**Deconstructing Whiteness**

**Decal Syllabus**

**Facilitators: Erica Gibbons, Madeline Livingstone**

**Faculty Sponsor: Victoria Robinson**

**Fall 2018**

**Course Description**

This decal aims to confront uncomfortable conversations about privilege and positionality to understand where white bodies have the responsibility to be in movements against white supremacy and in solidarity with marginalized peoples and groups of color. This class will not be to coddle white fragility, but to deconstruct and relearn whiteness through case studies, speakers, and intense, critical readings.

**Required Materials**

All readings will be provided for free on bCourses. Students will only be required to bring something to take notes with to class and internet to access readings. If you are unable to obtain either of these, contact a facilitator and we will arrange something.

**Student Learning Objectives**

Understand their positionality in the work of decolonization, and unlearn as well as develop new knowledge about white identity and how its constructs of oppression build most things we have come to see as “natural.”

**Grading**

40% Participation in class

30% Weekly written assignments

30% Attendance

Participation

Shows interest in readings and participates in discussion, providing meaningful commentary that is reflective and constructive. Student provides beneficially to the space and adheres to community agreements.

Weekly written assignments

1 paragraph responses to the discussion question that proves engagement with the topic at hand. Assignments are due weekly and will be submitted online. They will be reflective of the prior weeks themes but work generally with the common questions of the class.

Attendance

One unexcused absence

2 Absences= Letter grade drop

4 Absences=Fail

**Accommodations**

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with the instructional staff, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform us immediately and provide us with your “letter of accommodation” from the DSP Office. Please see us privately after class or at our office hours. Students who need academic accommodations (for example, a note-taker), should request them from the Disabled Students' Program, 260 César Chávez Center, 642-0518 (voice or TTY). DSP is the campus office responsible for verifying disability-related need for academic accommodations, assessing that need, and for planning accommodations in cooperation with students and instructors as needed and consistent with course requirements.

**Weekly Schedule**

Week 1: What is Whiteness?/ White Identity

* *When do you hear whiteness being discussed in your day to day lives?*
* In-class reading:
  + <https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/white-fragility-why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism-twlm/>
* Homework reading:
  + Barnor Hesse, *8 White Identities*
  + Howard Winant, *Behind Blue Eyes*
  + Andrea Smith, *Heteropatriarchy and Three Pillars of White Supremacy*

Week 2: Complexities of White Allyship

* *What should white allyship look like? Do white allies have to be institutionalists?*
* In-class reading:
  + <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/09/01/opinion/civil-rights-protest-resistance.html?_r=0&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com>
  + <http://www.guidetoallyship.com>
  + <http://www.dailycal.org/2017/06/26/performative-political-actions-masquerade-allyship/>
* Homework reading:
  + Martin Alcoff, *What Should White People Do*

Week 3: White Fragility/ White Defense/White Victimhood

* *How does recentering what we see as violent and violence reposition who needs protection?*
* In-class reading:
  + <https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/white-womens-tears-and-the-men-who-love-them-twlm/>
* Homework reading:
* <http://www.salon.com/2015/06/16/11_ways_white_america_avoids_taking_responsibility_for_its_racism_partner/>

Week 4: White Service/Travel

* *How can the use of race, class, and privilege be disentangled from white saviorhood? Is it a purely ideological difference?*
* In-class reading:
  + <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/>
  + Lauren Kascak Sayantani Dasgupta, *#InstagrammingAfrica: The Narcissism of Global Voluntourism*
* Homework reading:
  + Renato Rosaldo, *Imperialist Nostalgia*
  + Ivan Illich, *To Hell With Good Intentions*

Week 5: White Research and Education

* *What are liberal whites’ roles in colonization of education? Why do white people have more access to the histories of POC than POC do?*
* In-class Reading:
  + <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/education/233911-rewriting-history-and-the-pursuit-of-ignorance>
* Homework reading:
  + Chapters 1-3 Decolonizing Methodologies by Linda Tuhiwai Smith Additional Readings:

Week 6: White Entertainment

* *What impact do representations and assumptions of whiteness and racial stereotypes have on the opportunities and possibilities for individuals of different races and ethnicities in their personal and professional lives? Discuss Kaepernick and limits of liberation for POC in entertainment.*
* In-class Reading:
  + <http://www.criticalmediaproject.org/cml/topicbackground/race-ethnicity/>
  + <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2013/03/05/55599/the-medias-stereotypical-portrayals-of-race/>
* Homework reading:
  + *The Odds* Jeff Chang on Cultural Equity and #OscarsSoWhite

Week 7: White Emptiness of Culture/Cultural Appropriation

* *What are the dynamics of commercializable allyship? How does white money function in this setting? What does a “transformative, substantive white identity” look like? (Alcoff, 13).*
* In-class reading:
  + Ignatiev, *Abolishing Whiteness*
* Homework reading:
  + Podcast codeswitch “Whiteness”

Week 8: White Innocence/Tradition

* *What does the trope of the “Good White Person” do for allyship and conversations around equality? What is one way that the history of white people as inherently innocent, and their tradition as “natural” and therefore good, be disrupted?*
* In-class reading:
  + <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/lady-gaga-the-problems-with-non-racist-white_us_59960aeee4b033e0fbdec279>
* Homework reading:
  + Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence,* Introduction
  + “Color Imagery and Snow White” from *Race and Races* (504-514)

Week 9: White Media

* *How does tokenization of People of color work in conservative and liberal media? How is this different from true representation? What does true representation look like?*
* In-class reading:
  + <http://metro.co.uk/2016/12/27/a-former-versace-employee-says-the-company-uses-a-code-word-for-black-customers-6345645/>
* Homework reading:
  + “Constructing Crime, Framing Disaster” Dan Berger
  + Codeswitch “Rep Sweats”
  + Find a poc media person whose voice you want to center (Shaun King, Lowrey, Brittney)

Week 10: White History

* *Where do you see your history portrayed in history? Where do you see yourself in history books? How have you heard of your ancestors talked about in your family? Why are there so many movies made by white people about slavery now? Is the continuous reminder of slavery good or bad for black people emotionally and historically? Think of Snoop Dogg’s retort to the new rendition of Roots, and the possibility of HBO having the show “Confederacy.” What does this do to the history that white people want to present? Is it a move to retroactively put white people on the “right side of history”?*
* In-class reading:
  + <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/trey-lyon/call-it-what-is-is-white-_b_6234484.html>
* Homework reading:
  + <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/01/arts/design/chartres-cathedral-restoration-controversial.html?mwrsm=Facebook>
  + <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/150-years-later-schools-are-still-a-battlefield-for-interpreting-civil-war/2015/07/05/e8fbd57e-2001-11e5-bf41-c23f5d3face1_story.html?utm_term=.869a6927b48b>

Week 11: Environmental Racism

* *How have food practices been gentrified? How does sustainable food policy continue to have crazy expectations for PoC? What is another case study of Environmental Racism in the United States? Post about it on the facebook page. Find an organization that fights environmental racism*
* In-class reading:
  + Hooks and Smith, *The Treadmill of Destruction*
* Homework reading:
  + *Bringing Good food to others: Investigating the subjects of alternative food practice*

Week 12: White Comfort/Coddling

* *When has the fear of being uncomfortable changed what you are willing to do in a racialized situation? (talk about being a bystander) Is whites working with/teaching whites segregationist thinking?*
* In-class reading:
  + <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/anna-kegler/the-sugarcoated-language-of-white-fragility_b_10909350.html>
  + <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/06/24/417108714/dispatch-from-charleston-the-cost-of-white-comfort>
* Homework reading:
  + Robin Diangelo, *White Women’s Tears and the Men Who Love Them*

Week 13: Taking It Home

* *Should white people be institutionalists or be abolitionists? How are you going to take the knowledge that we learned in and through this class into your jobs and life paths?*
* In-class reading:
  + Bell, *Wanted: A white Leader Able to free whites of racism*
* Homework reading:
  + McDougall, *Building Civic Infrastructure for Social Change*