

Culture, Identity and Conflict

CONF 302

Fall 2015

Tuesdays 10:30am-1:10pm

Robinson Hall B205

Dr. Lopez Bunyasi

Email address: tlopezbu@gmu.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays after class until 3:00pm

If you cannot meet during regular office hours, you may schedule an appointment.

Course Description

This course is designed to explore deeply rooted, intractable and protracted social conflicts around core issues of identity. Course materials invite students to think critically about how identities based upon nationality, race, gender, class, and ability animate inter-personal and structural conflict, and they challenge students to consider how various contexts and conflicts, in turn, shape and re-shape social identities. In-class analysis of the readings and documentaries will be integrated with group-based activities during class time, as well as individual exploratory assignments outside of class. Throughout the semester, we will weave in and out of conversation about our own identities as we work to take account of our relationships to various conflicts both as people who have been impacted by them, and as people who (have) contribute(d) to them. By the end of the semester, students should be more adept at communicating their understanding of culture, identity and conflict, and they should have acquired a more sophisticated set of skills with which to explore dynamics of and potential remediation of identity-based conflicts.

Expectations for Participation

Although the professor will often begin each class with brief comments and some points of clarification, much of the course will consist of dialogue between students. A successful, productive class will require that you **come prepared, read all of the relevant material, participate responsibly** in the discussions, and **respectfully listen** to the views and ideas of other students. Regular attendance is expected; if one does not attend, one cannot participate.

Each day you will be expected to come to class prepared to express your ideas and to ask whatever questions you may have. During class discussions (of which there will be many), the professor will be expecting people to raise their hands so that they may be called upon. When raised hands are not forthcoming, she will call on people at random. The discussion generated in class will provide much food for thought—the more people who are willing to speak, the greater the “feast” will be.

Hopefully, the diversity of thought in our classroom will help you hone your own understandings and analyses of culture, identity, and conflict.

This course will explore controversial and sensitive subject matter; it is, therefore, expected that students will engage with one another in a respectful manner even when they do not agree with one another. Learning in community is a special experience, and it is one that is enhanced with a compassionate disposition.

Technology Policy

Cell phones should be silenced while in class. Text messaging and communicating via social media is discouraged. You are expected to neither make nor receive calls during our class unless the matter is an urgent one. Please let the professor know if you anticipate such a call. Failure to comply with these codes of conduct will negatively affect your participation grade.

The professor will communicate with students over email, so please be attentive to your university email account. Being attentive to your account means checking it daily.

Student Resources

George Mason has a terrific Writing Center where you can access tutoring (face-to-face, online and e-mail), writing workshops and helpful online resources.

To find out how you can take advantage of the WC, please visit their website at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

Learning Services provides a variety of experience-based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. To learn more about their coaching, skills, and tutoring resources, please visit their website at: <http://caps.gmu.edu/learning-services/>

Any student who suspects s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss the student's specific needs, and provide written documentation from the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, s/he can contact ODS. For more information, please visit their website at: <http://ods.gmu.edu>

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the faculty or staff. For more information, please visit their website at: <http://eli.gmu.edu>

The Office of Military Services assists veterans, active duty service members, guardsmen, reservists, and dependents in making a successful transition into the Mason community. For more information, please view their website at: <http://military.gmu.edu>

The Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education leads the university in creating and sustaining inclusive learning environments where all members of the Mason community are welcomed, valued, and supported. Some of the constituencies that they serve are historically under-represented minorities and first-generation university students. For more information, please visit their website at: <http://odime.gmu.edu>

Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a safe learning, living and working environment free from discrimination. The University's environment is meant to be experienced as vibrant and dynamic, and one that includes ample opportunities for exploration of self, identity and independence. Sexual misconduct and incidents of interpersonal violence deeply interrupt that experience, and George Mason University is committed to a campus that is free of these types of incidents in order to promote community well-being and student success.

George Mason University encourages individuals who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support.

Confidential resources are available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu), Student Health Services (shs.gmu.edu), the University Ombudsman (ombudsman.gmu.edu), and Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education and Services (waves.gmu.edu).

All other members of the University community (except those noted above) are not considered confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator.

For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact the University Title IX Coordinator at integrity.gmu.edu and/or at 703-993-8730. Our goal is to create awareness of the range of options available to you and provide access to resources.

Academic Conduct & Honor Code

The professor shares and upholds the expectations of academic conduct explicitly stated by the Office for Academic Integrity. As student members of the George Mason University community, and as student members of this course, you are accountable to the following Honor Code:

"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”

In this course, students are also prohibited from (a) knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, and (b) submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the professor.

Should you have any questions about what it means to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie, please consult the following website:

<http://oai.gmu.edu/understanding-the-honor-code/>

All students are encouraged to review the “Student Strategies for Preventing Violations” link on the Office for Academic Integrity’s website:

<http://oai.gmu.edu/preventing-violations/student-strategies-for-preventing-violations/>

Any student found violating the tenets of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

Course Requirements:

CONF 302 is a writing-intensive course. You will have four writing assignments, including one revision of previously graded work. You will find the prompts for these papers on Blackboard under the “Assignments” tab. You will also have one group presentation to make on the last day of class. The professor will form the groups and assign topics. Participation in class will also count for a significant portion of your grade; this mark will be determined by one’s commitment to in-class discussion and activities as someone who communicates, listens, acts, and observes.

Papers

All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and stapled with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman size 12 font. Double-sided printing is preferred, though not required. Your name, name of the course, semester, professor’s name, and assignment title must be placed as a heading in one of the top corners of the paper (single-spaced): this heading constitutes five lines total. There may only be three spaces between the end of the heading and the body of the paper. All papers must include page numbers and proper citation. A template for proper paper formatting can be found on Blackboard under the “Assignments” tab. Papers that do not follow this format will be deducted one-third of a letter grade (A to A-). Late papers will be deducted one-third of a letter grade (A to A-) for each day it is late. You may turn in a late paper over e-mail, but you must turn in a hard copy at your earliest convenience. The professor will not grade a paper electronically; she will only grade a hard-copy paper. She will, however, grade the paper keeping in mind the day that you turned it in electronically. Do yourself a favor and proofread each paper by reading it out loud to yourself before turning it in to the professor.

Basis for Grading

- In-class participation 15%
- Race and Memory Paper (5 pages) **Due 10/20** 25%
- Gender and Domination Response Paper (5 pages) **Due 11/17** 25%
- Revision **Due 12/8** 10%
**your choice as to whether the grade for the revision is averaged into the grade of the original paper*
- Renegade Dreams Paper (5 pages) **Due 12/14 at 11:00am sharp** 25%

Extra Credit

You may do up to three extra credit assignments. You may turn in only one extra assignment at a time on the day that particular assignment is due. The due dates that you may turn these assignments in are as follows:

Due 9/29: Attend and participate in a community service activity, and write a one paragraph summary of what you did and explain which identity group(s) was (were) primarily being served. Turn in some evidence that you did this activity (i.e. a flyer from the event, a note from an organizer from the event, a sticker, a photograph of you at the event, etc.). I highly recommend attending the **Fear 2 Freedom at Mason** event on **September 22** at Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall from 4-7pm. You can learn more about this event at: fear2freedom.onmason.com (1 percentage point)

Due 10/6: Watch *Race 2012* documentary (find link to film on Blackboard under "Extra Credit") and write a 1.5 page response paper linking issues from the current 2016 presidential campaign and political landscape to the 2012 presidential campaign and political landscape. (1 percentage point)

Due 12/1: Write a 1.5 page paper in which you reflect on a university event that you attended this semester (other than the community service activity described above). You must pre-approve the event with the professor. (1 percentage point)

Required Texts

Book

- Ralph, Laurence. 2014. *Renegade Dreams: Living Through Injury in Gangland Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Articles/Chapters (located on Blackboard under the "E-Reserves" tab)

- Cohen, Dara Kay. 2013. "Female Combatants and the Perpetuation of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War." *World Politics* 65, 3 pp. 383-415.
- Cohn, Carol. 1993. "War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War." In *The Gendered Society Reader*, ed. Kimmel, Michael and Amy Aronson, pp. 448-457. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Excerpts from DeSantis, Alan. 2007. *Inside Greek U: Fraternities, Sororities and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky. (entire book is online via Mason's Library)
- Delgado, Richard. 2013. "Precious Knowledge: State Bans on Ethnic Studies, Book Traffickers (*Librotraficantes*), and a New Type of Race Trial." *North Carolina Law Review* 91 pp. 1513-1553.
- Hague, Euan and Edward H. Sebesta. 2011. "The Jefferson Davis Highway: Contesting the Confederacy in the Pacific Northwest." *Journal of American Studies* 45 pp. 281-301.
- Hurd, Clayton A. 2008. "Cinco de Mayo, Normative Whiteness, and the Marginalization of Mexican-Descent Students." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 39, 3 pp. 293-313.
- Galtung, Johan. 1990. "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 27, 3 pp. 291-305.
- Excerpts from Johnson, Allan G. 2006. *Privilege, Power and Difference, 2nd Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill. pp. 12-40.
- King, C. Richard. 2004. "Borrowing Power: Racial Metaphors and Pseudo-Indian Mascots." *The New Centennial Review* 4, 1 pp. 189-209.
- Luke, Katherine P. 2009. "Sexual Violence Prevention and Technologies of Gender among Heavy-Drinking College Women." *Social Service Review* 83, 1 pp. 79-109.

- Pascoe, C.J. 2005. "Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse." *Sexualities* 8, 3 pp. 329-346.
- Phillips, Debby A. 2007. "Punking and Bullying: Strategies in Middle School, High School, and Beyond." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 22, 2 pp. 158-178.
- Ringrose, Jessica and Emma Renold. 2010. "Normative Cruelties and Gender Deviants: The Performative Effects of Bully Discourses for Girls and Boys in School." *British Educational Research Journal* 36, 4 pp. 573-596.
- Takaki, Ronald. 1993. "Multiculturalism: Battleground or Meeting Ground?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, pp. 109-121.
- Weitsman, Patricia A. 2008. "The Politics of Identity and Sexual Violence: A Review of Bosnia and Rwanda." *Human Rights Quarterly* 30, 3 pp. 561-578.
- Zakos, Katharine P. 2015. "Truth is marching on: the Lasershow Spectacular at the Stone Mountain Park Confederate Memorial and the changing narratives of history." *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 10, 3 pp. 280-295.

Additional Assigned Reading & Online Media (located on Blackboard under the "Additional Assigned Reading & Online Media" tab)

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "What this Cruel War was Over: The Meaning of the Confederate Flag is Best Discerned in the Words of those Who Bore It." *The Atlantic*. June 22, 2015
- Multiple Authors. "Room for Debate: Does the Confederate Flag Breed Racism?" *The New York Times*. June 19, 2015.
- Multiple Authors. "Room for Debate: Besides the Confederate Flag, What Other Symbols Should Go?" *The New York Times*. June 24, 2015.
- "Outlawed in Arizona." Need to Know on *PBS*. February 15, 2013.
- "Tucson's Mexican-American Studies Ban." *The Daily Show*. April 2, 2012.
- Horne, Tom. "An Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson." June 11, 2007.
- House Bill 2281. State of Arizona House of Representatives. 49th Legislature. Second Regular Session. 2010.
- Junger, Sebastian. "How PTSD Became a Problem Far Beyond the Battlefield." June 2015.

Course Schedule

*The following schedule is subject to change according to the learning needs of the class.

September 1. Introductions

- ❖ Introductions and networking
- ❖ Categories of identity
- ❖ Identity mapping
- ❖ Class expectations: forming norms, identifying triggers

September 8. Privilege and Oppression, Advantage and Disadvantage

- ❖ In-class activity

Readings to be completed for September 8:

- Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence." pp. 291-296*(*stop at Section 4; Examples of Cultural Violence)
- Johnson, Allan G. "Privilege, Oppression, and Difference."

September 15. Race: Definitions and Important Trends

- ❖ *Race: The Power of an Illusion* documentary
- ❖ Powerpoint

September 22. Race and Memory: Mascots, Holidays, and Currency

Readings to be completed for September 22:

- King, C. Richard. "Borrowing Power: Racial Metaphors and Pseudo-Indian Mascots."
- Hurd, Clayton A. "Cinco de Mayo, Normative Whiteness, and the Marginalization of Mexican-Descent Students."

September 29. Race and Memory: The Confederacy

Readings to be completed for September 29:

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "What this Cruel War was Over: The Meaning of the Confederate Flag is Best Discerned in the Words of those Who Bore It."
- Hague, Euan and Edward H. Sebesta. "The Jefferson Davis Highway: Contesting the Confederacy in the Pacific Northwest."
- Zakos, Katharine. "Truth is Marching On: The Lasershow Spectacular at the Stone Mountain Park Confederate Memorial and the Changing Narratives of History."
- Multiple Authors. "Room for Debate: Does the Confederate Flag Breed Racism?"
- Multiple Authors. "Room for Debate: Besides the Confederate Flag, What Other Symbols Should Go?"

October 6. Race and Memory: Ethnic Studies

- ❖ *Precious Knowledge* documentary

Readings to be completed and videos to be watched by October 6:

- Takaki, Ronald. "Multiculturalism: Battleground or Meeting Ground?"
- Horne, Tom. "An Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson."
- House Bill 2281. State of Arizona House of Representatives. 49th Legislature. Second Regular Session. 2010.
- Delgado, Richard. "*Precious Knowledge*: State Bans on Ethnic Studies, Book Traffickers (*Librotraficantes*), and a New Type of Race Trial."
- "Outlawed in Arizona." Need to Know on *PBS*.
- "Tucson's Mexican-American Studies Ban." *The Daily Show*.

October 13. No Class

October 20. Gender

- ❖ Race and Memory Paper due today
- ❖ In-class activities

October 27. Gender and Domination: Childhood and Adolescence

Readings to be completed for October 20:

- Phillips, Debby A. "Punking and Bullying: Strategies in Middle School, High School, and Beyond."
- Ringrose, Jessica and Emma Renold. "Normative Cruelties and Gender Deviants: The Performative Effects of Bully Discourses for Girls and Boys in School."
- Pascoe, C.J. "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse."

November 3. Gender and Domination: University Life

- ❖ **IF YOU ARE A VA RESIDENT: REMEMBER TO VOTE!**

Readings to be completed for October 27:

- DeSantis "Introduction: Life at Greek University"
- DeSantis "Understanding Gender"
- DeSantis "The Tough Guy and His Date (Rape)"
- Luke, Katherine P. "Sexual Violence Prevention and Technologies of Gender among Heavy-Drinking College Women."

November 10. Gender and Dominance: War

Readings to be completed for November 3:

- Cohn, Carol. "War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War."
- Weitsman, Patricia A. "The Politics of Identity and Sexual Violence: A Review of Bosnia and Rwanda."
- Cohen, Dara Kay. "Female Combatants and the Perpetuation of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War."

November 17. Trauma and Alienation

- ❖ Gender and Domination Response Paper due today
- Junger, Sebastian. “How PTSD Became a Problem Far Beyond the Battlefield.”

November 24. Renegade Dreams

Readings to be completed for November 24:

- Ralph, Laurence. Dramatis Personae –CH 3: Authenticity

December 1. Renegade Dreams

Readings to be completed for December 1:

- Ralph, Laurence. CH 4: Disability-Postscript

December 8. Last Class. TBD

- ❖ Revision due today

December 14. No Class.

- ❖ Renegade Dreams Paper due today

Instructor’s Intellectual Property

The lectures, classroom activities, and all materials associated with this class and developed by the instructor are copyrighted in the name of Dr. Tehama Lopez Bunyasi for the semester of Fall 2015.