

HOW WE SEE RACE, THROUGH SHORT WORKS BY MATT GUTERL AND TREVOR NOAH

Course Description

Here's an opportunity to find your own "growing edge" on matters of race. Join us this summer to increase our own metacognition around race--that is, how do we perceive and do we know how we perceive others? Trevor Noah's [Born a Crime](#), a picaresque and hilarious beach-read but insightful coming-of-age memoir, uses a South African lens to perceive how "race" operates. In [Seeing Race](#), Guterl, who may make a guest appearance, explores media and popular culture with a focus on our "sight lines," his metaphor for seeing race differences in our bodies.

Format

Before class begins, participants are asked to read [Born a Crime](#) and to sign up to lead discussion of one of the related topics on the syllabus. Short readings from Guterl's book will support each topic. Class members are encouraged to provide short presentations and discussion questions that stimulate discussion and dialog.

Resources/Expenses

Class members need to acquire [Born a Crime](#) by Trevor Noah and [Seeing Race in Modern America](#) by Matthew P. Guterl, titles available at public libraries, the Brown Book Store, and on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Internet and email access are strongly recommended.

Coordinators

Sidney Okashige co-coordinated her first LLC course on race ten years ago and since then has coordinated numerous courses, including Meditation with Thich Nhat Hanh, short stories, and Digging Deep Into the Titanic. Nini Stoddard now calls Providence home after a childhood overseas and married life in rural northeastern Connecticut. She has enjoyed the camaraderie and the variety of LLC courses since her retirement from Brown University.

INFO BOX

- Thursdays at 1 pm
- Summer semester
 - Eight weeks
 - Class Size: 20

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Nini Stoddard and Sidney Okashige, Coordinators – Summer 2022

Week #	First Hour	Second Hour
<p># 1 - JUNE 23 Read before the first class <u>Born A Crime by Trevor Noah</u> Two pdf articles on race as a social construct</p>	<p>Participants introduce themselves by reading their favorite (approx. 100 word) passage from <u>Born A Crime</u> and tell in a few sentences how it resonates with a personal experience or quality they think they have.</p>	<p>-Race as a Social Construct -What is metacognition about “race”? - “Stereotype Threat” – Part I Guest speakers and/or videos, followed by discussion prompts</p>
<p>#2 – JUNE 30 Guterl reading: Acknowledgements, Introduction, and pp. 15-45; Bought and Sold https://digpodcast.org/2021/11/14/aunt-jemima-american-racism-on-your-grocery-shelf/</p>	<p>Being White – Presented and led by Margaret Lawrence Presentation and discussion: J.C. Nott and George R. Gliddon’s <u>Types of Mankind</u>, 1854</p>	<p>Being Black, Looking Black Presentation and discussion by: TBD About Langston Hughes, Forest Whittaker, Aunt Jemima, and Trevor Noah</p>
<p>#3 – JULY 7 Guterl reading: Part III, Chapter 8; Coda Trevor Noah - “The Mulberry Tree” chapter</p>	<p>Stereotype Threat II Claude Steele’s theory Discussion led by: TBD</p>	<p>Passing and Apartheid Presentation and discussion by: TBD</p>
<p>#4- JULY 14 Trevor Noah’s chapters 8 (Robert), 10, 12, and 14 Rampersad’s perspectives on love and the Black woman in his Introduction to African-American Poetry (pdf)</p>	<p>Love and the Black Woman Trevor’s voice about romantic love Presentation and discussion by: TBD</p>	<p>Love and the Black Woman Born a Crime is really about Trevor’s mom Presentation and discussion by: TBD</p>
<p>#5 – JULY 21 Noah, first and last chapters Rampersad’s Introduction to African-American Poetry, pdf</p>	<p>Seeing Religion The Black experience Presentation and discussion: TBD</p>	<p>Seeing Death The Black experience Presentation and discussion: TBD</p>
<p>#6 – JULY 28 Trevor Noah, Chapters Sonny’s Blues by James Baldwin, pdf</p>	<p>Hearing Music-The Harlem Renaissance I Presentation and discussion: Joe Petteruti Sissieretta Jones of Providence Josephine Baker</p>	<p>Hearing Language - The Harlem Renaissance II Presentation and discussion: Sonny’s Blues by James Baldwin Sidney Okashige Code switching- how Trevor and his mother use language</p>

#7 – AUGUST 4	Seeing The Visual Arts The Harlem Renaissance III Presentation and discussion: Prophet by Joan Hausrath	The Arts Guest speaker: Sara Jane Ladd Collaborative Puzzle Solving at the Waterfire Museum
#8 – AUGUST 11 Stages of Freedom Museum “tour” Interview questions for Nondas Voll about her work with these two organizations: The Rhode Island Nonviolence Institute RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty	Seeing Locally Brown Slavery and Justice “walk” Creative Survival – Newport - Keith Stokes Joan Hausrath: Tatum	Seeing Locally Interview with Nondas Voll

Possible presentation topics

1. Langston Hughes, Forest Whittaker, Aunt Jemima as case studies – Class #2, Hour #2 or Class #3
2. Mark Twain’s short story, [“John Chinaman”](#) – Class #2
3. [Frank Korematsu](#) life, honors, and Supreme Court case – Class #3, Hour 2
4. Claude Steele – Class #3
 - a. Stereotype threat
 - b. Whistling Vivaldi
5. Apartheid in South Africa – Class #3, Hour 2
6. Trevor’s voice about romantic love – Class #4, Hour 1
7. Trevor Noah’s Mom as the main character of his memoir – Class #4, Hour 2
8. Seeing religion – Class #5, Hour 1
9. Seeing death – Class #5, Hour 2
- 10.
11. The Harlem Renaissance
 - a. Socio-economic and historical context
 - b. Visual Arts and Artists - Prophet
 - c. Music and Musicians –
 - d. Literature and writers – James Baldwin
 - e. The Black Legacy
12. Sissieretta Jones
13. Josephine Baker
14. Prophet
15. Ivy league schools, slavery, and justice
 - a. [Ebony and Ivy](#) – Craig Steven Wilder
 - b. [Other authors?](#)

16. Seeing with videos –
 - a. George Floyd
 - b. Ahmaud Arbery
 - c. Jan 6 at the US Capitol

Supplemental resources available to the class as pdf files

Arnold Rampersad's introduction to The Oxford Anthology of African-American Poetry, Rampersad and Herbold, eds, Oxford University Press
Available as a pdf.

Reviews of Matthew Guterl's book by

Lori Harrison-Kahan
Douglas Walter Bristol
Alyson Cole
Stephen Middleton

Some Suggested Discussion Prompts

What were my initial thoughts, impressions, observations (visualizations)?
What are my tentative conclusions? Or have I formed a question? A hypothesis or theory about it?
How did I make use of my own knowledge base and experiences when I made these observations?
Will I hold my conclusions in abeyance for now?
At second glance, what else do I notice?
Are there further possibilities? Is there is counterpoint?

For Class #1

“Race Is a Social Construct, Scientists Argue”

Megan Gannon
Scientific American

“What We Mean When We Say ‘Race Is a Social Construct’”

Ta-Nehisi Coates
The Atlantic

[The Harlem Renaissance](#) – The Library of Congress

The Art of Looking (National Gallery of Art)

By sharing observations, interpretations, questions, and ideas, participants build on their own first impressions and broaden their understanding about a single work of art in each meeting. Each session lasts one hour and is completely interactive. National Gallery educators will facilitate the conversation to create an environment for shared learning. These conversations will encourage you to engage deeply with art, with others, and with the world around you as you hone skills in visual literacy and perspective-taking.

<https://www.nga.gov/learn/teachers/lessons-activities/uncovering-america/harlem-renaissance.html>

How do visual artists of the Harlem Renaissance explore black identity and political empowerment?

How does visual art of the Harlem Renaissance relate to current-day events and issues?

How do migration and displacement influence cultural production?

“Sikh Protests Police Detention, Behavior,” Boston Globe, September 16, 2001;

Sabpreet Singh, “As You Were Saying,” Boston Herald, September 15, 2001;

“Under Attack, Sikhs Defend Their Religious Liberties,” Christian Science Monitor, October 31, 2001. Guterl, Matthew Pratt. Seeing Race in Modern America. The University of North Carolina Press. Kindle Edition.

Black Lives Matter Movement *worldwide protesting police brutality and systematic racism that overwhelmingly effects the Black community*

In 2013, three female Black organizers — Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi — created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called Black Lives Matter.

2012 acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin; website founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal

2014 deaths of Michael Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York.

2020 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN.