Instructor: Elizabeth Balskus  
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Office/Hours: MW 11-11:50  
158 Susan Campbell Hall  

Course Description:  
One of the most widely discussed notions in both academic settings and popular culture over the past few decades is cultural diversity. In the United States in particular, the notion of diversity has been invoked as a problem for politics, media, the education system, and our legal system. But what do we mean when we talk about diversity? The purpose of this course is to think critically about diversity and its terms, explore its history and introduction into society, track its history in the United States and explore how that history is tied to a greater world narrative of modernity and coloniality, and to develop conceptual tools through which we can evaluate its applicability and utility.

The purpose of this course is to give you a strong background in issues surrounding and arising out of considerations of cultural diversity within the context of
the United States and on a global scale. By the term’s end you will be versed in many dimensions of debates surrounding cultural diversity and will be expected to form and articulate your own opinions on cultural diversity as it relates to your life and your own society.

**Required Texts:**
*Between the World and Me* Ta-Nehisi Coates

All other required readings are on Canvas. Please print these out and bring them to class. You are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings carefully.

**Course Assignments:**
3 Response Papers (45%)
These will be short assignments (2-3 pages) that are explanatory, reflective or argumentative; depending on the question you are given. The purpose of these response papers is allow you to engage the readings more in depth on your own based off of our discussions in class. All response papers are to be submitted on Canvas. See below for deadlines.

Final Paper (25%)
The final paper will be due during finals week and will be a culmination of the work you have done throughout the term. You will be given a prompt at the beginning of Week 9, and will be expected to submit your paper by the due date to Canvas at midnight.

Attendance & Participation (30%)
Participation is the most crucial part of this course. You are expected to come to class: 1) having printed out the reading and brought it to class, 2) having read it and, 3) having written down notes and questions you may have about the material. You are expected to contribute to the discussion based on your notes, questions, and comments. You may be asked to write and submit short writing assignments in-class. Failure to participate or turn these assignments in to me may also result in a lowered participation grade.

**Attendance Policy:**
Since this is a discussion oriented course, you are expected to attend every class and contribute to the discussion. However, since life is filled with contingencies, you are allowed four unexcused absences with no penalty. Your fifth unexcused absence will result in a lowering of your final grade by one third of a letter grade, and from that point on, every unexcused absence will have the same effect on your grade. Eight unexcused absences will automatically result in an F.

It is your responsibility to contact the instructor in case of emergency prior to class (unless there are special circumstances where you cannot contact prior to class). These absences can be counted as excused with the instructor’s permission. If you are uncertain
about what would qualify as an emergency, please contact the instructor. All emergencies must be documented, otherwise the absences will not be excused.

**Late Assignments:**
You will lose 10% of the credit for a given assignment for each day that you fail to submit after the deadline.

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**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Section I: The Color Line and Structural Racism in the United States**

Week 1
T: Introduction & course overview, James Baldwin, “Nothing Personal”
R: Baldwin, “The Fire Next Time”, excerpts
   King Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here?* excerpts
*Recommended: Kanye West, The College Dropout*

Week 2
T: Ta-Nahisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, Section I
R: Coates, *Between the World and Me*, Section II
*Recommended: Mick Jenkins, The Water[s]*

Week 3
T: Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, excerpts
R: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, excerpts
*Recommended: Janelle Monae, Electric Lady*

**FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE FRIDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

**Section II: The Modern Subject and the Decolonial Project**

Week 4
T: Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
   Rorty, “Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality”
R: Quijano, “Coloniality and the Modern Subject”
   Cesaire, “Discourse on Colonialism”

Week 5
T: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, excerpts
   Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind*, excerpts
R: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, excerpts
   Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, excerpts
Week 6
T: Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas*, excerpts
R: Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, excerpts

SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE FRIDAY AT MIDNIGHT

Section III: Decolonizing Knowledge, Alternative Epistemologies

Week 7
T: Anzaldúa, “La conciencia de la mestiza, Towards a New Consciousness” from *Borderlands/La Frontera*
R: Lugones, “Playfulness, ‘World’-Travelling, and Loving Perception” from *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*

Week 8
T: Anzaldúa, “Let us be the healing of the wound” from *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*
R: Nayyirah Waheed, *Salt*, excerpts
   Rupi Kaur, *Milk and Honey*, excerpts
   Ijeoma Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada*, excerpts
   Tapiwa Mugabe, *Zimbabwe*, excerpts

Week 9
T: Audre Lorde, *Sister/Outsider*, excerpts
   Audre Lorde, *Collected Poems*, excerpts
R: McIntosh, “White Privilege”

THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE FRIDAY AT MIDNIGHT

Week 10
T: Coates, “The Case for Reparations”
   Socrates, *The Apology*
R: King Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here?* excerpts
   Balwin, “Notes of a Native Son” excerpts

FINAL PAPER DUE ON CANVAS WEDNESDAY OF FINALS WEEK AT NOON