

Histories of Racial Capitalism

HIST 29519

The University of Chicago—Fall 2017

TUE-THU 9:30-10:50 AM

Social Science Research, Room 404

Professor Destin Jenkins

Email: destin@uchicago.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3 PM

Harper East Tower, Room 687

This seminar takes as its starting point the insistence that the movement, settlement, and hierarchical arrangements of people of African descent is inseparable from regimes of capital accumulation. It builds on the concept of “racial capitalism,” which rejects treatments of race as external to a purely economic project and counters the idea that racism is an externality, cultural overflow, or aberration from the so-called real workings of capitalism. With a focus on the African Diaspora, this course will cover topics such as racial slavery, banking in the Caribbean, black capitalism in Miami, the under-development of Africa, and the profitability of mass incarceration.

Required Readings

- Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (2016).
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (1935, 1998).
- Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016).
- LaShawn Harris, *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy* (2016).
- Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, The German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (2012).

The readings listed above are on reserve at Regenstein Library. Other assigned readings can be found online [eBooks] and/or through our Canvas portal [C]. The *Supplemental Readings* should prove useful for your final paper.

Course Requirements

Grading:

Weekly Questions	10%
Op-Ed	20%
Participation	30%
Final Paper	40%
Brainstorm	--
Proposal	--
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Final Paper	30%

Weekly Questions:

You will submit one question by 5PM the days before class (i.e. Monday and Wednesday). Questions will be posted through our course Google Doc. The rationale behind the weekly questions is twofold. First, it allows me to give you frequent feedback. Second, the questions help to foster in-class dialogue. To that end, be sure to read the questions of your peers before posting and certainly before class. Late responses will be automatically marked down.

Op-Ed:

From payday loans to references to the prison industrial complex, the traces of racial capitalism are constantly in the news. There are essentially three components to your op-ed assignment. You will use racial capitalism as a *lens* to identify and make sense of a contemporary event, process, etc. You will situate the contemporary within its broader *historical context*, drawing on historical parallels from our readings. Lastly, you will imagine *alternatives* to the mechanics of racial capital accumulation that you've identified. The op-ed is due by 5PM on Friday, November 10th.

Participation:

I expect spirited, rigorous, and respectful participation. As a discussion based seminar, all students will be expected to attend and actively participate. This course requires that you complete all reading and written assignments in accord with deadlines listed on the syllabus. Being on time means arriving a few minutes *before class begins*. Your participation will be judged not by being present or on the quantity of comments. In class, *quality* is king. Therefore it is critical that your comments are grounded in the readings. Outside of unforeseen circumstances, no extensions will be granted. All unexcused absences and tardiness will greatly affect your grade.

Final Paper (For Undergraduates):

The final historiography paper should be between 12 and 15 pages. Like the op-ed, it requires that you use the *lens* of racial capitalism to place three-to-four authors in conversation around a topic of your choice. The paper requires that you seek out readings beyond that which is assigned. Smaller, mini-assignments will be built into the course.

Resources and Policies

Accessibility: *If you need any special accommodations or academic adjustments, please provide your professor with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) as soon as possible so that you may discuss with them how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.*

<http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

The Writing Program: <https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/>

UChicago Academic Integrity: <https://college.uchicago.edu/advising/academic-integrity-student-conduct>

Plagiarism: You are encouraged to consult with one another on the choice of paper topics, and you may also share library resources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as someone else, but you should ensure that the written paper you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and reflects your own approach to the topic.

Technology: Computers, tablets, and the like are permitted in class. This policy is subject to change if I find students abusing the privilege.

Week 1: Foundations

9/26—Introduction

9/28—Histories of Racial Capitalism

- F.A. Hayek, “Introduction,” in *Capitalism and the Historians* (pp. 3-29). [eBooks]
- Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Race in the 21st Century*. [eBooks]
 - “Introduction: Race, Culture, and History” (pp. 3-24).
- Jürgen Kocka, “Writing the History of Capitalism,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 47 (Fall 2010): 7-24. [C]
- “Forum I: Race, Capitalism, Justice,” *Boston Review* (2017). [C]
 - Robin D.G. Kelley, “Introduction” (pp. 5-8).
 - Peter James Hudson, “Racial Capitalism and the Dark Proletariat” (pp. 59-65).
- Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. [C]
 - Chapter 1: “Racial Capitalism: The Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development” (pp. 9-28).
- R.H. Tawney, “A History of Capitalism,” *The Economic History Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1950): 307-316. [C]

Supplemental Readings

- Sven Beckert, “History of American Capitalism,” in *American History Now*, ed. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr (2011).
- Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (2012).
- Seth Rockman, “What makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?” *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Fall 2014).
- Jeffrey Sklansky, “The Elusive Sovereign: New Intellectual and Social Histories of Capitalism,” *Modern Intellectual History*, vol. 9:1 (April 2012): 233-248.
- Jeffrey Sklansky, “Labor, Money, and the Financial Turn in the History of Capitalism,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2014): 23-46.

Week 2: Captivity, Transport, Commodities

10/3—Slave Trading

- Andrew Apter, “History in the Dungeon: Atlantic Slavery and the Spirit of Capitalism in Cape Coast Castle, Ghana,” *American Historical Review* 122.1 (Feb. 2017): 23-54. [C]
- Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. [C]
 - Chapter 3: “‘The Breedings Shall Go with Their Mothers’: Gender and Evolving Practices of Slave Ownership in the English American Colonies” (pp. 69-106).
- Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. [eBooks]
 - Chapter 2: “Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities” (pp. 33-64).
 - Chapter 3: “The Political Economy of the Slave Ship” (pp. 65-100).
- “Forum I: Race, Capitalism, Justice,” *Boston Review* (2017). [C]
 - Stephanie Smallwood, “What Slavery Tells Us about Marx” (pp. 78-82).
- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*. [C]
 - Chapter 3: “British Commerce and the Triangular Trade” (pp. 51-84).

Supplemental Readings

- Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (2005).
- Vincent Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (2008).
- David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (2000).
- David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, “Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas,” *The American Historical Review* 112.5 (Dec. 2007): 1329-1358.
- Nathan Nunn, “The Long-Term Effects of Africa’s Slave Trades,” National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper No. 13367 (Sept. 2007): 139-176.
- Cedric J. Robinson, “Capitalism, Slavery and Bourgeois Historiography,” *History Workshop Journal* vol. 23, no. 1 (1987): 122-140.

10/5—Antebellum Slavery

- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. [C]
 - Chapter 5: “Slavery Takes Command” (pp. 98-135).

- Alexandra Finley, “‘Cash to Corinna’: Domestic Labor and Sexual Economy in the ‘Fancy Trade,’” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 104, no. 2 (Sept. 2017): 410-430. [C]
- Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*. [eBooks]
 - Chapter 8: “The Carceral Landscape” (pp. 209-243).
 - Chapter 13: “The Grey-Eyed Man of Destiny” (366-394).
- *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith. [eBooks]
 - Chapter 5: Amy Dru Stanley, “Slave Breeding and Free Love: An Antebellum Argument over Slavery, Capitalism, and Personhood” (pp. 119-144).

Supplemental Readings

- Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014).
- *Slavery’s Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, ed. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (2016).
- Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (2017).
- Caitlin Rosenthal, “From Memory to Mastery: Accounting for Control in America, 1750-1880,” *Enterprise and Society*, vol. 14, no. 4 (Dec. 2013): 732-748.

Week 3: War and Reconstruction

10/10—General Strike

- Sven Beckert, “Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 109, no. 5 (Dec. 2004): 1405-1438.
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*.
 - Chapter 1: “The Black Worker” (pp. 3-16).
 - Chapter 2: “The White Worker” (pp. 17-31).
 - Chapter 3: “The Planter” (pp. 32-54).
 - Chapter 4: “The General Strike” (pp. 55-83).
- “Forum I: Race, Capitalism, Justice,” *Boston Review* (2017). [C]
 - Walter Johnson, “To Remake the World: Slavery, Racial Capitalism, and Justice” (pp. 11-31).

Supplemental Readings

- Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (2016).

- Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (2010).
- Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2007).

10/12—Reconfigurations

- Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*. [C]
 - Chapter 2: “Fault Lines, Color Lines, and Party Lines: Race, Labor, and Collective Action in Louisiana and Cuba, 1862-1912” (pp. 61-106).
- Moon Ho-Jung, “Outlawing ‘Coolies’: Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation,” *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (Sept. 2005): 677-701. [C]
- Noam Maggor, “To Coddle and Caress These Great Capitalists: Eastern Money, Frontier Populism, and the Politics of Market-Making in the American West,” *American Historical Review* vol. 122, no. 1 (Feb. 2017): 55-84. [C]

Supplemental Readings

- Iyko Day, *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism* (2016).
- Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (2006).

Week 4: New Frontiers

10/17—The New South

- Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*.
- Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893). [C]

Supplemental Readings

- Talitha L. LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (2015).
- Alex Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (1996).
- C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955).

10/19—The Caribbean

- Norman Girvan, “Aspects of the Political Economy of Race in the Caribbean and the Americas” (pp. 1-34). [C]
- Peter James Hudson, “The National City Bank of New York and Haiti, 1909-1922,” *Radical History Review*, issue 115 (winter 2013): 91-114. [C]
- Peter James Hudson, *Bankers and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean*. [eBooks]
 - Chapter Seven: “Odious Debt” (pp. 222-252).
 - Conclusion: “Racial Capitalism” (pp. 253-275).

Supplemental Readings

- Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (1992).
- Dana G. Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921* (1964).
- Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (1999).
- Cyrus Veese, *A World Safe for Capitalism: Dollar Diplomacy and America’s Rise to Global Power* (2002).

****October 20th**

- ✓ Final Paper: Brainstorm Due

Week 5: Uneven Development

10/24—Africa

- W.E.B. Du Bois, “The African Roots of War,” *The Atlantic* (1915): 707-714. [C]
- J.A. Hobson, “Capitalism and Imperialism in South Africa” (1900): 3-30.
 - https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_UD5FAAAAYAAJ
- Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. [C]
 - Chapter 7: “Imperialism as a Special Stage of Capitalism” (pp. 88-98).
- Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South*.

Supplemental Readings

- Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972).

10/26—Black Capitalism

- Abram L. Harris, *The Negro as Capitalist: A Study of Banking and Business* (1936). [C]
 - Chapter 3: “The Negro Organizes His Own Bank” (pp. 46-61).
 - Chapter 5: “The Banks of the District of Columbia and Maryland” (pp. 104-123).
 - Chapter 9: “The Plight of the Negro Middle Class” (pp. 177-184).
- Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*. [C]
 - Chapter 5: “Black Capitalism: Entrepreneurs, Consumers, and the Historical Evolution of the Black Market” (pp. 133-167).

Supplemental Readings

- E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (1957).

Week 6: Scraping By

10/31—Licit/Illicit

- Consumers’ League of Eastern Pennsylvania, “Colored Women as Industrial Workers in Philadelphia” (1919-1920). [C]
- LaShawn D. Harris, *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City’s Underground Economy*.

Supplemental Readings

- Cynthia M. Blair, *I’ve Got to Make My Livin’: Black Women’s Sex Work in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (2010).
- Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (2010).
- Premilla Nadasen, *Household Workers United: The Untold Story of African American Women who Built a Movement* (2015).
- Victoria Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (2001).

11/2—Depression

- Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*. [eBooks]
 - Chapter 2: “‘The Little Brown Man in Gringo Land’: The ‘Second Color Menace’ in the Western South” (pp. 40-63).
 - Chapter 3: “The Whiteness of Cotton: Race, Labor Relations, and the Tenant Question, 1900-1920” (pp. 64-91).
 - Chapter 5: “The Scientific Management of Farm Workers” (pp. 118-140).
 - Chapter 6: “The Whiteness of Manhood” (pp. 141-162).

- Chapter 7: “The Darker Phases of Whiteness” (pp. 163-182).
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. [eBooks]
 - “Prologue. Radical Genesis: Birmingham, 1870-1930” (pp. 1-10).
 - Chapter 1: “An Invisible Army: Jobs, Relief, and the Birth of a Movement” (pp. 13-33).
 - Chapter 2: “In Egyptland: The Share Croppers’ Union” (pp. 34-56).
 - Chapter 3: “Organize or Starve!: Communists, Labor, and Antiradical Violence” (pp. 57-77).

Supplemental Readings

- Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (2005).

****November 3rd**

- ✓ Final Paper: Proposal Due

Week 7: The Postwar Metropolis

11/7— The City

- N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (2014). [eBooks]
 - Chapter 3: “Jim Crow Liberalism” (73-99).
 - Chapter 5: “Knocking on the Door” (133-161).
 - Chapter 6: “A Little Insurance” (163-198).
- Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996). [eBooks].
 - Chapter 4: “‘The Meanest and Dirtiest Jobs’: The Structures of Employment Discrimination” (91-124).
 - Chapter 5: “‘The Damning Mark of False Prosperities’: The Deindustrialization of Detroit” (125-152).
 - Chapter 6: “‘Forget about your inalienable Right to Work’: Responses to Industrial Decline and Discrimination”(153-178).

Supplemental Readings

- Andrew Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (2015).
- Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (1983).

11/9—The Suburb

- Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. [eBooks]
 - Chapter 3: “Tax Dollar” (112-147).
 - Chapter 7: “White Noose” (267-299).
- Federal Housing Administration, *Insured Mortgage Portfolio*, vol. 3. [C]
 - “A Banker Looks at FHA Mortgage” no. 5 (Nov. 1938).
 - “Mortgages and the Commercial Bank,” no. 5 (Nov. 1938).
 - “FHA Mortgages as Investment Securities,” no. 9 (March 1939).
 - “Let’s Be Realistic About FHA Loans,” no. 9 (March 1939).
- Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) Residential Security “Redlining” Map and Area Descriptions. Hartford, Connecticut, 1937. [C]

Supplemental Readings

- David M.P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy & White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (2007).
- Kenneth Jackson *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1987).
- Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (2009).

****November 10th**

- ✓ Op-ed Due by 5PM.

Week 8: Advocates and Discontents

11/14—“We Intend to Run It”

- Crystal M. Moten, “‘Fighting Their Own Economic Battles’: Charles Lockett, Ethnic Enterprizes, and the Challenges of Black Capitalism in 1970s Milwaukee,” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* vol. 18, no. 1 (Jan.-March, 2016): 106-125. [C]
- Marcia Chatelain, “The Miracle of the Golden Arches: Race and Fast Food in Los Angeles,” *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 85, no. 3 (Aug. 2016): 325-353. [C]
- Matthew Vaz, “‘We Intend to Run It’: Racial Politics, Illegal Gambling, and the Rise of Government Lotteries in the United States, 1960-1985,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 101, no. 1 (June 2014): 71-96. [C]

Supplemental Readings

- Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969).

- *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City*, ed. David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler (2001).
- *The Business of Black Power: Community Development, Capitalism, and Corporate Responsibility in Postwar America*, ed. Laura Warren Hill and Julia Rabig (2012).

11/16—Discontents

- *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O'Dell*, ed. Nikhil Pal Singh. [eBooks]
 - "A Colonized People" (pp. 124-144).
 - "The July Rebellions and the 'Military State'" (pp. 145-159).
- Alondra Nelson, *The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*. [eBooks].
 - Introduction: "Serving the People Body and Soul" (pp. 1-22).
 - Chapter 2: "Origins of Black Panther Party Health Activism" (pp. 49-74).
 - Chapter 3: "The People's Free Medical Clinics" (pp. 75-114).
- Russell Rickford, "'We Can't Grow Food on All This Concrete': The Land Question, Agrarianism, and Black Nationalist Thought in the late 1960s and 1970s," *Journal of American History*, vol. 103, no. 4 (March 2017): 956-980.

Supplemental Readings

- Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (2016).

**November 17th

- ✓ Final Project: Annotated Bibliography Due

Week 9: Punishment

11/21—Incarceration

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. [eBooks]
- Alex Lichtenstein, "Flocatex and the Fiscal Limits of Mass Incarceration: Toward a New Political Economy of the Postwar Carceral State," *Journal of American History*, vol. 102, no. 1, (June 2015): 113-125. [C]

Supplemental Readings

- Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, *Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor and Global Capitalism* (2015).
- Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, *Getting Tough: Welfare and Imprisonment in 1970s America* (2017).

- Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (2016).

11/23— No Class. Thanksgiving Recess

Week 10: Inequality

11/28—Extraction

- Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (2016).
- Walter Johnson “Ferguson’s Fortune 500 Company,” *The Atlantic*, April 26, 2015.

Supplemental Readings

- Jason Grotto, Heather Gillers, Patricia Callahan, and Alex Richards, “Broken Bonds,” *Chicago Tribune* (2013).
 - <http://apps.chicagotribune.com/bond-debt/index.html>
 - Part 1: “Chicago's Debt Splurge.”
 - Part 2: “Spending with Abandon.”
 - Part 3: “Emanuel Buys Time.”
 - Part 4: “A Lesson in Mismanagement.”

11/30—College Reading Period

****December 7th**

- ✓ Final Paper Due—No Extensions!