Combating Otherness in the Digital Age

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Office hours: Mondays 1:30-3:00 and by appt. in Worrell Hall 305

I. Course Description
Throughout history, human beings have reduced entire groups of people as ‘inferior’ while proclaiming others as superior. This dichotomy includes moral, physical, and intellectual inferiority or superiority. With these distinctions, come great struggles such as war, enslavement, ostracization, murder, etc. Our knowledge of such occurrences has been greatly influenced by the communication technology used to share knowledge and information. In this course we will objectively examine core components of ‘Othering’, while comparing our own digital culture with their antecedents. Today’s age of the digital revolution has allowed for online media such as social networking, blogs, and livestreaming to shape the world around us. We will view civilization through the lens of the digital revolution, learning both about past issues, and what our experiences with modern technology lead us to discover about them. At first glance, our reading list may appear intimidating, but each class session will include the essential dialog to help you succeed in this course. However, I cannot stress enough the importance of setting aside the allotted time necessary to dedicate yourself to the assigned texts. Wikipedia or other such internet conveniences will NOT be reliable substitution for actual reading. Our readings will pair great works of literature, history, and philosophy with current digital texts and tools, exploring common themes that include the structure of knowledge, principles of awareness and participation, and the power of knowledge in the digital age.

II. Required texts (links provided in Calendar):
Plato, Allegory of the Cave
Andrés Reséndez, The Other Slavery
Upton Sinclair, The Jungle
Franz Kafka, The Metamorphoses
Ernest Hemingway, A Clean, Well-Lighted Place
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein
George Orwell, 1984
Carol Anderson, White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide

III. Course Requirements
Students in this course will be expected to complete readings before class and participate in class discussions and activities. Grades for the course will be earned by accumulating points in the following manner:

1. 1 Essay 200 points (200 points total)
2. 10 Pop Quizzes 20 points each (200 points total)
3. Assignments point variation (200 points total)
4. 3 Exams 100 points each (300 points total)
5. 1 Final Presentation (100 points total)

TOTAL POINTS = 1000 divided by 10 = grade

Points will be added together at the end of the semester to receive the following letter grades:
90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; under 60=F. Cheating will result in an automatic F.

IV. Policies and Procedures

Regular attendance is imperative to your success in the class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility
to keep up with assigned readings. Late homework assignments and late essays will only be accepted if
prior arrangements have been made before the day of your absence. Similarly, exams can only be made
up if prior notice was given to instructor. No exceptions. Otherwise, I do not need to be notified of
absences. However, excessive absences may result in being dropped from the course. Quizzes cannot be
made up, but there will be extra credit opportunities to make up lost points.

Of significant importance is an understanding that courtesy in the classroom is a requirement. I encourage
active discussions and feedback in class, but it should always be done in a respectful manner. Disrespect
toward the instructor or other students will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Cell phone and
laptop use during lecture is not allowed.

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating
Procedures. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, not doing one’s own work, plagiarism,
and unacceptable collusion. Not doing one’s own work may involve copying from or providing
information to another student, or possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Plagiarism occurs
when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person as one’s own.
And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any
act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible
disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating,
plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational
and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators but also for the entire
community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic
integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or
otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

ADA statement

As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services
located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform
successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the
director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call 915-747-5148 for general information about the
American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability.
Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and The Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso

V. Calendar
Subject to change at the instructor’s discretion:

January
22 - Course Introduction
27- Emerging Out of ‘Darkness’: Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, Critical Thinking Tools: Logical Fallacies and Unsound Arguments
29- Emmanuel Levinas and ‘The Other’

February
3- Lewis Vaughn: Subjectivism, Relativism, and Emotivism
5- Andrés Reséndez, The Other Slavery, pg. 1-87 (The Chichimec Wars)
10- pg. 87(The Chichimec Wars)-pg. 196 (Ch. 8: Missions, Presidios, and Slaves)
12- pgs. 196 (Ch. 8)-pg. 246 (American Ranchers)
17- pgs. 246 (American Ranchers)-end
19- Upton Sinclair, The Jungle, Chpts. 1-4, Focus: Speciesism
24- pg. 4-Ch. 19
26- The Jungle, Chpts. 19-26

March
2- The Jungle, Chpts. 27-end
4- Exam 1
9- Franz Kafka- The Metamorphoses (full), Ernest Hemingway, A Clean, Well-Lighted Place (full)
11- Introduction to Frankenstein, Volume I-Chapter IV (end at: “Thus ended a day memorable to me: it decided my future destiny.”)
16- Spring Break
18- Spring Break
23- Chapter IV-Volume II (end at: “...the first hapless victims to my unhallowed arts.”)
Volume II-Volume III
25- Volume III-end
30- Begin George Orwell, 1984, One: I-VII
April
1- One VII-Two: VI
6- Two: VI- Three
8- 1984, Three-End
13- Film: Black Mirror, Ep. 5 Se.3
15- Exam II
20- Carol Anderson, White Rage, Prologue- pg. 22
22- White Rage, pg. 22- Three
27- White Rage, Three - Five
29- White Rage, Five - Afterword- After the Election: Imagining

May
4- VICE News: Charlottesville: Race and Terror
6- Final Presentations, Essay due
15- Final Exam, 1 pm -3:45 pm

April 3rd - Drop Deadline