

Advisory

ADVISORY: You are enrolled in a six-week accelerated course. You will have several hours of homework each week: two or more class readings, four in-class writings, and sometimes quizzes or papers to research and write. Make sure you are ready to accept and complete the heavy workload in this accelerated essay composition class.

Instructor & Class Information

Course: English 103, Section 1016, *Composition and Critical Thinking*

Semester: Summer 2014, June 16 - July 27

Instructor Name: Nuala Lincke-Ivic, Associate Professor

Class Hours & Location: Online and in General Classroom 150, 8:00 - 10:05 AM in General Classroom Building in Room 240 on MTWTh.

Office Location, Hours & Telephone: My office is in the General Classroom Building, in 210-D. My office hours are from 6:45 - 7:45 AM on MTWTh. My telephone number is (310) 287-4544. My college email is lincken@wlac.edu. The best way to reach me is via Private Messages inside this classroom. Please do not email me about classroom business; Private Message me so we have a readily accessible record of all communications between you and me.

ENGLISH 103 - COMPOSITION AND CRITICAL THINKING (UC:CSU) - 3 UNITS

Prerequisite: Completion of English 101 with a grade of "C" or better or appropriate placement level demonstrated through the English assessment process.

In English 103, *College Reading and Composition*, students “develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills beyond the level achieved in English 101. Based on non-fiction writing, the course will focus on the development of logical reasoning and analytical and argumentative writing skills” (*Schedule of Classes*). This course meets the transfer critical thinking requirement.

Course Learning Outcome

"At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to research, evaluate and cite outside sources for use in the student's own writing."

Student Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to...

1. Analyze arguments according to the Stephen Toulmin Method of Argumentation;
2. Utilize appropriate terms when analyzing arguments;
3. Understand differences between fact and opinion, recognize common fallacies, and display important characteristics of a critical thinker;
4. Scrutinize writers' rhetorical aims (logos, pathos, ethos) and the cultural context in which works were produced;
5. Compose college-level essays that (1) reveal critical thinking in response to respected (and often seminal) works of non-fiction, and (2) possess clarity of purpose and solid and specific support, together with variety in sentence structure and vocabulary choice.

Institutional Course Outcomes

English 103 will also help students meet these Institutional Student Learning Outcomes:

A. "Critical Thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence, and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences." *In essays and class discussions, analyze arguments.*

B. "Communication: Effectively communicate thought in a well-organized manner to persuade, inform, and convey ideas in academic, work, family and community settings." *In writings and class discussions, share ideas about what makes an argument effective.*

G. "Cultural Diversity: respectfully engage with other cultures in an effort to understand them." *In writings and class discussion, analyze literature from a multi-cultural perspective.*

H. "Ethics: practice and demonstrate standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty and fairness; apply ethical principles in submission of all college work." *Submit writings in which words other than your own are documented in MLA format.*

I. "Aesthetics: Use multiple modes of inquiry and approaches to experience and to engage with the art and nature; develop and express personal creative visions throughout all aspects of one's life." *In writings and discussions, demonstrate recognition of literature as art-especially works of non-fiction.*

Weekly Lesson Plans

| Week 1 | Activities | Due |
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| <p>June 16-19</p> | <p>Week 1 Research Journal: 20 minutes every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical Thinking 2. Logos, Pathos, Ethos 3. Deductive & Socratic Method 4. Inductive & Scientific Method <p>Toulmin Method Rogerian Method Transitions</p> <p>Discussion Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" 2. "Teddy" | |
| <p>Week 2</p> | <p>Activities</p> | <p>Due</p> |
| <p>June 23-26</p> | <p>Week 2 Research Journal: 20 minutes every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ad Hominem & Ad Hominem Tu Quoque 2. Appeal to Popularity 3. Biased Sample 4. Poisoning the Well <p>Toulmin Method Rogerian Method Transitions</p> <p>Discussion Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" 2. "Teddy" | |

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| | <p>Quiz 1: Summary of Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" - Contentions, Support for Contentions & Thesis, Audience, Purpose</p> | |
| Week 3 | Activities | Due |
| June 30 - July 3 | <p>Week 3 Research Journal: 20 minutes every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Red Herring 2. Sweeping Generalization 3. Bandwagon 4. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc <p>Discussion Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" 2. "Teddy" | <p>Paper 1 due online Friday at 11:59 PM. Submit it to instructor in Assignments, Tests and Surveys, and post it in Paper 1 Evaluation in Discussions.</p> <p>Complete Peer Evaluation 2 by Sunday at 11:59 in ATS and in Discussions.</p> |
| Week 4 | Activities | Due |
| July 7-10 | <p>Week 4 Research Journal: 15 minutes every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appeal to Authority 2. Appeal to Belief 3. Appeal to Emotion 4. Guilt by Association <p>Discussion Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" 2. "Allegory of the Cave" | |

| Week 5 | Activities | Due |
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| July 14-17 | <p>Week 5 Research Journal: 15 minutes every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burden of Proof 2. False Dilemma 3. Division 4. Appeal to the Consequences of a Belief <p>Discussion Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" 2. "Allegory of the Cave" <p>Quiz 2: Critique of Quiz 1 Summary of Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" - Contentions, Support for Contentions & Thesis, Audience, Purpose</p> | |
| Weekend | Activities | Due |
| July 21-24 | <p>Week 6 Research Journal: 15 minutes every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appeal to Tradition 2. Appeal to Common Practice 3. Begging the Question 4. Ignoring a Common Cause <p>Discussion Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" | <p>Paper 2 due online Friday at 11:59 PM. Submit it to instructor in Assignments, Tests and Surveys, and post it in Paper 2 Evaluation in Discussions.</p> <p>Complete Peer Evaluation 2 by Sunday at 11:59 in ATS and in Discussions.</p> |

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| | 2. "Allegory of the Cave" | |
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Class Texts

All class texts are free online, and are listed below.

Staples:

1.

The Nikzor Project: Fallacies

<http://www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/>

2.

Aristotle's Logos, Ethos, Pathos

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/perkins/aris.html>

Class Texts:

1. J(erome) D(avid) Salinger's 1953 short story "Teddy"

To Obtain Story: Go to Reserve Desk on 2nd Floor of Pace Library; ask for story, and make a photocopy.

Study Guide for J.D. Salinger's "Teddy":

a. Does Teddy behave like a "normal" boy his age?

b. How does Teddy describe himself? Do people seem to accept or reject this description? What evidence is there in the story that Teddy's description might be correct? Do Teddy's parents seem to pay attention to this evidence or disregard it? Why?

c. Why does Teddy seem to react differently to Booper than other characters? How do they "see" Booper, and how does Teddy "see" Booper? Why? Is there evidence that Teddy's assessment of Booper is correct?

d. When he converses with Teddy, does the young professor appear to "listen" to Teddy: to consider carefully what Teddy asserts, in order to consider whether what he asserts is valid?

e. Do any of the characters in the story seem to committing one or more fallacies?

2. YouTube: *Allegory of the Cave*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYKNAdbhQ-w>

Study Guide for YouTube Video:

a. After viewing the video, what do you think Plato's "Cave" might be about?

3. History Guide: "Allegory of the Cave" from Plato's *Republic*

<http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html>

Study Guide for Plato's "Cave":

a. What is an allegory?

b. Do the people in the cave imprison themselves, or do others imprison them?

c. Like the people imprisoned in the cave—who are exposed to false images—do you ever feel that you are being exposed to information that is not "real"? If so, who are the people who expose you to these images?

d. How does a prisoner unchain himself and climb up out of the cave into the sunlight? What causes the prisoner to be free? How can you liberate yourself from any false information that you think you are being exposed to?

e. What is the sunlight?

f. If somebody who freed himself from the cave decided to return to the cave, why do you think that person might return to the cave?

4. Ta-Nehisi Coates' 2012 article in *The Atlantic*: "Fear of a Black President"

Fear of a Black President

As a candidate, Barack Obama said we needed to reckon with race and with America's original sin, slavery. But as our first black president, he has avoided mention of race almost entirely. In having to be "twice as good" and "half as black," Obama reveals the false promise and double standard of integration.

[Ta-Nehisi Coates](#) Aug 22 2012, 9:20 PM ET

The irony of President Barack Obama is best captured in his comments on the death of Trayvon Martin, and the ensuing fray. Obama has pitched his presidency as a monument to moderation. He peppers his speeches with nods to ideas originally held by conservatives. He routinely cites Ronald Reagan. He effusively praises the enduring wisdom of the American people, and believes that the height of insight lies in the town square. Despite his sloganeering for change and progress, Obama is a conservative revolutionary, and nowhere is his conservative character revealed more than in the very sphere where he holds singular gravity—race.

Part of that conservatism about race has been reflected in his reticence: for most of his term in office, Obama has declined to talk about the ways in which race complicates the American present and, in particular, his own presidency. But then, last February, George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old insurance underwriter, shot and killed a black teenager, Trayvon Martin, in Sanford, Florida. Zimmerman, armed with a 9 mm handgun, believed himself to be tracking the movements of a possible intruder. The possible intruder turned out to be a boy in a hoodie, bearing nothing but candy and iced tea. The local authorities at first declined to make an arrest, citing Zimmerman's claim of self-defense. Protests exploded nationally. Skittles and Arizona Iced Tea assumed totemic power. Celebrities—the actor Jamie Foxx, the former Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm, members of the Miami Heat—were photographed wearing hoodies. When Representative Bobby Rush of Chicago took to the House floor to denounce racial profiling, he was removed from the chamber after donning a hoodie mid-speech.

The reaction to the tragedy was, at first, trans-partisan. Conservatives either said nothing or offered tepid support for a full investigation—and in fact it was the Republican governor of Florida, Rick Scott, who appointed the special prosecutor who ultimately charged Zimmerman with second-degree murder. As civil-rights activists descended on Florida, *National Review*, a magazine that once opposed integration, ran a column proclaiming [“Al Sharpton Is Right.”](#) The belief that a young man should be able to go to the store for Skittles and an iced tea and not be killed by a neighborhood-watch patroller seemed uncontroversial.

By the time reporters began asking the White House for comment, the president likely had already given the matter considerable thought. Obama is not simply America's first black president—he is the first president who could credibly teach a black-studies class. He is fully versed in the works of Richard Wright and James Baldwin, Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X. Obama's two autobiographies are deeply concerned with race, and in front of black audiences he is apt to cite important but obscure political figures such as George Henry White, who served from 1897 to 1901 and was the last

African American congressman to be elected from the South until 1970. But with just a few notable exceptions, the president had, for the first three years of his presidency, strenuously avoided talk of race. And yet, when Trayvon Martin died, [talk Obama did](#):

When I think about this boy, I think about my own kids, and I think every parent in America should be able to understand why it is absolutely imperative that we investigate every aspect of this, and that everybody pulls together—federal, state, and local—to figure out exactly how this tragedy happened ...

But my main message is to the parents of Trayvon Martin. If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon. I think they are right to expect that all of us as Americans are going to take this with the seriousness it deserves, and that we're going to get to the bottom of exactly what happened.

The moment Obama spoke, the case of Trayvon Martin passed out of its national-mourning phase and lapsed into something darker and more familiar—racialized political fodder. The illusion of consensus crumbled. [Rush Limbaugh denounced](#) Obama's claim of empathy. *The Daily Caller*, a conservative Web site, [broadcast all of Martin's tweets](#), the most loutish of which revealed him to have committed the unpardonable sin of speaking like a 17-year-old boy. A white-supremacist site called Stormfront produced a photo of Martin with pants sagging, flipping the bird. *Business Insider* posted the photograph and took it down without apology when it was revealed to be a fake.

Newt Gingrich pounced on Obama's comments: "Is the president suggesting that if it had been a white who had been shot, that would be okay because it wouldn't look like him?" Reverting to form, *National Review* decided the real problem was that we were interested in the deaths of black youths only when nonblacks pulled the trigger. John Derbyshire, writing for *Taki's Magazine*, an iconoclastic libertarian publication, composed [a racist advice column](#) for his children inspired by the Martin affair. (Among Derbyshire's tips: never help black people in any kind of distress; avoid large gatherings of black people; cultivate black friends to shield yourself from charges of racism.)

The notion that Zimmerman might be the real victim began seeping out into the country, aided by PR efforts by his family and legal team, as well as by various acts of stupidity—Spike Lee tweeting Zimmerman's address (an act made all the more repugnant by the fact that he had the wrong Zimmerman), NBC misleadingly editing a tape of Zimmerman's phone conversation with a

police dispatcher to make Zimmerman seem to be racially profiling Martin. In April, when Zimmerman set up a Web site to collect donations for his defense, he raised more than \$200,000 in two weeks, before his lawyer asked that he close the site and launched a new, independently managed legal-defense fund. Although the trial date has yet to be set, as of July the fund was still raking in up to \$1,000 in donations daily.

But it would be wrong to attribute the burgeoning support for Zimmerman to the blunders of Spike Lee or an NBC producer. Before President Obama spoke, the death of Trayvon Martin was generally regarded as a national tragedy. After Obama spoke, Martin became material for an Internet vendor flogging paper gun-range targets that mimicked his hoodie and his bag of Skittles. (The vendor sold out within a week.) Before the president spoke, George Zimmerman was arguably the most reviled man in America. After the president spoke, Zimmerman became the patron saint of those who believe that an apt history of racism begins with Tawana Brawley and ends with the Duke lacrosse team.

The irony of Barack Obama is this: he has become the most successful black politician in American history by avoiding the radioactive racial issues of yesteryear, by being “clean” (as Joe Biden once labeled him)—and yet his indelible blackness irradiates everything he touches. This irony is rooted in the greater ironies of the country he leads. For most of American history, our political system was premised on two conflicting facts—one, an oft-stated love of democracy; the other, an undemocratic white supremacy inscribed at every level of government. In warring against that paradox, African Americans have historically been restricted to the realm of protest and agitation. But when President Barack Obama pledged to “get to the bottom of exactly what happened,” he was not protesting or agitating. He was not appealing to federal power—he was employing it. The power was black—and, in certain quarters, was received as such.

No amount of rhetorical moderation could change this. It did not matter that the president addressed himself to “every parent in America.” His insistence that “everybody [pull] together” was irrelevant. It meant nothing that he declined to cast aspersions on the investigating authorities, or to speculate on events. Even the fact that Obama expressed his own connection to Martin in the quietest way imaginable—“If I had a son, he’d look like Trayvon”—would not mollify his opposition. It is, after all, one thing to hear “I am Trayvon Martin” from the usual placard-waving rabble-rousers. Hearing it from the commander of the greatest military machine in human history is another.

By virtue of his background—the son of a black man and a white woman, someone who grew up in multiethnic communities around the world—

Obama has enjoyed a distinctive vantage point on race relations in America. Beyond that, he has displayed enviable dexterity at navigating between black and white America, and at finding a language that speaks to a critical mass in both communities. He emerged into national view at the Democratic National Convention in 2004, with a speech heralding a nation uncolored by old prejudices and shameful history. There was no talk of the effects of racism. Instead Obama stressed the power of parenting, and condemned those who would say that a black child carrying a book was “acting white.” He cast himself as the child of a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas and asserted, “In no other country on Earth is my story even possible.” When, as a senator, he was asked if the response to Hurricane Katrina evidenced racism, Obama responded by calling the “ineptitude” of the response “color-blind.”

Racism is not merely a simplistic hatred. It is, more often, broad sympathy toward some and broader skepticism toward others. Black America ever lives under that skeptical eye. Hence the old admonishments to be “twice as good.” Hence the need for a special “talk” administered to black boys about how to be extra careful when relating to the police. And hence Barack Obama’s insisting that there was no racial component to Katrina’s effects; that name-calling among children somehow has the same import as one of the oldest guiding principles of American policy—white supremacy. The election of an African American to our highest political office was alleged to demonstrate a triumph of integration. But when President Obama addressed the tragedy of Trayvon Martin, he demonstrated integration’s great limitation—that acceptance depends not just on being twice as good but on being half as black. And even then, full acceptance is still withheld. The larger effects of this withholding constrict Obama’s presidential potential in areas affected tangentially—or seemingly not at all—by race. Meanwhile, across the country, the community in which Obama is rooted sees this fraudulent equality, and quietly seethes.

Obama’s first term has coincided with a strategy of massive resistance on the part of his Republican opposition in the House, and a record number of filibuster threats in the Senate. It would be nice if this were merely a reaction to Obama’s politics or his policies—if this resistance truly were, as it is generally described, merely one more sign of our growing “polarization” as a nation. But the greatest abiding challenge to Obama’s national political standing has always rested on the existential fact that if he had a son, he’d look like Trayvon Martin. As a candidate, Barack Obama understood this.

“The thing is, a *black man* can’t be president in America, given the racial aversion and history that’s still out there,” Cornell Belcher, a pollster for Obama, told the journalist Gwen Ifill after the 2008 election. “However, an extraordinary, gifted, and talented young man who happens to be black can be president.”

Belcher's formulation grants the power of anti-black racism, and proposes to defeat it by not acknowledging it. His is the perfect statement of the Obama era, a time marked by a revolution that must never announce itself, by a democracy that must never acknowledge the weight of race, even while being shaped by it. Barack Obama governs a nation enlightened enough to send an African American to the White House, but not enlightened enough to accept a black man as its president.

Before Barack Obama, the "black president" lived in the African American imagination as a kind of cosmic joke, a phantom of all that could never be. White folks, whatever their talk of freedom and liberty, would not allow a black president. They could not tolerate Emmett's boyish gaze. Dr. King turned the other cheek, and they blew it off. White folks shot Lincoln over "nigger equality," ran Ida Wells out of Memphis, beat Freedom Riders over bus seats, slaughtered Medgar in his driveway like a dog. The comedian [Dave Chappelle](#) joked that the first black president would need a "Vice President Santiago"—because the only thing that would ensure his life in the White House was a Hispanic president-in-waiting. A black president signing a bill into law might as well sign his own death certificate.

And even if white folks could moderate their own penchant for violence, we could not moderate our own. A long-suffering life on the wrong side of the color line had denuded black people of the delicacy necessary to lead the free world. In a skit on his 1977 TV comedy show, [Richard Pryor, as a black president](#), conceded that he was "courting an awful lot of white women" and held a press conference that erupted into a riot after a reporter requested that the president's momma clean his house. More recently, the comedian [Cedric the Entertainer](#) joked that a black president would never have made it through Monicagate without turning a press conference into a battle royal. When Chappelle tried to imagine how a black George W. Bush would have justified the war against Saddam Hussein, his character ("Black Bush") simply yelled, "The nigger tried to kill my father!"

Thus, in hard jest, the paradoxes and problems of a theoretical black presidency were given voice. Racism would not allow a black president. Nor would a blackness, forged by America's democratic double-talk, that was too ghetto and raw for the refinement of the Oval Office. Just beneath the humor lurked a resonant pain, the scars of history, an aching doubt rooted in the belief that "they" would never accept us. And so in our Harlems and Paradise Valleys, we invoked a black presidency the way a legion of 5-foot point guards might invoke the dunk—as evidence of some great cosmic injustice, weighty in its import, out of reach.

And yet [Spud Webb](#) lives.

When presidential candidate Barack Obama presented himself to the black community, he was not to be believed. It strained credulity to think that a man sporting the same rigorously managed haircut as Jay-Z, a man who was a hard-core pickup basketball player, and who was married to a dark-skinned black woman from the South Side, could coax large numbers of white voters into the booth. Obama's blackness quotient is often a subject of debate. (He himself once joked, while speaking to the National Association of Black Journalists in 2007, "I want to apologize for being a little bit late, but you guys keep on asking whether I'm black enough.") But despite Obama's post-election reluctance to talk about race, he has always displayed both an obvious affinity for black culture and a distinct ability to defy black America's worst self-conceptions.

The crude communal myth about black men is that we are in some manner unavailable to black women—either jailed, dead, gay, or married to white women. A corollary myth posits a direct and negative relationship between success and black culture. Before we actually had one, we could not imagine a black president who loved being black. In [The Audacity of Hope](#), Obama describes his first kiss with the woman who would become his wife as tasting "of chocolate." The line sounds ripped from *Essence* magazine. That's the point.

These cultural cues became important during Obama's presidential run and beyond. Obama doesn't merely evince blackness; he uses his blackness to signal and court African Americans, semaphoring in a cultural dialect of our creation—[crooning Al Green](#) at the Apollo, name-checking Young Jeezy, regularly appearing on the cover of black magazines, [weighing the merits of Jay-Z versus Kanye West](#), being photographed in the White House with [a little black boy touching his hair](#). There is often something mawkish about this signaling—like a Virginia politico thickening his southern accent when talking to certain audiences. If you've often been the butt of political signaling (Sister Souljah, Willie Horton), and rarely the recipient, these displays of cultural affinity are powerful. And they are all the more powerful because Obama has been successful. Whole sections of America that we had assumed to be negrophobic turned out in support of him in 2008. Whatever Obama's other triumphs, arguably his greatest has been an expansion of the black imagination to encompass this: the idea that a man can be culturally black and many other things also—biracial, Ivy League, intellectual, cosmopolitan, temperamentally conservative, presidential.

It is often said that Obama's presidency has given black parents the right to tell their kids with a straight face that they can do anything. This is a function not only of Obama's election to the White House but of the way his presidency broadcasts an easy, almost mystic, blackness to the world. The

Obama family represents our ideal imagining of ourselves—an ideal we so rarely see on any kind of national stage.

What black people are experiencing right now is a kind of privilege previously withheld—seeing our most sacred cultural practices and tropes validated in the world’s highest office. Throughout the whole of American history, this kind of cultural power was wielded solely by whites, and with such ubiquity that it was not even commented upon. The expansion of this cultural power beyond the private province of whites has been a tremendous advance for black America. Conversely, for those who’ve long treasured white exclusivity, the existence of a President Barack Obama is discombobulating, even terrifying. For as surely as the iconic picture of the young black boy reaching out to touch the president’s curly hair sends one message to black America, it sends another to those who have enjoyed the power of whiteness.

In America, the rights to own property, to serve on a jury, to vote, to hold public office, to rise to the presidency have historically been seen as belonging only to those people who showed particular integrity. Citizenship was a social contract in which persons of moral standing were transformed into stakeholders who swore to defend the state against threats external and internal. Until a century and a half ago, slave rebellion ranked high in the fevered American imagination of threats necessitating such an internal defense.

In the early years of our republic, when democracy was still an unproven experiment, the Founders were not even clear that all white people should be entrusted with this fragile venture, much less the bestial African. Thus Congress, in 1790, declared the following:

All free white persons who have, or shall migrate into the United States, and shall give satisfactory proof, before a magistrate, by oath, that they intend to reside therein, and shall take an oath of allegiance, and shall have resided in the United States for one whole year, shall be entitled to all the rights of citizenship.

In such ways was the tie between citizenship and whiteness in America made plain from the very beginning. By the 19th century, there was, as Matthew Jacobson, a professor of history and American studies at Yale, has put it, “an unquestioned acceptance of whiteness as a prerequisite for naturalized citizenship.” Debating Abraham Lincoln during the race for a U.S. Senate seat in Illinois in 1858, Stephen Douglas asserted that “this government was made on the white basis” and that the Framers had made “no reference either to the Negro, the savage Indians, the Feejee, the Malay, or an other inferior and

degraded race, when they spoke of the equality of men.”

After the Civil War, Andrew Johnson, Lincoln’s successor as president and a unionist, scoffed at awarding the Negro the franchise:

The peculiar qualities which should characterize any people who are fit to decide upon the management of public affairs for a great state have seldom been combined. It is the glory of white men to know that they have had these qualities in sufficient measure to build upon this continent a great political fabric and to preserve its stability for more than ninety years, while in every other part of the world all similar experiments have failed. But if anything can be proved by known facts, if all reasoning upon evidence is not abandoned, it must be acknowledged that in the progress of nations Negroes have shown less capacity for government than any other race of people. No independent government of any form has ever been successful in their hands. On the contrary, wherever they have been left to their own devices they have shown a constant tendency to relapse into barbarism.

The notion of blacks as particularly unfit for political equality persisted well into the 20th century. As the nation began considering integrating its military, a young West Virginian wrote to a senator in 1944:

I am a typical American, a southerner, and 27 years of age ... I am loyal to my country and know but reverence to her flag, BUT I shall never submit to fight beneath that banner with a negro by my side. Rather I should die a thousand times, and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throw back to the blackest specimen from the wilds.

The writer—who never joined the military, but did join the Ku Klux Klan—was Robert Byrd, who died in 2010 as the longest-serving U.S. senator in history. Byrd’s rejection of political equality was echoed in 1957 by William F. Buckley Jr., who addressed the moral disgrace of segregation by endorsing disenfranchisement strictly based on skin color:

The central question that emerges—and it is not a parliamentary question or a question that is answered by merely consulting a catalog of the rights of American citizens, born Equal—is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not

predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race.

Buckley, the founder of *National Review*, went on to assert, “The great majority of the Negroes of the South who do not vote do not care to vote and would not know for what to vote if they could.”

The idea that blacks should hold no place of consequence in the American political future has affected every sector of American society, transforming whiteness itself into a monopoly on American possibilities. White people like Byrd and Buckley were raised in a time when, by law, they were assured of never having to compete with black people for the best of anything. Blacks used inferior public pools and inferior washrooms, attended inferior schools. The nicest restaurants turned them away. In large swaths of the country, blacks paid taxes but could neither attend the best universities nor exercise the right to vote. The best jobs, the richest neighborhoods, were giant set-asides for whites—universal affirmative action, with no pretense of restitution.

Slavery, Jim Crow, segregation: these bonded white people into a broad aristocracy united by the salient fact of unblackness. What Byrd saw in an integrated military was the crumbling of the ideal of whiteness, and thus the crumbling of an entire society built around it. Whatever the saintly nonviolent rhetoric used to herald it, racial integration was a brutal assault on whiteness. The American presidency, an unbroken streak of nonblack men, was, until 2008, the greatest symbol of that old order.

Watching Obama rack up victories in states like Virginia, New Mexico, Ohio, and North Carolina on Election Night in 2008, anyone could easily conclude that racism, as a national force, had been defeated. The thought should not be easily dismissed: Obama’s victory demonstrates the incredible distance this country has traveled. (Indeed, William F. Buckley Jr. later revised his early positions on race; Robert Byrd spent decades in Congress atoning for his.) That a country that once took whiteness as the foundation of citizenship would elect a black president is a victory. But to view this victory as racism’s defeat is to forget the precise terms on which it was secured, and to ignore the quaking ground beneath Obama’s feet.

During the 2008 primary, *The New Yorker’s* [George Packer journeyed to Kentucky](#) and was shocked by the brazen declarations of white identity. “I think he would put too many minorities in positions over the white race,” one voter told Packer. “That’s my opinion.” That voter was hardly alone. In 2010, Michael Tesler, a political scientist at Brown University, and David Sears, a professor of psychology and political science at UCLA, were able to assess the

impact of race in the 2008 primary by comparing data from two 2008 campaign and election studies with previous surveys of racial resentment and voter choice. As they wrote in *Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America*:

No other factor, in fact, came close to dividing the Democratic primary electorate as powerfully as their feelings about African Americans. The impact of racial attitudes on individual vote decisions ... was so strong that it appears to have even outstripped the substantive impact of racial attitudes on Jesse Jackson's more racially charged campaign for the nomination in 1988.

Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, a doctoral candidate in economics at Harvard, is studying how racial animus may have cost Obama votes in 2008. First, Stephens-Davidowitz ranked areas of the country according to how often people there typed racist search terms into Google. (The areas with the highest rates of racially charged search terms were West Virginia, western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, upstate New York, and southern Mississippi.) Then he compared Obama's voting results in those areas with John Kerry's four years earlier. So, for instance, in 2004 Kerry received 50 percent of the vote in the media markets of both Denver and Wheeling (which straddles the Ohio–West Virginia border). Based on the Democratic groundswell in 2008, Obama should have received about 57 percent of the popular vote in both regions. But that's not what happened. In the Denver area, which had one of the nation's lowest rates of racially charged Google searching, Obama received the predicted 57 percent. But in Wheeling, which had a high rate of racially charged Google searching, Obama's share of the popular vote was only 48 percent. Of course, Obama also picked up some votes because he is black. But, aggregating his findings nationally, Stephens-Davidowitz has concluded that Obama lost between 3 and 5 percentage points of the popular vote to racism.

After Obama won, the longed-for post-racial moment did not arrive; on the contrary, racism intensified. At rallies for the nascent Tea Party, people held signs saying things like Obama Plans White Slavery. Steve King, an Iowa congressman and Tea Party favorite, complained that Obama “favors the black person.” In 2009, Rush Limbaugh, bard of white decline, called Obama's presidency a time when “the white kids now get beat up, with the black kids cheering ‘Yeah, right on, right on, right on.’ And of course everybody says the white kid deserved it—he was born a racist, he's white.” On *Fox & Friends*, [Glenn Beck asserted](#) that Obama had exposed himself as a guy “who has a deep-seated hatred for white people or the white culture ... This guy is, I believe, a racist.” Beck later said he was wrong to call Obama a racist. That same week he also called the president's health-care plan “reparations.”

One possible retort to this pattern of racial paranoia is to cite the Clinton years, when an ideological fever drove the right wing to derangement, inspiring militia movements and accusations that the president had conspired to murder his own lawyer, Vince Foster. The upshot, by this logic, is that Obama is experiencing run-of-the-mill political opposition in which race is but a minor factor among much larger ones, such as party affiliation. But the argument assumes that party affiliation itself is unconnected to race. It pretends that only Toni Morrison took note of Clinton's particular appeal to black voters. It forgets that Clinton felt compelled to attack Sister Souljah. It forgets that whatever ignoble labels the right wing pinned on Clinton's health-care plan, "reparations" did not rank among them.

Michael Tesler, following up on his research with David Sears on the role of race in the 2008 campaign, recently published a study assessing the impact of race on opposition to and support for health-care reform. The findings are bracing. Obama's election effectively racialized white Americans' views, even of health-care policy. As [Tesler writes](#) in a paper published in July in *The American Journal of Political Science*, "Racial attitudes had a significantly greater impact on health care opinions when framed as part of President Obama's plan than they had when the exact same policies were attributed to President Clinton's 1993 health care initiative."

While Beck and Limbaugh have chosen direct racial assault, others choose simply to deny that a black president actually exists. One in four Americans (and more than half of all Republicans) believe Obama was not born in this country, and thus is an illegitimate president. More than a dozen state legislatures have introduced "birther bills" demanding proof of Obama's citizenship as a condition for putting him on the 2012 ballot. Eighteen percent of Republicans believe Obama to be a Muslim. The goal of all this is to delegitimize Obama's presidency. If Obama is not truly American, then America has still never had a black president.

White resentment has not cooled as the Obama presidency has proceeded. Indeed, the GOP presidential-primary race featured candidates asserting that the [black family was better off under slavery](#) (Michele Bachmann, Rick Santorum); claiming that Obama, as a black man, [should oppose abortion](#) (Santorum again); or denouncing Obama as a ["food-stamp president"](#) (Newt Gingrich).

The resentment is not confined to Republicans. Earlier this year, West Virginia gave 41 percent of the popular vote during the Democratic primary to Keith Judd, a white incarcerated felon (Judd actually defeated Obama in 10 counties). Joe Manchin, one of West Virginia's senators, and Earl Ray Tomblin, its governor, are declining to attend this year's Democratic

convention, and will not commit to voting for Obama.

It is often claimed that Obama's unpopularity in coal-dependent West Virginia stems from his environmental policies. But recall that no state ranked higher on Seth Stephens-Davidowitz's racism scale than West Virginia. Moreover, Obama was unpopular in West Virginia before he became president: even at the tail end of the Democratic primaries in 2008, Hillary Clinton walloped Obama by 41 points. A fifth of West Virginia Democrats openly professed that race played a role in their vote.

What we are now witnessing is not some new and complicated expression of white racism—rather, it's the dying embers of the same old racism that once rendered the best pickings of America the exclusive province of unblackness. Confronted by the thoroughly racialized backlash to Obama's presidency, a stranger to American politics might conclude that Obama provoked the response by relentlessly pushing an agenda of radical racial reform. Hardly. Daniel Gillion, a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania who studies race and politics, examined the Public Papers of the Presidents, a compilation of nearly all public presidential utterances—proclamations, news-conference remarks, executive orders—and found that in his first two years as president, Obama talked less about race than any other Democratic president since 1961. Obama's racial strategy has been, if anything, the opposite of radical: he declines to use his bully pulpit to address racism, using it instead to engage in the time-honored tradition of black self-hectoring, railing against the perceived failings of black culture.

His approach is not new. It is the approach of Booker T. Washington, who, amid a sea of white terrorists during the era of Jim Crow, endorsed segregation and proclaimed the South to be a land of black opportunity. It is the approach of L. Douglas Wilder, who, in 1986, not long before he became Virginia's first black governor, kept his distance from Jesse Jackson and told an NAACP audience: "Yes, dear Brutus, the fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves ... Some blacks don't particularly care for me to say these things, to speak to values ... Somebody's got to. We've been too excusing." It was even, at times, the approach of Jesse Jackson himself, who railed against "the rising use of drugs, and babies making babies, and violence ... cutting away our opportunity."

The strategy can work. Booker T.'s Tuskegee University still stands. Wilder became the first black governor in America since Reconstruction. Jackson's campaign moved the Democratic nominating process toward proportional allocation of delegates, a shift that Obama exploited in the 2008 Democratic primaries by staying competitive enough in big states to rack up delegates even where he was losing, and rolling up huge vote margins (and delegate-count victories) in smaller ones.

And yet what are we to make of an integration premised, first, on the entire black community's emulating the Huxtables? An equality that requires blacks to be twice as good is not equality—it's a double standard. That double standard haunts and constrains the Obama presidency, warning him away from candor about America's sordid birthmark.

Another political tradition in black America, running counter to the one publicly embraced by Obama and Booker T. Washington, casts its skepticism not simply upon black culture but upon the entire American project. This tradition stretches back to Frederick Douglass, who, in 1852, [said of his native country](#), "There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States at this very hour." It extends through Martin Delany, through Booker T.'s nemesis W. E. B. Du Bois, and through Malcolm X. It includes Martin Luther King Jr., who at the height of the Vietnam War called America "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." And it includes Obama's former pastor, he of the famous "God Damn America" sermon, Jeremiah Wright.

The Harvard Law professor Randall Kennedy, in his 2011 book, *The Persistence of the Color Line: Racial Politics and the Obama Presidency*, examines this tradition by looking at his own father and Reverend Wright in the context of black America's sense of patriotism. Like Wright, the elder Kennedy was a veteran of the U.S. military, a man seared and radicalized by American racism, forever remade as a vociferous critic of his native country: in virtually any American conflict, Kennedy's father rooted for the foreign country.

The deep skepticism about the American project that Kennedy's father and Reverend Wright evince is an old tradition in black America. Before Frederick Douglass worked, during the Civil War, for the preservation of the Union, he called for his country's destruction. "I have no love for America," [he declaimed](#) in a lecture to the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1847. "I have no patriotism ... I desire to see [the government] overthrown as speedily as possible and its Constitution shivered in a thousand fragments."

Kennedy notes that Douglass's denunciations were the words of a man who not only had endured slavery but was living in a country where whites often selected the Fourth of July as a special day to prosecute a campaign of racial terror:

On July 4, 1805, whites in Philadelphia drove blacks out of the square facing Independence Hall. For years thereafter, blacks attended Fourth of July festivities in that city at their peril. On July 4, 1834, a white mob in New York City burned down the

Broadway Tabernacle because of the antislavery and antiracist views of the church's leaders. Firefighters in sympathy with the arsonists refused to douse the conflagration. On July 4, 1835, a white mob in Canaan, New Hampshire, destroyed a school open to blacks that was run by an abolitionist. The antebellum years were liberally dotted with such episodes.

Jeremiah Wright was born into an America of segregation—overt in the South and covert in the North, but wounding wherever. He joined the Marines, vowing service to his country, at a time when he wouldn't have been allowed to vote in some states. He built his ministry in a community reeling from decades of job and housing discrimination, and heaving under the weight of drugs, gun violence, and broken families. Wright's world is emblematic of the African Americans he ministered to, people reared on the anti-black-citizenship tradition—poll taxes, states pushing stringent voter-ID laws—of Stephen Douglas and Andrew Johnson and William F. Buckley Jr. The message is “You are not American.” The countermessage—[God damn America](#)—is an old one, and is surprising only to people unfamiliar with the politics of black life in this country. Unfortunately, that is an apt description of large swaths of America.

Whatever the context for Wright's speech, the surfacing of his remarks in 2008 was utterly inconvenient not just for the Obama campaign but for much of black America. One truism holds that black people are always anxious to talk about race, eager to lecture white people at every juncture about how wrong they are and about the price they must pay for past and ongoing sins. But one reason Obama rose so quickly was that African Americans are war-weary. It was not simply the country at large that was tired of the old Baby Boomer debates. Blacks, too, were sick of talking about affirmative action and school busing. There was a broad sense that integration had failed us, and a growing disenchantment with our appointed spokespeople. Obama's primary triumphs in predominantly white states gave rise to rumors of a new peace, one many blacks were anxious to achieve.

And even those black Americans who embrace the tradition of God Damn America do so not with glee but with deep pain and anguish. Both Kennedy's father and Wright were military men. My own father went to Vietnam dreaming of John Wayne, but came back quoting Malcolm X. The poet [Lucille Clifton once put it succinctly](#):

They act like they don't love their country
No
what it is
is they found out
their country don't love them.

In 2008, as Obama's election became imaginable, it seemed possible that our country had indeed, at long last, come to love us. We did not need our Jeremiah Wrights, our Jesse Jacksons, our products of the polarized '60s getting in the way. Indeed, after distancing himself from Wright, Obama lost almost no black support.

Obama offered black America a convenient narrative that could be meshed with the larger American story. It was a narrative premised on Crispus Attucks, not the black slaves who escaped plantations and fought for the British; on the 54th Massachusetts, not Nat Turner; on stoic and saintly Rosa Parks, not young and pregnant Claudette Colvin; on a Christlike Martin Luther King Jr., not an avenging Malcolm X. Jeremiah Wright's presence threatened to rupture that comfortable narrative by symbolizing that which makes integration impossible—black rage.

From the ["inadequate black male"](#) diatribe of the Hillary Clinton supporter Harriet Christian in 2008, to Rick Santelli's 2009 rant on CNBC against subsidizing ["losers' mortgages,"](#) to Representative Joe Wilson's ["You lie!"](#) outburst during Obama's September 2009 address to Congress, to John Boehner's screaming ["Hell no!"](#) on the House floor about Obamacare in 2010, politicized rage has marked the opposition to Obama. But the rules of our racial politics require that Obama never respond in like fashion. So frightening is the prospect of black rage given voice and power that when Obama was a freshman senator, he was asked, on national television, to denounce the rage of Harry Belafonte. This fear continued with demands that he keep his distance from Louis Farrakhan and culminated with Reverend Wright and a presidency that must never betray any sign of rage toward its white opposition.

Thus the myth of "twice as good" that makes Barack Obama possible also smothers him. It holds that African Americans—enslaved, tortured, raped, discriminated against, and subjected to the most lethal homegrown terrorist movement in American history—feel no anger toward their tormentors. Of course, very little in our history argues that those who seek to tell bold truths about race will be rewarded. But it was Obama himself, as a presidential candidate in 2008, who called for such truths to be spoken. "Race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now," he said in his "More Perfect Union" speech, which he delivered after a furor erupted over Reverend Wright's "God Damn America" remarks. And yet, since taking office, Obama has virtually ignored race.

Whatever the political intelligence of this calculus, it has broad and deep consequences. The most obvious result is that it prevents Obama from directly addressing America's racial history, or saying anything meaningful

about present issues tinged by race, such as mass incarceration or the drug war. There have been calls for Obama to take a softer line on state-level legalization of marijuana or even to stand for legalization himself. Indeed, there is no small amount of inconsistency in our black president's either ignoring or upholding harsh drug laws that every day injure the prospects of young black men—laws that could have ended his own, had he been of another social class and arrested for the marijuana use he openly discusses. But the intellectual argument doubles as the counterargument. If the fact of a black president is enough to racialize the wonkish world of health-care reform, what havoc would the Obama touch wreak upon the already racialized world of drug policy?

The political consequences of race extend beyond the domestic. I am, like many liberals, horrified by Obama's embrace of a secretive drone policy, and particularly the killing of American citizens without any restraints. A president aware of black America's tenuous hold on citizenship, of how the government has at times secretly conspired against its advancement—a black president with a broad sense of the world—should know better. Except a black president with Obama's past is the perfect target for right-wing attacks depicting him as weak on terrorism. The president's inability to speak candidly on race cannot be bracketed off from his inability to speak candidly on everything. Race is not simply a portion of the Obama story. It is the lens through which many Americans view all his politics.

But whatever the politics, a total submission to them is a disservice to the country. No one knows this better than Obama himself, who once described patriotism as more than pageantry and the scarfing of hot dogs. "When our laws, our leaders, or our government are out of alignment with our ideals, then the dissent of ordinary Americans may prove to be one of the truest expressions of patriotism," Obama said in Independence, Missouri, in June 2008. Love of country, like all other forms of love, requires that you tell those you care about not simply what they want to hear but what they need to hear.

But in the age of the Obama presidency, expressing that kind of patriotism is presumably best done quietly, politely, and with great deference.

This spring I flew down to Albany, Georgia, and spent the day with Shirley Sherrod, a longtime civil-rights activist who embodies exactly the kind of patriotism that Obama esteems. Albany is in Dougherty County, where the poverty rate hangs around 30 percent—double that of the rest of the state. On the drive in from the airport, the selection of vendors—payday loans, title loans, and car dealers promising no credit check—evidenced the statistic.

When I met Sherrod at her office, she was working to get a birthday card out

to Roger Spooner, whose farm she'd once fought to save. In July 2010, the conservative commentator [Andrew Breitbart posted video clips](#) on his Web site of a speech Sherrod had delivered to the NAACP the previous March. The video was edited so that Sherrod, then an official at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, appeared to be bragging about discriminating against a white farmer and thus enacting a fantasy of racial revenge. The point was to tie Obama to the kind of black rage his fevered enemies often impute to him. Fearing exactly that, Sherrod's supervisors at the USDA called her in the middle of a long drive and had her submit her resignation via BlackBerry, telling her, "You're going to be on *Glenn Beck* tonight."

Glenn Beck did eventually do [a segment on Sherrod](#)—one in which he attacked the administration for forcing her out. As it turned out, the full context showed that Sherrod was actually documenting her own turn *away* from racial anger. The farmer who was the subject of the story came forward, along with his wife, and explained that Sherrod had worked tirelessly to help the family. The farmer was Roger Spooner.

Sherrod's career as an activist, first in civil rights and then later in the world of small farmers like Roger Spooner, was not chosen so much as thrust upon her. Her cousin had been lynched in 1943. Her father was shot and killed by a white relative in a dispute over some cows. There were three witnesses, but the grand jury in her native Baker County did not indict the suspect. Sherrod became an activist with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, registering voters near her hometown. Her husband, Charles Sherrod, was instrumental in leading the Albany Movement, which attracted Martin Luther King Jr. to town. But when Stokely Carmichael rose to lead SNCC and took it in a black-nationalist direction, the Sherrods, committed to nonviolence and integration, faced a weighty choice. Carmichael himself had been committed to nonviolence, until the killings and beatings he encountered as a civil-rights activist took their toll. Sherrod, with a past haunted by racist violence, would have seemed ripe for recruitment to the nationalist line. But she, along with her husband, declined, leaving SNCC in order to continue in the tradition of King and nonviolence.

Her achievements from then on are significant. She helped pioneer the farm-collective movement in America, and co-founded New Communities—a sprawling 6,000-acre collective that did everything from growing crops to canning sugar cane and sorghum. New Communities folded in 1985, largely because Ronald Reagan's USDA refused to sign off on a loan, even as it was signing off on money for smaller-scale white farmers. Sherrod went on to work with Farm Aid. She befriended Willie Nelson, held a fellowship with the Kellogg Foundation, and was shortlisted for a job in President Clinton's Agriculture Department. Still, she remained relatively unknown except to students of the civil-rights movement and activists who promoted the rights

of small farmers. And unknown she would have remained, had she not been very publicly forced out of her position by the administration of the country's first black president.

Through most of her career as an agriculture activist, Sherrod had found the USDA to be a barrier to the success of black farmers. What hurt black farms the most were the discriminatory practices of local officials in granting loans. Sherrod spent years protesting these practices. But then, after the election of Barack Obama, she was hired by the USDA, where she would be supervising the very people she'd once fought. Now she would have a chance to ensure fair and nondiscriminatory lending practices. Her appointment represented the kind of unnoticed but significant changes Obama's election brought.

But then the administration, intimidated by a resurgent right wing specializing in whipping up racial resentment, compelled Sherrod to resign on the basis of the misleading clips. When the full tape emerged, the administration was left looking ridiculous.

And cowardly. An e-mail chain later surfaced in which the White House congratulated Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's staff for getting ahead of the news cycle. None of them had yet seen the full tape. That the Obama administration would fold so easily gives some sense of how frightened it was of a protracted fight with any kind of racial subtext, particularly one that had a subtext of black rage. Its enemies understood this, and when no black rage could be found, they concocted some. And the administration, in a panic, knuckled under.

Violence at the hands of whites robbed Shirley Sherrod of a cousin and a father. White rage outlined the substantive rules of her life: Don't quarrel with white people. Don't look them in the eye. Avoid Route 91 after dark. White racism destroyed New Communities, a fact validated by the nearly \$13 million the organization received in the class-action suit it joined alleging racial discrimination by the local USDA officials granting loan applications. (Which means that her being forced out by Vilsack was the second time the USDA had wronged her directly.) And yet through it all, Sherrod has hewed to the rule of "twice as good." She has preached nonviolence and integration. The very video that led to her dismissal was of a speech aimed at black people, warning them against the dangers of succumbing to rage.

Driving down a sparse country road, Sherrod and I pulled over to a grassy footpath and stepped out at the spot where her father had been shot and killed in 1965. We then drove a few miles into Newton, and stopped at a large brick building that used to be the courthouse where Sherrod had tried to register to vote a few months after her father's death but had been violently turned back by the sheriff; where a year later Sherrod's mother pursued a

civil case against her husband's killer. (She lost.) For this, Sherrod's mother enjoyed routine visits from white terrorists, which abated only after she, pregnant with her dead husband's son, appeared in the doorway with a gun and began calling out names of men in the mob.

When we got back into the car, I asked Sherrod why she hadn't given in to rage against her father's killers and sided with Stokely Carmichael. "It was simple for me," she said. "I really wanted to work. I wanted to win."

I asked Sherrod if she thought the president had a grasp of the specific history of the region and of the fights waged and the sacrifices made in order to make his political journey possible. "I don't think he does," Sherrod said. "When he called me [shortly after the incident], he kept saying he understood our struggle and all we'd fought for. He said, 'Read my book and you'll see.' But I *had* read his book."

In 2009, Sergeant James Crowley arrested Henry Louis Gates Jr., the eminent professor of African American studies at Harvard, at his front door in Cambridge, for, essentially, sassing him. When President [Obama publicly asserted the stupidity](#) of Crowley's action, he was so besieged that the controversy threatened to derail what he hoped would be his signature achievement—health-care reform. Obama, an African American male who had risen through the ranks of the American elite, was no doubt sensitive to untoward treatment at the hands of the police. But his expounding upon it so provoked right-wing rage that he was forced away from doing the kind of truth-telling he'd once lauded. "I don't know if you've noticed," Obama said at the time, "but nobody's been paying much attention to health care."

Shirley Sherrod has worked all her life to make a world where the rise of a black president born of a biracial marriage is both conceivable and legal. She has endured the killing of relatives, the ruination of enterprises, and the defaming of her reputation. Crowley, for his actions, was feted in the halls of American power, honored by being invited to a "beer summit" with the man he had arrested and the leader of the free world. Shirley Sherrod, unjustly fired and defamed, was treated to a brief phone call from a man whose career, in some profound way, she had made possible. Sherrod herself is not immune to this point. She talked to me about crying with her husband while watching Obama's Election Night speech. In her new memoir, *The Courage to Hope*, she writes about a different kind of tears: when she discussed her firing with her family, her mother, who'd spent her life facing down racism at its most lethal, simply wept. "What will my babies say?," Sherrod cried to her husband, referring to their four small granddaughters. "How can I explain to my children that I got fired by the first black president?"

In 2000, an undercover police officer followed a young man named Prince

Jones from suburban Maryland through Washington, D.C., into Northern Virginia and shot him dead, near the home of his girlfriend and 11-month-old daughter. Jones was a student at Howard University. His mother was a radiologist. He was also my friend. The officer tracking Prince thought he was on the trail of a drug dealer. But the dealer he was after was short and wore dreadlocks—Prince was tall and wore his hair cropped close. The officer was black. He wore dreadlocks and a T-shirt, in an attempt to look like a drug dealer. The ruse likely worked. He claimed that after Prince got out of his car and confronted him, he drew his gun and said “Police”; Prince returned to his car and repeatedly rammed the officer’s unmarked car with his own vehicle. The story sounded wildly at odds with the young man I knew. But even if it was accurate, I could easily see myself frightened by a strange car following me for miles, and then reacting wildly when a man in civilian clothes pulled out a gun and claimed to be a cop. (The officer never showed a badge.)

No criminal charges were ever brought against Carlton Jones, the officer who killed my friend and rendered a little girl fatherless. It was as if society barely blinked. A few months later, I moved to New York. When 9/11 happened, I wanted nothing to do with any kind of patriotism, with the broad national ceremony of mourning. I had no sympathy for the firefighters, and something bordering on hatred for the police officers who had died. I lived in a country where my friend—twice as good—could be shot down mere footsteps from his family by agents of the state. God damn America, indeed.

I grew. I became a New Yorker. I came to understand the limits of anger. Watching Barack Obama crisscross the country to roaring white crowds, and then get elected president, I became convinced that the country really had changed—that time and events had altered the nation, and that progress had come in places I’d never imagined it could. When Osama bin Laden was killed, I cheered like everyone else. God damn al-Qaeda.

When trans-partisan mourning erupted around Trayvon Martin, it reinforced my conviction that the world had changed since the death of Prince Jones. Like Prince, Trayvon was suspected of being a criminal chiefly because of the color of his skin. Like Prince’s, Trayvon’s killer claimed self-defense. Again, with little effort, I could see myself in the shoes of the dead man. But this time, society’s response seemed so very different, so much more heartening.

Then the first black president spoke, and the Internet bloomed. Young people began “Trayvoning”—mocking the death of a black boy by photographing themselves in hoodies, with Skittles and iced tea, in a death pose.

In a democracy, so the saying goes, the people get the government they deserve. Part of Obama’s genius is a remarkable ability to soothe race consciousness among whites. Any black person who’s worked in the

professional world is well acquainted with this trick. But never has it been practiced at such a high level, and never have its limits been so obviously exposed. This need to talk in dulcet tones, to never be angry regardless of the offense, bespeaks a strange and compromised integration indeed, revealing a country so infantile that it can countenance white acceptance of blacks only when they meet an Al Roker standard.

And yet this is the uncertain foundation of Obama's historic victory—a victory that I, and my community, hold in the highest esteem. Who would truly deny the possibility of a black presidency in all its power and symbolism? Who would rob that little black boy of the right to feel himself affirmed by touching the kinky black hair of his president?

I think back to the first time I wrote Shirley Sherrod, requesting an interview. Here was a black woman with every reason in the world to bear considerable animosity toward Barack Obama. But she agreed to meet me only with great trepidation. She said she didn't "want to do anything to hurt" the president.

This article available online at:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/09/fear-of-a-black-president/309064/>

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Grading:

1. Research Journals: 6 at 8 points each, 48 points total
2. Papers: 2 @ 20 points each, 40 points total
 - Paper 1: Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" (Structure 1)
 - Paper 2: Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Fear of a Black President" (Structure 2)
3. Peer Evaluations: 2 @ 6 points each, 12 points total

Total Points: 100

Grading Scale

A = 100 - 90 points

B = 89 - 80 points

C = 79 - 70 points

D = 69 - 60 points

F = 59 - 0 points

NOTE: There are no plus (+) or minus (-) grades in the LACCD system. For this reason, I will offer three (3) extra credit points at the end of the semester so that students may change grades that would be a B+, C+ and D+ into an A, B, and C. However... fulfillment of extra credit assignments does not guarantee that extra credit will be awarded; all extra credit assignments must be of superior quality.

Essay Rubric

| Essay Rubric | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Criterion | 1. Does not demonstrate SLO adequately | 2. Demonstrates SLO adequately | 3. Exceeds adequate demonstration of SLO |
| Content | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lacks clear thesis/focus , and may be off topic. 2. Does not support thesis adequately. 3. Does not counter antithesis. 4. May lack a persuasive purpose. 5. May contain redundancies and incorrect information about class readings. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has thesis/focus. 2. Provides minimal but sufficient support for thesis. 3. Counters antithesis. 4. Includes a persuasive purpose. 5. May contain redundancies, but any information about class | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has clear thesis/focus. 2. Supports thesis very ably with any required class readings and all of these types of evidence: facts, expert opinions, relevant anecdotes, and descriptions of |

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|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | readings is correct. | <p>situations and events.</p> <p>3. Counters convincing antithesis effectively, so overall argument presented in paper does not appear to be a straw man argument.</p> <p>4. Includes a clear persuasive purpose.</p> <p>5. Contains no redundancies, and any information about class readings is correct.</p> |
| Academic Integrity* | 1. The paper is plagiarized or contains one or more plagiarized passages. | 1. The paper is not plagiarized in whole or in part. | 1. The paper is not plagiarized in whole or in part. |
| Organization | 1. Lacks necessary and/or appropriate transitions between several sentences and/or | 1. Contains sufficient transitions between most sentences and paragraphs, and | 1. Contains sufficient and appropriate transitions between most sentences |

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| | <p>paragraphs, and essay may contain too few paragraphs and/or paragraphs that seem inappropriately long.</p> <p>2. Orders ideas and support for thesis randomly.</p> | <p>paragraphs in essays seem generally appropriate in terms of quantity and length, although some may seem inappropriately long.</p> <p>2. Orders ideas and support for thesis logically.</p> | <p>and paragraphs, so paper seems stylistically superior, and paragraphs seem appropriate in terms of quantity and length.</p> <p>2. Orders ideas and support for thesis thoughtfully and logically, allowing reader to comprehend content easily.</p> |
| <p>Grammar, Mechanics, MLA Format</p> | <p>1. Contains simple vocabulary and sentence structure.</p> <p>2. Features many different kinds of distracting errors that stop reader from focusing on content: grammar, spelling, punctuation, wrong</p> | <p>1. Contains some college-level vocabulary and sentences with more than one clause.</p> <p>2. Has some English usage errors, but these errors do not distract reader from</p> | <p>1. Contains appropriate college-level vocabulary and a variety of sentences that help essay to read well and seem stylistically superior.</p> <p>2. May have some English usage errors, but these</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | <p>words, awkward/garbled phrasing.</p> <p>3. MLA format is non-existent, contains numerous errors, or contains major errors.</p> | <p>focusing on content.</p> <p>3. MLA format is mostly correct, but may contain several minor errors.</p> | <p>errors are minor and do not distract reader from focusing on content.</p> <p>3. MLA format is mostly correct, although it may contain a few minor errors.</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

*A paper that is plagiarized or contains one or more plagiarized passage automatically receives a failing grade.

Rubric for In-Class Writing Discussions

Well = Superior performance
 Adequate = Meets minimum standards
 Inadequate - Does not meet minimum standards

- A:** Fulfills all criteria well.
- B:** Fulfills most criteria well, but 1-2 adequately.
- C:** Fulfills 1-2 criteria well, but most criteria adequately.
- D:** Fulfills one or two criteria well or adequately, but fulfills most criteria inadequately, and too many distracting errors stop reader from focusing on content.
- F:** Fulfills all criteria inadequately, and/or too many distracting errors stop reader from focusing on content.

Discussion Criteria:

1. Read and/or view discussion texts, as appropriate, before the discussion begins.
2. Read each discussion contribution before posting your own discussion contribution.
3. Post your in-class writing in a timely manner.

4. Offer your own thoughts/ideas about at least two other students' in-class writings; do not simply agree or disagree with their opinions.
5. Run a spell/grammar check on all discussion postings, and use font Verdana, size 14, in black type.

Classroom Environment

In this classroom, all students must work together with me to create a safe, pleasant and productive learning environment. Please see <http://www.wlac.edu/studentlife/index.html> for WLAC policies about creating this kind of environment. This URL contains other useful information for students. Please click on it, and read the information.

Important Dates

| Summer 2014 | Session #1 | Session #2 |
|--|---|---|
| SESSION PERIOD APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED BEGINNING | Jun 16 - Jul 27 Mar - Jun | Jun 16 - Aug 10 Mar - Jun |
| REGISTRATION BEGINS | | |
| <i>-Priority (EOPS, DSPS, Veterans, Foster Care Youth, CalWORKs)</i> | Apr 14 - 16 | Apr 14 - 16 |
| <i>-Continuing Students</i> | Apr 17 - May 7 | Apr 17 - May 7 |
| <i>-New & Returning Students</i> | May 8 | May 8 |
| <i>-Residency Determination Required</i> | Jun 15 | Jun 15 |
| Special Registration Hours | NA | NA |
| FINALS | last day of class | last day of class |
| LAST DAY TO | | |
| Add a Traditional Class | Jun 15 - Online Jun 20 - In Person | Jun 15 - Online Jun 20 - In Person |
| File Pre-requisite / | May 30 | May 30 |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Challenge Petition | | |
| Drop a Class w/o a Fee | Jun 20 | Jun 20 |
| Drop a Class w/o a W | Jun 20 | Jun 20 |
| Drop w/ a W | Jul 17 | Jul 25 |
| File Pass / No Pass | Jun 20 | Jun 20 |
| GRADUATION PETITION ACCEPTED | Apr 7 - Jul 18 | Apr 7 - Jul 18 |
| CAMPUS CLOSED | Jul 4 | Jul 4 |
| <i>NOTE: ACT, Weekend courses and other accelerated program classes have different deadlines. Please check with your instructor.</i> | | |

Learn to Work in an Online Classroom at WLAC:

If you have never worked inside an online classroom at WLAC, please learn how to (a) equip your computer with the correct browser and (b) work inside our online classroom.

1. Go to www.wlac.edu.
2. Click on the Online/Hybrid Classes link in the upper right corner.
3. In the top menu, click on Course Login Info.
4. Scroll down the screen to the tutorials.
5. View/read the tutorials, as appropriate.

Resources:

Please go to <http://www.wlac.edu/studentlife/index.html> to learn about what campus resources are available to you: tuition waivers, book vouchers, academic counseling, tutoring, and additional services. Be aware that WLAC has a Writing Lab on the ground floor of the library--and it offers online help. For library computer-assisted instruction information, please see the Class Schedule.

Writing Lab: http://www.wlac.edu/library/info/lab_writing.html

Changes to Syllabus

I may make changes to the Syllabus, if they seem appropriate and/or necessary. If I do, then I'll announce the changes on the home page, on the right side of the screen, under "Announcements," and write the changes on the whiteboard in class. It is your responsibility to become aware of these changes.

Learning Disabilities

If you have a learning disability (LD), then you learn things differently than most students do-and you usually learn at a different speed. In other words, you "process" information differently. For this reason, you might need more time to complete an assignment. An LD is not a shameful thing-LOTS of intelligent people have LD's. You are not stupid if you have an LD! Let me know immediately if you have an LD-or think that you might, okay? We'll need to make sure that DSP&S documents your LD; if it's not documented, then I will not be able to give you additional time to complete assignments.

Location

Student Services Building (SSB 320)

Telephone

(310) 287-4450

Department Email

dsps@wlac.edu

Academic Integrity Policy (Plagiarism)

In most English classes, cheating occurs in two ways. First, a student presents another person's words or ideas (or other people's words and ideas) as his or her own, quoting or paraphrasing that person (or people) without indicating that quoting or paraphrasing is occurring. Second, a student has someone else write his or her work. Every semester I seem to catch students cheating; I don't enjoy catching cheaters. Please do NOT cheat.

Students who cheat will be subject to all appropriate academic penalties: They will receive a failing grade on their assignment, and the Dean of Student Services will be notified. If an assignment seems too challenging for you, or if you have an emergency that stops you from completing an assignment, Private Message me. I'll try my best to help you.