

Professor Crews (he/him) | Area and Global Studies  
Class Times: Tue/Thu 8:30-9:45, ASH 2107  
Office Hours (LOH 112): M/W 12-2 & T/Th 10-12  
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## **Diversity in the United States**

### **(LIB 201 – Section 8)**

#### **Course Description**

This course explores how the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion and physical abilities affect the material lives and media representations of various cultural groups in the United States. We will engage historical and current debates on issues such as racial and ethnic identities and politics, immigration, economic inequality and wealth, the power of media representations, the digital divide, how gender norms and sexism shape our and the many and diverse ways that power, privilege and structural inequities manifest in our world.

#### **Course Goals**

The aim of this course is to help you think more broadly and critically about issues of race, class, gender, ability and other forms of social identities, and how they inform political realities in the United States. You will be asked to think through a range of theoretical ideas, to integrate these ideas with course activities and assignments, and to reflect on your own identity and social position over the semester. By the end of the class you should have a better understanding of how our own social location and experiences inform the way we understand the world and how we go about addressing issues of power, privilege and social justice/injustice in our own lives.

#### **Required Class Book**

**Rereading America: Cultural Context for Critical Thinking and Writing (10th Ed.).** Gary Colombu, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle. Bedford St. Martin's. 2016.

*A copy of this book is on reserve in the library (2 hour checkout).* [Library link](#)

#### **Additional Course Readings**

Additional course readings/content will be posted on Blackboard and is indicated by (\*BB) on the syllabus.

*\* This syllabus may be updated during the course of the semester.*

# COURSE DETAILS

## **Class Organization**

- **Participation:** Students are expected to have read materials before class and to take an active role in all classroom discussions, activities and events.
- **Presentations:** Students will be put into small groups, and each group will be responsible for leading a class discussion or other assigned activities.
- **Co-curricular Events:** Students will attend at least four LIB 201 approved events.
- **Co-curricular Reflections:** Students will write short posts in response to LIB 201 events.
- **Ethics in Action Essays:** Students will write two short ethical reflection essays (3-4 pgs).

## **Class Participation** (20% of final grade)

You are expected to read and think about the issues raised in our readings before class, and to fully participate in class conversations and activities. Please bring all assigned materials to class.

## **Group Presentations** (20% of final grade)

You will be divided into groups and each group will lead a discussion. Each student in the group will be responsible for leading part of the group discussion, as well as preparing any handouts or summaries for class. Each groups will have 20 minutes.

## **Co-curricular Events & Reflections** (40% of final grade)

Students will attend a minimum of four LIB 201 approved events which will take place over the course of the winter semester. These events range from guest speakers to conferences and workshops. A list of approved LIB 201 events can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/LIB201w19>.

Students will also be asked to write short blog posts (4 posts, 500-1000 words) reflecting on the LIB 201 approved events which they attended. These posts will require you to critically reflect, analyze and comment on specific aspects of diversity and identity. Each combined event and reflection post is worth 10% of your final grade.

## **Ethics in Action Essay:** (20% of final grade)

Students will write 2 short ethical reflection papers (3-4 pgs) for the midterm exam and one for the final exam, on diversity in the US. Each paper will count for 10% of your final grade.

## **Assignment Due Dates**

Please turn in your assignments on time. Late assignments will only be accepted within 24 hours of the original due date and with an automatic 25% grade reduction. No credit will be given for any assignment more than 1 day late without official documentation of an excused absence.

## **Grading**

The class uses a standard grading breakdown for grades, as follows:

**A** (99-94), **A-** (93-90) **B+** (89-87), **B** (86-84), **B-** (83-80), **C+** (79-77),  
**C** (76-74), **C-** (73-70), **D+** (69-67), **D** (66-64), **D-** (63-60), **F** (59 <)

## **Co-curricular Events and Reflection Posts**

For the LIB 201 approved events and your reflection blog posts, the posts will respond to the following 4 themes over the course of the semester. You should plan to attend events that allow you to move from the first theme to the fourth theme over the course of the semester, gradually going deeper with your analysis of issues of diversity and identity. The first two reflection posts must be submitted by **Week 7** (Midterms), and the final two posts must be submitted by **Week 14**. Please be sure to plan accordingly to attend LIB 201 events.

- **Event Theme 1: Location of Self**
  - An event that helps you reflect on your own identity and your position relative to the world.
- **Event Theme 2: Awareness and Knowledge of Other Communities/Identities**
  - An event that develops your awareness and knowledge of people, populations or identities that are different than your own affinity group and identity.
- **Event Theme 3: Knowledge and Examination of Structures and Systems**
  - An event that develops your knowledge of historical, political, social, and economic structures/systems.
- **Event Theme 4: Application and Integration of New Knowledge**
  - An event that helps you to reexamine your role in society by reflecting on the semester's material. How has your identity changed over the course of our class?

## **Class Attendance**

More than 3 unexcused absences may result in a grade reduction for the course. Coming to class significantly late will count as an unexcused absence. See policies in the GVSU [Student Code](#).

Exceptions for class absences are as follows:

- Personal illness or death in the family (documentation required)
- Religious holiday or participation in university-approved activity (documentation required)
- Cosmic event making attendance impossible (flood, earthquake, zombie apocalypse)

## **Office Hours & Communication**

If you need to meet with me you can either speak to me before or after class or come to my office (LOH 112) during posted office hours. I try to respond to emails within 48 hours, but if for some reason you don't receive a reply after two days, please send me a follow up email.

## **Use of Electronics in Class**

Cell phones **MAY NOT** be used during class. Put them on silent and keep them in your bag. Laptops or tablets are allowed **if** being used for note taking or viewing our class readings.

Checking your Facebook/Twitter/WeChat/WhatsApp/Instagram/SnapChat/Tinder/Grindr/Weibo, etc. is not class participation. Repeated abuse of electronics is grounds for a reduced final grade.

### **Writing & Research Help**

If you need additional writing or editing help contact the Writing Center in Lake Ontario Hall, #120. More information is available here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>. The Mary Idema Pew Library also provides a variety of resources for writing and research, including the Knowledge Market and Service Desk. For details visit: <https://www.gvsu.edu/library/>.

### **Classroom Conduct**

You are expected to treat your fellow students and the professor with respect. The nature of politics is disagreement, and arguments do emerge over deeply-held personal beliefs. You are encouraged to express your beliefs and convictions, but must do so respectfully and without insulting or attacking classmates. Discriminatory remarks, personal attacks and threats will not be tolerated, and you will be asked to leave if you cannot be respectful to others in class.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a sign of intellectual laziness. You risk an F for the course if you are found guilty of plagiarism. GVSU's statement on Academic Integrity of Grades and Scholarship is listed [here](#):

*“The principles of academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to a community of scholars. The University expects that students will not engage in acts of academic dishonesty in curricular and non-curricular academic activities. Engaging in academic dishonesty compromises the integrity of university grades, and scholarship and research. Academic dishonesty is defined as actions or behaviors that misrepresent one’s contributions to or the results of any scholarly product submitted for credit, evaluation, or dissemination. This definition includes, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, cheating, and plagiarism.”*



### **Disability Support**

I will make every effort to accommodate any special needs you may have in the classroom. If you need accommodations for a learning, physical, or other disability, please provide a memo from Disability Support Resources indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the Disability Support Resources office (JHZ 4015) by calling 331-2490 or

email [dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu). Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. More information is available at: <https://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/>.

### **Gender Pronouns & Preferred Name**

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate/preferred name or gender pronoun (she/her/, he/him/, they/them/, etc.). Please advise me of your preferences so that I can update my records. You can also change your name within the university system through myName. More info about GVSU's myName process is online at: <https://www.gvsu.edu/myname/>.

### **Campus Diversity and Equity Resources**

Additional resources available on campus for students include the following:

- Counseling Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>
- LGBT Resource Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/>
- Office of Inclusion and Equity: <https://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/>
- Women's Center: [https://gvsu.edu/women\\_cen/](https://gvsu.edu/women_cen/)
- Multicultural Affairs: <https://gvsu.edu/oma/>
- Veterans Network: <https://www.gvsu.edu/veterans/>
- Disability Support Resources: <https://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/>
- Campus Interfaith Resources: <https://www.gvsu.edu/campusinterfaith/>
- DACA & Undocumented Student Resources: [https://www.gvsu.edu/daca\\_undoc/](https://www.gvsu.edu/daca_undoc/)
- Replenish Food Assistance Resources: <https://www.gvsu.edu/replenish/>

Campus bias, harassment and discrimination reporting resources include the following:

- Report a Bias Incident: [https://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/bias\\_incidents.htm](https://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/bias_incidents.htm)
- Title IX Complaints: <https://www.gvsu.edu/titleix/title-ix-procedures-investigation-26.htm>
- Victim's Rights Office:  
[www.gvsu.edu/vro/allendale-and-holland-campus-resources-81.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/vro/allendale-and-holland-campus-resources-81.htm)

### **GVSU's Non-Discrimination Statement**

Every aspect of University life should be free from discrimination because of age, disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or weight. Student housing, organizations, athletics, classes and University community facilities should be open to all who desire to participate.

### **Course Learning Objectives**



At the end of this course you should be able demonstrate an understanding of how identities are socially framed by different groups through written and oral expression, historicize diversity in the US via a comparative approach and demonstrate how these experiences impact diversity. Students will discuss identity through different mediums and disciplines (i.e. anthropology, ethnic studies, history, sociology, feminism and gender studies) and apply these approaches, methods and theories to thinking about diversity in the US. Additional information about learning outcomes is included in the GenEd handout at the end of the syllabus. This course is subject to all GVSU policies as listed here: [www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies](http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies).

**THE BOONDOCKS**

**BY AARON McGRUDER**



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## --- PART I: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND ---

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### **Week 1 (1/8, 1/10): Welcome & Course Introduction**

*Hand out syllabus, review goals, organization and materials, class introductions.*

Assignments:

- A Letter to Your Future Self

### **Week 2 (1/15, 1/17): Community Building**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Thinking Critically, Challenging Cultural Myths (pg 1-14) (copy posted on \*BB)
- **Ronald Takaki** - The Making of Multicultural America (Ch 1) (\*BB)

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## --- PART II: RETHINKING RACE, CLASS, GENDER ---

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### **Week 3 (1/22, 1/24): Created Equal**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 6, Part 1 (pg 567-636)
- **Martin Luther King Jr.** - SCLC Speech “Where Do We Go From Here” (\*BB)

### **Week 4 (1/29, 1/31): Created Equal**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 6, Part 2 (pg 647-682)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #1** - Tue 1/29

### **Week 5 (2/5, 2/7): Money and Success**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 4, Part 1 (pg 345-408)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #2** - Tue 2/5

## **Week 6 (2/12, 2/14): Money and Success**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 4, Part 2 (pg 415-462)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #3** - Tue 2/12

## **\*\* Midterm Exams \*\***

## **Week 7 (2/19, 2/21): True Women, Real Men**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 5, Part 1 (pg 463-514)

Assignments:

- **\*Ethics in Action Paper #1** - Due Tue (2/19)
- **\*Co-curricular Reflections** - Deadline for Blog #1 and Blog #2 - Thu (2/21)

## **Week 8 (2/26, 2/28): True Women, Real Men**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 5, Part 2 (pg 522-566)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #4** - Tue 2/26

## **\*\* Week 9 (3/4-8): No Class – Spring Break**

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# **--- PART III: KNOWLEDGE, TECHNOLOGY & MEDIA ---**

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## **Week 10 (3/12, 3/14): Learning Power**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 2, Part 1 (pg 99-153)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #5** - Tue 3/12

## **Week 11 (3/19, 3/21): Learning Power**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 2, Part 2 (pg 161-212)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #6** - Tue 3/19



## **Week 12 (3/26, 3/28): Wild Wired West**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 3, Part 1 (pg 213-282)

Assignments:

- **\*Presentation Group #7** - Tue 3/26

## **Week 13 (4/2, 4/4): Wild Wired West**

Readings:

- **Rereading America** - Ch 3, Part 2 (pg 289-344)

## **Week 14 (4/9, 4/11): Open Topic Week**

Readings:

- **TBD**

Assignments:

- **\*Co-curricular Reflections** - Deadline for Blog #3 and Blog #4 - Thu (4/11)

**\*\* Thu 4/18 class video** – Professor Crews at WPSA Conference

## **Week 15 (4/16, 4/18): Wrap-up and Review**

Wrap-up & Final Exam Review

Assignments:

- **\*Ethics in Action Paper #2** - Due Tue (4/16)
- **I Am Not Your Negro - James Baldwin and Race in America** - Kino Lorber Edu  
Watch for Thu class: <https://gvsu.kanopy.com/video/i-am-not-your-negro>

**\*\* Final Exams \*\***

## **Week 16 (4/22): Finals**

Final Exam:

- **Monday, April 22, 10:00-11:50 am**

**### End of Class – Happy Summer ###**

## ***GVSU General Education Program***

The mission of the Grand Valley State University General Education Program is to provide a broad-based liberal education experience that fosters lifelong learning and informed citizenship. The program prepares students for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

### **LIB 201 Diversity in United States Foundations - Social and Behavioral Sciences Cultures - US Diversity**

#### **Knowledge Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Explain how knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences is created and applied.
2. Explain major approaches, methods, theories, and substantive findings of the field.
3. Evaluate and apply concepts and theories from the social and behavioral sciences to real-life examples.
4. Explain historical trajectories and consequences, worldviews, languages, and/or ways of life of diverse cultures within the United States.
5. Explain how social constructions of ethnicity/race and at least one of the following social attributes shape group and individual identities: gender, class, abilities, age sexual orientation, religion, or common history.

#### **Skills Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Critical Thinking – use systematic reasoning to examine and evaluate information and ideas and then synthesize conclusions to propose new perspectives and solutions. Students will:
  - Assess relevant information, perspectives and assumptions.
  - Construct logical conclusions based on reason and evidence.
  - Formulate novel approaches or create innovative interpretations.
  - Evaluate the novel approaches or innovative interpretations.
2. Ethical Reasoning —use a decision-making process based on defining systems of value. Students will:
  - Recognize ethical issues when presented in a complex situation.
  - Demonstrate understanding of key concepts and principles underlying various systems of reasoning.
  - Accurately apply ethical theories and terms to situations.
  - Demonstrate the ability to deal constructively with ambiguity and disagreement.
3. Written Communication — the practice of creating and refining messages that educated readers will value. Students will:
  - Develop content that is appropriate to a specific disciplinary or professional context, drawing upon relevant sources.
  - Organize written material to suit the purposes of the document and meet the needs of the intended audience.
  - Express ideas using language that meets the needs and expectations of the intended audience.
  - Use conventions of grammar, punctuation, usage, formatting, and citation appropriate to the specific writing situation.
4. Ethical Reasoning —use a decision-making process based on defining systems of value. Students will:
  - Recognize ethical issues when presented in a complex situation.
  - Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and principles underlying various systems of reasoning.
  - Accurately apply ethical theories and terms to situations.
  - Demonstrate the ability to deal constructively with ambiguity and disagreement.

*Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.*