

MCES 205

Westfield State College, Summer Session II, 2009 In the Eye of the Beholder:
Race, Image, & Beauty among
Black & Latina Women in US Popular Culture
Instructor: Julie M. Skogsbergh
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Course Description:

This course uses of a variety of texts, both written and visual, and serves as an exploration, inquiry, and analysis of the issues of inequality and oppression specific to Black & Latina women in US popular culture. This class will address many themes specific to race and gender such as: racism, ethnicity, whiteness, privilege, discrimination, oppression, class, classism, sexuality, sexism, homophobia, age, ageism, ability, ableism, religion, beauty, immigration, social change, and activism.

A Comment Regarding MCES 205:

Given the serious nature of the topics addressed in this course, this online course will likely be significantly different than other courses you have taken (in person or online). I ask that each of you consider the material with open-minds, recognizing that some of the material may be new or may challenge previously held beliefs, but this is a journey we will all embark on together over the next six weeks. This is one reason in particular I have us do the initial expectations exercise, so that we all agree to recognize that there needs to be a clear set of expectations among all of us.

Required Text: (Available at WSC Bookstore, or for purchase online at Amazon.com) The Skin Between Us: A Memoir of Race, Beauty, & Belonging by Kym Ragusa (2006).

Additional Readings:

These are articles that will be available on our course website as PDFs in each week's respective folder. ***Special Tip: If the readings are opening upright on your screen, just go to 'View' in the drop down tabs of Adobe and click on 'Rotate View', and click on 'clockwise' to rotate the page horizontally.

Course Requirements:

All assignments/postings/entries are always due on the date indicated on the syllabus, which is always by 9am each respective Monday. ***Please note, I will not accept late papers, so please plan accordingly. If extenuating circumstances arise, please contact me ASAP.

Journals

I ask that you keep a journal, in which you will write about the course content each week. Your entries will likely vary in length, but I estimate they will average about 2-4 pages per week. This journaling exercise is intentionally open-ended in order to allow room for independent thoughts and reflections, but your entries MUST discuss some or most of the following - subject matter or overall theme(s) of the film(s) &/or reading(s) as well as your personal reaction(s). If there are more than 4 articles, I do not expect that you will engage with each article you read for the week in the journal, but a safe rule of thumb is to reference at least half of the articles read for the week. For example, week 1 there are 2 articles for you to read, so my expectation is that you are going to write about both of them. But if there are 6 articles one week, then I expect you would write about at least 3 plus the film in your Journal Entry. Your journal entries should be typed via the journal log on the course website. Journals are a large part of your grade in that their purpose is for you to have a space where you can engage with the course materials/content for each week. I am looking for you to make connections between the course articles/readings as well as the films. Any material that is new to you from class and/or from your readings (i.e. articles from the course packet) must be cited. This includes direct quotations as well as information you obtain from the source and paraphrase. I can provide citation information during the course of the semester via email links (APA or MLA is fine, whichever you are used to using). If you would like access to these links, please just email me. When referencing a specific article within your journal entry or discussion post, you MUST cite as referenced above, i.e. (author, pg.#). Other than that, I do not consider this a

"formal" process. Rather, this is a free writing space where you can raise questions, make connections to your own life and work, etc. Creativity is encouraged! I am looking to see development in your own individual learning process & journey over the next six weeks. Always remember, you are graded only against yourself, never against your peers.

Participation

Participation is required, as this is an online course. Our discussions will be enriched by the various backgrounds and experiences we all bring so I encourage everyone to get involved in our online discussions. Please note that you are required to post at least 2 discussion questions to the open discussion forum thread each week as well as post at least 2 replies to your peers' posts. In addition, I expect that you are also reading at least half of the total posts each week on the open discussion board forum.

Final Paper/Exam

There are no exams in MCES 205. There is, however, a 5 pg. Final Paper on the text for the course, *The Skin Between Us: A Memoir of Race, Beauty, and Belonging* by Kym Ragusa, drawing upon the various themes addressed throughout the course. Details will follow. The final paper is due via email, as a .doc or .docx document, by 9am on Saturday, 8/22.

Grading:

Each assignment will be graded on a 100 point scale, with the final grade based on the averages for each part.

Percentages

Participation ~ 30% of final grade

Journals~ 40% of final grade

Final Paper ~ 30% of final grade

Thx,

Julie

Adjunct Professor, MCES 101

Westfield State College