

CAM BRIDGE RELITERARY VIEW.

Citation Info

Audre Lorde, from *“I teach Myself in Outline”*: *Notes, Journals, Syllabi and an excerpt from Deotba*, edited by Miriam Atkin and Iemanjá Brown, *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative*, Series 7, Number 1, Fall 2017. These excerpts appeared in issue 11 (Michaelmas 2018) of the *Cambridge Literary Review*, pp. 17-22.

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Audre Lorde

**from SYLLABI, TEACHING JOURNALS, NOTES,
AND COURSE PROPOSALS**

[undated]

HIST/LIT. 210:

MS AUDRE LORDE

RACE AND THE URBAN SITUATION

OR

“CIVILIZATION OR DEATH
TO ALL AMERICAN SAVAGES”
(Officer’s toast, 1779)

DISCUSSION TOPICS & ASSIGNED READINGS

INTRODUCTION – What is a race?

I. Defining racism

not ethnocentrism; bias; prejudice; bigotry; discrimination
are there ‘unconscious’ racism; degrees of racism

READING: Suggested- Allport-*The Nature of Prejudice*

II. Racism in America

A. western values for ‘Black’

slavery & racism in other societies

coloured; negro; & Black

READINGS: Required; Schwartz & Disch pages 1-50; Boggs

‘Uprooting Racism’

Suggested: Gosset, Thomas- *Race,*

The History Of An Idea

B. What is a racist society? Institutionalized racism:

The subjective racism – personal function

the objective racism – utility and profit

Metaracism

READING: Required; Kovel- pages 211-230; also Chapter II

Suggested; Boggs- ‘Uprooting Racism’, p 146

III. Mechanics Of Oppression

A. Dehumanization – the images and its acceptance

Stereotyping

Instruction of history

pseudo-scientific rationales

READINGS: Required; Schwartz & Disch pages 384-442

Suggested: Carlson, Lewis- In Their Place pp 97-115

B. Division – class conflict & the american dream

other myths that divide; matriarchy; who's blacker'n

who; Blackness defined as deprivation

READINGS: Required; Schwartz & Disch pages 442 - 452;

263 - 270

Suggested: Gosset, 144-197; 409-430; Boggs –

“Black Capitalism”- pp 135

IV. Effects of Racism on White Americans

the true dehumanization

fear & guilt: projection & acting out

the acceptance of one's own oppression

READINGS: Required; Schwartz pages 155-162; 189 - 207; 251-258

Suggested; Kovel – chapter 4; & Howe, Louise

The White Majority

V. Effects of racism on Black Americans

A. The internalized stereotype

self-expectations & ’

who d'ya think you are?

'identification with white'

self definition & self-acceptance

B. Disunity

who am I so who are you

horizontal anger

your foot on my neck or my foot on your neck :

other choices

C. Fear

the desire to lull & pacify the oppressor

adopting dysfunctional values

D. The here and now
can we separate ideology & values from action?

READINGS: Suggested: Staples, Robert. *The Black Family*
Boggs, James
Kennedy, Flo. *Racism and Sexism in*
Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Powerful*
Cade, Toni. *The Black Woman: An Anthology*
Baldwin, James. *Notes Of A Native Son*
FREEDOMWAYS, Fall, 1971.
"Jensenism, the New Racism"

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

READ: Bennett, Lerone. *Before the Mayflower.*

READ: Question on the Midterm Exam, Oct. 30

Outside project report: to be assigned following Midterm

Book Reports – three. To be discussed in class. one page.

Weekly Journal – one page written weekly on some point or points
made in class discussions.

Proposal for Faculty Seminar at Hunter on Race

[Undated]

THIS IS AROUND THE N.B. (North Building) a saying I have to live with—but we are all on the side of truth. It is not enough to be on the side of truth. Unless we use ourselves in the service of that truth, make those things we believe real within our living, then they are meaningless in our lives.

I am a Black Woman of intelligence and sensitivity—a poet doing my work, and today a piece of that work is to share with each one of you some of the pain and wastefulness of racism here at Hunter.

I have been named TH Professor,¹ an honor of which I am proud. It is an ironic honor, for I am one of those women that TH considered uneducable. He believed only those fair of skin could learn well, and he writes of one Black woman who took 8 years to complete college—his own words—he says she has “The Negro face in all its barbaric deformity, flat nose, thick lips, retreating chin.” I know what TH thought about me. Resisting such hatred in a classroom takes an enormous amount of energy. I attended Hunter High School across the street in the 1940’s, and I was taught by white women who had studied under TH. I learned a lot from some of those women, but their presumption of my inferiority left vivid scars across my young womanhood.

It took me 10 years to complete Hunter College. Not because of my Black face, but because I worked at night to support myself. Psychology class my lab partner was white and she also worked full time. We were late with a lab report once and told our professor about the difficulty each of us was having with schedules. She told us to come see her and she thought she could help us about work. This professor was head of the department, and there were student lab asst. jobs available so we were quite hopeful. When we saw her, she made Marcia a lab asst, and offered me a job in her house as a live-in maid.

1 Distinguished Thomas Hunter Chair.

But of course that is history, and the essence of progress is change. Today, the student body at Hunter is now of 54% people of color and [left blank] female. But some things have not changed. There are racial attitudes still flourishing in some of our classrooms that rival any of my experiences.

Racism at Hunter Today

1. is a professor saying to a student, in public, “What are you doing here? You know you people can’t write.”
2. is a professor writing a proposal for a Women’s Studies Program at the Univ. of Ciskei without even knowing that the Ciskei is a Bantustan created by South Africa, one giant death-camp where women sit for days by the side of the road, with dying children in their arms, waiting for the weekly water truck from Pretoria.
3. is a pre-med student from the Caribbean being told that medical school requires sustained concentration, so perhaps she should become a lab technician instead.
4. is taking a course on the American Revolution and never learning that the 1st person to die in the Boston Massacre was a black man, Crispus Attucks. Without learning that 2 of the great heroes of that war and of Bunker Hill were Black members of the Green Mountain Boys name[d] Peter Salem & Salem Poor. These facts do not only belong in a course on Black History—they belong in a course on the American Revolution—part of the history of America.
5. is a science professor explaining to a whole class of predominantly Black and Latino students—how they are of inferior intelligence compared to students at Harvard and therefore he is not going to be bothered to teach them certain fundamentals of the subject, since it would be a waste of his time.

These are only a few random examples of racism at Hunter today in and out of the classroom. It is not enough to believe we are on the side of truth.

Racism at Hunter will change when we begin to recognize that race, and distortions around race, are realities in American consciousness and when we as educators, dare to examine the ways in which

these distortions affect our teaching, and imprint themselves upon our students. It is not enough to believe we are on the side of right.

I propose a series of faculty seminars on racial awareness and a race-conscious curriculum that will begin to explore some of these issues, and I urge the Faculty Delegate Assembly to support such a proposal and to examine some of these questions before they detonate in our faces.