

# **Race, Gender and Algorithms**

Professor Dr. micha cárdenas

CRES 150, Summer 2020, UC Santa Cruz

Monday and Wednesday, 1:00PM-4:30PM

## **Course Description**

Algorithms shape race and gender today. Yet algorithms are older than digital media and can be understood as recipes or rituals. In this course, students will engage with the emerging field of trans of color poetics by studying readings in women of color feminism, transgender studies and decolonial theory. Digital media art will ground the discussion, including works from queer and trans artists of color working in digital games, anti-surveillance fashion and performance art. Students will create digital media projects in response to the ideas of the course, in the medium or platform of their choice. These can include video prototypes, web sites, Scalar books, Twine games, podcasts and/or video channels, which I will discuss the technical aspects of in class, based on interest from students in the class.

The goal of the class is to create a theory-practice studio, in which students engage in detail with theoretical texts and build digital artworks in response. There will be ample time dedicated to discussion, hands on activities and presentation. Students will learn methods of practice based research, creating things other than linear texts in order to deepen their understanding of the intersections of race, gender and algorithms.

## **Learning Objectives**

Students in this course will be supported and facilitated in meeting these learning objectives:

- To better understand interdisciplinary approaches to studying race and gender
- Learning what algorithms are, and how they are shaping race and gender in contemporary societies
- To be able to creatively respond to social issues of race and gender using algorithmic media, blending theory and practice into practice-based research and praxis.

These objectives meet and extend these CRES learning objectives:

## **Critical Frameworks**

- Deep knowledge of historical, contemporary, and intersectional perspectives on race and ethnicity.

- Familiarity with different disciplinary methods applied to race and ethnicity.
- A critical perspective on institutional power and knowledge.

### **Communication**

- Ability to account for other people's arguments, to formulate one's own arguments, and to locate both arguments in the larger context of the field.
- Ability to formulate an argument in alternative media, such as speech, audiovisual, digital, and other forms of non-written communication.
- Effective writing in the interdisciplinary field.

### **Required Texts**

*Algorithms of Oppression*, Safiya Noble

*Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora

*Poetic Operations*, micha cárdenas [forthcoming]

### **Grading**

There is extensive research on the ways that grading harms learning. (See: <https://www.jessestommel.com/ungrading-a-bibliography/> for more on this)

All grading in this class is self-assessment. We will create a rubric for assessment in this course together in class. You will write a one page self-assessment for your mid-term and a three page self-assessment for your final, using the rubric and responding to it.

### **Meetings**

We will meet twice a week, optionally, on Zoom video chat. I will record these meetings and upload them to a Google Drive folder to make them available to you, in case you do not have a computer or the bandwidth to join video meetings. I will send invitations to Zoom meetings via email. We are not using Canvas.

We will also have weekly discussions on the Discord platform (<https://discord.com>). Your participation in at least one of these, but preferably both, is essential to your learning.

### **Assignments**

### **Presentations – Pairs**

Choose a week to present the reading, with a partner. Present material to start the day's discussion. Presentations should be 15-25 minutes, including main argument of the reading, relevant quotes for the argument's progression, and examples described by the author. Bring in other examples or art or media that relate to the reading, including examples from your own work if it relates to the theme of the class, or from your research for your class project. The idea is to bring the reading to life for the rest of the class, and bring in a discussion of how the reading relates to your own research.

### **Mid-Term Project – Week 5**

Students in the class will create a digital project engaging the concepts of race, gender and algorithms. For the mid-term, students will present a plan or proposal of their final project to the class. Students with ongoing research projects that engage the topic are welcome to develop a module of that project for this course. Students can use any platform they choose, and I will be available for teaching platforms such as Twitter, Tumblr, Twine, or Scalar, based on the needs of students in the class.

Some students choose to create a video essay or video prototype for an imaginary technology, while some students may want to create interactive media, such as a hashtag campaign on social media. Some students choose to create a non-linear essay on the web, or a website for a fictional company or product. We will have media creation workshops towards the end of the quarter to teach some of these approaches, such as video and audio editing or how to create text based games.

### **Final Project – Week 10**

Presentation of the digital project to the class, with a possible public exhibition if space allows.

### **Important Summer Session Remote 2020 Deadlines:**

Session 1:  
Drop: Monday, June 29  
Request for “W”: Friday, July 10

Session 2:  
Drop: Monday, August 3  
Request for “W”: Friday, August 14

8-Week:  
Drop: Monday, July 6  
Request for “W”: Friday, July 24

10-Week:

Drop: Monday, July 6  
Request for "W": Friday, July 24

Summer is unique. **You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment.** You must drop yourself. Dropping before the deadline results in a full-tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund).

For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar: <https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html>

For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email [summer@ucsc.edu](mailto:summer@ucsc.edu).

## Schedule

*Readings are due to have been read on the date they are listed in the syllabus. We will be discussing these readings on these dates.*

### Week 1, July 27th

#### Monday

Design Justice, A.I., and Escape from the Matrix of Domination  
<https://jods.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/costanza-chock>

"When the Robot Doesn't See Dark Skin", Joy Buolamwini  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/opinion/facial-analysis-technology-bias.html>

"Artificial Intelligence's White Guy Problem", Kate Crawford  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/26/opinion/sunday/artificial-intelligences-white-guy-problem.html>

#### Wednesday

*Algorithms of Oppression*, Introduction: The Power of Algorithms

### Week 2, August 3rd

#### Monday

*Algorithms of Oppression*, Chapter 1. A Society, Searching

#### Wednesday

*Algorithms of Oppression*, Chapter 2, Searching for Black Girls

## **Week 3, August 10th**

### **Monday**

Read: *Poetic Operations*, micha cárdenas, Introduction

### **Wednesday, August 12th**

*Mid-Term Presentations, overview of project concept and sketch/draft/outline*

## **Week 4, August 17th**

### **Monday**

*Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Introduction, p. 1-26

### **Wednesday**

*Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Chapter 1, p. 27-54

## **Week 5, August 24th**

### **Monday**

Hands on tech tutorials and studio session

### **Wednesday**

*Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Epilogue, p. 188-197

## **Week 6, August 28th**

### **Monday**

*Final project presentations*

## **Resources**

All Gender Restrooms at UCSC:

<https://maps.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/GIF-Master-Lst-Final-091916.pdf>

Lactation Rooms: [https://maps.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/lactation\\_room\\_map\\_6-18.pdf](https://maps.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/lactation_room_map_6-18.pdf)

Childcare: <https://childcare.ucsc.edu/>

Prayer Rooms: ISB-475, <http://ucscmsa.wixsite.com/home>

For Veterans: <https://stars.ucsc.edu/veteran/>

Undocumented Student Services:

[https://eop.ucsc.edu/undocumented\\_student\\_services/index.html](https://eop.ucsc.edu/undocumented_student_services/index.html)

Support for Survivors of Assault: <https://care.ucsc.edu/resources/support-survivors.html>

Slug Support, including Food Support

<https://basicneeds.ucsc.edu/crisis-resolution/Slug%20Support%20Program.html>

Writing Centers: <https://lss.ucsc.edu/programs/writing-support/index.html>

Counseling & Psychological Services: <https://caps.ucsc.edu/index.html>

## Policy

### Late Work

Handing in your work late will cause your grade to drop one letter per day. Work more than three days late will not be accepted.

### Attendance

A major part of a transformative education is learning to work with your peers, face to face, in a professional manner, to generate knowledge together. A university education is about more than facts and data, it is also about learning the social skills involved in having a conversation about challenging issues in a way that allows everyone to be heard. Your participation in class and section is essential. I will take attendance on quiz days. **You cannot miss more than three lectures or section days and still pass this class.** If you have a documented reason for your absence, such as doctor's note or a documented family emergency, you can provide that to your TA, but you cannot make up quizzes, in class assignments or participation points from missed classes.

### Email

I do not answer email on the weekend. I will respond to any email sent to me within two business days of receiving them. Always specify course number ARTG 80H in the subject of your email.

### DRC Remote Accommodations:

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. Operations continue via remote appointments. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, email the DRC Schedulers at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu) for an appointment.

### Small Group Tutoring

Small Group Tutoring (SGT) supports students academically to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments outside of the classroom. In SGT, you can expect the Tutor to facilitate cooperative group activities designed to have students work together on the

course content and develop study skills for the course. SGT is offered at least three times each week for the entire quarter. The Tutor is an undergraduate student who took the class, did well, and is trained to facilitate group sessions to focus on students' needs to succeed in the course. SGT is open to all students enrolled in the class and they must sign up on our online system: TutorTrac. When students sign up for SGT, they are committing to attend every week. For Summer 2020, students can begin signing up for tutoring on **Monday, June 22rd** and tutoring will begin **Wednesday, June 24th**. Students only have to sign up once for tutoring and their appointments will repeat weekly. Sign-ups will close on **Friday, August 14th** for all Summer Session Sign-Ups. This means that after **August 14th**, no new students can sign up for tutoring.

Want SGT to be successful for you? Bring your books, lecture notes, questions, and be open to working collaboratively with your peers. You can sign up using this link: <https://ucsc-go-redrock.com/tracweb40/NoAccess.4sp?errText=insufficient%20credentials%20to%20view%20content>

You can also find the link on our website: <https://lss.ucsc.edu/index.html>

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

## **Title IX:**

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#),

and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at [titleix.ucsc.edu](https://titleix.ucsc.edu).

The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using our [online reporting link](#).

For more information please visit the [Title IX Operations under Covid-19](#) page.