

**Syllabus**  
**Race and Ethnicity in American History**  
HIST 288-2  
Fall 2021

**Contact:**

Prof. Lee Willis  
459 CCC  
Zoom office hours: T, W, 10:00-11:00 AM and by appointment  
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**Required texts:**

Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Back Bay, revised edition, 2008). (text rental)

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, revised edition, 2012). (For purchase.)

Additional readings and handouts will be provided in class and on Canvas.

**Course description:**

This class is an exploration of United States history from the perspective of immigration and multiculturalism. Through the lens of race and ethnicity, we will investigate the development of colonial North America and the United States. We will examine how racial and ethnic identities are rooted in historical context and how they have changed over time. This approach will provide a greater understanding and appreciation of the diverse people who have shaped the development of the United States that we live in today.

**Learning outcomes:**

This course meets the General Education Program requirement for Historical Perspectives and U.S. Diversity. By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Describe how people and institutions in the United States have constructed diverse identities and cultures.
2. Explain how individuals in the United States have responded to the experience of discrimination and inequality.
3. Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural perspectives in the United States.
4. Use primary sources as evidence to answer questions about historical change.
5. Describe differences among interpretations of colonial America and United States history.
6. Analyze institutional and cultural change in American society.

## Grading and evaluation:

Grades in this course will consist of two exams, a book precis (a concise analytical review), and six reflection papers based on course reading. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Two exams: 60% (30% each)

The New Jim Crow paper: 10%

Reflection papers (6 total): 30%

Grading scale: (percentages)

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

## Assignments and responsibilities:

Class participation: First and foremost, students are expected to attend class. I will take attendance every meeting. Our class time will include lectures, group discussions, and large group discussions.

Face covering requirement: All students, employees and visitors to any UW-Stevens Point campus or facility will be required to wear face coverings when inside campus buildings. This policy is in effect until further notice.

Reading: Most weeks we will read a chapter in the Takaki textbook. Pay close attention to the larger points Takaki is making each chapter and how each chapter section reinforces the larger theme. In the second half of the semester, we will read Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. This work describes the problems of structural racism, segregation, and disfranchisement that still pervade our society today.

Reflection papers: On six occasions in the semester, you will write reflection papers on the course reading. I will provide a prompt or series of questions to consider as you write your reflection. These assignments will help you make larger connections in the history of race and ethnicity. Some of the assignments will be based entirely on the Takaki reading and others will include a primary source document related to the weekly topic or theme. The assignments will prepare you for the midterm and final exams.

Analytical review: You are required to write a precis (a concise analytical review) on Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. Detailed instructions for this assignment are posted in Canvas.

Exams: We will have a midterm and final exam in essay format on Canvas. The essay questions will be posted one week before the due date. The questions will be broad and

will ask you to discuss larger course themes using specific examples. Reflection papers and class lectures will help you prepare for these tests.

Late penalties: Please make every effort to turn in assignments on time. A late penalty of one-letter grade will be applied for every day an assignment is late.

Schneidkies happen: If you are dealing with difficulties in your life that are interfering with your ability to work on this course, please let me know. We can work together to help you succeed.

### **Course outline and assigned readings:**

September 2: Why we need “a different mirror.” Read pp. 3-20 in Takaki.

Week of September 7: The Native American and European Encounter. Read pp. 23-48 in Takaki. Reflection paper #1 due Wednesday, September 8 at 11:00 PM.

Week of September 14: The Development of Racial Slavery in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Read pp. 49-71 in Takaki.

Week of September 21: Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears. Read pp. 75-97 in Takaki. Reflection paper # 2 due Wednesday, September 22 at 11:00 PM.

Week of September 28: Racial Slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Read pp. 98-130 in Takaki. Reflection paper #3 due Wednesday, September 29 at 11:00 PM. Midterm exam essay topics will be posted on Canvas by Thursday, September 30.

October 5: Irish immigration. Read pp. 131-154 in Takaki.

### **Thursday, October 7 at 11:00 PM: Midterm exam due in Canvas.**

Week of October 12: Manifest Destiny and Mexico. Read pp. 155-176 in Takaki.

Week of October 19: Pacific Immigration and the Chinese. Read pp. 177-205 in Takaki. Reflection paper #4 due Wednesday, October 20 at 11:00 PM.

Week of October 26: Native American Wars in the West. Read pp. 209-231 in Takaki.

Week of November 2: The Rise of Jim Crow and the Great Migration. Read pp. 311-335 in Takaki and begin reading Alexander.

Week of November 9: Eastern European and Jewish immigration. Read pp. 262-291 in Takaki and continue reading Alexander. Reflection paper #5 due Wednesday, November 10 at 11:00 PM.

Week of November 16: Mexican immigration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Read pp. 292-310. Finish Alexander and begin working on precis.

November 23: Mexican immigration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, continued. Reflection paper #6 due Wednesday, November 24 at 5:00 PM.

Week of November 30: The Civil Rights Movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Read pp. 341-382 in Takaki. **Precis on Alexander due Wednesday, December 1 at 11 PM.**

Week of December 7: Civil Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: disillusion or progress? Read pp. 382-439 in Takaki.

**Wednesday, December 15: Final Exam due in Canvas by 5 PM.**