial capitalism”, this course will provide graduate students with a foundation for understanding and articulating capitalism as a historically determined global racialized system. Proceeding into theories of neoliberalism and its particular manifestations of race, the course finishes with selections from classical critical theory, asking students to re-assess foundational critiques of political economy through the lens of theories of racial capitalism.

Over the course of the semester, students will develop a field defining review essay on the anthropology of racial capitalism and neoliberalism.

### **Course Website**

A Canvas website (<https://tlt.rutgers.edu/canvas>) accompanies this course; there you will find announcements and discussion boards. If you have trouble accessing the site, please email your professor.

All students are responsible for timely attention to email and Canvas postings for this course and therefore should check the Canvas site and their Rutgers email accounts regularly. Dates and assignments may change; all changes will be announced in class or posted on Canvas or both.

### **Reporting absences online**

If you miss a class, within 24 hours, you are required to submit a form noting the date of the absence and explaining the reason, using the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. An email is automatically sent to the professor and TA.

[Please use the Rutgers absence report online system rather than emailing the professor or TAs directly about absences.]

\*\*If you miss more than two classes, you are required to see a Dean of Students for assistance in verifying any special circumstances, and to submit documentation of those unusual circumstances to the professor. The only excused absences are for unusual circumstances—such as medical reasons or a death in the family—and these circumstances must be documented by a physician and/or academic Dean.

### **Religious holidays**

Please notify the professor during the first two weeks of the semester if you will observe a religious holiday that will prevent you from attending a meeting. You may arrange to make up the work missed only if you notify the professor during the first two weeks of the semester about any expected absence due to a religious holiday.

### **Lateness**

Please come to class on time; it is very distracting to your professor and classmates when students arrive late to class.

### **E-mail communication with TA and professor**

In the subject line of your email message, begin with "G&N:RC"—e.g., a subject line might read: " G&N:RC /reading question" or " G&N:RC /exam question." (Specifying " G&N:RC " in your email subject line will help to ensure timely responses.)

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

**Attendance and Participation (15%):** Fifteen percent of your grade will reflect overall class attendance and participation in class discussion. These points will be based on attendance, involvement in class by raising questions and issues, listening and responding respectfully to others, and participating in group work. Excellent class attendance and participation means not missing class without notice, being on time and staying for the full time, and being actively engaged in the class. Laptops and tablets will be allowed in class for learning. However, if you are found to be using these devices for other purposes or if you use a phone in class, you may be asked to leave the class. **Audio and video recording of discussions are not allowed.**

To be prepared for the class you should do the assigned reading and assignments prior to the class, understand the major themes in the reading and/or ask questions related to your lack of understanding, as well as raise questions and issues for discussion.

#### **Review Essays (55%):**

You will be tasked with writing a review essay defining the field the anthropology of neoliberalism and racial capitalism and the relationship between them, in the style of reviews found in the Annual Review of Anthropology. This assignment is intended to familiarize you with a key genre in academic writing and can also serve as the foundation for one of the field statement essays required by the Anthropology Department.

You will write a 10-page (Times New Roman, 12pt.) annotated bibliography that will be due on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.

This paper will count for 20% of your overall grade.

You will write a 20-page (Times New Roman, 12pt.) review essay on the anthropology of neoliberalism and racial capitalism based on the midterm bibliography you created.

This paper will count for 35% of your overall grade.

#### **Annotated Questions (15%)**

Rather than weekly individual discussion board posts, students will write three annotated questions about the upcoming class readings. Questions can be about concepts or vocabulary that you don't understand, or topics you would like to explore further in class discussion. By annotated, I mean that each question should refer to a specific passage or set of passages and that you should explain your interest in the question in two or more sentences.

These questions are due by midnight the evening before class (Monday nights).

These questions will count for 15% of your grade. You will receive one point for each question per class. You will only fail to receive points if you do not post the required number of responses, or if a response is clearly not based on a deep engagement with the reading.

### **Class facilitation (15%)**

You will each be responsible for facilitating (perhaps with a partner, depending on course enrollment) an in-depth discussion of the readings for one class. You will have twenty minutes to present key ideas and tensions from the readings. You will then be responsible for facilitating the next forty minutes of class discussion with questions based on the reading. Presentations are to be analytical, not summarizations, and your ability to guide and respond to classmates will count equal to your presentation. You are required to bring a two-page handout of key points and quotations to give to classmates.

Your Discussion Question and Facilitation assignment will be worth 15% of your grade. Points will be based on your preparation, relevant examples, and classroom presentation.

### **Accessibility Services**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

### **Course Materials**

Class readings will be posted on the Canvas website in pdf form when possible or can be found on the library website in e-book format. Works which should be purchased or otherwise acquired will be indicated with a star in the schedule below.

## **Course Schedule (All Readings Are Selections)**

### ***Introductions***

#### **Week 1**

### ***Slavery and Freedom***

#### **Week 2**

\*DuBois, W. E. B. (1935): *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* – Chapters 1-4, 7, 9, 14, 16, 17

#### **Week 3**

\*James, C. L. R. (1938): *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Chapters 1-8, 12

#### **Week 4**

\*Hartman, Saidiya (1997): *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*

Moten, Fred (2003): *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*

### ***What is Racial Capitalism?***

#### **Week 5**

Kelley, Robin D. G. (2017): “What is Racial Capitalism and Why Does It Matter?” (YouTube)

\*Robinson, Cedric (1983): *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.

#### **Week 6**

Fields, Barbara and Karen Fields (2014): *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*

Hall, Stuart (1980): “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance.”

Harris, Cheryl (1995): “Whiteness as Property.”

## ***Neoliberalism – Economy and Democracy***

### **Week 7**

Foucault, Michel (1979): *The Birth of Biopolitics*

\*Brown, Wendy (2015): *Undoing the Demos*

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff (2001): “Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism”

### **Week 8**

Harvey, David (2010): *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*

Mirowski, Phillip (2013): *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown*

MacLean, Nancy (2017): *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*

## ***Fugitive Aspirations***

### **Week 9**

Dawson, Michael C. and Megan M. Francis (2016): “Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order”

Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten (2016): *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*

### **Week 10**

Gramsci, Antonio (1935): *The Prison Notebooks*

Hall, Stuart (1986): “Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity”

## ***The Critique of Political Economy***

### **Week 11**

\*Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe (1985): *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*

Zizek, Slavoj (1989): “How Did Marx Invent the Symptom?”

### **Week 12**

\*Marx, Karl (1867): *Capital Vol. 1*

***Where Do We Go From Here?***

**Week 13**

\*Thomas, Deborah (2019): *Political Life in the Wake of the Plantation: Sovereignty, Witnessing, Repair*

**Week 14**

\*Shange, Savannah (2019): *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, and Schooling in San Francisco*