



**Black Bodies and Policing Race**  
**HIST 389-006/ INTS 375-005**  
**4 credits**  
**Fall 2017**  
**1:30-4:10 Tuesday**  
**Robinson Hall A 106**

Dr. Wendi N. Manuel-Scott

George Mason University, School of Integrative Studies, 407 Enterprise Hall

4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

E-mail: [wmanuels@gmu.edu](mailto:wmanuels@gmu.edu) | SIS Phone: 703-993-1201 | SIS Web: <http://integrative.gmu.edu>

Office hours by appointment.

“The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.” -bell hooks

“....We must move against not only those forces which dehumanize us from the outside, but also against those oppressive values which we have been forced to take into ourselves.” – Audre Lorde

## **Course Description**

The policing of black bodies has shaped America. Since the nation's inception to the twenty-first century, black bodies have been racialized, criminalized, and policed. Drawing on interdisciplinary approaches, students will explore historical and contemporary forms of criminalization, policing, and racial terrorizing of black bodies. The readings and discussions will examine how memory, performance, and the portrayal of racialized policing have changed over time. We will also critically explore the black tradition of self-defense against racial violence, including race riots, the anti-lynching movement, and Black Lives Matter activism.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

The School of Integrative Studies, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and disability. We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.

- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

### **University Policies**

#### **Honor Code, Plagiarism, Collaboration**

This class and all of your work as an undergraduate are governed by GMU's Honor Code: "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Plagiarism is presenting another person's words, ideas, or sequence of arguments as your own without attribution. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources properly in this course. If at any point, however, you have a question about this, please ask. If you are tempted to plagiarize or find yourself using material from the Internet or any other source and trying to pass it off as your own, stop working on the assignment and contact the instructor. It is better to submit work late than to break the Honor Code. It is my duty to report all violations of the Honor Code, and I take this duty quite seriously. When I report cases of plagiarism to the Honor Committee, I recommend that the penalty be failure for the course or suspension from George Mason. Such drastic outcomes are avoided through proper citations and good communication with your instructor. To read more about the Honor Code, the Honor Committee, and its procedures, see go to <http://honorcode.gmu.edu>.

Please remember that no grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Should you experience extreme academic anxiety there are resources on campus to assist you during stressful moments. Please reach out to me or one of the University office offering writing assistance, study skills, or counseling.

#### **Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence:**

George Mason University is committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and incidents of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730).

#### **Disabilities and Academic Accommodations:**

I am very supportive of students with different learning abilities. However, I cannot help you unless I know about it in advance. If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell me. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing me with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss required accommodations at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term.

### **Religious and Cultural Observances**

Some course assignments may be in close proximity to religious or cultural observances. If an assignment creates a conflict, please talk to me in advance so we can make appropriate arrangements.

### **Technology Guidelines**

#### **Email:**

Electronic mail is a valuable tool. I will, from time to time, send emails to the class, and I am happy to respond to your email messages provided you bear in mind the following points. In academic and professional settings, all emails should have a descriptive subject line (“Question about Black Bodies assignment”), begin with a respectful salutation (“Prof. Manuel-Scott”), and conform to standard English with proper punctuation and capitalization. Do not use instant message abbreviations. All correspondence should take place via your Mason email account. If you have not activated your Mason email account, go to <https://mail.gmu.edu/>, and select “activate account.”

#### **Blackboard:**

I expect assignments to be turned in via Blackboard, unless other instructions are provided. If you require assistance with Blackboard access, please contact the Mason IT Unit: <https://itservices.gmu.edu/>.

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

#### **Attendance and Prepared Participation**

I expect you to be in class and will take attendance. You can’t participate if you’re not present so it is to your benefit to be in class and on time. You should also note that I construe “present” to mean both physical and active mental engagement. I also expect students to complete all of the assigned readings before class. It is also to your advantage to listen closely to lecture material and to take notes during lectures and films.

I place a high value on promptness. I feel very strongly that there are very few excuses for late arrivals. You are expected to arrive on-time and leave when class is over. Please avoid planning appointments which overlap with the class time. Repeat offenses will impact your attendance and participation grades.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to check with your classmates to find out what you have missed. If you are absent, do not ask me (in person or via email) if you “missed anything important” or “what did I miss.”

#### **Grades for the course will be determined from the following assignments.**

1. Participation 25%
2. Blackboard Critical Reflections 25%
3. Visual Project and Essay 25%
4. Final Essay 25%

### **Participation and Reading Annotations:**

All of us—students and instructor—will be actively learning in this course. We will teach each other and learn from each other as we co-create our learning community. The practice of co-creation requires full participation and I am interested in being in a class in which everyone is prepared, curious, and engaged.

To facilitate everyone being fully curious and engaged assigned texts and books are required at every class meeting. In addition, you must annotate **ALL** required readings (articles and books). Annotations help students understand the assigned texts on a deeper level and serve as prompts for critical reflection essays and class discussions.

During each class session, one or more students will be asked lead the general discussion about that day's readings. They will use their annotations to present the key ideas within the assigned readings and make connections to previous readings.

Assigned articles will be electronically available on Mason's Blackboard as PDF's. You must bring readings with you to every class - either electronically or printed. In order to receive participation credit, you are expected to have read assigned pages from books, and articles, before class and have detailed annotations. *If you read the text electronically, you are still required to have detailed reading annotations.*

#### Reading Annotations Guidelines:

1. Summarize the thesis.
2. Annotate main arguments in your own words.
3. Summarize the content of key paragraphs or sections.
4. Comment on what reading says about course themes.
5. Comment on how the reading connects with another assigned text.
6. Identify new terms and concepts (with a definition).
7. Note comments or questions for class discussion.

Your annotations will be checked informally during class meetings and students should be prepared to facilitate class discussion based on their annotations.

The following annotation methodology is suggested but feel free to develop your own as well:

1. Use pink highlighter/pink sticky notes
  - To note the thesis statement and central arguments.
2. Use yellow highlighter/ yellow sticky notes
  - To note key terms, supporting points, reactions, and questions.
3. Use blue highlighter/ blue sticky notes
  - To note connections with other assigned texts.

You may find the annotation methodology complicated but over time it will become automatic and an invaluable skill that is transferable to other courses.

#### **Blackboard -Critical Reflections:**

This course requires five critical reflections. I expect this to be an academic and a personal journey of discovery and inquiry. The reflections will serve as a place that not only lets me know that you have read the material, but also that you understand the texts and see the ways they are connected to current events, films, and other courses you may be taking.

I am not interested in long general summaries of the material. I want to see specificity, depth of understanding, and critical reflection. I want to see the way that you incorporate course concepts/terminologies, interpret readings, analyze current events, and connect the textual references. The reflections should be at least three

pages in length. Late or missing posts will negatively impact your grade. I will not accept work that is more than one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of a death in the family. I do allow for “one “life happens” opportunity: that is, you may turn in one “life happens” assignment late (up to 48 hours) with no penalty OR rewrite **ONE** essay based on my comments, for the *possibility* of improving your grade. The “life happens” rule applies only to the reflection essays and NOT to the visual project essay or final exam.

### **Adopt An Inmate Visual Policing Race Project:**

The fourth credit you earn for this course is an embedded experiential learning (EL) credit. The requirement for EL credits is approximately 45 contact hours for every one credit. Those hours are outside of our classroom meeting time and outside of your course preparation time.

To fulfill the EL credit students will be expected to collaborate with two to three other members of the class to produce a visual project based on the Adopt An Inmate program ([AdoptAnInmate.org](http://AdoptAnInmate.org)). You will receive additional information and ongoing support throughout the semester.

Your goal is to create an engaging visual presentation using text, images, and sound. Your Visual Policing Race Project must have a point of view and present a compelling narrative that is well researched. You will be divided into groups and each group will develop an original project.

As part of the experiential learning requirement for this course, you will write a 3-5-page reflection paper on your learning experiences for the EL requirements. The EL experiences should be as valuable to you as your in-class experiences, and I expect you to be able to competently apply the classroom learning to the EL events. In your final paper, you will discuss the overall value of your experiences and the kind of learning that took place through supporting the Adopt An Inmate project.

Each group must meet with Prof. Manuel-Scott outside of class for developmental updates. Your project topic **MUST** be approved by Prof. Manuel-Scott.

- Part I. Project Update 1. Due September 21
- Part II. Project Update 2. Due October 10
- Part III. Project Update 3. Due November 7
- Part IV. Project Presentation. Due December 5

### **Final Exam/ Synthesis Paper:**

There will be one final assignment – a synthesis take-home exam. Your paper should draw on assigned course texts and reflect the development of your own interpretations. You do not need to consult any materials outside of the assigned text to successfully complete the final.

### **Required Books:**

You must purchase and bring to class the following books:

- Sally Hadden. *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- Harriet A. Washington. *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (Knopf Doubleday, 2008).

Various supplemental texts available on Blackboard throughout the semester. Readings marked with **BB** are posted on Blackboard.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1 (August 29): Black Bodies and Blackness in the Wake**

Course introduction and view excerpt of *Trouble the Water*

**WEEK 2 (September 5): From Ship's Hull to Prison Cell: Black Disposability and Criminality in the Wake**

**Readings:**

Discuss Mustakeem, *Slavery At Sea*, Chapter 2; and Hadden, *Slave Patrols*, Introduction and Chapter 1. **BB**

**WEEK 3 (September 12): The Law and the Criminalization of Black Bodies**

**Readings:**

Discuss Vesely-Flad "Conclusion: Reconstructing the Image of the Polluted Black Body" *Racial Purity and Dangerous Bodies: Moral Pollution, Black Lives, and the Struggle for Justice* **BB**

Adopt An Inmate SKYPE training (3pm-4:30pm)

**WEEK 4 (September 19): Science and Black Bodies on the Plantation**

**Assignment:**

Critical Reflection Essay 1 Due

**Readings:**

Discuss Washington, *Medical Apartheid*, Chapters 1-2 and 4.

**WEEK 5 (September 26): Patrolling Black Bodies**

**Readings:**

Discuss Hadden, *Slave Patrols*, Chapters 2-4.

**WEEK 6 (October 3): Fear of the Monstrous Negro: Control and Violence in the Civil War Era**

**Assignment:**

Critical Reflection Essay 2 Due

**Readings:**

Discuss Washington, *Medical Apartheid*, Chapter 3; and Hadden, *Slave Patrols*, Chapters 5-6 and Epilogue.

**WEEK 7 (October 10): Columbus Day Recess (Tuesday Classes Do Not Meet)**

**Assignment:**

Work on Group Projects

**WEEK 8 (October 17): Strange Fruit: Lynching and the Construction of Carceral Criminality**

**Assignment:**

Critical Reflection Essay 3 Due

**Readings:**

Discuss Wells-Barnett, "Lynch Law in America" **BB**; and Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle*, Introduction and Chapter 3. **BB**

**WEEK 9 (October 24): The Convict Lease System, Racialized Policing, and Imprisonment**

**Readings:**

Discuss Douglass, "The Convict Lease System" **BB**; Wells, "The Convict Lease System" **BB**; LeFlouria, "The Gendered Anatomy of Negro Crime," *Chained in Silence* **BB**; and Stevenson, "A Presumption of Guilt: The Legacy of America's History of Racial Injustice," *Policing the Black Man*. **BB**

**WEEK 11 (October 31): Killing Black Bodies: Tuskegee and Scottsboro**

**Assignment:**

Critical Reflection Essay 4 Due

**Readings:**

Discuss Washington, *Medical Apartheid*, Chapters 3 and 8; Wright, “Letter to the Editors: Plea from a Scottsboro Boy” **BB**; and Scottsboro Boys, “Appeal from Death Cells.” **BB**

**Class Screening:**

*The Scottsboro Boys: An American Tragedy*, directed by Barak Goodman and Daniel Anker (PBS, 2000).

**WEEK 12 (November 7): Race and Criminal Justice: A Voice from the Inside**

**Assignment:**

Project Update 3 Due

Class Phone Conference (with former white supremacist / racial justice activist inmate)

**WEEK 13 (November 14): Experimentation and Executions: Black Bodies in Custody**

**Readings:**

Discuss Washington, *Medical Apartheid*, Chapter 10; and Kilgore, “The Myth of Prison Slave Labor Camps in the U.S,” *CounterPunch*. **BB**

**Class Screening:**

*The Farm: Angola, USA*

**WEEK 14 (November 21): Making Thug Nation**

**Assignment:**

Critical Reflection Essay 5 Due

**Readings:**

Discuss Kelley, “Thug Nation: On State Violence and Disposability” in *Policing the Planet* **BB**; and Butler, “Constructing the Thug” in *Choke Hold* **BB**

**Class Screening:**

*The Central Park Five*

**WEEK 15 (November 28): Black Lives Matter-Abolitionists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Readings:**

Discuss “Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial in the Criminal Justice System” by The Sentencing Project **BB**

**WEEK 16 (December 5): Adopt An Inmate: Final Presentations**

Group Presentations