

## Harper College Graduate Equivalency Course (GEC) Syllabus

Race and Education

3.0 GEC Hours

Spring 2021

February 2 – March 9, 2020

Synchronous Sessions on Tuesdays from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. through Zoom

*Education is a reflection of the society from which it is birthed, nothing more, nothing less.*

– Horace Mann Bond

### Faculty Information

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### Course Information

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#### Course Description

The course, *Race and Education*, explores the centrality of education in the social construction of race in the U.S. and schooling as one of the primary institutionalizing sites in the production of race as a cultural phenomenon.

This course, conceptualized through a critical race theoretical (CRT) lens, is structured by its own set of principles and assumptions that guide the questions raised and course of study. The knowledge claims that ground CRT lay in the self-determining resistance of enslaved Africans. Its epistemological origins are in critical legal studies expanded into educational discourse through the works of Richardo - Delgado Derrick Bell (1990), Gloria Ladson Billings (1998), Joyce King (1991), Sylvia Wynter (1992).

Five principles ground the assumptions and analysis in CRT.

- *Intercentricity* (Yosso, 2005) of race and racism - in education CRT begins with the conclusion race and racism are endemic to and permanent in the U.S. and that racism intersects with forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexuality, language, culture, immigrant status, phenotype, accent, and surname.
- *Challenge to dominating ideology* - CRT seeks to challenge claims of objectivity, equal opportunity, fairness, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity, asserting that these claims camouflage and normalize self-interest, power, and privilege of dominating groups.
- *Commitment to social justice* – CRT's social justice principle makes transparent hidden processes, knowledge wells, thought processes, and interactions that normalize and institutionalize domination and/or unequal power relations and agendas. In education, CRT's social and racial justice research agenda exposes how diversity and inclusion policies, practices, and percepts are borne from what Bell (1980) and (1990) identifies as *interest convergence*. Bell (1980 & 1990) used interest convergence to problematize the supposed gains of the civil rights

movement, such as school desegregation and access to higher education. He makes a compelling argument that these policies did provide access to resources and spaces but did not work toward the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty. Problematizing these hallmark policies and procedures offers a structural analysis on the way that race works in education.

- *Centrality of experiential knowledge* - CRT recognizes, and honors the experiential knowledge of historically marginalized people as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination. In education, CRT centralizes the lived experiences and knowledge construction of racialized and other historically marginalized people. Through counternarratives or storytelling methods that include family histories, parables, *sayings*' (African American proverbs), testimonios, *dichos* (Latinx proverbs), and chronicles.
- *Interdisciplinary perspective* - CRT extends beyond conceptual boundaries set-forth in academic disciplines in its analyze race and racism within both historical and contemporary contexts. In education, particularly this course, I use a transdisciplinary approach to unpack the way race has structured education in the U.S.

### **Course Goals**

- Course participants will grow or develop their understanding of how race has historically shaped, and currently, shapes, schooling for a range of stakeholders.
- Students will develop their understanding of the role of race in American society through their study of race in American educational practice and policy.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Many of us, especially educators and those committed to education believe that education and schooling are the great equalizers. Deep down, we believe that hard work (meritocracy) and perseverance (individualism) can create pathways out of poverty and beyond the barriers of race, gender, and economic-based oppression. This belief is embedded in shared folk knowledge, and it justifies the creed and promise of the American Dream. In the larger society, the rhetoric around education and schooling is that it is the north star of the American Dream. The default assumption is that knowledge and schooling provide choices and opportunities that lead to a prosperous lifestyle.

These strong beliefs overshadow critical analyzes of education and schooling, preventing apprehension of the liberatory aspects of education and schooling. Despite contrary information, because the reality is statistics tell us that very few move up and out of the economic class to which we were born, the power of this belief is that it gives hope. In the wake of our faith in education and schooling, families are slipping into the categories of poverty and working poor with African American, Latinx, Indigenous Americans, and poor white communities bearing the brunt of inherent inequities in housing, educational achievement, advancement, and economic mobility. In light of these powerful economic and educational formations, Black and brown communities (and other racially marginalized communities) are pushing back, organizing, and mobilizing in ways not seen in many years. It is more important than ever to learn and develop critical frameworks for making sense of the institutional history, policy climate, and contentious realities of teachers and students within U.S. public schooling.

In this course, we will explore the role of race and racism in the context of education and schooling. As purported in CRT, race is everywhere in American. We are inundated with race over our entire lives in every corner of our lived experiences. Schools, as a microcosm of the larger society, pass on and maintain our intrinsic understandings of race. It is also one of the primary sites where many students learn what race is, and through their interactions with individuals of various racial groups, and the messages they receive by the presence and absence in their schools of students and educators of different racial identities. The intertwining of race and schooling is not a recent phenomenon but rather threads through the history of education and schooling in the United States.

Nineteenth-century Common Schools excluded Black children and others, depending on their racial classification. Schooling has always served as a tool of socialization and cultural indoctrination. These tactics were extended in practices of educators who enforced dominating norms (deculturalization—Springs 2016) and values upon racially minoritized groups. First Peoples of America education was founded on the principles of assimilation and weaken their resistance to colonization. The dispossession of California from Mexico required that Mexican children abandon their language under the guise of progress and in the name of school success.

The legacy of race, knowledge, methods, and processes used to construct, justify and disseminate are very much with us. A few examples of race's presence in today's American schools include:

- The ongoing student movement across our nation's universities, in which student groups have identified and challenged racial bias and racialized aggression
- Disproportionate suspension and expulsion of, and school-based police intervention with, African-American and Latinx youth, as well as the adultification of Black girls
- An underrepresentation of teachers of color among America's teacher workforce

These examples illustrate that race factors into educators' and students' day-to-day experiences in American educational institutions. As it does in other social settings, race shapes individuals' experiences and practices through their perceptions, expectations, responses. Individuals and communities bring their matrices of opportunity and resources to their schools, and these matrices are shaped by how race works in the United States.

The course will begin with an interrogation of race, apprehending why and how it was created, and to what benefit and detriment. Building on this knowledge, the course of study will turn to how education and schooling contributed to the social construction, propagation, and institutionalization of race. The second half of the course is prompted by an ideological shift, as the remaining course of study will examine race as a cultural phenomenon in education and schooling. This shift centers the counternarratives of those racialized as "*other*" allowing us to apprehend the contemporary ways that race and racism function in education and schooling.

### Course Outline

1. Weeks 1-2: Race and Schooling

Trace the history of race and education in the United States to our current context.

Examine experiences you had in school that taught you about how race worked in your community in American society.

Unpack encounters you have had with students, parents, colleagues, community members, district leadership that has had racial undertones or overtones.

2. Weeks 3-4: Media Analyses

Evaluate what rigorous scholarship can teach us about youth and communities that have been racialized.

Explain how research and theory have historically failed or fallen short, often by omitting the voices of Black youth themselves.

3. Weeks 5-6: Bridging Theory and Practice

Identify a course, policy, or practice and explore the way that race works within the context you have identified.

Analyze the policies, practices, language, assumptions, and impact as they relate to race.

### Required Text and Video Series (will be provided to course participants)

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, 1962-. (2014). *Racism without racists: color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Pounder, C. C. H., Adelman, L., Cheng, J., Herbes-Sommers, C., Strain, T. H., Smith, L., Ragazzi, C., Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (2003). *Race: The power of an illusion*. San Francisco, Calif: California Newsreel.

Articles to Include (will be provided to course participants):

Kendi, I. X. (2017). *Stamped from the Beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America*. Random House.

Smedley, A., & Smedley, B. D. (2012). *Race in North America: Origin and evolution of a worldview*. Westview Press.

Spring, J. (2016). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the United States*. Routledge.

Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (2015). *Foundations of critical race theory in education 2ed*.

*Other materials will be utilized in class and assigned via Blackboard.*

## **Student Expectations and Requirements**

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This course takes the position that only labor-intensive intellectual pursuits produce self-reflective and self-critical praxis. This class will require you to share your schooling experiences, engage in dialogue with your classmates, and remain open to grappling with challenging and sometimes uncomfortable topics.

Freire (1970) wrote, "we are conditioned, but we are not determined," as participants in the class, I want to acknowledge our positionality as educators, students, administrators, community members. Though we have attained a measure of academic success, we are all in the process of becoming, regardless of the educational level, and we all have the potential to strengthen our resolve and skill to be change agents in our current locations and beyond. Though the course is hyper-critical of education and schooling, I hold firmly to the belief that education and schooling can create emancipatory pathways for individuals, communities, and society in general. Accessing the liberating aspects of education and school requires intentionality, ongoing critical praxis (study + reflection), commitment to social justice.

Throughout the course, I ask that you remain attentive to your experiences, monitor your disclosures, and work to respect each other. This course deals with the sensitive topic of race that is sometimes difficult to discuss. We must work together to create a classroom environment where people feel safe taking risks. ***To this aim, please follow these norms:***

- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Do not be afraid to challenge one another by respectfully asking questions, refraining from personal attacks – focus on ideas.
- Participate to the fullest of your ability – community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- The goal is not to agree – it is to gain a deeper understanding.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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### Race and schooling autobiography (Due by end of week 2)

Please write a 6-8 page, double-spaced autobiography of your educational experiences looking at them through the lens of race. Some questions that might help you flesh this out are:

- What have the racial compositions of your classrooms and schools been?
- What was the racial background of educators at your schools?
- How did you see race play out in the schools you attended?
- What experiences did you have in school that taught you about how race worked in your community in American society?
- If you have worked in P-16 schools, please extend this consideration to your work. What encounters have you had with students, parents, colleagues, community members, district leadership that has had racial undertones or overtones?
- How did you make sense of these encounters at the time?
- How do you make sense of them now?

### Media Analyses (Due by end of week 4)

For one class session, you will be responsible for posting on the course discussion forum an article from a popular (non-academic, can include bloggers such as Son of Baldwin, Luuvie) media source that pertains to course themes and topics. The purpose of this assignment is to complement the more academic course material by sharing instances of how racism and inequality affect racialized communities, youth on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the media item you choose should be no more than a year old.

Post a link to the media source, and share a brief reaction/response (2500 - 5000). As you respond, think about the following:

- Beyond the headlines, what can rigorous scholarship teach us youth and communities that have been racialized?
- On the other hand, how have research and theory historically failed or fallen short, often by omitting the voices of Black youth themselves?

### Bridging theory and practice (Due by end of week 6)

This assignment allows participants to explore the relationship between theory and practice. Identify a course, policy, or practice and explore the way that race works within the context you have identified. You should use the following questions to guide the analysis:

- How do we talk about race as it relates to the policy or practice?
- How do these practices, processes, or policies include or use race language and thusly shape or justify our assumptions about race?
- Consider the way that race and racism impact students' or community members' everyday experiences.

## **Methods of Evaluation**

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Students must complete all three assignments with a score of 80% or higher per the grading rubric for each assignment to earn a passing grade for the course. Rubrics will be provided for each assignment.

## **Course Calendar**

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Course meetings will take place on Tuesdays from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. via Dr. Hoff's virtual classroom. Additional learning activities and assignments will take place over Blackboard.

**Tuesday, Feb 2:** Introductions, Race and Education Overview

Assigned Readings on History of Race and Education Due for Next Class

**Tuesday, Feb 9:** Race and Education Discussion

Race and Education Autobiography Due by Sunday, Feb 14

**Tuesday, Feb 16:** Media Analysis Overview

Assigned Readings about Racialization of Youth and Communities Due for Next Class

**Tuesday, Feb 23:** Media Analysis Discussion

Media Analysis Due by Sunday, Feb 28

**Tuesday, March 2:** Bridging Theory and Practice Overview

Assigned Readings on Race and School Policies and Practices Due for Next Class

**Tuesday, March 9:** Bridging Theory and Practice Overview

Theory and Practice Evaluation Due by Sunday, March 14

## **Graduate Equivalency (GEC) Policies**

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### **Enrollment**

The Academy for Teaching Excellence requires a minimum of six (6) faculty to be enrolled in any GEC to be offered. The maximum enrollment in any GEC is determined collaboratively with the instructor and the Academy. Enrollment is measured two (2) weeks before the first scheduled day of the course.

Faculty wishing to participate in a GEC will register for the course through the [Academy website](#). All GECs are pre-approved for credit.

### **Registration and Withdrawal Policy**

The registration deadline is two (2) weeks before the first scheduled day of the course.

A faculty member will have seven (7) calendar days from the beginning of the course (first day of class) to un-enroll by notifying both the instructor and [kmichela@harpercollege.edu](mailto:kmichela@harpercollege.edu). After seven (7) days, any faculty member who does not successfully complete the course will receive a “XV” (Incomplete) on their transcript and no credit will be awarded.

### **Receiving Credit for GECs**

GEC credits will appear in a faculty member’s professional development list (full-time faculty) and transcript within two weeks after the end of each semester. A faculty member may repeat a GEC at any time; however, because GEC credit is used for promotion and tenure, credit for a course may only be awarded once.

### **Final Grades**

GEC grades will be awarded as “PV” (Pass) for students who have successfully completed the course and “XV” (Incomplete) for students who have not. No other grade options will be assigned in any case.

## **Policies**

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### **Students with Disabilities and Academic Accommodations**

Harper College strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let Access and Disability Services (ADS) know immediately at 847.925.6266. ADS will privately discuss the options you have, including the accommodations they offer. You are welcome to register with Access and Disability Service by going to [www.harpercollege.edu/ads](http://www.harpercollege.edu/ads) and fill out the application for ADS services. Once you have your accommodations approved by ADS, please make arrangements with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

ADS contact information: 847.925.6266, [ads@harpercollege.edu](mailto:ads@harpercollege.edu), Building I, Room 103.

### **Equal Opportunity Statement**

Harper College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or unfavorable discharge from military service.