

## **RACE & ETHNICITY IN THE NEW URBAN AMERICA**

(J6002)

Columbia University, January, 2002

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**Gissler's office:** Room 604A

**Office hours:** Tuesday and Wednesday (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)  
Sign-up sheet on door. Or call for appointment. Carla Baranauckas, an editor at the Times, can also be called for advice, but be aware that when she is on deadline with breaking news she may have to arrange to call you back later.

### **OBJECTIVES & PHILOSOPHY**

You will explore racial and ethnic issues in a changing urban America, and learn to cover them effectively. You will read, listen, discuss, debate, report and write. The three educational goals are a blend of substance and technique. They are:

1. Greater awareness of racial and ethnic complexity, pushing beyond black and white into a wider realm of problems and perspectives.
  
2. Greater skill in reporting and analyzing racial and ethnic issues.

3. Greater ease in dealing with race and ethnicity as a journalist and a human being.

I will share what I know about racial and ethnic issues, and draw on others -- journalists, scholars, activists -- to share what they know. I want the seminar marked by candor, trust and rich conversation.

## **ORGANIZATION**

New York City will provide the issues, settings, resources and personalities. You will be on the street and in diverse neighborhoods. Think shoe leather. Think ideas. Think voices. Think of this seminar as a news-beat. In addition to several stories and profiles, you will write a brief racial autobiography, a book review you will present in class, and an enterprise story that will be part of an anthology posted on the Web. We'll have guest speakers and field trips. Two books are required. Mainly we'll use copies of salient articles and videos, many of them excellent pieces honored at Columbia's "Let's Do It Better" workshops on journalism, race and ethnicity. We also suggest, but do not require, that you keep a personal journal as you explore new frontiers.

\* **Our seminar meets Monday, 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., in Room 601C.** However, reserve all of Monday and Tuesday for the course. You will be on call. For example, we may change the seminar time to accommodate a field trip or hold an added meeting to accommodate a speaker. Generally, I try very hard to keep Tuesday open for reporting, reading, reflecting, writing.

\* Our seminar is our newsroom. Be professional. Be on time.

\* Deadlines will accompany all assignments. Every assignment must be completed and every deadline must be met. **Unless otherwise specified, the story deadline is 10 a.m. Monday.**

\* Instructors will critique stories in detail. So will seminar members (on a rotating basis). You'll write for each other, not just for your instructors.

\* In seminars, we will share experiences and discuss techniques, ideas, issues and problems. Strong participation is essential. You also should contribute weekly to our seminar's private electronic bulletin board where reporters further swap thoughts, tips and impressions.

\* The syllabus is a tentative road map. Use it to plan your work, but remember: Everything is subject to change because of news developments, a speaker's altered plans, etc. As in daily journalism, we'll adapt. The seminar's final weeks are loosely structured so we can discuss enterprise stories in depth and deal with other issues that might deserve more attention.

\* Check your E-mail daily. I send frequent messages. You should also check our class bulletin board regularly.

## **REQUIRED READING**

### **All handouts must be read**

#### **Newspapers**

Read the New York papers daily. We will discuss stories in class. The New York Times and the New York Daily News are a minimum daily requirement.

**Books** (on sale at Columbia bookstore and on reserve in the journalism school library)

Ellis Cose, "The Rage of a Privileged Class." Paperback.

Andrew Hacker, "Two Nations." Paperback.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

### **Newspapers and magazines**

You should look occasionally at the Wall Street Journal and be familiar with New York magazine, the Village Voice, the New York Observer.

### **Books**

A recommended reading list is attached.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Format**

Double space all stories. On the upper left of the first page, list your story slug, your name, your instructor's name, your mailbox number and the word count. On the upper right, list significant sources and their **phones numbers** (a key requirement). Be sure to include **three** story ideas at end of every story. That is **mandatory**.

### **Length**

A length will be assigned with each piece, usually about 1,000 to 1,200 words. The enterprise story will be 2,000-2,500 words. The aim is keen analysis and graceful writing -- not bulk.

### **Book review**

Pick a book from the recommended reading list. The review will be 600-700 words and presented orally in class. Be prepared for questions. If you wish to read a book that is not on the list be sure to clear the choice with me.

## **Enterprise story**

Examples of enterprise stories written by last year's class can be found on the school Web site, under [www.jrn.columbia.edu/studentwork/race](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/studentwork/race).

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

If absent because of illness or emergency, be sure to call before class.

## **SEMINAR SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1 -- JAN. 28 Introduction to race and ethnic reporting**

Values, standards, techniques, trends

Tentative speaker: Lena Williams, reporter, New York Times

Videos: "The N-Word," WVEC, Norfolk, Va.

"Acting White," ABC News 20/20

Assignment: A brief racial autobiography. **Due Wed., 1/30, 5 p.m.**

Feature on racial/ethnic attitudes. **Due 2/11, 10 a.m.**

Required reading: Part I of Hacker (Chps. 1 - 4) by 2/4

### **WEEK 2 -- FEB. 4 What are race and ethnicity anyway?**

What sciences says, what society does

#### **Field trip: Harlem in two parts**

Sunday Feb. 3: Attend Abyssinian Baptist Church (11 a.m. service)

Leave: 9:30 a.m. from J-school lobby

Monday Feb. 4: Tour of Harlem

Leave: 9:00 a.m. from J-school lobby

Visit: Rev. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Barbara Askins, director, 125th Street Business Improvement District

Lunch in Harlem at United House of Prayer for All People

**Rescheduled Monday seminar: 4:30 p.m. Room 607B**

Videos: "About Race," KRON, San Francisco

"Colorism," ABC News Nightline

Assignment: Three enterprise story ideas (for class anthology). **Due 2/18**

Your three most important "standards." **Due 2/18**

Required reading: "Equality on the job: Are We There Yet?" Seattle Times  
(1999 Workshop)

<http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/seattle/default.htm>

### **WEEK 3 -- FEB. 11 Civil Rights: From clarity to ambiguity**

Video: Excerpts from "Tulsa"

Excerpts from "Eyes on the Prize."

Excerpts from "The Faltering Dream," produced by Walter Cronkite.

Speaker: Electra Yourke, enforcement supervisor, EEOC

Assignment: Assignment (Pick one) **Due 2/25**

Profile -- An old civil-rights warrior or a new one (or both)

Feature -- Affirmative action: what next?

Feature -- Discrimination today

Feature -- Integration today

Required reading: "Majority of None," San Jose Mercury News (2000 Workshop)

[http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/mercurynews\\_majority.htm](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/mercurynews_majority.htm)

"Koreatown," Los Angeles Times (1999 Workshop)

[http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/Koreatown\\_LATIMES.htm](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/Koreatown_LATIMES.htm)

**WEEK 4 -- FEB. 18 Beyond black and white (Part 1).**

Closer look at Asian Americans and the nation's changing makeup

Speakers:

Margaret Fung, executive director, Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund

Steve Yun, executive director, National Korean American Service & Education Consortium

Mae Cheng, reporter, Newsday

Video: "Asian Fears," ABC News Nightline

Assignment: Story on neighborhood "pressure points" OR "parallel lives."

**Due 3/4**

Required reading: "Tug of War," Allie Shah (2001 Workshop)

<http://www.startribune.com/news/metro/tugofwar>

Part II of Hacker by 2/28

## **WEEK 5 -- FEB. 25 Beyond black and white (Part 2)**

Covering Muslims in America

Speakers:

Timur Yuskaev, Interfaith Center of New York

Others: TBA

Assignment: Feature on stereotypes or on multi-racial lifestyles **Due 3/11**

Two-page memo on enterprise story **Due Wednesday, 3/13 at 10 a.m.**

Required reading: "Tale of Two Cultures," Elizabeth Llorente (1999 *Workshop*)

<http://www.bergen.com/news/newkorea1199808231.htm>

<http://www.bergen.com/news/guats19980824.htm>

"Best Friends, Two Worlds Apart," Mirta Ojito (2001 *Workshop*)

[http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/featured\\_articles/000606tuesday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/featured_articles/000606tuesday.html)

Suggested reading: "Hispanics in Suburbia," Elizabeth Llorente

<http://www.bergen.com/news/lizproj200012032.htm>

<http://www.bergen.com/region/lizside200012035.htm>

<http://www.bergen.com/news/newcome200012042.htm>

## **WEEK 6 -- MARCH 4 Beyond black and white (Part 3)**

Latino issues and growing Latino influence

Speakers: Elizabeth Llorente, reporter, The Record

Others: TBA



Required reading: "From the Heart: Lauren's World," Gary Pomerantz  
(1999 *Workshop*)

<http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/ajc/default.htm>

Cose, Chps. 1-4 and Chp. 6, **by 3/19**

**Special session: Tuesday, March 5.** Evening meeting with Pulitzer jurors.

Time and place: TBA

Required reading: "At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die," Charlie LeDuff (2001 *Workshop*)

[http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/featured\\_articles/000616friday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/featured_articles/000616friday.html)

### **WEEK 7 -- MARCH 11 Racial twists, turns and stereotypes**

A look at multi-racial Americans and at enduring stereotypes – spoken and unspoken

Speaker: Charlie LeDuff, reporter, New York Times

Video:

"True Colors," ABC, discrimination testing

### **WEEK 8 -- MARCH 18 Spring break**

## **WEEK 9 -- MARCH 25 The middle class**

How class affects racial and ethnic issues (*Master's project deadline; evening class*)

Speaker: Ellis Cose, Newsweek associate editor and author

Assignment: Feature on views from the middle class. **Due 4/8.**

Required reading: Cose, Chp. 5, by 3/30.

"Locked In," Jonathan Kaufman (*1999 Workshop*)

<http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/wsj/kaufman1.htm>

"Crime Scene," Angelo Henderson (*2000 Workshop*)

<http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/wsj1.htm>

## **WEEK 10 – APRIL 1 Crime, race and ethnicity: What journalism misses**

Urban crime's deeper causes

**Field Trip: Rikers Island or The Tombs (Manhattan detention center)**

Leave: Monday, April 1, from Columbia. Departure time: TBA

**Special session: Tuesday morning, April 2**

Speaker: Maria Hinojosa, CNN correspondent

Assignment: First-person piece on jail visit. **Due 4/3 10 a.m.**

First draft of enterprise story **Due 4/15 10 a.m.**

## **WEEK 11 -- APRIL 8 Urban Politics: Role of race and ethnicity**

How racial and ethnic issues shape the urban agenda (*Gissler at ASNE, April 9-12*)

Speaker: Jim Sleeper, journalist, author of "Liberal Racism"

Share pieces on jail trip.

## **WEEK 12 -- APRIL 15 Suburbia and race**

From tract housing to gated communities

Video: "Why Can't We Live Together?" DuPont Award winning program by NBC News.

### **Field Trip: Monday, April 15, NBC News,**

Meet with Tom Brokaw, watch Nightly News.

Time: 1 p.m.

Assignment: Work on enterprise story. **Due 4/29**

## **WEEK 13 -- APRIL 22 Looking for solutions**

Easing racial and ethnic tensions

Tentative speaker: Bob Herbert, New York Times columnist

**Special session:** "Native Americans in New York: An Invisible Minority,"  
Carla Baranauckas

Discussion of book reviews (I).

## **WEEK 14 -- APRIL 29 Race in the newsroom**

Roundtable: Newsroom issues

Speakers: Arlene Morgan, former assistant managing editor, Philadelphia Inquirer;

Farnaz Fassihi, reporter, Star Ledger

Others: TBA

**Special guest:** Chris Hedges, reporter, New York Times

Discussion of book reviews (II).

**WEEK 15 -- MAY 6 The class anthology**

Discussion of enterprise stories (I).

**WEEK 16 -- MAY 13 Wrap-up of course**

Discussion of enterprise stories (II).

Farewell party

**COMMENCEMENT MAY 22**