

Senses of Brown (Summer 2025)

Jul 7 to Aug 8, 2025
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
10:45 AM - 12:40 PM
Healy 103

Instructor: Manu Chander
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Course Description

While it has become increasingly common to talk of brownness as a racial and cultural category in the U.S., brownness remains largely under-theorized. This course invites students to take part in an emerging conversation about the meanings of brownness, its conceptual and material histories from the nineteenth century, which witnessed the popularization of race science and rapid colonial expansion, to the present day. In what ways, if any, does the idea of brownness cohere as a concept, and how does it relate to more commonly discussed ideas of whiteness and Blackness? In what ways does the term work for or against rigid notions of racial difference? And, perhaps most important, what, if any, emancipatory potential does the term offer us?

Books

All readings will be made available on Canvas.

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend all in-person meetings and to complete all assignments on time. The grade breakdown is as follows:

1. Regular Attendance - 25%
2. 2 1000-words reflection essays, each worth 15% of the final grade.
3. Two weeks prior to submitting your final project you will submit a 1-page proposal, worth 10% of your final grade.
4. One week prior to submitting your final project you will submit a brief (250 word) project update, worth 5% of your final grade.
5. A final project due at the end of the semester will count for 30% of the final grade. Students are encouraged to combine creative output in any medium/genre with critical analysis. One could, for instance, present part of a memoir or work of fiction; a work of visual art; or a playlist accompanied with liner notes that explore the relationship between the texts and the theories of brownness considered in over the course of the semester.

Late Submission Policy

Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments, discussion board posts, group projects, etc., are due at the time and date listed in the assignment description. If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, please inform the instructor prior to the date the work is due. Late work will result in a score of 0 or grade of "F."

Communication Policy

Emails

Please contact the instructor via email at manu.chander@georgetown.edu. Except for weekends and holidays, the instructor typically will respond to email messages within 24 hours. Please check your email on a regular basis for any instructor messages.

Netiquette

"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the dos and don'ts of online communication. When posting to our discussion board or communicating with others in our class, please remain courteous. Below are the guidelines we will follow in this course.

- Be professional and courteous
- Be respectful of other points of view
- Avoid using slang and abbreviations because they can lead to misinterpretation
- Do not capitalize all letters because this suggests shouting
- Think and proofread before you submit

Attendance and Participation Policy

We meet four times a week in person, and you are expected to attend every class session; I will excuse absences on a case-by-case basis -- if you know you will need to miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible.

Dropping the Course

Please consult the University's policies and procedures for dropping any course at <https://college.georgetown.edu/advising/fag/add-drop-a-course/>.

Required technological skills

- Ability to utilize Canvas

Required equipment / materials

- Computer with internet access
- Software that can save a file in the format of Microsoft Word or PDF

Academic Integrity and AI

You are responsible for reading and understanding the University's policies on academic integrity, which can be found at <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/>.

Please note: In this course, *your* ideas and *your* voice are what matters. Using AI text generation tools at any stage of working on your assignments (idea generation, looking for sources, outlining/organizing, writing, revising, etc.) would make it much harder for me to evaluate and respond helpfully to your work, since I wouldn't be able to tell what's coming from you. As such, you're not permitted to use AI text generating tools at any point when working on your assignments, and I will treat the use of AI text generators as academic dishonesty, and will report the incident to the Honor Council.

Resources

Georgetown is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. The following resources have been identified to further the mission of access and support.

- [Student Advising](#)
- [Hoya Hub Food Pantry](#)
- [Serving Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations](#)
- [Counseling Services](#)
- [Pregnancy and Parenting Supports](#)
- [Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment](#)
- [Bias Incidents](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1: Foundations

7/7-7/10

Monday

- Introductions
- Syllabus review
- Martin Espada, "Jorge the Church Janitor Finally Quits"
- Agha Shahid Ali, "The Half-Inch Himalayas"

Tuesday

- Center for Documentary Studies, "[The Invention of Race](#)" (n.b.: make sure to click on the 53 minute full episode)
- Geoffrey Galt Harpham, ed., *Theories of Race: An annotated anthology of essays on race, 1684–1900*, chapters [6](#), [8](#), [13](#), [22](#)

Wednesday

- Joshua Javier Guzmán, "Brown" (in *Keywords for Latino/a Studies*)
- Nitasha Tamar Sharma, "Brown" (in *Keywords for Asian-American Studies*)
- Neda Maghbooleh, from *The Limits of Whiteness*

Thursday

- W.E.B. Du Bois, selected writings

DUE SUNDAY 7/13 BY 11:59 PM: FIRST REFLECTION ESSAY

Week 2: Hispanic or Latin or Brown?

7/14-7/17

Monday

- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "We Are All Americans: The Latin Americanization of Racial Stratification in the USA"
- Jack Forbes, from *Africans and Native Americans*

Tuesday

- Gloria Anzaldúa, selected writings

Wednesday

- Richard Rodriguez, from *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*

Thursday

- Rodriguez, from *Brown*
- Swati Rana, "Reading Brownness: Richard Rodriguez, Race, and Form"

DUE SUNDAY 7/20 BY 11:59 PM: SECOND REFLECTION ESSAY

Week 3: Desi or South Asian or Brown?

7/21-7/24

Monday

- Vijay Prashad, from *Karma of Brown Folk*

Tuesday

- Prashad, from *Karma of Brown Folk*
- Moon Charania, from *Archive of Tongues: An Intimate History of Brownness*

Wednesday

- Charania, from *Archive of Tongues*

Thursday

- Nitasha Tamar Sharma, "Rap, Race, Revolution: Post 9/11 Brown and a Hip Hop Critique of Empire"

DUE SUNDAY 7/27 BY 11:59 PM: FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

Week 4: Afro-Diasporic or Black or Brown?

7/28-7/31

Monday

- Stuart Hall, from *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*

Tuesday

- Hall, from *Familiar Stranger*
- Hazel Carby, from *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands*

Wednesday

- Carby, from *Imperial Intimacies*

Thursday

- Kevin Young, from *Brown: Poems*
- Andrea Canaan, "Brownness"

DUE SUNDAY 8/3 BY 11:59 PM: FINAL PROJECT UPDATE

Week 5: Brown in the World

8/7-8/7

Monday

- Kamal Al-Solaylee, from *Brown: What Being Brown in the World Today Means (to Everyone)*

Tuesday

- Al-Solaylee, from *Brown*

Wednesday

- Selections from *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* (Volume 10, Issue 1, Spring 2024)

Thursday

- Informal final project presentations and discussions

FINAL PROJECTS DUE IN CLASS ON LAST DAY