

# Syllabus Spring 2021

## CompSci 190: Race, Gender, Class, and Computing

### Course Details

Location: Online  
Hours: Tues/Thurs 10:15-11:30am  
Credits: 1  
Website: <https://www2.cs.duke.edu/courses/spring21/compsci190/index.html>

Course Materials (Sakai): <https://sakai.duke.edu/portal>

### Instructor Details

Instructor: Dr. Nicki Washington  
Email: [nicki@cs.duke.edu](mailto:nicki@cs.duke.edu)  
Office Hours: Tue-3-5pm; Wed 430-530pm (via Zoom)

### Course Description

This course provides an introduction to identity and ways in which it is defined (race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and ability). Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) challenges impacting these identities (such as intersectionality, racism, sexism, xenophobia, classism, and more) are discussed, including various social justice movements. Identity is then explored in the context of DEI challenges in computing/tech environments, technologies developed, and their impact on people from various identities (including policies and organizations dedicated to addressing them).

### Prerequisites

No background in computing or social science is required.

### Areas of Knowledge and Modes of Inquiry Fulfillment

This course fulfills the Social Science (SS) Area of Knowledge and Cross-Cultural Inquiry (CCI); Science, Technology, and Society (STS); and Writing Modes of Inquiry requirements (W).

### Required Text

Required-The MLA Style Manual (<https://bit.ly/2NqpyG8>) will be used for all formal paper submissions (Book Reflection Draft #1, #2, and Final Draft).

This course leverages news articles, podcast episodes, Ted Talks, interviews, documentaries, and books that are available via either the web or the Duke Library at no charge.

### Additional Resources

- This course will use Sakai. All course material and submissions will be via Sakai.
- This course will use various articles, podcast episodes, videos, and other publicly accessible information via the Internet.
- The instructor team will use iThenticate to ensure written submissions are original work.

### Course Objectives/Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand identity and the various ways in which it is defined (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual identity, and ability).
2. Understand and discuss intersectionality.

3. Understand how various identities are impacted in different ways by society and computing.
4. Define, understand, and differentiate between cultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
5. Identify reasons for lack of DEI in computing+tech and methods to improve each.
6. Identify types of discrimination (in society and computing technologies)
7. Understand how the lack of DEI in computing+tech influenced biased technology development.
8. Identify strategies for addressing biases in technical environments as well as software.

## Topics Covered

This course covers but is not limited to the following topics:

### Week 1

Water No Get Enemy: Intro, Syllabus, House Rules, Course Expectations

### Week 2

Say It Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud: Identity, Race, and Ethnicity  
Brown Skin Girl: Identity-Gender and Sexuality

### Week 3

Four Women: Intersectionality, Class  
Everybody Loves the Sunshine: Ability, Religion

### Week 4

Land of the Free: Slavery, White Privilege, White Supremacy, Racism  
Mississippi Goddam: Anti-XX Racism, Xenophobia

### Week 5

U.N.I.T.Y.: Classism, Sexism, Misogyny  
Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler): Homophobia/Transphobia, Ableism, Ageism, Religious Discrimination

### Week 6

Fight the Power: The Movements (Part I): Suffrage Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Feminist Movement, #MeToo, Black Lives Matter  
Talkin Bout a Revolution: The Movements (Part II): Stonewall Uprising, United Farm Workers Movement, Dreamers Movement, Disability Rights Movement

### Week 7

DNA: Cultural Competence, Ethics, Allies/Advocates/Activists/Co-conspirator, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion  
Don't Touch My Hair: Policy-13th Amendment, 19th Amendment, 15th Amendment (Voting Rights Act), DACA, American Disabilities Act, Crown Act

### Week 8

HELLA BLACK: What Does This Have to Do with Computing?  
NO CLASS: March 11

### Week 9

This is America: Quiet Crisis, Digital Divide, Machine Learning vs. Artificial Intelligence  
Nina: Facial Recognition Software

### Week 10

Lockdown: Surveillance Tech  
Sound of da Police: Predictive Policing, Recidivism/Bail Software

### Week 11

Can't Knock the Hustle: Search Algorithms/ChatBots, Job/FinTech Applications  
Is It Because I'm Black: Healthcare Software and Voice Recognition Technology (Siri/Alexa/Google)

### Week 12

Wake Up Everybody: Tech Impacting People with Disabilities and LGBTQ+ Communities

Shook Ones, Pt. II: Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT)/Policy

### Week 13

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Presentations

Optimistic: Presentations

### Week 14

Umi Says: Presentations

Lovely Day: Now What? Course Wrap-Up

## Course Requirements

- **Attendance/Participation**-Because the nature of the course centers class discussions, students are expected to attend class and actively participate in class discussions, including discussion threads. Asynchronous videos will be provided of each lecture for those unable to attend class synchronously.
- **Position Paper**-Students are expected to write one position paper at the beginning of the semester.
- **Weekly Reflections**-Students are expected to provide weekly writing assignments based on class discussions and reading material, which will also serve as informal writing preps.
- **Book Reflection**-Students are expected to submit a reflection paper on one book they read from a list of available options. Two draft submissions are required.
- **Peer Reviews**-Students will complete two peer reviews of book reflection drafts.
- **Final Presentation**-Students must complete an end-of-course presentation.

*\*This course was intentionally and appropriately curated using factual information to teach concepts that will lead to more equitable and inclusive computing environments for diverse identities. It is extremely important that this course is prioritized as a safe space for learning/growing. The course discusses sensitive topics that impact people with different identities in different ways. As such, it requires participation that is respectful of all identities. Failure to abide by this (including verbal and written language that is found to be abusive, offensive, threatening, and/or hateful) will result in reporting to the proper university officials. Repeated incidents will result in appropriate university grievance harassment procedures and additional actions, as necessary. For more information, refer to the [Duke Community Standard: A Guide for Students](#).\**

## Grading Policy

Position Paper:	60 points total (8.6%)
Weekly Reflections:	240 points total (34.3%)
Book Reflection	200 points total (28.6%)
Peer Reviews (Reflection)	50 points total (7.1%)
Project:	150 points total (21.4%)
<b>700 Total Points Possible</b>	

Final grades are reported based on the following scale:

## Late Assignments

All assignments are due via Sakai at 1159pm PST on the specific due date. All assignments have a one-day grace period, which is 1159pm PST of the day after the original due date. Anything submitted after this grace period will not be graded unless an approved extenuating circumstance.

## Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to abide by the [Duke Community Standard](#) in terms of academic integrity, respect, fairness, accountability, and more. A complete discussion of the Duke Community Standard, expectations, and procedures in the event of violations are discussed in the [Duke Community Standard: A Guide for Students](#).

### **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Duke University is prepared to make reasonable academic adjustments and accommodations to allow students with disabilities full participation in the same programs and activities available to students without disabilities. The Student Disability Access Office assists students with disabilities who are enrolled in Trinity College and the Pratt School of Engineering. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a student must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as, but not limited to, hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, caring for oneself, and learning. Substantially limiting refers to an impairment that prevents an individual from performing a major life activity or significantly restricts the condition, manner, or duration under which an individual can perform a major life activity. Students requesting accommodations under the provisions of Section 504 or the ADA (e.g., academic, housing, etc.) must consult Leigh Fickling, Director, Student Disability Access Office, 919-668-1267 or 919-668-1329 TTY, to explore possible coverage. Students with medical conditions not covered under the provisions of ADA must consult Duke Student Health Services at 919-681-9355 for further information.

### **Office of Student Affairs**

Students are also encouraged to raise concerns or questions related to harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, and related retaliation to the Office of Student Affairs at [conduct@duke.edu](mailto:conduct@duke.edu).

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is a guide and every attempt is made to provide an accurate overview of the course. However, circumstances and events may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester and may depend, in part, on the progress, needs, and experiences of the students.