

HATE SPEECH (COMM 624) SYLLABUS
SPRING 2019
DR. MICHAEL WALTMAN

Class Meeting Time: TTH 2:00 to 3:15

Office: 311 Bingham Hall

Office Hours: Wednesday Noon to 2:45

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Purpose

This course is an upper-level COMM course and is intended for advanced undergraduate students and, from time to time, interested graduate students. The purpose of *Hate Speech* is to expose students to the nature of hate in American life. As we attempt to understand the essential qualities of hate we will learn that hate is made possible through communication (sometimes in the form of hate speech) and human perception (sometimes in the forms of stereotypes and bias). We will learn that hatred is sustained through the imposition of racist, sexist, and heterosexist ideologies that privilege Whiteness, maleness, and heterosexuality. This is NOT to say that all White males are the source of all hate. Sometimes these ideologies are explicitly understood by the people who use them. Sometimes these ideologies and the assumptions underlying them are only implicitly understood and we may be relatively unaware of their influence. Moreover, these ideologies are broad social products for which no single individual can be responsible.

We will also learn that hate may also be resisted through communication. Students will learn how communication may serve to teach respect and tolerance, rather than hate. The word “tolerance,” like most words, has multiple meanings. Tolerance should be understood in this context as a willingness to embrace and value social and cultural differences, a definition of this term adopted by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The tolerant mind is capable of encountering social difference without seeing difference as a threat. Knowledge of the essence of hate will place students in a position to fight hate when they encounter it in their own lives. Just as students can learn to be vigilant to the presence of hate in their own lives they can learn to help other people be vigilant to the hate and intolerance that may threaten their communities.

Understanding the nature of hate is a formidable task. Different hate groups are motivated by different goals and the evidence of their hate is found in different activities that pursue those goals. Individuals who hate bring various personal experiences that shade their hate with different hues and colors. We will learn about the hatred espoused by members of organized hate groups. We will also learn how politicians and news pundits encourage hatred in order to accomplish political and professional goals. If we can understand these various actors we may be able to understand the diverse ways that hate insinuates itself into American life.

There is another reason that a thorough understanding of hate is a formidable task. Most of us come to this class because we view hate as a significant social and communication problem. But not everyone sees hate in the same speech or the same action. Expressions of hatred look differently now than they did in the 1960s. Now racism and hatred is veiled in the everyday talk of mainstream politicians and other social actors. For example, present-day hate speech often occurs through “coded language” that stands in for culturally understood stereotypes. An adequate understanding of hatred requires us to be aware of the subtle and hidden expressions of hatred.

Important Assumptions of the Course

Our views (I include myself because I am always changed by the discussions in this class) will change as we read and talk with one another throughout the semester. However, there are a few assumptions that serve as the foundation for this course. I am not asking everyone to accept these assumptions but you will be asked to be aware of the assumptions and be open-minded enough to consider them and understand them, even if you question them. Indeed, we will test these assumptions in our discussions and we may revise or reject them based on those discussions. I will try to make those assumptions explicit so that we may begin the class on common ground. *First, this course was developed with the belief that the essential organizing principle underlying groups’ interactions with one another is “identity” (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and sexual orientation).* Conflict occurs when groups see the advancement of one identity as a challenge to their own identity. For example, advances in civil rights, economic opportunities for women and other minorities, immigration, biracial marriages, etc. are all challenges to Whiteness, maleness, etc. in America. *Second, the current social and political organization, including hate groups in America, is a natural extension of an Anglo, male, heterosexual hegemony in American society.* Our country has a long history privileging Whiteness and that is powerfully embedded in our culture. Even as we try to reject the privileging of Whiteness we may be influenced by this historical discourse. Some scholars have argued that the Holocaust was possible because of generations of anti-Semitic stories and literature that spread from one end of Europe to the other. *Third, hate is not an unusual state of mind that is evident only in depraved individuals who have “something wrong with them.”* The hateful mind is not a stupid mind. Hate is made possible and arises from the very processes that help people to function effectively in their social and interpersonal environments (e.g., categorizing, forming impressions, developing implicit personality theories, and communication). *Fourth, communication can be a tool to spread hate and fear or it can be a means of fighting hate and teaching tolerance.* Hatred comes alive in the language and discourse that we use on a daily basis. Therefore, the challenging of hatred must also occur through language and everyday discourse. We will take very seriously the question: What does an anti-hate discourse look like and how does it function in our everyday lives.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, students will: (a) Understand, describe, and interpret the various properties of hate speech, (b) Students will be able to examine a corpus of text and critique that text for the ways that hatred is manipulated by the rhetor, (c) Students will be able to describe the various groups and social institutions that promote hatred in the United States or manipulate hatred for their own personal and/or communicative agendas, (d) students will be able to describe the various ways that hate speech is employed to promote hate crime, ethno-violence, and the formation of hate groups and political alliances.

Required Texts

Waltman, M. S., & Haas, J. (2010). *The Communication of hate*. Peter Lang Publishers: New York.

Waltman, M. S. (2015). *Hate on the Right: Right Wing Political Groups and Hate Speech*. Peter Lang Publishers. New York.

Readings received from Dr. Waltman

A book you choose to critique and present to the class (See Book Review Assignment below)

Assignments

Examination (20% of final course grade)

Book Review (20% of final course grade) and Book Presentation (15% of final course grade)

Analysis of Film/Internet Web Page (30% of final course grade)

Class Business (15% of final course grade)

Examination

The examination will cover concepts that have been discussed to date and that you will continue to use to understand course material covered in the second part of the semester. The examination will consist of objective and discussion questions is intended to test your ability to recognize the operation of concepts basic to understanding hate and hate speech. *The exam will be taken on February 26 and 28.*

Book Review

Students will select a book from a sample provided by Dr. Waltman. You will notice that there are more students in this class than there are books in the sample. Students will form book discussion groups (of approximately 5 people) that will select a common book to read. The expectation is that you will read and meet to discuss the book and help one another to achieve a

better understanding of the book. Groups will also prepare a presentation of the text to the class (more below). The goal of the presentation is to help the class learn something new about hatred and hate speech. The group will write a common book review and the group will receive a common grade for the review. The review should provide a cogent analysis and report of the text. The written review should be approximately 7, double-spaced pages in length (length may vary due to the number of chapters and the relative importance of each chapter to this course). *The grading criteria for the book review is posted on Sakai. **Due: One week after the group presentation***

Students will provide a brief group presentation/discussion (about 30 minutes) of the book before the book review is completed and turned in. This is intended to benefit the writers by providing him/her with constructive feedback. However, it is also intended to broaden the class' knowledge of information relevant to this course. So, you should provide a handout that your classmates can review and understand the most important issues raised in the book you reviewed. *Grading criteria for the presentation is posted on Sakai. **See Schedule for the date of group presentation.***

Textual Analysis of Internet Web Page/Film

The student should select an internet web page that has been constructed by a specific hate group (or a group that manipulates hate in order to accomplish a social or political goal) or a specific group that monitors the activities of such groups (e.g., Eye on Hate. Right Wing Watch, or Anti-Defamation League) and analyze the group's use of the web page as a tool in the accomplishment of the group's goals. You may select a web page analyzed in class but your analysis should be different. You should analyze the web page in theoretical terms that you learn in this class or in another COMM class. Papers should be approximately 10-15 double-spaced pages in length (12 point font with one-inch margins).

Or

The student should select a film (or documentary) that deals specifically with the topic of hate. You should analyze the film in theoretical terms that you learn in this class or in another COMM class (e.g., content analysis or narrative analysis). Papers should be approximately 10-15 double-spaced pages in length (12 point font with one-inch margins).

It is expected that this will be an assignment that you work on throughout the semester. *An assignment sheet and grading criteria are provided on Sakai.* It is difficult to provide an exhaustive list of theoretical perspectives that you might find useful for this assignment. Similarly, it is just as difficult to provide an exhaustive list of sources that you might consult for such perspectives. We will discuss a number of theoretical "lenses" that you may use in your analysis of a Web Page/film. You should select a Web Page/film and theoretical lens with my assistance. **Due: May 6.**

Class Business

"Class business" refers to student initiated discussions. Class business will focus on some idea or artifact (e.g., newspaper clippings) that relate to our class. Topics for class business may or

may not relate to the specific topics scheduled for discussion that class period. A topic for class business may be something that you encountered in the news or in your daily life that you found theoretically interesting and want to share with the group. I will begin each class period by asking if there is any “class business” to discuss. There will be no time limit for this discussion (except for the need to deal with other class matters). On the day that you introduce your class business, turn in something to me with your name on it that relates to your class business topic (e.g., Magazine article or notes you make on your topic). This will help me to give you appropriate credit for “class business.” This is more than a report of a news event. You should relate your class business to material we are discussing in class and provide insights into the importance of the material you are introducing to the class.

Course Grades

This is probably the most complicated class that I teach. It employs a wide variety of examinations, presentations, and papers to pursue course goals. It is impossible for me to provide a succinct summary for what might constitute, for example, “A” work on each assignment. However, I will provide you with a handout that will describe that precisely for each assignment that you will complete. Final course grades will be determined by the percentage of total points earned (A = 100 to 93%; A- = 92 to 90%; B+ = 89 to 88%; B = 87 to 83%; B- = 82 to 80%; C+ = 79 to 78%; C = 77 to 73%; C- = 72 to 70%; D+ = 69 to 68%; D = 67 to 63%; D- = 62 to 60%; F = < 60%).

Spring 2018 Schedule

January 10

Introduction to Hate Speech

January 15

The Sociology of Hate in America: The Ideology of Hate and Forms of Hate Groups
America (*Waltman & Haas Chapter 2*; **TV/Film clips viewed in class**)

January 17

The Sociology of Hate in America: The Ideology of Hate and Forms of Hate Groups
America (*Waltman & Haas Chapter 2*; **TV/Film clips viewed in class**)

January 22

The Nature of Hate Speech (*Waltman & Haas Chapter 3*)

January 24

The Nature of Hate Speech (*Waltman & Haas Chapter 3*)

January 29

Formation of Reading Groups

January 31

How Do Communities Respond to Hate Crime and Why?
View and Discuss Laramie Project

February 5

How Do Communities Respond to Hate Crime and Why?
View and Discuss Laramie Project

February 7

The Internet and Hate Speech (*Waltman & Haas, Chapter 4*)

February 12

The Internet and Hate Speech (*Waltman & Haas, Chapter 4*)

February 14

Nativism and Paramilitary Organizations (*Waltman & Haas, Chapter 5; Waltman, Ch. 5*)

February 19

Nativism and Paramilitary Organizations (*Waltman & Haas, Chapter 5; Waltman, Ch. 5*)

February 21

Review for Examination

February 26

Examination

February 28

Examination

March 5

Discussion of Group Presentation

March 7

Discussion of Textual Analysis

March 12

Spring Break

March 14

Spring Break

March 19

***White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* by Tim Wise**

***Covering* by Kenji Yoshino**

Class business

March 21

***Hate Crimes and Ethnobiology* by Howard Ehrlich**

***The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander**

Class business

March 26

***Racism without Racists: Color Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva**

***Race Pride and the American Identity* by J. T. Rhea**

Class business

March 28

Two Books to be determined (This is an opportunity for students to suggest books)

April 2

Politics and Hate (*Waltman & Haas, Chapter 6; Waltman Chapter 3*)

Christian Right (*Waltman, Chapter 4*)

April 4

Southern States Communication Association (no class)

April 9

Hate and the Movies (View Reel Bad Arabs)

April 16

Alt Right and the Normalizing of Hate (lecture and manuscript in process)

April 18

Homology of Exclusion (Waltman)

April 23

Textual Analysis

April 25

Anti-Hate Discourses (*Waltman & Haas, Chapter 7*)

Last Day of Classes

May 6

Final Examination (Textual Analysis Due)

Sign up Sheet for Book Presentation and Reports

Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement by K. Blee

Hate Crimes and Ethnobiology by Howard Ehrlich

Race Pride and the American Identity by J. T. Rhea

Racism without Racists: Color Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

Covering by Kenji Yoshino

White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son by Tim Wise

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

Viral Hate: Containing its Spread on the Internet by Abraham Foxman and Christopher Wolf

A Student Chosen Book

Sign-up Sheet for Book Presentations and Report

White Like Me by Tim Wise

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Dear White America by Tim Wise

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Covering by Kenji Yoshino

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Race Pride and American Identity by Joseph Rhea

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Hate Crimes and Ethnobiology by Howard Ehrlich

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Viral Hate by Foxman and Wolf

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Racism Without Racists by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Beautiful Souls by Eyal Press

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

United States of Jihad by Peter Berg

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

