

Race, Technology, and Information

Instructor: Rayvon Fouché, [REDACTED]

Schedule: [REDACTED]

Location: [REDACTED]

Course Description

This course will engage scholarship that traverses studies of race and difference, technology and science, and a variety of information systems and platforms. The objective is to develop a scholarly foundation of the literatures relevant to the ways racially marginalized communities experience, navigate, and inhabit information infrastructures. A special emphasis will be placed on understanding how the concepts of trust, justice, and equity function within these relationships, both historically and at the contemporary moment.

Assignments

Weekly expectation (3 sections x 50 minutes):

1. Weekly question/comment to pass.
 - a. What was something that you did not understand.
 - b. What will you take away from the reading, and what do you want others to take away from the reading (they do not necessarily have to be the same).
 - c. Rating 1-5 (5 being highest. Fractionals encouraged.)
 - d. One word description of the reading (break out that thesaurus please).
2. Bring something from your world (text, video, image, game, song, etc.) into the conversation to teach us something (5 people per class period x twice a quarter).
3. Overall assessment/discussion/critique of the reading (open conversation)

Evaluated Assignment(s):

How do you want to be evaluated? Collaborative carrots over Domineering sticks...

Door 1: Final Quarter Paper

Door 2: Critical Commentaries

Door 3: Annotated Bibliography

Door 4: Bibliographic essay

Door 5: ?

- I care most about your investment to learn and participate in the collective intellectual effort.
- Journeys over paths (take a detour through the grass).

From the initial class period you will have a week to develop a grading "rubric" for evaluation and receive my approval (please share and talk about your approach). The only requirement is that you produce 6000 to 8000 words over the quarter.

Course Fine Print

In our class discussions, we may explore a variety of challenging issues which can help enhance our understanding of different experiences and perspectives. This can be challenging, but in overcoming these challenges we find the greatest rewards.

A note on class, gender, sexuality, race, and all forms of difference. We all come with different cultural experiences and to have productive discussion it is imperative that the thoughts and opinions of others be listened to and understood. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea, but you may not attack an individual. With our varied experiences, knowledge bases, and level of expertise, it is important will respect others' perspectives while critically examining them in ourselves.

Northwestern University Non-Discrimination Statement:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/about/statements/non-discrimination-statement.html#:~:text=Northwestern%20University%20does%20not%20discriminate,status%2C%20age%2C%20disability%2C%20citizenship>

Accessibility/Mental Health/Wellness:

I strive to cultivate an educational experience that is accessible for all students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illnesses, impairments, injuries, or any other condition or circumstance that might negatively affect one's education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome, but not required, to contact me to discuss your specific needs so that I can accommodate you as best I can.

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). All Northwestern students

are also eligible to access support at no cost through [TimelyCare](#), a virtual mental health platform that provides counseling, health coaching and 24/7 on-demand services. Additional information on the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/timelycare.html>

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a central tenant of our collective work. You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional and ethical manner in all aspects of this course. Plagiarism, cheating, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/index.html>

Intellectual Property/Copyright:

"...members of the Northwestern University Academic Community shall own in their individual capacity the copyright to all copyrightable works they create at the University resulting from their research, teaching, artistic creativity, or writing. As a copyright owner they have the rights to use, copy, reproduce, modify, display, perform, distribute, create derivative works, and to permit others to do the same, if their work is an original, tangible, written, visual, or musical work of authorship, and therefore protectable by U.S. and other countries' copyright laws."

Students may not copy, reproduce, or post to any other outlet (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, or other open media sources or websites) any work in which they are not the sole or joint author or have not obtained the permission of the author(s).

Northwestern University Copyright Policy

(<https://www.invo.northwestern.edu/invention-management/policies-forms/copyright-policy/#:~:text=of%20the%20Northwestern%20University%20Copyright,a%20result%20of%20the%20Activities>).

Responsible Use of AI:

- Original Work: Students should ensure that assignments are their own work and based on their own understanding. While AI can provide guidance, it is not a replacement for students' own reflections, interpretations, and original work.
- Citation: ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are known to fabricate/manufacture, therefore their use and output need to be carefully considered and assessed. As with

any outside source, the use of AI needs to be cited and documented appropriately as well as fact checked. Primary sources should be cited from relevant literature rather than AI sources when available.

- Data privacy: Personal or sensitive information should not be shared with third-party AI systems. Further, terms of service of AI platforms used should be considered as not all AI platforms provide privacy.

Religious Observances:

Northwestern is committed to fostering an academic community respectful and welcoming of persons from all backgrounds. To that end, the policy on academic accommodations for religious holidays stipulates that students will not be penalized for class absences to observe religious holidays. If you will observe a religious holiday during a class meeting, scheduled exam, or assignment deadline, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two week of class. If exams or assignment deadlines on the syllabus fall on religious holidays you observe, please reach out so that we can discuss that coursework.

Syllabus Changes:

Please note that the specifics of this course syllabus are subject to change in the case of unforeseen circumstances. I will notify students of any changes as soon as possible. Students will be responsible for abiding by the changes.

Reading Schedule

January 4

Week 1: Figuring out what we will do this quarter...

Why I prefer why is race? Why is technology? Why is information? to What is race? What is technology? what is information?

What's your question?

Eula Biss "Time and Distance Overcoming," *The Iowa Review* 38.1 (2008): 83-89.

January 11, Infrastructures

Jim W. Corder, "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love." *Rhetoric Review* 4.1 (1985): 16-32.

Rayvon Fouché (2006) *The Wretched of the Gulf: Racism, Technological Dramas, and Black Politics of Technology*, *The Black Scholar*, 36:4, 7-12

Langdon Winner. *Daedalus*, Vol. 109, No. 1, *Modern Technology: Problem or Opportunity?* (Winter, 1980), pp. 121-136.

Appraisal Narratives: Reading Race on the Midcentury Block Adrienne Brown
American Quarterly, Volume 70, Number 2, June 2018, pp. 211-234

Eran Fisher (2022) Do algorithms have a right to the city? Waze and algorithmic spatiality, *Cultural Studies*, 36:1, 74-95

January 18: Let's Talk about Digital Racism

Rob Eschmann. *When the Hoods Come Off: Racism and Resistance in the Digital Age*

January 25: Digital Afterlife

Tonia Sutherland. *Resurrecting the Black Body: Race and the Digital Afterlife*

February 1:

Armond Towns. *On Black Media Philosophy*

February 8

TBD

February 15: Is Data the Real Conscripted Laborer

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun. *Discriminating Data: Correlation, Neighborhoods, and the New Politics of Recognition*

February 22: Automation Imaginaries

Long T. Bui. Model Machines: A History of the Asian as Automaton

February 29: Indigenous Sovereignty in the Digital

Marisa Elena Duarte. Network Sovereignty: Building the Internet across Indian Country

March 7: Manufactured and Technologized Inequality/Inequity

Virginia Eubanks. Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor

A few others that were in play...

Ramon Amaro. The Black Technical Object: On Machine Learning and the Aspiration of Black Being

Meredith Broussard. More than a Glitch: Confronting Race, Gender, and Ability Bias in Tech

Tonia Sutherland. Resurrecting the Black Body Race and the Digital Afterlife

Simone Browne. Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness

Ruha Benjamin. Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson. Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World

Jian Neo Chen. Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures and Technologies in Movement

Armond Towns. On Black Media Philosophy

Lisa Nakamura. Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet

Lisa Nakamura. Racist Zoombombing

Kara Keeling. Queer Times, Black Futures

Patrik Svensson and David Theo Goldberg. Between Humanities and the Digital

Safiya Noble. Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism

Elaine Jing Zhao. Digital China's Informal Circuits: Platforms, Labour and Governance

Michelle Wright. Physics of Blackness Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology

André Brock. Distributed Blackness: African American Cybercultures

Diana Montaño. Electrifying Mexico: Technology and the Transformation of a Modern City

Catherine Knight Steele. Digital Black Feminism

Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste and Juan Poblete. Internet, Humor, and Nation in Latin America

Marzia Milazzo. Colorblind Tools: Global Technologies of Racial Power

Eduard Arriaga and Andrés Villar. Afro-Latinx Digital Connections

M. Remi Yergeau. Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness

Christina Dunbar-Hester. Hacking Diversity: The Politics of Inclusion in Open Technology Culture

Long T. Bui. Model Machines: A History of the Asian as Automaton

Sun-ha Hong. Technologies of Speculation: The Limits of Knowledge in a Data-Driven Society

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun. Discriminating Data: Correlation, Neighborhoods, and the New Politics of Recognition

Marisa Elena Duarte. Network Sovereignty: Building the Internet across Indian Country

Katherine McKittrick. Dear Science and Other Stories

Virginia Eubanks. Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor

Caroline Criado Perez. Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men

Ruha Benjamin. Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life

Sarah Florini. Beyond Hashtags: Racial Politics and Black Digital Networks

Robert Topinka. Racing the Street: Race, Rhetoric, and Technology in Metropolitan London, 1840-1900

Shoshana Amielle Magnet. When Biometrics Fail: Gender, Race, and the Technology of Identity

Jennifer Gómez Menjívar (Editor), Gloria Elizabeth Chacón. Indigenous Interfaces: Spaces, Technology, and Social Networks in Mexico and Central America