



Prof. Roy Holler | M,W,F - Period 8 - 3:00 PM - 3:50 PM | FLG 0245 | Office Hours: Mon + Wed 2:00 - 3:00 PM @ Turlington Hall 1120 | Email: royholler@ufl.edu

Aren't we all passing? Moving between identities daily, changing our personalities, hiding behind masks and presenting ourselves to be different than who we are? Many times, passing between identities help people adjust to certain demands of a mainstream culture. In more rare cases, passing allows individuals to gain access to opportunities and benefits that are only available to a different racial or ethnic group. While some forms of passing seem acceptable and understandable, others are considered taboo and are frowned upon. Why do we have this need to pass, and if we're all passing, how do we know if and when we've passed too far?

Looking to answer these questions, we will start the course by defining passing through its racial American roots, learning about the extreme stakes of African Americans passing as whites at the turn of the 20th century, and then continue to seek manifestations of the phenomena in contemporary realities. The second part of the course will review passing as a global phenomenon, utilized by international communities around the world. Focusing primarily on transnational Jewish identities, we will try to reevaluate our own negotiation of identity/difference.

Required Course Materials

Required: Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. Penguin Classics. ISBN - 9780142437278

Books are available to purchase at the bookstore. I will provide you with all other readings through the course site. These texts must be brought to class. Failure to come in with the assigned readings will result in removal of student from session.

Movies and Documentaries: Students will view a number of films during the semester. Some films will be screened in class. Others will be available through streaming services or via direct link. Students must see required films no later than they are assigned.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

- Students will explore the histories, narratives and experience of *passing* in a national/global scale, with an emphasis on how Black/Jewish identities define and present themselves (in regard to race, ethnicity, religion, class and gender) in the US, Europe and Israel.
- Students will reevaluate assumptions regarding fixed identities and race as biological/social construct. We will critique the visibility of race, visual racial biases and the feasibility of being “color-blind,” and our own negotiation of identity/difference.
- Students will engage with contemporary accounts of passing, exploring how alignment with mainstream identities affect the realities around them.

Expectations:

Attendance and Participation: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> (Links to an external site.). The following are guidelines made by the instructor.

- Attendance: is mandatory, will be taken daily and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. You are allowed three “personal days” for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for “excused” will result in a two-point deduction from your final grade. Excessive absences will lead to a failing grade in the class.
- Participation: The class is discussion based. Consistent informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation is expected and will be evaluated using the rubric below. The instructor will inform you of your participation grade to date when mid-term exams are returned and schedule a conference if you are earning below 70% of the possible points. NOTE: If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

- Class Etiquette. To make this class as enjoyable and collaborative experience as possible, there are a few in-class policies: I expect you to attend all classes. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones during class time. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all. If you need special accommodations due to a disability or other health-related issue, inform me as soon as possible.
- Canvas: All assignments, lecture notes, handouts, study guides, grades, etc. will be posted on the course website on Canvas. It is your responsibility to check the website regularly and keep up to date with the class.

List of Graded Assignments:

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points
Reading Journal	The reading journal entries will be available on the course website. For each entry you will provide a self-reflective or critical response, based on assigned readings of the week. Entries will be evaluated and graded based on the quality of writing and its correspondence with the assigned reading.	100 words weekly	20%
Analytical Essay	Comparative, 6-page paper analyzing course themes through literary analysis of two texts from syllabus, of different global cultures. Students will use a given question bank or a topic of their choice.	1500 Words	30%
Recorded Final Project	You will record a podcast/a short recorded story in which you will further explore one of the themes that were covered in this course. Do you have a personal story to share? A passing story by your friend or in your community? Which direction will you explore? Racial passing? Perhaps religion or gender? Or anything relevant, new, and exciting!	Podcast pitch + Final product	40%
Participation	The class is discussion based, meaning you shouldn't expect hour long lectures. The success of our class is based on your active discussion and group work!	Active participation	10%

Other Policies:

Late Submission Policy: Journals, assignments, thesis, papers, all must be submitted by the date and time listed on Canvas.

Students Requiring Accommodation: who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/> (Links to an external site.). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Grades and Grading Policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

UF Evaluations Process: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> (Links to an external site.). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> (Links to an external site.). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> (Links to an external site.).

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio: The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> (Links to an external site.) or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Reading Schedule:



Week 1 (Aug. 24): **So You Want to Talk about Race?**

Working definition of race, identity and passing. How do we define ourselves, our identities? How do we define others? What are the motives, benefits, costs that are associated with racial passing in the US.

Wed. Welcome!

Fri. Vin Diesel, *Multi-Facial* (short film, 20 min) + Haney Lopez “The Social Construction of Race”

Week 2 (Aug. 29): **Passing. A Chosen Exile.**

Reading Nella Larsen’s novel *Passing*, we will discuss whether identities are fixed/fluid, looking at fictional and real narratives of passing between race, gender and class. We will reevaluate assumptions regarding race as biological/social construct, discuss the visibility of race and the feasibility of being color-blind.

Mon. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Selections + Langston Hughes, “Passing,” from *The Ways of White Folk* (1934)

Wed. Nella Larsen, *Passing*. (Part I, One + Two)

Fri. Larsen, *Passing* (Part I, Three + Four)

Week 3 (Sep. 5) **Passing. Cont.**

Mon. Labor Day. No Class

Wed. Larsen, *Passing* (Part II)

Fri. *Passing* (Part III)

Week 4. (Sep. 12): **Assimilating/Covering/Passing**

Is passing a term that fits every case of changing or adapting one's identity? We will examine various degrees of passing, the differences between temporary and permanent passing, discussing whether passing is a chosen or forced endeavor.

Mon. Kenji Yoshino, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights* (pg. 3 – 31).

Wed. Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B" (1949) (Pg. 1-2).

Fri. Andrea Lee, *Sarah Phillips* (1984), Selections.

Week 5 (Sep. 19) **Trading Races**

Looking at documented cases of race swapping, discussing how prejudice and racism look when one crosses the color the line. Can walking a mile in someone else's shoes help us understand each other's lifelong experiences?

Mon. Ice Cube's *Black. White.* Screening.

Wed. *Black. White.* Discussion.

Fri. Katrina E. Bell-Jordan, "*Black. White.* and a *Survivor of The Real World: Constructions of Race on Reality TV*"

Week 6 (Sep. 26): **"Papa Can You Hear Me?"**

Utilizing our familiarity of passing in the American context, we will work to identify other forms of passing as they occur in international cultures. We will establish understanding of Jewish life in the diaspora and explore the reasoning behind passing in gender-segregated societies.

Mon. Rosh Hashana, NO CLASS

Wed. Discussion. Barbara Streisand. *Yentl* (1983).

Fri. *Yentl.* Cont. + A.B. Yehoshua, "Who is a Jew" (2013)

Week 7 (Oct. 3): **The Passing of a Nation**

Zionism did not just move Jewish people to Israel, but also wished to recreate the Jewish body, and produce a new “race” of Jews. Thus, immigrants to Israel had to change their identities, erasing past lives to become New Hebrews.

Mon. Jayne Chong-Soon. “Navigating the Topology of Race.”

Wed. Yom Kippur – NO CLASS

Fri. The New Hebrew. Discussion



Week 8 (Oct. 10): **Passing of a Nation, Part II**

Looking at more personal narratives of Jewish switching of identities, we will examine how our knowledge of one culture can help us better understand another. What is comparable, what isn't? Can African American passing shed light on Jewish-Israeli identity?

Mon. Haim Hazaz, “The Sermon” (1942) (Pg. 233 – 249)

Wed. Dahn Ben-Amotz, *To Remember, To Forget*, (1968), (pg. 3-10, 26-59)

Fri. Discussion.

Week 9 (Oct. 17): **Passing Ethnicities**

We will focus on experiences of 2nd generation to passing parents and examine issues that come up such as reclaiming lost heritage and reckoning with forced mainstream identity.

Mon. Orly Castel-Bloom. “Umami Fi Shurl.” (Pg. 259 – 261)

Wed. Sami Shalom Shitrit, “Who is a Jew and what kind of a Jew”

Fri. Personal Meetings – Midterm Paper.

Week 10 (Oct. 24): **A Pretty Pass**

This section will look at experiences of non-Jewish minorities in Israel, specifically the Arab-Israeli population, raising questions of self-definition as a racial/religious minority in a nation state.

Mon. *Fictitious Marriage*.

Wed. Discussion. Cont.

Fri. *We Love Arabs*. Screening + **Midterm Paper Due**

Week 11 (Oct. 31): **Straight Passing.**

Mon. *We Love Arabs*. Discussion.

Wed. *Yossi and Jagger*. Screening

Fri. Discussion.

Week 12 (Nov. 7): **Black and Jewish.**

W.E.B. Du Bois described African American “double consciousness”: “One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body.” In a sense, Israeli Ethiopians live in triple consciousness, Israelis, black, Jewish. This section will focus on the experiences of Beta Israel, what it means to be black in Israel today.

Mon. *Red Leaves*. Discussion.

Wed. *White Eye*. Discussion.

Fri. No Class.

Week 13 (Nov. 14): **Blacks and Jews.**

Mon. *Blackkkklansman*. Discussion

Wed. Cont.

Fri. Personal Meetings.

Week 14 (Nov. 21): **Thanksgiving Week**

Mon. No class - work on your podcast

Wed/Fri. Thanksgiving.

Week 15/16 (Nov 28 + Dec 5): **Is Passing Passing?**

Students will share and present their final projects, recorded projects (interviews, personal narratives) which will be edited into a class podcast.

Mon. Neo-Passing + “The Layered Deceptions of Jessica Krug”

Tue. Podcast Extravaganza

Wed. Podcasts cont.

Mon. More Podcasts.

Wed. Goodbye, Farewell!

Other Other Policies:

In-Class Recording: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

This class does not espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel students to believe concepts concerning race, gender, national origin as listed in Florida House Bill 7