This course will explore how racial ideologies travel between texts and across time. Our primary materials include early modern tragedies and tragicomedies, slave narratives, twentieth- and twenty-first century film, and postcolonial fiction. We will be investigating how four centuries of writers and artists have represented cross-cultural desire, the aesthetics of white and black bodies, racial masquerade, and the civilizing mission. As we jump between genres and centuries, we will be attending closely to the intertextuality of racism—that is, how appropriations of canonical texts register shifts in racial thought. Over the course of the semester, we will develop a vocabulary for discussing different forms of literary intertextuality; we will use this conceptual grounding to track the movements of bigoted rhetoric across temporal, geographical, and generic borders. How, for example, does the racialization of bodies differ on the page and in performance? And finally, how do present-day writers offer ameliorative visions of black and brown humanity?

Course Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the complex, contradictory ways literary works represent racial difference on stage, in prose, and in verse.
- Reflect on how pre-modern constructions of race laid the foundations for our twenty-first-century racial imaginary.
- Recognize how literary devices, conventions, and genres structure meaning and interpretation.
- Construct thoughtful, persuasive arguments using their critical thinking and close reading skills.
- Explore the representational issues that arise when a text moves between media and genres.

Required and Recommended Texts

Unless listed below, all course readings will be made available on Blackboard. They should be printed prior to class time. The following texts are available for purchase or to rent at the university bookstore:


Additionally, you will need copies of William Shakespeare’s *Othello* and *The Tempest*. Any copy will do, but I highly recommend the following editions:

**Assignments and Evaluation**

Your final grade in this course will reflect your scores on the following:
- Essay 1 (3–4 pp.): 20%
- Essay 2 (6–7 pp.): 25%
- Final Project: 25%
- Critical Experiments: 15%
- In-Class Participation: 15%

**Essays:** In this class, you will be asked to write two papers of increasing length. These exercises will hone your critical thinking as well as your analytical writing skills. Both will require you to identify the formal features of language, including diction, meter, sound symbolism, and imagery. Prompts will be distributed in class. Essays should be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and spellchecked. Be sure to include page numbers, MLA- or Chicago-style citations, one-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Assignments are due by the start of class.

**Final Project + Presentation:** Students will independently research one of the racial tropes that we will be discussing in class. At the semester’s end, you will then present your research to their peers. Additional instructions will be provided in class.

**Critical Experiments:** Over the course of the semester, you will be responsible for submitting four “critical experiments,” each worth 3% of your final grade. These exercises will prompt you to experiment with different methods of thinking and analysis. These low-stakes assignments will be graded for completion. Additional instructions will be provided in class. You will receive an additional 3% in this category simply for meeting with me during office hours to discuss your course progress.

**In-Class Participation:** Active participation is an essential part of this course. My expectation is that all students will make a substantive contribution to our discussions. Students who find it difficult to speak in class should contact me to make alternative arrangements. As part of your participation grade, you will be expected to complete short,
in-class writing exercises, usually at the start of class. These five-minute free-writes will prompt you to jot down your initial impressions of an assigned reading. You will submit these exercises at the end of class.

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**Course Policies and Resources:**

**Attendance:** Because this is a discussion-intensive course, attendance is absolutely vital to your success. You may miss up to three classes, no questions asked; after the third absence, your final grade will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per each additional day that you miss. (So, for example, if you miss six classes, your final grade will be lowered one full letter; a B+ will become a C+.) I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you anticipate missing more than four class sessions, you should speak to me directly before the end of the second week. In certain cases, I’m willing to be flexible and to offer an alternative absence policy.

**Technology:** No laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are to be used during class time. You must bring to class a printed copy of all readings; electronic copies are not permitted.

**Extensions and Late Assignments:** I am happy to offer extensions, but I require forty-eight hours’ notice. Late papers will be penalized one grade increment (or one-third of a letter grade) per calendar day.

**Disabilities Accommodations:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class:** I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form.
Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. The last day to drop a class for the spring semester is April 10, 2020.

**Grade Appeals:** As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

**Support for Basic Needs:** Insufficient basic needs—food, a safe living space—can affect your performance in classes and make your university experience more challenging. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or you lack a safe and stable place to live, you might consider several resources on campus. Contact the Division of Student Engagement and Success for support. Specifically, the office of Student Assistance provides consultations, resource management, and institutional support for “extenuating circumstances.” Their website is here: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html. The Student Assistance Coordinator is Kristeen Gonzalez. UC318, M-F 8AM-5PM. 361-825-2612 If you do not have access to or cannot afford sufficient food, be aware that “Izzy’s Food Pantry” provides on-campus access to food. Find more information here: http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/ If you feel comfortable doing so, please talk with me and/or your other professors. We may be able to assist.

**Statement of Civility:** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

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**Course Schedule (Subject to Change, if Needed):**

Tuesday, January 21  
Introductions

Thursday, January 23  
“Race,” from *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

**Unit 1: Language, Education, and Postcolonialism**
Tuesday, January 28  
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1611), Acts 1–2

Thursday, January 30  

Tuesday, February 4  

Thursday, February 6  

Tuesday, February 11  

Thursday, February 13  
Daniel Defoe, extract from *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)

Tuesday, February 18  
Daniel Defoe, extract from *Robinson Crusoe* (1719); Selected Robinsonades

Thursday, February 20  

Tuesday, February 25  

Thursday, February 27  
Hanay Geiogamah, *Foghorn* (1973)

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**Unit 2: Black Bodies, Beauty Standards, and Media Representation**

Tuesday, March 3  
First Essay Assignment Due

Thursday, March 5  

March 9–13, 2020  
SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 17  
Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

Thursday, March 19  
Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

Tuesday, March 24  
Langston Hughes, “Slave on the Block,” from *The Ways of White Folks* (1934); Dorothy Parker, “Arrangement in Black and White” (1927)

Thursday, March 26  
*Get Out* (2018)

Tuesday, March 31  
Selected Poems (Cleveland, Herbert, etc.)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 2 Thursday</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>April 7 Tuesday</td>
<td>Selected Poems (Du Bois, Burroughs, etc.); Frantz Fanon, extract from <em>Black Skin, White Masks</em></td>
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<td>April 9 Thursday</td>
<td>Toni Morrison, extract from <em>The Bluest Eye</em> (1970)</td>
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<td>April 14 Tuesday</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, <em>Othello</em> (1603), Act 1–3</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16 Thursday</td>
<td>NO CLASS; Second Essay Assignment Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21 Tuesday</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, <em>Othello</em> (1603), Act 4–5</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28 Tuesday</td>
<td><em>(Mini-)Unit 3: Black Futures</em></td>
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<td>April 30 Thursday</td>
<td>Selected Afro-Futurist Short Stories (Butler, Diaz, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30 Thursday</td>
<td><em>Black Panther</em> (2018)</td>
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<td>May 5 Tuesday</td>
<td>Wrap-Up Discussion</td>
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<td>May 14 Thursday</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
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