**Racialized Police Violence in Global Perspectives**

**Instructor:**

K. Frances Lieder (k.lieder@pitt.edu)

**Class Sessions**:

TBD

**Class Location:**

Zoom

**Course Description:**

This class provides students with an opportunity to think about the most recent wave of brutal police violence in the United States in a global perspective. Readings will focus on topics such as racial capitalism, colonialism and settler colonialism, transnationalism, and global police violence. The goal is for students who complete the course to be able to explain how racialized and militarized policing in the USA shape and are shaped by historical and contemporary global connections and processes.

**Objectives**: By the end of the course, students will be able to:

* Identify and describe the historical development of racialized police violence
* Identify and describe how decisions regarding policy and law happen in global context
* Compare disciplinary approaches and perspectives on police violence
* Think critically about calls to defund the police and abolish prisons
* Analyze how racialized police violence impacts a population
* Analyze transnational relationships and their effects on racialized police violence

**Course Policies:**

**Course Materials**: The course will use Canvas to provide announcements, assignments, session links, and readings to students. All assignments will be turned in via Canvas and all grading will be provided via rubrics in Canvas. Some of the documentaries you will be asked to watch will cost a few dollars to access via streaming platforms. If this is a financial hardship for you, please contact me to discuss alternatives.

**Course Contract:** Before the first class, I will share a document with you that includes suggested rules for engaged, respectful, and vulnerable conversation. During the first class, we will take a few minutes to discuss these rules and any suggestions/comments/questions you may have. You will then be asked to sign a copy of the contract and return it to me before the second class.

**Late Policy:** The weekly responses will need to be completed on time to gain credit. There will be NO extensions and a strict no late policy applied to the weekly responses assignment. This is a completion assignment that when completed in good faith will receive full credit; those that do not complete components or do not complete the responses in good faith will not receive any credit.

The *Intervention* assignments will face a penalty of *10% for each day* (a 24-hour period beyond the deadline) the assignment is late. This means that if your assignment is an hour late (or even 23 hours and 59 minutes late) it will face a 10% deduction.

**Assignment Extension Requests:** It is your responsibility to contact me regarding any special circumstances that may affect your ability to complete the assignments before the due date. If you are not going to complete the assignment on time, then you may request an extension without a late penalty. I will respond to requests for an extension on a case-by-case basis. Extensions, though, will only be considered a viable option *up to 24 hours before* the assignment is due. Once you are within 24 hours of the due date or past due, the assignment will face the penalty outlined above.

[**Academic Integrity**](http://www.indiana.edu/~deanfac/download/holidayreq.html)**:** Any work that you submit should be your own work (i.e., not borrowed/copied from any other source, including our assigned readings, lectures from the presenters, and your classmates). When using other people’s ideas to substantiate your own, please properly cite the original source, including use of quotations when necessary. We will review proper citation procedures in class, and you should ask for clarification whenever needed.

As the Chicago Manual of Style notes in Ch. 13: “The choice between quoting, on the one hand, and merely copying, on the other, can mean the difference between properly acknowledging and crediting the ideas of others and falsely representing them as your own, thus making the conventions outlined in this chapter and in chapters 14 and 15 essential to modern scholarship.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

As a result, the course will apply this recommendation as the following: **any use of 4 or more words** from a report, journal article, webpage, lecture, or any reference material will need to **include the use of quotations** to indicate what you are crediting and will need to **include a proper footnote/endnote** following the Chicago style.

Any act of cheating or plagiarism will be treated in accordance with the University of Pittsburgh’s Academic Integrity Guidelines, which can be found here: <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty/academic-integrity-freedom/academic-integrity-guidelines>. Depending upon the individual violation, students could face penalties ranging from a zero on the assignment to failing the class. Violations will be reported according to the processes applicable to the student’s university.

[**Grading**](http://www.indiana.edu/~deanfac/download/holidayreq.html)**:** I teach with a policy of “ungrading.” Research shows that grading assignments individually encourages students to write what they think their teacher wants to hear, instead of engaging deeply with the material. I want us to try to engage one another qualitatively, rather than worrying about quantitative assignments. Therefore, while I offer feedback, I do not assign number or letter grades. At the end of the semester, you will assign yourself a grade and justify it, based on your work. While I reserve the right to disagree with you and assign you a different final grade, this rarely happens. Why? Because you have spent the whole semester thoughtfully reflecting on your work and the work of your peers. This way, you will also be setting your own goals for what you want to get out of this class, rather than trying to guess at what I want from you. If, at any point during the semester, you are concerned about your grade, you may contact me for a meeting to discuss it. If you are worried about your grade, your best strategy is to join discussions, do the readings, listen to your peers, and complete assignments thoughtfully and punctually. This course should not be about busy work. If an assignment does not feel useful or thought-provoking to you, let’s talk about how to modify it.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, we encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with us as early in the weekend (before the weekend starts is preferable) as possible. We will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered then we encourage you to contact Disability Resources ([drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu)). Please be aware that accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

**Mental Health:** As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Pitt services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available at Pitt (<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/>). Support is always available (24/7) from University Counseling Center for Pitt students at 412-648-7930.

**Technology**: It is assumed that each student enrolled in this course owns or has access to a personal computer and high-speed access to the Internet. We all depend on machines to get our work done. We all know that machines break down or crash. When they do, it does not constitute an “excuse” or “emergency.” We expect that you will prepare your assignments and presentations far enough in advance so that when your computer or Canvas malfunctions you will be able to rectify the problem and turn in the assignment in on time. If the issue is Canvas, you should email your assignment to your assigned instructor. Emailing is a last resort, not option A.

If you lose access to an internet connection or quality degrades and impacts your ability to participate in the course via Zoom, you will need to reach out to your instructor as soon as possible. This will allow us to help adapt based on circumstances and assist you in completing necessary coursework.

**E-mail Communication Policy**

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on **Edit Forwarding Addresses**, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to [www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html](http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html)

**Final Grades are based on multiple dimensions**:

Participation in Weekly Zoom Class (20%): Participation entails showing up on time, listening thoughtfully and respectfully to one another, and contributing your own thoughts and analysis.

Completing all course reading and listening assignments (10%): Please be honest with yourselves and one another about what you have read/watched/listened to. You should have no more than 2 hours of work per week. If you find that the work is taking longer than that, please let me know, so we can discuss how to cut down on assignments.

Weekly responses on Canvas (30%): Each week on Canvas, you must post one thing from the reading/listening that you’d like to discuss and why (due 24 hours in advance of class). This can be a question, an opinion, a provocation. You must also respond to *at least* two other student posts (due 12 hours in advance of class). Please try to engage closely with the reading/listening in these posts (use direct quotes and page numbers when possible).

Final *Intervention* Project (40%): For your final project, you will be asked to use the course materials and conversations to construct an “intervention.” Many people read or talk about police violence and feel overwhelmed by their inability to do anything about it. Here’s our chance to challenge the notion that we cannot do anything. Your assignment is to construct an intervention in whatever field or methodology feels most compelling to you. It can be a policy memo, a song, a documentary, organizing a protest, writing a letter to your local newspaper editor, rewriting a bad legal policy—whatever moves you. Alongside of your intervention, you will turn in a 5-7 page paper explaining how your intervention relates and is inspired by the course materials. As we get closer to the end of the term, we will discuss this in more detail.

**Schedule:**

* Pre-Reads: Prior to class, students should review the entire syllabus and its policies, read and consider the suggested course contract, and watch *The Force* (2017).

***Week 1,* Introduction:**

* Watch *The Force* (2017). Available on Amazon and Netflix.

***Week 2,* Race:**

Listen to these two podcasts from the “Seeing White” series from *Scene-on Radio*.

* *How Race was Made*: <https://www.sceneonradio.org/episode-32-how-race-was-made-seeing-white-part-2/>
* *Made in America:* <https://www.sceneonradio.org/episode-33-made-in-america-seeing-white-part-3/>

***Week 3,* Colonialism and Settler-Colonialism:**

* Listen to The Henceforward Podcast, Episode 4: Red and Black DNA, Blood, Kinship, and Organizing with Kim Tallbear: <http://www.thehenceforward.com/episodes/2016/7/25/episode-3-red-and-black-dna-blood-kinship-and-organizing-with-kim-tallbear>
* Read: Criminal Empire: The Making of the Savage in a Lawless Land By Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (available on Canvas)

***Week 4,* Racial Capitalism:**

* Watch this lecture at the *Simpson Institute* by Robin Kelley: *What is Racial Capitalism and Why Does it Matter?* <https://simpsoncenter.org/content/what-racial-capitalism-and-why-does-it-matter>

***Week 5,* Transnationalism:**

* Watch this video discussion with Stuart Schrader, author of *Badges without Borders:* <https://www.c-span.org/video/?465425-1/badges-borders>

***Week 6,* Militarization:**

* Watch *Do Not Resist* (2016). Available on Amazon, iTunes, Google Play, and Vimeo

***Week 7,* Policing in the USA:**

* Listen to this podcast, “American Police,” on NPR’s *Throughline*, with Khalil Gibran Muhammad: <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/869f046127>

***Week 8,* Defunding the Police:**

* Listen to this podcast, “Ruth Wilson Gilmore Makes the Case for Abolition” on *The Intercept*: <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition/>

***Week 9,* The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Prison Abolition:**

* Watch *13th* (2016). Available on youtube: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8>)

***Week 10,* Activist Intervention:**

* Watch Antigone in Ferguson: <https://www.pbs.org/video/house-seats-antigone-in-ferguson-vzpdg7/>

1. The Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 13.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)