Passing: Black, White, and Jewish

Course Information

Class Meetings

R | Period 4 (10:40 AM - 11:30 AM) <u>WEIM 1076</u> T | Period 4 – 5 (10:40 AM - 12:35 PM) <u>MCCC 0100</u>

Instructor

Roy Holler, Assistant Professor of Israel Studies – <u>royholler@ufl.edu</u> Office location: 1120 Turlington Hall Office hours: Tue 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM @ Turlington Hall 1120 Phone: (352) 273-3765

Course Description

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? In some cases, passing between identities help us adjust to certain demands of a mainstream culture. In others, passing allows individuals to gain access to opportunities and benefits that are only available to a different group. However, there are forms of passing that seem acceptable and understandable, and ones that are considered taboo and 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 pass too far?

Looking to answer these questions, we will start the course by defining basic terminology and methodology of race and racial bias, and then review key themes and principals of passing through its racial American roots. We will analyze the extreme stakes of African Americans passing as white at the turn of the 20th century, and continue to seek manifestations of the phenomena in contemporary realities through a multidisciplinary lens. We will review historical recordings of mullatto slaves, read memoirs and narratives of African American passers, discuss poems and literary creation which deals with passing, review Legal theories about hiding and expressing identities, and watch a reality TV show about switching races. In the second part of the course, we will create a dialogue between different cultures, and review passing as a global phenomenon which utilized by international communities and minorities around the world. Focusing primarily on transnational Jewish identities, we will try to reevaluate our own negotiation of identity/difference.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- International (N)
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the <u>Quest</u> and <u>General Education</u> objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required & Recommended Course Materials (to purchase/rent)

Required: Larsen, Nella. *Passing.* Penguin Classics. ISBN - 9780142437278 Recommended: *The Little Seagull Handbook*, ISBN-13: 978-0393911510 Recommended website for writing support: OWL // Purdue Writing Lab @ www.owl.purdue.edu

All other readings and materials will be available on CANVAS. Please be in touch with the professor if you're having trouble accessing them.

Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

1. List of Graded Work

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points
Reading Journal	Through course website. Self-reflective responses to assigned readings.	100 words weekly	200 – 20%
Short response paper	2-page paper to show understanding and basic implementation of <i>passing</i> in a critical framework. (This assignment will count towards the Writing Requirement.)	500 Words	100 – 15%
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. (This assignment will count towards the Writing Requirement.)	1700 Words	200 – 25%
Recorded Final Project	Podcast segment – a recorded edited submission of a 5-6 minute story, which includes a narrative, at least one interview, and a personal reflection component, discussing the class themes. Students will submit a pitch and a draft which will be workshopped in class. The audio file will be accompanied by a written overview of the process.	Podcast pitch + Draft. Recorded podcast. 200 word overview of project.	250 – 30%
Participation	Class discussion and in-class group work.	Active participation	100 – 10%

Written work submitted in this course will be thoroughly evaluated, and students will receive their papers with extensive feedback in respect, but not limited to: grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. Feel free to contact me, or the UF's Writing Studio (<u>www.writing.ufl.edu</u>) for further instruction and consultation in regards to effective writing.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <u>https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/</u>

А	94 - 100%	С	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%	C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%	D+	67 – 69%
В	84 – 86%	D	64 – 66%
В-	80 - 83%	D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%	E	<60

Grading Rubric(s)

Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

	High Quality	Average	Needs Improvement
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.	Student shows convincing range and quality of knowledge, having thoroughly read the assigned material in preparation for class discussion. (9-10 pts.)	Student seems informed on the subject, having done minimal preparation for class discussion. (6-8 pts.)	Student is almost never prepared for class, exhibits very little or no knowledge of the assigned material/topics covered. (1-5 pts.)
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.	9 – 10 pts.	6 – 8 pts.	1 – 5 pts.
Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student incorporates or builds off of the ideas of others. (9 – 10 pts.)	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. (6 – 8 pts.)	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student is distracted, overuses laptops/electronics or interrupts when student speak. (1 – 5 pts.)

Participation Grading Rubric: (10 points, 10%)

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
Week 1 (Jan. 9 th)	Торіс	So You Want to Talk about Race?	
	Summary	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.	
	Readings/Works	 Vin Diesel, Multi-Facial (Links to an external site.) (short film, 20 min) + Read: Haney Lopez "The Social Construction of Race" (Pg. 191-200) Langston Hughes, "Passing," from <i>The Ways of White Folk</i> (1934) (Pg. 1-4) James Weldon Johnson, The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man (Chapter 10, Pg. 1-4) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	1/10
Week 2 (Jan. 16 th)	Торіс	Passing: A Chosen Exile	
	Summary	Reading Nella Larsen's novel <i>Passing</i> , class will discuss whether identities are fixed/fluid, looking at fictional and real narratives of passing between race, gender and class. We will reevaluate contemporary assumptions regarding race as biological/social construct, discuss the visibility of race the feasibility of being color-blind.	
	Readings/Works	- Nella Larsen, Passing (1929) (Pg. 143-242)	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	2/10
Week 3 (Jan. 23 rd)	Торіс	Assimilating/Covering/Passing	

2. Weekly Course Schedule

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
	Summary	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, between passing then and now, and discuss whether passing is a chosen or forced endeavor.	
	Readings/Works	 Kenji Yoshino, <i>Covering: The Hidden Assault on Civil Rights</i> (2007) (pg. 3 – 31) Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B" (1949) (Pg. 1-2) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	3/10
Week 4 (Jan. 30 th)	Торіс	Trading Races	
	Summary	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?	
	Readings/Works	 Ice Cube's <i>Black. White.</i> (2006) (2 episodes, 50 min each) Katrina E. Bell-Jordan, <i>"Black.White.</i> and a <i>Survivor</i> of <i>The Real World</i>: Constructions of Race on Reality TV" (Pg. 354 – 370) 	
	Assignment	Short Response Paper	1/1
Week 5 (Feb. 6 th)	Торіс	"Papa can you hear me?"	
	Summary	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. What does it mean to live in exile, away from one's home?	
	Readings/Works	 - Isaac Bashevis Singer. "Yentl the Yeshiva Boy" (1962) (pg. 131 – 160) - Barbara Streisand. Yentl (1983). Selections screened in class. 	

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
		- A.B. Yehoshua, "Who is a Jew" (2013) (Pg. 1-4)	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	4/10
Week 6 (Feb. 13 th)	Торіс	The Passing of a Nation	
	Summary	This week we will examine the assimilation, covering and passing demands experienced by immigrants in global settings. We will generate our discussion by looking at Zionism which 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 had to change their identities, erasing past lives to become New Hebrews.	
	Readings/Works	 Jayne Chong-Soon. "Navigating the Topology of Race" (Pg. 441-447) Haim Hazaz, "The Sermon" (1942) (Pg. 233 – 249) Oz Almog, <i>The Sabra</i> (2000), Chapter 1. (Pg. 1-22) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	5/10
Week 7 (Feb. 20 th)	Торіс	Passing of a Nation, Part II.	
	Summary	Looking at more personal narratives of switching identities, we will examine how studying one culture can help us better understand another, and perhaps better understand ourselves. Which experiences can be compared? Are some issues completely taboo? Can African American passing narratives shed light on other contemporary identities?	
	Readings/Works	- Dahn Ben-Amotz, <i>To Remember, To Forget,</i> (1968). (Pg. 3 – 45)	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	6/10

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
Week 8 (Feb. 27 th)	Торіс	2 nd Generation to Passing	
	Summary	This week we will examine issues that come up when reclaiming lost heritage and reckoning with past identities. How is identity passed from one generation to another? Do children necessarily keep the parents' culture, or do they adopt the mainstream culture?	
	Readings/Works	 Orly Castel-Bloom, "Ummi Fi Shurl." (Pg. 259 – 261) Sami Shalom Shitrit, "Who is a Jew and what kind of a Jew" (poem, 1 pg.) Adi Keissar, "Black on Black" (poem, 1 pg.) Roy Hasan, "The Language of my Parents" (poem, 1 pg.) 	
	Assignment	Midterm Paper	1/1
Week 9 (Mar. 6 th)	Торіс	A Pretty Pass (Week I)	
	Summary	This section will look at experiences of non-Jewish minorities passing in Israel, specifically the Arab-Israeli population. We will examine the current conflict in the Middle East while raising questions of self-definition as a racial/religious minority living in a nation state.	
	Readings/Works	 A.B. Yehoshua, "Defining who is an Israeli" (Pg. 1 - 3) Ghassan Kanafani, "Returning to Haifa" (Pg. 150 – 190) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	7/10
Week 10 (Mar. 20 th)	Торіс	A Pretty Pass (Week II)	
	Summary	This week we will discuss reverse passing, or passing from mainstream culture to minority culture. We will also examine notions of identity/difference, belongingness, racial and ethnic biases, and other visual biases that effect minorities.	

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
	Readings/Works	 Haim Bouzaglo, <i>Fictitious Marriage</i> (1 hour 30 min) Sandra Meiri, "The Foreigner Within and the Question of Identity in <i>Fictitious Marriage</i>" (pg. 241 - 253) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	8/10
Week 11 (Mar. 27 ^{th)}	Торіс	Don't Ask, Don't Tell	
	Summary	Looking at passing narratives of LGBTQ+ communities in Israel, we will review the performativity of feminine/masculine traits in relation to the military and other settings in daily life. We will examine the plausibly of current policies such as "don't ask, don't tell," and the covering demands that they carry.	
	Readings/Works	 Yossi and Jagger. Film. (1 hour) Raz, Yosef. (2004). "Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema." (pg. 203 - 209) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	9/10
Week 12 (Apr. 3 rd)	Торіс	Black and Jewish	
	Summary	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." How does one live with two identities and are people today still feel the same way? Is double consciousness limited to race? We will try and answer these questions by reviewing the experiences of Ethiopian Jews, and what it means to be both black and Jewish.	
	Readings/Works	 Red Leaves (2014) (Film, 90 min) White Eye (2020) (Film, 15 min) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	10/10

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
		Podcast Workshop 1 (podcast pitch due)	1/3
Week 13 (April 10 th)	Торіс	Reinventing the Black-Jewish Alliance	
	Summary	Coming to a closure, we return to the States, leaving the theoretical comparisons and focusing on concrete examples of the African American and Jewish connection, we will discuss identity making, identity politics, and the Black-Jewish alliance in context.	
	Readings/Works	 Spike Lee, <i>Blackkklansman</i> (2018) (2h 8 min). "Charlottesville: Race and Terror" – <i>VICE News Tonight</i> (screening in class) David C. Atkinson, "Charlottesville and the alt-right: a turning point?" (pg. 309 - 315) Brett Ashley Kaplan, "JewKkKlansman" (2020) (op-ed, 3 pages) 	
	Assignment	Reading Journal	
Week 14/15 (Apr. 17 th)	Торіс	Final Project Workshop/Showcase	Recorded project + short essay 3/3
	Summary	Students will share and present their final projects, recorded projects (interviews, personal narratives) which will be edited into a class podcast.	
	Readings/Works	- n/a	
	Assignment	Recorded interview/narrative accompanied with a 200 word review, and verbal introduction.	

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the <u>Quest</u> and <u>General Education</u> learning outcomes as follows:

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).

- Identify, describe, and explain the concept of *passing* and its historical and literary evolution, based in its African American roots and its contemporary, broad and global occurrences, specifically as illustrated in the Jewish world, with attention to the current fluidity of racial identities (Quest 1, H, N). Assessments: Class participation, journal entries, comparative papers and final project.
- Identify and critique past and present visual biases, the perception of fixed identities, race as a biological/social construct and negotiation of identity/difference in mainstream culture. (Quest 1, H). Assessments: Class participation, journal entries, comparative papers and final project.
- Explore and apply a unique African American phenomenon in relation to global communities, to better understand the intersection of transnational Jewish/Israeli and Palestinian identities.
 (Quest 1, H, N). Assessments: Class participation, journal entries, comparative papers and final project.

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Analyze and Evaluate historical and contemporary narratives by and about passing individuals, that depict the experience and help us construct a critical approach to the demands of conforming one's racial/ethnic identities to that of the majority, in local and global settings.
 (Quest 1, H, N) Class participation, journal entries, short and comparative papers and Final Project.
- Connect the complex relationships between how unique models of international identity structures (black/Jewish) are perceived and enforced today—culture/ethnicity/race/class and gender—and the interpretation of ideas on which they are based through a comparative lens.
 (Quest 1, H, N) Class participation, journal entries, short and comparative papers and Final Project.
- Review how passing between identities help people around the world adjust to certain demands of a mainstream culture and/or gain access to opportunities and benefits that are only available to a different group. (Quest 1, H, N). Assessments: Class participation, journal entries, comparative papers and final project.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).

- **Develop and present** their own findings in verbal and recorded form through an experiential project that applies the experience of black/Jewish communities to personal/local narratives. (Quest 1, H) Class participation and Final Project.
- Explore how passing effects the Black/Jewish experience through personal and comparative written assignment which analyzes a work from the syllabus (literature, film, memoir). (Quest 1, H) Journal entries, short and comparative papers and Final Project.

Connection: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).

- **Explore** one's own connection and identification with the intersection of the Black/Jewish experience, and (re)assess the intellectual and cultural framework that constructs our personal and political views. **(Quest 1, H)** Class participation, journal entries, short and comparative papers and Final Project.
- **Review** how passing narratives can help students create approaches and strategies to promote justice and equality to subdued identities on campus, weather their peers' or their own, and to Better and freely express their own backgrounds and realities, through engaging with other lived experiences. **(Quest 1, H)**. Assessments: Class participation, journal entries, comparative papers and final project.

Required Policies

Attendance Policy

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 (more than 50%) will lead to a failing grade in the class.

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/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <u>https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/</u>. 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.

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/. 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/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

University Honesty Policy

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

(<u>https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/</u>) 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: <u>http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/</u>, 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/ or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

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.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.