Multiracial Identities, Experiences, and Politics
SOCY 207
Summer 2023

Meeting Information
Mondays and Wednesdays: 9:00-11:15 AM
Location: WTS B60 - Watson Center 60 Sachem Street B60

Instructor(s)
Dr. Alex Manning
Email: alex.manning@yale.edu
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays after class and by appointment (Use Calendly Link to schedule): https://calendly.com/amanningyalesociology/officehours

Format
This is a seminar that is primarily organized around in-class discussion. The vibrancy of our conversations is dependent on consistent immersive and close readings of the various assigned texts. I will lecture at moments during each class.

This is intended to be primarily a reading, writing, and discussion-based course that asks you to work collectively with your peers and outside speakers (community activists and organizations) to discuss and propose suggestions for working to eliminate injustices across multiple social categories. The assignments are deliberately designed to foster sociological analytic skills through varied formats, with particular attention to collective knowledge production and dissemination to wider publics.

Course Description

While mixed/multi-identities have been part of U.S. history since the nation’s birth, the year 2020 marked only the third time in U.S. history that Americans will be able to check more than one racial/ethnic category in the census. Today, multiracial people in the US and other nations, are gaining more visibility and recognition. With this visibility, however, comes inevitable scrutiny and ambivalence as evidenced by debates over the identity choices of high-profile multiracial people, and the broader social and political implications of a growing social group.

This course will introduce contemporary discussions, debates and narratives surrounding multiracial people. By reading and discussing scholarly, literary, editorial, and visual texts we will critically examine the spaces multiracial people occupy in the U.S. and in other global contexts, as well as the identity politics and perspectives that mark these experiences. We will also explore the growing narratives and spaces being created to build communities and express
multi-subjectivities. Through class discussions, writing reflections, and a final project, students will also be encouraged to explore their own identities and subjectivities as they relate to larger discourses, current events, and narratives around race and intersecting identities.

Key Questions that Ground the Course

- How can we conceptualize and understand “mixed” identity? How has “mixed” identity been defined/denied at different points in U.S. history? Who is considered “mixed”/“multi”? What is the role of “power/privilege” in claiming a mixed identity? Who has the power to identify others?

- How do multiracial people experience the social world? How do they understand racism and racial identity? How and why are claims to mixed/multi racial identity & heritage policed?

- Do multi-racial people really challenge race or the racial order? What are the critiques of “multiraciality”? What is the relationship between the increased visibility of mixed people and the idea of “post-racial”?

- What are the possibilities and limitations to a politically self-aware mixed race-movement that explicitly acknowledges and engages the role of power and privilege?

- How do multiracial people come to represent a desire for racial reconciliation? How are multiracial people portrayed by media and in popular culture?

Pre-requisites

There are no formal pre-requisites are required to take this class. But the class is intended for students interested in topics of racism and race from a sociological perspective. Students should be comfortable reading and respectfully discussing contentious and sensitive social/political topics.

Learning Objectives

- Critically question existing conceptions of race and multiracial
- Strengthen racial literacy and racial grammar
- Develop clear and nuanced understanding of differences between race, racialization and racism.
- Understand the role of power and domination as integral to race in America
- Recognize the relationship between settler colonialism, chattel slavery, and other forms of racialized violence to the realities of multiracial identity.
- Analyze, agitate, and transform your social world using course content.
Learning objectives provide an opportunity to articulate the specific knowledge, skills and abilities you intend for your students to learn or develop by the end of the course. Click here for guidance on writing learning objectives from the Poorvu Center.

Required Materials
All books are available to purchase or rent via the Yale Bookstore and anywhere else you get books. All books are available on course reserve. Many of the texts are available for free electronically/digitally via the Yale Library. Other readings will be electronically available in PDF form on Canvas.

- Mixed Messages: Multiracial Identities in the “Color-Blind” Era (Edited by David L. Brunsma)
- The Colors of Love: Multiracial People in Interracial Relationships by Melinda A. Mills

Assignments

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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| Reflective Writing/Sociological Correspondence.  | 35%          | • All three entries must be turned in by June 30th  
| 3 entries are required (1 page single spaced per entry). |              | • Feedback will be given in weeks 2 & 4.          |
| Final Project:                                   | 35%          | • Due June 30th                                |
| Option A: Blog Post                             |              | • Topic Identification by start by end of Week 2. |
| Option B: Research Proposal                     |              |                                              |
| Option C: Critical Essay                        |              |                                              |
| Info Graphic & Lightening Talk                  | 15%          | • Due June 30th                                |
| Participation & Attendance                      | 15%          |                                              |
| Extra Credit                                     | 2%           | • Due by June 30th                             |
| • Individual or Paired Audio Reflection about readings/broader themes that emerge throughout the semester |              |                                              |

Reading Workload & Schedule
Reading is crucial to understanding course concepts and building an engaging and productive classroom for all. When students do not complete readings, it negatively impacts the class and I consider it to be disrespectful to the instructor, but more importantly your peers.
I expect that you do the reading before class and that you come with question(s) and comments. I have tried to avoid overly academic/jargon filled texts and consider most of the content engaging and accessible to read. For the occasional academic article, I recommend that you read for key passages and arguments rather than reading word for word. There will be a guide on how to read academic articles posted on Blackboard. I will also do my best to provide reading guides/key questions for work that is more difficult to get through.

See Course Canvas for specific chapter and page number assignments. The schedule and course readings are subject to change.

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<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 29-June 2</td>
<td>Mon: Course Overview, Introductions, and Defining Race</td>
<td>• Sociology Correspodence Opportunity #1</td>
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<td>o Mixed Messages: Chapter 1: Doing Race in the Color-Blind Era (1-14)</td>
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<td>o Mixed Messages Chapter 2: Defining Race: Comparative Perspectives (pp. 15-31)</td>
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<td>Wed: Hypodescent, Anti-Miscegenation Laws, Tragic Mulatto Myth</td>
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<td>Fri: Struggles for Multiracial Recognition Post-Civil Rights, It’s Implications, and the Racial Politics of Mixed Race</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Mon: Indigeneity The Case of Hawaii, Tribal Membership Laws, Blood Quantum</td>
<td>• Sociology Correspondence Opportunity #2</td>
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<td>June 5-9</td>
<td>Wed: Colonialism and War: Lessons from Vietnam &amp; Amerasians</td>
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<td>Fri: Hapa Movement, Multiracial Asian America, Experiences of Multiracial Latinos</td>
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<td>o Mixed Messages Black, Honorary White, White: The Future of Race in the US by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David G. Embrick</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Mon. Family</td>
<td>• Sociology Correspondence Opportunity #3</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>June 19-23</td>
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<td>Mon. Love, Dating, Romance</td>
<td>Multiracial People in Love by Melinda Mills</td>
<td>Sociometry Correspondence Opportunity #4</td>
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<td>Wed. Love, Dating, Romance</td>
<td>Multiracial People in Love by Melinda Mills</td>
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<td>transracial, biracial, and monoracial families. <em>Social Identities, 17</em>(6), 747-769.</td>
<td>Wed. Transracial Adoption &amp; Queerness as mixed Identity</td>
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<td>Fri. Identity, Self-Image, and Boundaries of Belonging</td>
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<td>Politics of Passing &amp; Racial Ambiguity</td>
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Assessments & Grading
Share with your students when and how they will receive feedback on their progress in the course, including formative and summative assessments as well as clearly articulated grading breakdowns, practices, and policies.

Class Participation (15%)
Class attendance and participation are crucial for your success in this course. You are given three free days – classes you can miss without penalty to your participation grade. After that, your grade will be docked points for classes missed without legitimate documentation excusing you. If you do need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from peers to catch up on material missed.

This is a reading heavy course. Most weeks you will read well around or over 100 pages of material. You are expected to show up to class having read and reflected on the assigned reading before class. Every student’s perspective is a valuable one and part of what makes for an interesting and rewarding class so please come to class ready to engage with your peers.

Grading:
Your grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your participation. I understand that participation in class discussion comes easier for some students than others. Therefore, I also consider other forms of participation such as coming to office hours or handing in your written responses to the questions I pose at the end of class. Other factors that contribute to your grade include coming to class on time and prepared with the necessary class materials. Electronic devices are not allowed in class. You should plan to bring the readings to class (physical or digital form), and/or your detailed reading notes as well as paper and pen/pencil for notetaking. Please note that habitually coming to class late, leaving early, or frequent trips
out of the classroom during the class period are disruptive to your peers and me and will negatively affect your grade.

**If any participation will be challenging for you, please let me know so that we can talk through strategies.**

**Reflective Writing/Sociological Correspondence (35% of grade-3 total entries)**

This activity is borrowed from the pedagogical practices of Dr. Kristie Dotson & Demar F. Lewis (PhD candidate in Sociology at Yale). Inspired by an enthusiasm for reviving the near-extinct tradition of “philosophical correspondences.” Instead of writing weekly discussion questions or posting comments on a discussion board, you will develop your own sociological thinking through weekly writing correspondences with one of your peers throughout the semester. This form of peer mentorship is a keyway of achieving the learning objectives of this course. Since this is most likely a new sort of exercise for you, you may have some questions. Please see me at any time during the semester if you have any questions or concerns about the assignment.

**Instructions:**
First, find a partner or be assigned a partner by the instructor. Together, your task is to create and maintain an ongoing, semester-long written sociological exchange about the assigned readings. You and your partner will write to each other about a reading or readings at least four times this term. One partner will write a page commenting on the reading, and give or transmit that page to the other partner; then, the other partner will write a page responding to the first partner's commentary. You will alternate the roles of commentator and respondent. If these roles eventually blur, as is the case in most vital correspondences, this is fine, unless, of course, the correspondents feel that the basic distribution of tasks has become too uneven or burdensome. In that case, some correction will be in order.

The means of correspondence are your choice, with the restriction that you must each be able to submit all entries electronically to me periodically, and at the close of the course, for review. So, if you carry on your correspondence by email, you still must be able to submit an electronic copy via pdf. (Please note also that you are responsible for producing a second copy of any assignments submitted for evaluation in this course in the unlikely event that the first one should be lost.) Some students use (digital) folders and exchange them at/before class meetings; others get together outside of class hours. Please discuss this with each other and find an agreement that is suitable for both partners' schedules and preferences. Note: It is your joint responsibility to arrange the details of managing entries so that your assignments are complete and handed in on time. Do see me as soon as possible if you have any difficulties with this or any aspect of the assignment.

**Guidelines:**
We are reading a great deal of work. Ideally, your correspondence can serve as a way to come to understandings of the readings that are better than those you could arrive at by yourself. In addition, you can create a partnership of inquiry that will help you develop your ideas for the outlines and papers you will write. So, correspondents who consider each other's work seriously
and thoughtfully, as well as the readings, of course, will be on track to making the most of this assignment. You need not write an essay for your entry; you may write several paragraphs: notes, objections, arguments, illustrations, refutations, examples, counter-examples, expressions of puzzlement, etc. You may find it helpful to number the paragraphs of your writing to make it easier for both of you to make reference to particular points you’ve made. You should also be kind to your correspondent by providing accurate page/paragraph references to the texts about which you are writing. Do not try to address all the readings assigned for a given week, nor indeed, all of a given reading. Focus more narrowly and be concise; these are short writing assignments.

If you are struggling to start your entries, I will provide optional prompts that can be used to help you begin work through your ideas.

**Quantity:**
With regard to quantity, one single-spaced page is the minimum length for an entry. You certainly may write more than that, up to a maximum limit of two pages single-spaced. You will write a total of four weeks of entries, with one entry per partner each week.

**Verbal Option:**
For one of the entries, you and your partner can do an audio/verbal version of correspondence in the form of a conversation/podcast. Here you have the option to work on verbally communicating your ideas and synthesizing key arguments/themes present in the readings. I expect a verbal correspondence to be roughly 10 minutes if done as a pair. Or 5 minutes if done individually.

**Commenting:**
In commenting, try to give your partner some substantial idea, observation, position, or argument to which to respond. Write about what interests you. Express your thoughts as clearly as you can. Avoid endlessly explicating the text. Avoid too much personal opinion that reflects a lack of engagement with the material. And above all, engage the text by making sure to incorporate it in your commentary (do not forget to cite!) All citations should be either endnotes or footnotes.

**Responding:**
In responding, address your partner’s comments as directly, carefully and specifically as possible. In principle, a good response is as good as a good commentary. Avoid simply repeating what your partner has written. Be kind, but be thorough in expressing your thoughts on your partner’s initial response. All citations should be either endnotes or footnotes.

**Audience:**
Your partner is your audience. Despite the fact that, yes, your instructor will be reading what you write, you are to write to each other, not to your instructor.

**Review and Grading**
During the semester there will be three periods of review/check-in for this assignment, in addition to a final evaluation of your correspondence by your instructor.

**Instructor reviews:**
Instructor reviews will consist in check or minuses with potential written instructor comments on, and suggestions for, the entries.

Entries for Weeks 1 & 2 should be submitted via Canvas by Sunday, June 11
Entries for Weeks 3 & 4 & 5 be submitted via Canvas by Sunday, June 30th

Each time you turn in your correspondence, make sure that the names of both correspondents are on the entries.

**Grading:**
You will be graded, ultimately, on an individual basis, but a part of that grade will necessarily reflect your joint performance as co-participants in your ongoing correspondence. Therefore, it is to each partner's advantage that the other partner succeeds and develop. Though, it is possible for partners to receive different grades on this assignment.

**FINAL PROJECT (35%) – Due June 30th**

The final project for this course is a multi-component assignment. In this project, you will choose a topic of your choice that fits within the field of multiracial experiences, identity, and politics that you think deserves critical attention. You have three options to choose from: Option A: WordPress/Blog Post; Option B: Research Proposal; Option C: Critical Essay

No matter what option you choose, you will be expected to draw on concrete definitions of race, racism, multi-racial, and other pertinent sociological concepts. You will substantiate your arguments based on existing research, data sources, and personal experiences, and observations.

**Option A: WordPress/Blog Post**

Your blog entry will use the theories and concepts covered in the course to explain and analyze your selected topic from a sociological perspective. You will be expected to include images or multimedia, and reference respected sources of information (investigative journalism and academic sources You might think of this assignment as “translating” your ideas for someone who has never taken a sociology course, not considered multi-raciality as a site of serious study, and an opportunity to convince someone them why it’s an important issue. There are many, many possible and excellent topics to choose from. If you are struggling to select a topic, please reach out to me and we’ll figure it out.

I hope this assignment facilitates the following:

- Space for development of individual creativity & intellectual curiosity, and sociological analysis.
• Continued development of and comfort with sociological analysis, argument making, and your voice.
• Writing improvement, and comfort with public-facing written communication.
• Opportunity for the class to recognize and learn from each other’s work and effort.
• Beginning to build a culture at Yale of critical interrogation and sociological knowledge about race/racism, power, and multiracial experiences.
• Gain familiarity with a web platform that is used across many fields of work.

The final piece should be 800-1300 words and include the following: (a) descriptive, clear title, (b) concise and compelling description of your topic, (c) clear summary of the relevant theory/concept(s) you are drawing on from course material, and (d) your argument/analysis of the topic using your sociological lens (c and d should be the bulk of your piece).

**Option B: Research Proposal**

If you would prefer a more “traditionally academic” project, you can write proposal for future research on a topic pertaining to multiracial identity and politics. Your proposal (3-5 pages) should answer the questions below:

• What is the problem/dynamic/experience/inequity that you are interested in? Why does it matter? What is the status quo right now (i.e., what are the stakes)?
• What books, articles, or research exists on this topic? What are the findings of these studies? What is the structure of the data used in existing research (i.e., what kinds of information does it capture, at what level, produced by what method, etc.)?
• What is the research question that you think future researchers should explore to expand knowledge about your inequity of interest?
• What specific sociological definitions of race, gender, and class etc. are most appropriate to pursue this research question, and how do they inform your diagnosis of this inequity?
• What are the specific data sources that future researchers should use to answer your question? What is the structure of this data (i.e., what kinds of information does it capture, at what level, produced by what method, etc.)? How might this data be collected?
• What methods/tools should be used to analyze this data? What processes or procedures should be carried out while conducting research activities (i.e. Describe the recruitment/eligibility criteria for including participants in this study)?
• What are the implications/limitations of this prospective study? Which audiences might stand to benefit from the execution of this proposed research project?

All research proposals should be 3-5 pages and should cite a minimum of 5 scholarly sources, with at least one coming from outside of the syllabus. Page numbers are not including title page, abstract, references, or figures. The paper should be double-spaced, 12-
Option C: Critical/Creative Essay

If you prefer to approach your topic regarding multiracial identity and politics from a more personal perspective, you can write a reflexive essay, that is less bound by formal proposal guidelines. Imagine this to be a sociological autobiography or see similar essays about mixed experiences/identity from authors like Gloria Anzaldúa (essay posted to Canvas). If you choose this option, I expect you to engage with what sociological/historical factors have shaped your experiences in relation to multiraciality. And how has racism and notions of multiracial shaped your life and relationship to the social world?

A more detailed guide will be posted to Canvas. You will be expected to do the following in the essay:

- Reflect and critically analyze your own experiences with race and situate your experiences in a broader social context.
- Apply 1-2 social theories about race/racism and multiracial experience
- Grapple and connect any of the following sociological themes/concepts
  - Power, Racial Order, Hierarchy, Inequality
  - Political Movements, Political Orientations
  - Relationship to the Body
  - Identity, Socialization, Community, and Culture
  - Families & Social relationships
  - Intersections with Class, Gender, Sexuality, Ability & Disability

Infographic & Lightening Talk (15%):

Infographic: Using the free Canva website, students should create a 1-page infographic which conveys why their topic of interest is a social problem worthy of attention. Students with experience in graphic design may elect to customize their infographic outside of Canva using another digital software package.

Lightning Talk: Record a short presentation on the topic, question, proposed methods, and implications of your research proposal. Presentations will follow a “lightning talk” format, meaning you will have exactly three minutes and up to three static slides to convey your message. This format requires you to distill your presentation to only the most essential and impactful information. Think of this like a TikTok or YouTube video highlighting your issue of interest for an educated but uninformed audience.

We sill share the infographics and lightening talks in class on June 28th and 30th.

**If you choose to do the critical essay and don’t feel comfortable sharing what you wrote publicly, we can discuss an alternative option for this assignment.***
Extra Credit (2%)

*Verbal/Audio Journal or Conversation:*
Individually or as a partner, discuss your central takeaways from the semester. To the best of your ability synthesize the important lessons, analytical frameworks, and arguments that we engaged with during the semester. The aim of this is for you to both summarize the class to someone who is not familiar with the course and provide a space for you to be reflexive about what you’ve learned and what new ideas/questions you are developing. This journal should be between 7-12 min long. Submit it to Canvas by *June 30th.*

Course Policies
Add any policies unique to this course, such as attendance and participation. Describe in what ways you provide flexibility for your students.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

During the first class, we will collaboratively create some basic community agreements that we see as vital to fostering a generative, inclusive, and safe classroom environment. These agreements should be based on anticipated dynamics that tend to emerge based on discussions related to race, inequality, power, privilege, etc. Because dynamics are just that - dynamic, these agreements can be re-evaluated and modified over the course of the semester

General Classroom Behavior:

You are adults. I expect you to participate often, engage the material both critically and constructively, and to have the highest respect for others, even if you disagree with what they say. Oppression, racism, sexism, patriarchy, violence, crime, and abolition are challenging topics to discuss and it’s useful to follow these guidelines.

- Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about these various topics.
- Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned but accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
- Assume that people – both those we study and those in this class – do the best they can.
- Never demean or devalue people for their experiences, backgrounds, or statements. We must agree to disagree at times, and always disagree respectfully.

I want the classroom environment to be comfortable for all students. Our own experiences matter in this course and should stimulate rather than shutdown conversation. If at any time you feel threatened or uneasy, please bring it to my attention via email, or in person. While it is normal and acceptable for us to disagree with each other, please do keep in mind that personal attacks are inappropriate in a classroom. I will challenge you to justify your opinion, but I will never personally judge you. It is my duty as an instructor to ensure that each student feels safe and respected in the classroom. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. If problems arise, we will not spend class time solving them. You will be asked to leave, and we
will work on a solution after class. Remember, both learning and teaching require humility. Open yourself up to being changed.

**Gender Pronouns**

I seek to create a classroom that values the gender identity and expression of all students. Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns of their choice, including the use of non-binary pronouns (such as “they/them” or “ze/hir”). To do this, I encourage class members to indicate the pronouns they use for themselves, if desired, and to respect the pronoun choices of others. If you don’t know someone else’s preferred pronouns, you might use the neutral “they” or their preferred name.

**Academic Integrity**

As an instructor, I am most fulfilled when engaging with student’s who develop their own ideas through curiosity and effort, while always recognizing the work of others that help build collective knowledge. **Academic integrity is a core university value that ensures respect for the academic reputation of the University, its students, faculty and staff, and the degrees it confers. The University expects that students will conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner and respect the intellectual work of others. Please ask about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if they are unclear.** Academic integrity requires that students at Yale acknowledge all the sources that inform their coursework. Most commonly, this means (a) citing the sources of any text or data that you include in written assignments, and (b) only collaborating with other students in ways that are explicitly endorsed by the assignment. Please ask about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if they are unclear.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging**

I embrace a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, social class and religion. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all. We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination. I strive to build and facilitate a classroom environment especially committed to increasing the representation of those populations that have been historically excluded from participation in U.S. higher education.

**Accessibility & Academic Supports**

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or that form barriers to your inclusion, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies that can enable you to succeed in the course. I encourage you to visit Student Accessibility Services to determine how you could improve your learning as well. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There is also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Residential College Tutors, and Academic Strategies. I aim to increase accessibility by providing captions for all videos, sharing lecture slides to Canvas, and providing multiple forms verbal and written learning opportunities.
Mental Health and Wellness
Overwhelmed? There are times that each of us may feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed. I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling to meet the course requirements (or just struggling in general), as we can develop a plan to help. Beyond talking with me, there are many resources available on campus to help and support you: Click here for short descriptions and contact information for an array of Yale student resources: Mental Health & Wellness Supports: Yale College Community Care; College Care Clinicians; Community Wellness Specialists; Yale Well; Yale Mental Health and Counseling

Wellness Supports
When instructors endorse university resources on the syllabus, students are more likely to explore support resources and refer to them throughout the semester. Click here for short descriptions and contact information for an array of Yale student resources (e.g. writing, STEM & language tutoring, Academic Strategies Program, mental health & wellness resources). You are welcome to use the sample descriptions for resources aligned with your course and student population.

Overwhelmed? There are times that each of us may feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed. I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling to meet the course requirements (or just struggling in general), as we can develop a plan to help. Beyond talking with me, there are many resources available on campus to help and support you

COVID
We are still in a pandemic that is causing much physical and mental stress on all of us. If you are required to go into quarantine, do your best to communicate with me. I will work with you on deadlines/extensions.

Concerns, Late Policy
If you have concerns about your grade in this course, you should discuss them with me as soon as possible. I am always willing to explain why you received a particular grade and discuss ways to improve your future scores. Any issues related to grading in general or your grade in particular must be brought to my attention prior to the last week of regular classes.

Assignments are due by midnight of the due date. Please provide prior communication (2-3 days in advance) if you need an extension on an assignment. Assignments turned in late without communication will be deducted partial points (generally 5% for each late day).