

URBAN 514 A Sp 25: Race And Social Justice Seminar

SYLLABUS AND READINGS--SPRING 2025

Monday 12:00 - 1:20 Gould 440 1 CR Instructor: Manish Chalana email: chalana@uw.edu

Office hours: By appointment, 410 Gould Hall, in UDP office.

Course Description: This quarterly course explores concepts of race, gender, racism, class, social justice, and makes explicit their connections between design, planning, policy, and cities. It does so to build student understanding about how, and the degree to which, these disciplines have historically addressed (or contributed to) these topics, and where they stand currently. This exploration will include progress made, persistent challenges, and overt actions that have and may continue to work in racist and unjust ways. This class, as a one-credit seminar, will only be able to begin to unpack these issues, and does by way of reading one text per quarter (generally).

Objectives: This class represents an ongoing commitment to having an academic home for RGSJ topics in our department. The readings will explore issues of race in the US, and issues of gender, different conceptions of justice, and the implications of those different ideas mostly in regard to the built environment, broadly defined.

Seminar discussions will provide students an opportunity to discuss these in an open and safe environment and challenge them to develop their own thinking about the material. Readings, guest discussants, and discussions will be organized in collaboration with faculty and students each quarter.

Course structure and assignments: This course is structured as a seminar based on readings and discussion.

Students will read assigned sections and turn in reading responses (500 words max) on Canvas **by 8 pm the night before the class** meeting. Alternative forms of reading response are allowable, including detailed tables, graphic art, etc. These reflections are an opportunity for you to process the material, provide you something for discussion, and need not be a simple summary of the material (I don't need that, I've read the stuff, too!). If you put in a real effort on any form of reflection, you will generally receive full credit.

Students should be ready to discuss the main themes that emerged from the readings and share their thoughts and participate in the discussions. Students will facilitate one class period as a member of a small group; see facilitation ideas at the bottom of the syllabus. We may invite students and other faculty to be discussants and share their work when possible, a couple of times per quarter.

Evaluation: Your final grade will be based on your participation in all facets of the class: in-class discussions and reading responses. This is a Credit/NC class; active class participation and a minimum of 5 reading responses and 1 team facilitation will earn you credit for the course.

Participation: This class is conducted in-person. Students are expected to participate in class to fully benefit from course activities and meet the course's learning objectives. Students should only register for this class if they are able to attend in-person. Participation in all classes is required unless discussed in advance with instructors. Students are expected to show up for all class periods and participate in discussions having done the readings, posted questions and/or comments on the discussion boards. An unexcused absence may be made up with another reading reflection submission.

When absent, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in advance (or as close to the class period as possible in the case of an unexpected absence), and to request appropriate make-up work. The instructor has the responsibility to determine if make-up work is possible and/or to modify assignment or course grading. For chronic absences, the instructor may award an incomplete grade after the 8th week, or recommend the student contact their academic adviser to consider a hardship withdrawal (known as a Registrar Drop).

This class is governed by the university's student policies, including those on plagiarism and multiple submissions. It is your responsibility to be familiar with these. More information on this can be found at:

<https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>

Accommodations: Your experience in this class is important to us. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. The website for the [DRS](#) provides other resources for students and faculty for making accommodations.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for the accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request>).

Safe Space and Accountable Space: We use the definition of safe space provided by the Safe Space Network: a place where anyone can fully express themselves, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability.

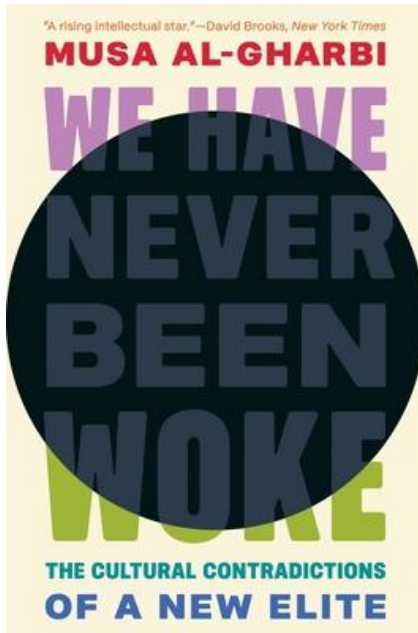
Safe space doesn't mean your ideas won't be challenged, or you won't potentially feel uncomfortable. It does mean that you won't be made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe *on account of* the characteristics mentioned. It's also important to recognize that we can't *guarantee* such a space, in class or otherwise. But we can be accountable to our words and actions, be prepared to learn, and try to recognize the difference between intent and impact. So maybe what we aim for is safe space, but what we can hold is accountable space.

In discussing issues of race, gender, and social justice in the US context it is likely that at some time you will be uncomfortable, as the history of the country regarding these is particularly painful and conflicted. As planners, designers, and humans, we have professional and personal responsibilities for understanding and dismantling racism and systems of oppression. In this class, we will work hard to talk about these topics while protecting everyone's self-respect. In the event of inadvertently offensive remarks, we will recognize and attempt to educate ourselves about ways of discussing and doing shared analysis in a non-offensive manner.

Given that we all come at this with different levels of experience engaging with these concepts, we will all benefit from providing each other with the benefit of the doubt when speaking: assume that people mean the best and that we are all learning as we move on a path to a greater understanding of race, racism, gender, class, and justice as they play out in the US, in planning, and beyond.

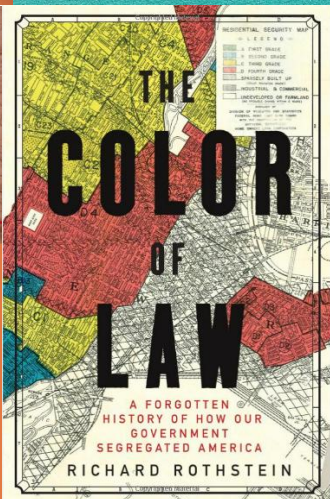
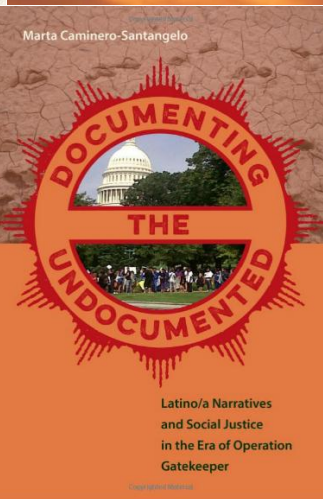
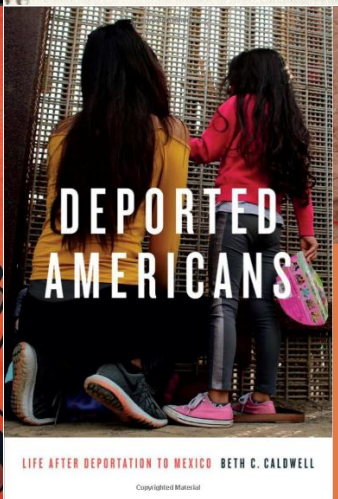
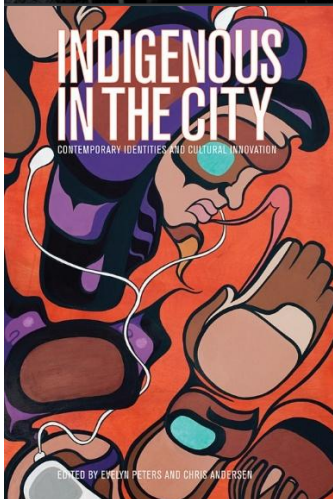
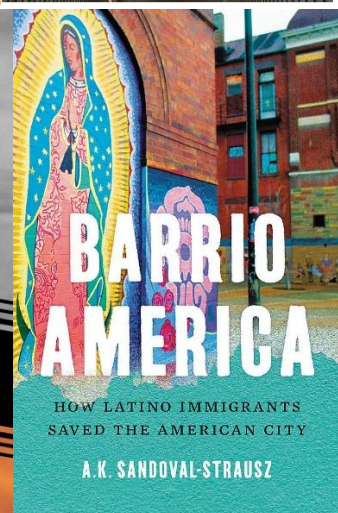
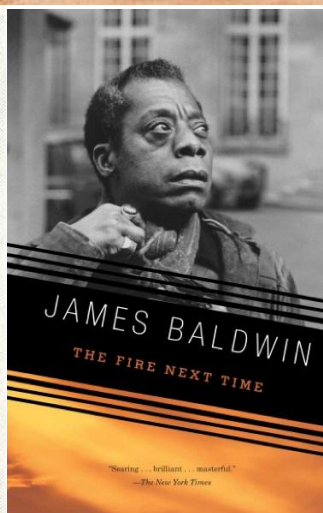
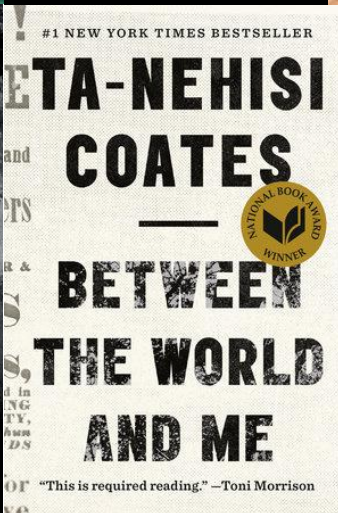
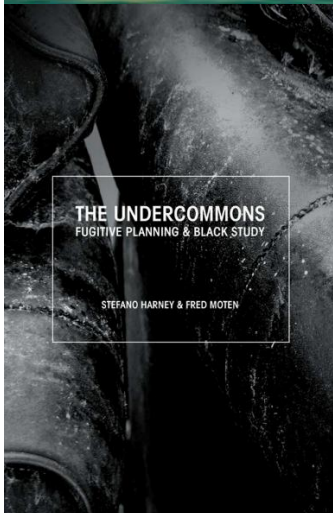
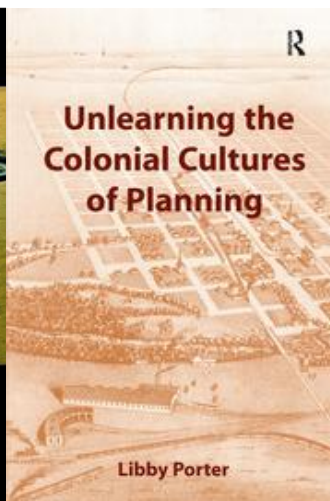
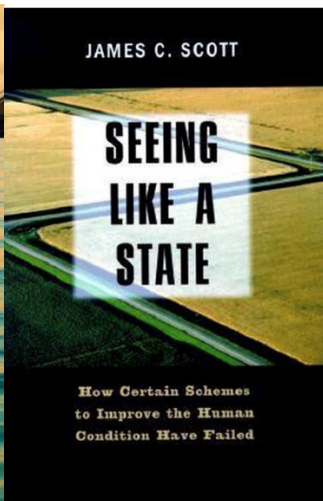
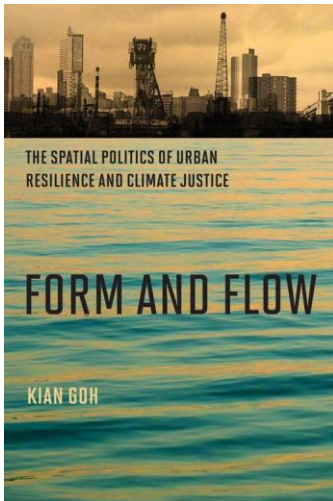
Technology Protocol: Please be courteous and refrain from personal digital activity during class time.

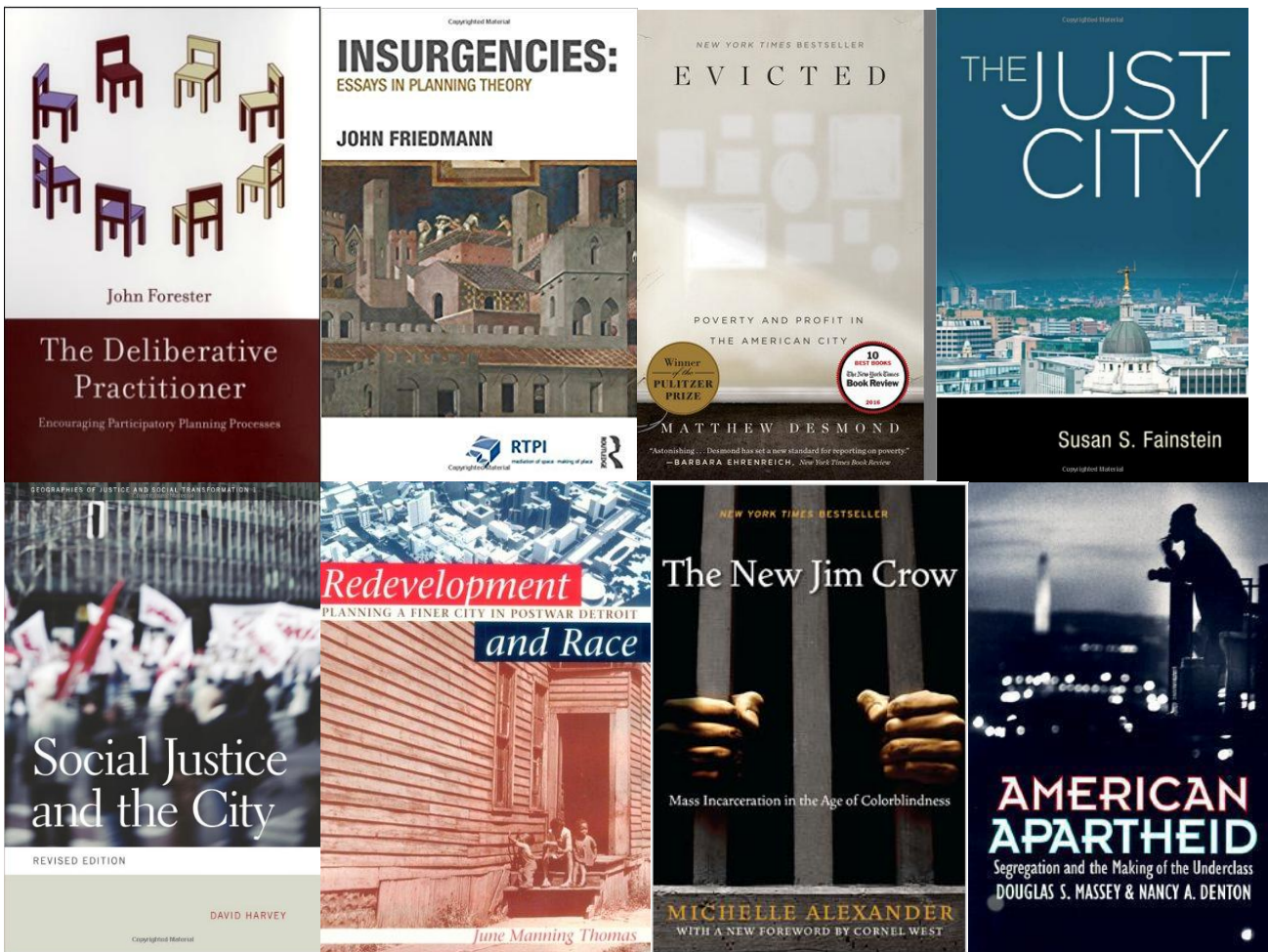
Class Readings: This quarter, we will read Musa Al-Gharbi's, *We Have Never Been Woke: The Cultural Contradictions of a New Elite* (2025; Princeton University Press). The text is widely available in bookstores and online, and are also available as an ebook through the UW Libraries. The schedule of readings is below; the books we've read are after that.



Week	Date	Reading	Notes
1	3/31	Western States Center Download Western States Center : Dismantling Racism Resource Book (as you wish, good reference point especially if you are unfamiliar with the history of race in America)	Class introduction: overview, schedule, expectations, and such.
2	4/7	Text; Introduction	
3	4/14	Text; Ch 1	Team facilitated session
4	4/21	Text; Ch 2	Team facilitated session
5	4/28	Text; Ch 3	Team facilitated session
6	5/5	Text; Ch 4	Team facilitated session
7	5/12	Text: Ch 5	Team facilitated session
8	5/19	Text: Ch 6	Team facilitated session
9	5/26	No class	
10	6/2	Conclusion	

To see what this class is about, it's helpful to see the books we've read in previous iterations of the class:





Discussion Facilitation (Adapted from CEP 301)

Summary

The idea of the discussion facilitators is to have one or more students serve as facilitators for each class. Each of you will facilitate discussion at least once during the quarter. You can sign up for the class you want to facilitate, and you can, if you like, talk with the instructor about planning your session (highly recommended).

Specifics: Facilitators

Facilitators may want to begin each session by briefly outlining (on the board and/or orally) what the facilitators plan to do in the discussion. Then, the facilitators will assist the class in an exploration of the important ideas in the readings. Facilitators have some freedom to decide on the format of the class exploration. A few possibilities are sketched out below. Your job is to help the class engage in a meaningful exchange of ideas and opinions--think about how you like to engage and what makes for a good class session.

In preparing their material, the facilitators should complete the readings in advance and formulate the content of discussion and its structure. The idea is for the discussion facilitators to inspire everyone to explore the reading in insightful ways. We encourage leaders to consult with the instructor(s) in developing your plan. Everyone should sign up early and spend adequate time preparing your class. In general, the more preparation facilitators do, the better the discussion goes.

The Rest of Us

The existence of the discussion leaders is in no way an opportunity for the rest of the class to take it

easy. The discussion facilitators will guide the discussion, but they should by no means do most of the talking. Their role is to stimulate you to engage in an insightful discussion. Thus the rest of the class should digest the readings as usual and come prepared to participate fully along the lines laid out by the facilitation group.

Techniques for Planning a Discussion

These are just some possible structures. You should feel free to invent new ones as you like. Remember, though, the goal is to focus the class on a productive discussion of the readings. Don't let an overly elaborate structure interfere with that primary goal--class time is limited and can fly by.

Whole-group—everyone engages in discussion together at one time. This is good because you can get a greater range of ideas and opinions with a larger group. Large groups are sometimes tricky to manage well though, so having a good set of stimulating questions is important so you can shape the discussion to move in insightful directions that you have thought out beforehand. Large-group formats can also be a more intimidating setting in which to speak, so consider how you'll make it inclusive.

Small-group discussion—the class is broken up into small groups to discuss. They can have the same topic to discuss, or they can have different topics. In a jigsaw format, the groups each discuss different aspects of a larger topic, and then they rejoin into a whole group to see how each group's issues/conclusions fit together.

Rotate)—each leader develops questions on a particular sub-topic of the day's topic. The class is then divided up into the same number of small groups as there are discussion leaders. Then, the leaders move in shifts from group to group so that each leader has a chance to lead each group. That way, each group gets a chance to discuss each aspect of the day's topic. Near the end of class, you can bring everyone back into whole-group to share insights. This is somewhat time-intensive, so watch your time carefully.

Structured debates—where two sides of a specific issue are pitted against each other, usually given roles to play, and their interaction is moderated by the leaders. It's good to give the groups a few minutes of thought organization before the debate begins.

Four-square—the leaders set aside four corners labeled "agree," "tend to agree," "tend to disagree," and "disagree." They then make a statement, for example: "immigration is a good thing." Then each person in the class goes to the corner they decide best describes their reaction to the statement, or are assigned a corner/position. The group in each corner discusses for a while why they agree/disagree/etc. with the statement. The class then goes back into whole-group while remaining at their chosen locations to discuss their positions. At the end, the leaders ask if anyone would like to change corners. Those that do are asked to share why their position changed during the discussion. This exercise can also be done as a **spectrum**, having students line up along the length of the classroom based on say, strength of opinion about a topic.

Brainstorming—the leaders ask the class to come up with ideas about a given topic (say, "reasons why you oppose the war in Ukraine" and "reasons why you support the war in Ukraine"). The product of that brainstorming (usually written on the board) can then serve as the basis for discussion, or it can be a way to sum up a discussion.

Fishbowl—here one small-group (~four students) engages in discussion on the topic or question for a defined amount of time (probably the amount that gets everyone into the fishbowl by the end of class, so four groups would mean about 25 percent of the class, or about 20 minutes), and the rest of the class observes their discussion. An extra chair is left open for anyone from the class who would like to ask a question or offer a perspective (once this is done the person goes back to their class seat).

Different small groups then rotate into the fishbowl—they can discuss different topics or the same topic as they wish.

Role-playing—is a general technique that can be applied to any of the above methods. A person or group is given a role to play (rather than playing themselves), which gives them a certain point of view to argue from. This is particularly helpful when there is an issue you think most people (when playing themselves) will agree on; you can have people play roles that are in opposition to the common opinion. It can be difficult, however, to keep conversational meaningful. In general, role playing is not advised unless the group is given adequate time and sufficient detail.

Each of these can be used in combination, or alone. Of course this list is not exhaustive—there are other possible techniques you can find or invent on your own!