

**Race and the University**  
**AAS 4550 / ENGL 4961 / HIST 4551 / AMST 4550**  
W 12:20 – 2:15  
LNC 117

Prof. Shelley Wong  
[ssw6@cornell.edu](mailto:ssw6@cornell.edu)  
282 Goldwin Smith  
Office Hrs: Th 2-4

Prof. Derek Chang  
[dsc37@cornell.edu](mailto:dsc37@cornell.edu)  
425 Rockefeller Hall  
Office Hrs: T, Th 11-12

**Course Description**

What is a university, what does it do, and how does it do it—these are the broad questions that animate this course. The course begins with a look at how the idea (as well as the actual functioning) of the American university has changed over the past century. The sketching out of that historical context will then give rise to other sorts of questions: What kinds of knowledge are valorized within the academy? What kinds of people have historically been seen as properly belonging –or not belonging—within its precincts? How has the emergence of fields of inquiry such as Ethnic Studies (with its analytical platform built on the intersection of race, class and gender) brought to the fore (if not brought to crisis) some of the more vexing questions that strike at the core of the idea of the university as the pre- eminent site of disinterested knowledge? This seminar will give students the opportunity to examine American higher education (especially in the form of its major research institutions) as a prism through which to view the shifting linkages between knowledge, power, equality and democracy.

**Requirements**

Attendance and Participation (XX%). As any seminar depends upon active participation in class, each student will be expected to complete the assigned readings and to contribute to class discussions every week. Attendance is required. Students may be asked to attend lectures by guest speakers. Attendance at the lectures is required unless there is an unavoidable scheduling conflict.

Discussions Questions (XX%). Each student will be required to submit at least two (2) discussion questions to the class's Blackboard discussion board by Tuesday at 12:00 p.m. (noon). The questions should be based on the week's reading assignments and should be designed to spur discussion, conversation, and/or debate. We encourage questions that are conceptual or that connect themes across readings or topics rather than those that ask about narrow or specific facts. Before attending class on Wednesday, students should read their classmates' posts. Students should feel free to respond on the discussion board to posts.

Journal Assignment (XX%). Each student will be required to keep a journal based on the course readings and seminar discussion. Your journal entries will largely take the form of answering the weekly discussion questions that you had earlier posted on the electronic discussion board. That is, you will incorporate into your

journal entry what you have gleaned from class discussion about the issues posed by your questions. These discussion questions and the subsequent journal entries will likely become valuable resources as you think about your final research project.

Presentations (XX%). Each student will be required to make one in-class presentation during the semester. The presentation should be based on one assigned reading and will be made in the session during which that reading is due. Students will be asked to sign up by February 8th.

Final project (XX%). Each student will be required to write a final research essay due at the end of the semester.

**For all assignments, students are required to abide by Cornell University's Code of Academic Integrity. A copy of the code can be found at the following URL: <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>.**

**Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity, especially plagiarism, may result in a failing grade in the course. Students are urged to read and complete the exercises on "Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism" at <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>.**

### **Required Texts**

Susan Searls Giroux, *Between Race and Reason: Violence, Intellectual Responsibility, and the University to Come* (Stanford University Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-0804770484

Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Harvard University Press, 2011). ISBN: 978-0674060364

John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011). ISBN: 978-1421402666.

### **Reserved Readings**

Reserve readings are available electronically on the course's Blackboard site. Access is restricted to registered students in the class. You can access Blackboard at <http://www.blackboard.cornell.edu/>

## Class Schedule

### Jan. 25: Introduction: Key Terms/Concepts/Issues

**Screening (in class):** "San Francisco State on Strike"

### Feb. 1: What is the University? I

#### **Readings:**

- H. Giroux, "Vocationalizing Higher Education: Schooling and the Politics of Corporate Culture," in *Beyond the Corporate University: Culture and the Pedagogy in the New Millennium* (2001)
- Cheyfitz, "The Discourse of the University: Modern and Postmodern," in *Universities in Translation: The Mental Labor of Globalization* (2010)
- H. Giroux & S. Giroux, "Race, Rhetoric, and the Contest over Civic Education," in *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth, and the Crisis of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (2004)
- Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, Chapter 8  
"Communique from an Absent Future"  
(<http://wewanteverything.wordpress.com/2009/09/24/communique-from-an-absent-future/>)
- Summers, "What You (Really) Need to Know," *New York Times*, 20 January 2012  
([http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/education/edlife/the-21st-century-education.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=larry%20summers&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/education/edlife/the-21st-century-education.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=larry%20summers&st=cse))
- DiFrancesco, "Brushing the Dust Off Cornell's Curriculum," *Cornell Sun*, 21 January 2012  
(<http://cornellsun.com/section/opinion/content/2012/01/23/brushing-dust-cornells-curriculum>)

### Feb. 8: What is the University? II

#### **Readings:**

- Hohendahl, "Humboldt Revisited: Liberal Education, University Reform, and the Opposition to the Neoliberal University," *New German Critique* 38:2 (Summer 2011)
- Du Bois, "The Field and Function of the Negro College" in *The Education of Black People* (2001)
- Kerr, "The Idea of the Multiversity" in *The Uses of the University* (2001)
- Veblen, Chapters 1 & 8 in *The Higher Learning in America* (1918)
- Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, Introduction & Part I

*Recommended:* Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, Chapters 4 & 5

### Feb. 15:

#### **Readings:**

- Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, Parts II-IV

## **Feb. 22: The Color of Whiteness I**

### **Readings:**

- Wildman & Davis, "Language & Silence: Making Systems of Privilege Visible" in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge* (2000)
- Schwarz, "Eating Kosher Ivy: Jews as Literary Intellectuals," in *In Defense of Reading: Teaching Literature in the Twenty-First Century* (2008)
- Gladwell, "Getting In: The Social Logic of Ivy League Admissions," *The New Yorker*, 10 October 2005
- Lichtenstein, Chapter from *When Affirmative Action Was White*
- Simpson, "Introduction" in *I Have Been Waiting': Race and U.S. Higher Education* (2003)

*Recommended:* Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, Chapter 7

## **Feb. 29: The Color of Whiteness II**

### **Readings:**

- Vera & Imani, "Confronting White Students: The Whiteness of University Spaces," in *The Agony of Education* (1996)
- S. Giroux, "Notes on the Afterlife of Dreams: On the Persistence of Racism in Post-Civil Rights America," in *Between Race and Reason*
- S. Giroux, "Playing in the Dark: Racial Repression and the New Campus Crusade for Diversity," in *Between Race and Reason: Violence, Intellectual Responsibility, and the University to Come* (2010)
- Espendshade and Radford, "Mixing and Mingling on Campus" in *No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admission and Campus Life* (2009)
- Urcioli, "Producing Multiculturalism in Higher Education," *Qualitative Studies in Education* 12:3 (1999)
- Steele, "Introduction" and Chapter 5, in *Whistling Vivaldi and Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us* (2010)

## **March 7: Race and the Production of Knowledge**

### **Readings:**

- Sakai, "Dislocation of the West and the Status of the Humanities" in *Traces: A Multicultural Journal of Cultural Theory and Translation* (2000)
- Harootunian, "Tracking the Dinosaur: Area Studies in a Time of 'Globalism'" in *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (2000)
- Nishitani, "Humanitas and Anthropos: Two Western Concepts of Being" in *Traces: A Multilingual Series of Cultural Theory and Translation*, 4
- Miyoshi, "Ivory Tower in Escrow" in *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (2002)