Race and Technology

Humanities 45 - 01

Summer 2024

Course Logistics

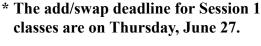
Dates: 6/24 - 7/26

Time: MW (1pm - 4:30pm) **Location**: Online (Zoom)

Meeting ID: 913 7123 1740

Passcode: roboto

classes are on Thursday, June 27.



Instructor Information

Name: Mia Tempestt Boykin Email: mboykin@ucsc.edu

Office Hours: Friday, 10am - Noon (Via zoom, by appointment)

Communicating with me: I am very excited to talk with you about any material from the course (course content, questions about assignments or grades, issues from discussions), as well as any other aspects of your lives as students. Please come to office hours! You don't need to have any particular questions in mind; I'm happy to just have a conversation.

I am also available to take questions via email. Please feel free to contact me through Canvas or by email. In general, I promise to answer any emails sent on Monday-Thursday within 24 hours and to respond to any email sent on Friday-Sunday by Tuesday morning. If you don't get a response within 24 hours, please feel free to contact me again.

Course Description

Despite how we think about technologies as neutral and bias-free, this course asks you to consider how racial and gendered logics shape and are shaped by technological innovations (such as facial recognition, codes and algorithms, data networks, surveillance technologies, and drones). By turning to films, news articles, websites, and scholarly articles, we look beyond the marketing and promise of technologies to assess how inequalities are programmed into the automated code driving techno-intelligence. With the goal of social justice and a more ethical approach to technological design, we ask: Who benefits and who loses through these "innovations"? We will also assess the holistic picture of technological



development, including what historical context inspires the development of a technology, how it affects the environment, who works to build the components, and who becomes the experts of how we address social problems. You will have the opportunity to collaborate to debate these issues and consider how we might propose alternative solutions or interact differently with technologies and the worlds they offer.

This course fulfills the Ethnicity & Race (ER) **General Education** requirement. As part of that, you will understand the complex ways race, gender, sexual orientation, etc are designed through technological objects, imaginaries, and histories.

Further description of the ER General Education requirement can be found here.

This course has no prerequisites.

Course Learning Goals

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

- 1. Critically **assess** how race and technology personally influences (or not) your everyday life.
- 2. **Consider** people's position with respect to technology or the relation between those making the technologies and those whose lives it impacts.
- 3. **Assess** diverse perspectives to collaboratively generate questions about how broader structures of race are part of technological design.
- 4. **Examine** how race is coded into the design of technology.
- 5. **Analyze** how technology unfairly targets or misrepresents marginalized groups in its design.
- 6. **Create** alternative approaches to technological development with the goal of "design justice."

Feedback & Grading Practices

Feedback on your work: I will provide direct comments and feedback on your assignments. Please click here to learn how to access my comments in Canvas. For major assignments, I will include a grading rubric that will be available to you prior to submitting your work. Please click here to learn how to access grading rubrics for assignments. I will aim to provide feedback one week after an assignment is submitted.

Group work Grades

Students will be assessed using the rubric on canvas individually and as part of the group.

Late Work Policy: Part of the expectations for this course includes submitting your work on time and being prepared for class discussions, group work, and your in-class

presentations. Most work in this course cannot be turned in late. These include Co-leading Class Discussions, Sharing Final Project Ideas, Peer Feedback on group projects, Group Presentations, and the Project Essay/Creative Outcome. You may submit Discussion Board Posts up to **three days late**, but all posts submitted late will receive a half-credit deduction.

Opportunities for Revision: You will have ONE opportunity to revise an assignment.

Evaluation Process: Specifications/Contract Grading

This class uses "Specifications Grading." This means that your grade is determined by your demonstrated commitment to putting in the effort to meet the expectations of the course. We will speak about this in the first class, but the principle is simple: we establish, in advance, everything that you need to do to earn a baseline grade of a B (we also indicate what you need to do to receive an A, a C, or a D).

This model emerged from pedagogical scholarship that shows a systemic bias that favors students who are trained and exhibit proficiency in a particular kind of academic writing, a system that disadvantages students who are writers and speakers of multilingual backgrounds and who have had a multitude of educational experiences.

Thus "specifications" grading evaluates your performance through your effort in fulfilling the expectations of the course. These "specifications" include keeping up with the reading; your engagement (which takes various forms); your ability to complete assignments of passing quality and by established deadlines. You will receive peer feedback, submit your own self-assessment, and receive feedback from your professor.

Please feel free to come to class with questions about this grading model, or to reach out to me directly over email or during office hours.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for this course are divided into work that shows **participation** (both in class and online) and work that is completed in out-of-class **assignments** that relate to your group final project.

Readings	You must read all assigned texts and view all video content. Be prepared to discuss and answer questions about the reading in class.	
In-Class Engagement	You must attend and participate during	

	each class session. Participation/engagement can take various forms (chat participation, oral engagement, emoji responses, etc).	
Co-leading Class Discussion	You will co-lead the discussion of one assigned reading with another student. Reading assignments will be finalized in the first week of the course.	
Sharing Final Project Idea	Your group will discuss its final project idea (or up to three ideas) in our roundtable session during Week 8. Your discussion should be a brief presentation of roughly 5 minutes, plus 5 minutes for questions.	
Group Projects: Peer-to-peer Feedback	Provide feedback to each member of your group, using peer feedback form.	
Group Projects: feedback for another group's project ideas.	Provide feedback on each person's work from another group, using peer feedback form.	

Assignments

Discussion Board Post(s)	Answer weekly questions on the Canvas Discussion Board in weeks 1-8. Minimum 200 words. When you post, you must also respond to two other classmates' comments.
Final Project (Intervention/Solution Proposal)	Final projects! Two Options: 1) 1600-2000 words, approx 6-8 pages double spaced, 12pt font 2) Creative Projects (to be confirmed through discussion with the instructor)
Final Project Presentations	You will have 15 minutes to discuss your final project. Make sure each person's participation is noted (oral presentation, design, research, etc)

Discussion Boards: Each week, students will be presented with questions and assignments based on the content, text(s), and media utilized in class. Students will write about their own critical analysis on the relevant topic. They will be responsible for **responding to two**

or more students in that same discussion board to build their understanding of the topic and to consider alternative perspectives (Learning Goals 1-5).

Posts will be due at 11:59 pm on the Sunday after Week's material, and the responses will be due at 11:59pm on the following Wednesday (3 days later).

Deductions:

- a) Late posts can be submitted by Wednesday; all late posts will receive a half-credit deduction. Eight discussion boards will be provided for students throughout the course.
- b) If you do not respond to two other students' posts by the Wednesday deadline, you will receive a half-credit deduction for that week's Discussion Post.

Following a Techno-Object (Group Project): Students will work collaboratively in groups of three or four to track the conditions of a specific technology's development, paying close attention to the relationship between this particular technology and race. (Learning Goal 3) Students will complete this project in a three-tiered process:

- a. Establish the historical context that shapes the design of a technology. (Learning Goal 2)
- b. Examine how the object is (re)presented and how its material context influences its production and/or use.
- c. Assess what racial discriminations and biases are encoded into the technology.
- d. Create an alternative technological design that implements elements of "design justice" and is grounded on the thoughts and reflections prompted by the course. *Alternatively:* Provide an example of a technological creation you have found that might solve a social problem we have discussed in class. (Learning Goal 6)

The final submission of this project will be a 1600-2000 word group essay (or in some other format, with my prior approval). This final submission will be due at **11:59pm on tbd**, our course's final exam date.

GRADING STANDARDS

Specifications grading establishes transparent standards for what amount of work is necessary (as well as the standards for acceptable work) to earn each letter grade. I will use a version of the checklist below to keep track of your grade. You also need to track your grade by making your own version of this checklist and checking off the assignments as you complete them.

Participation	Assignments	
1. □ Reading	1. □ Week 1: Discussion Board Post (Personal Technology Reflection)	
2. • In-Class Engagement	2. Uweek 2: Discussion Board Post	

3. □ Co-leading Class Discussion	3. • Week 3: Discussion Board Post	
4. □ Sharing Final Project Idea	4. □ Week 4: Discussion Board Post	
5. • Peer feedback on your own and another group's final project idea	5. □ Week 5: Discussion Board Post	
	6. □ Week 6: Discussion Board Post	
	7. • Week 7: Discussion Board Post Pre-Writing about Project	
	8. © Week 8: Discussion Board Post Group Project	
	9. □ Week 9: Group Project Proposal	
	10. □ Week 10: Group Presentation	

To earn an A:

- Participation
 - Co-lead the discussion of *one* assigned reading.
 - Participate in your group's *final project idea* presentation during Week 8.
 - Attend and participate fully in *all class sessions*.
 - Provide *peer feedback* to all members of another group on their project.
 - Provide *peer feedback* to all other members of your group on your project.
- Assignments
 - Complete all **8 Discussion Posts**, including responding to 2 other students.
 - Complete the final *Group Project*. This includes every component of the group project: proposal, presentation, and project essay/creative outcome.
- Complete at least two of the following three options:
 - One additional Discussion Post responding to a non-assigned reading (500 words).
 - Additional work for your group project beyond expectations in the form of a prototype, reflective essay, plan for dissemination, or other approved addition (must be discussed with the instructor).
 - <u>Closing reflective essay</u> on how this course will change your approach to the intersection of race and technology going forward (must be discussed with the instructor (500 words)).

To earn a B:

- Participation
 - Co-lead the discussion of *one* assigned reading.

- Participate in your group's *final project idea* presentation during Week 8.
- Miss no more than <u>3 class sessions</u>. Attend and participate fully in all other class sessions.
- Provide *peer feedback* to all members of another group on their project.
- Provide *peer feedback* to all other members of your group on your project.

Assignments

- Complete any <u>6 Discussion Posts</u>, including responding to 2 other students.
- Complete the final *Group Project*. This includes every component of the group project: proposal, presentation, and project essay/creative outcome.

To earn a C:

- Participation
 - Miss no more than <u>4 class sessions</u>. Attend and participate fully in all other class sessions.
 - Provide *peer feedback* to all members of another group.
 - Provide *peer feedback* to all other members of your group.

Assignments

- Complete any <u>4 Discussion Posts</u>, including responding to 2 other students.
- Complete the final *Group Project*. This includes every component of the group project: proposal, presentation, and project essay/creative outcome.

To earn a D:

- Participation
 - Miss no more than <u>6 class sessions</u>. Attend and participate fully in all other class sessions.
 - Provide *peer feedback* to all members of another group on their project.
 - Provide *peer feedback* to all other members of your group on your project.

Assignments

- Complete any <u>3 Discussion Posts</u>, including responding to 2 other students.
- Complete the final *Group Project*. This includes every component of the group project: proposal, presentation, and project essay/creative outcome.

Note on half credit: Discussion Posts can receive half credit (for late posts or for not responding to two other students' posts). You should think of the Discussion Post requirement as a statement about the equivalent of full credit posts. For example, an A requires 8 full credit Discussion Posts (on time and with responses to other students). A C requires the equivalent of 4 full credit Discussion Posts. That could be 4 full credit posts, but it could also be 8 half credit posts, or 3 full credit and 2 half credit posts.

Course Materials

We will read excerpts from the following texts. Listed below:

- Shalini Kantayya, *Coded Bias*. Film PBS: 2020, 1 hr 25min.
- Legacy Russell, Glitch Feminism
 - Introduction, Chapters 4 9
- Safiya Noble, Algorithms of Oppression
 - Introduction, Chapter. 1
- Simone Brown, *Dark Matters*
 - Introduction, Chapters 3 -4
- Eric Stanley, Captive Genders
 - Introduction, Chapters "Maroon Abolitinists" & "Tools/Resources"
- Atanasoski, N., Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures
 - Introduction, Chapter 6
- Aimi Hamrai, Building Access
 - Introduction, Chapters 2 & 7
- Toby Beauchamp, Going Stealth
 - Introduction, Chapters 1 & 3
- "The Cloud is Material," Steven Gonzalez Monserrate in Michael & Joyce Huesemann, *Techno-Fix: Why Technology Won't Save us or the Environment.*
 - (Optional)

Student Hours for Class

You should expect to spend approximately 15 hours a week on this course, with the estimated times below:

A. lecture: 3.15 hours/wk
B. reading: 4 hours/wk
C. assignments: 4.5 hours/wk
D. review: 3.25 hours/wk

If you are finding that you are spending significantly more time on a component, please come talk to me so we can figure out an effective solution!

Course Schedule

Week	Theme / Core Questions	Readings/ Viewings	Engagement Activities & Assessments Due
1	Race as Code 6/26	• In-class Film: Coded Bias	Discussion Board: What personal experiences or media accounts demonstrate racial, gendered, or class inequalities?
2	Defining "Technology"	Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora. Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots and the Politics of Technological Futures. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2019.	Discussion Board How does the historical context shape the design of a technology used today (especially in ways that reproduce race, gender, etc?
3	Cyborg: Defining "Human" 7/1	• Glitch Feminism (Legacy Russell)	Discussion Board How do we understand the divide or lack of divide between technology and human beings? How do technologies change or complicate what it means to be "human"?
4	Algorithms: Automating Oppression 7/3	• Algorithms of Oppression (Safiya Noble)	Discussion Board How do algorithms & search engines reinforce the construct of race & identity? Can we identify alternative technological systems that consider inclusive algorithmic methods?
5	Designed Environments	Building Access (Aimi Hamrai)	Discussion Board How do technological environments define

	<mark>7/8</mark>	Fixed: The Science /Fiction of Human Enhancement	"the human?" Are there indigenous/natural systems that pre-date our contemporary notions of technology?
6	Ecologies of Technology 7/10	"Surrogate Human Effects of Technoliberalism"	Discussion Board Find an article about the negative effects of technology and the environment and write about why we don't see this aspect of technological harm.
7 & 8	Surveillance 7/15 7/17	 Captive Genders (Eric Stanley) Going Stealth (Toby Beauchamp) 	Discussion Board Identify an example of how surveillance technologies are utilized in the world (CCTV, drones, tracking cookies, etc). Write about the impact these have on our everyday lives.
9 & 10	Design Justice & Student Led Presentation 7/22 7/24	 Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need (READER) Student Led Presentations 	Group Project In preparation for your final projects, explain how the readings help you think about how you might re-design a particular technology.

Collaboration & Academic Integrity

All members of the UCSC community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others in order to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Following assignment rules
- Using only permitted materials during an assignment

- Viewing assignment materials only when permitted by your instructor
- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information
- Submitting your own original work

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including use of Internet material without proper citation
- Submitting your own work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.
- 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 <u>Academic Misconduct page</u> at the <u>Division of Undergraduate Education</u>.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying (entirely or in part) the wording used in another source. It is possible to plagiarize a source even if you cite it if you copy the wording.
- Claiming an idea as your own that you obtained from a source (including someone else)

In general, if you are taking a great deal from another source, consider whether you should be quoting the source directly. And if your response is largely quotation or if the most important ideas are quoted, you should think seriously about whether your response is sufficiently original.

Academic integrity and collaboration: This is a course that prizes collaborative exploration of difficult and contested topic areas. This occurs both formally, through collaborative assignments, and informally, through classroom and online discussions (as well as your individual conversations with your classmates). Collaborative exploration leads to some of the thorniest areas in academic integrity. With that said here are some guidelines:

- For all of your responses, include a brief collaboration statement, crediting *everyone* you interacted with for the assignment (instructors, classmates, friends, family, etc.), and explaining what they contributed to your contribution.
- For group work, mention every person in your group and detail precisely what they contributed to
- When talking with classmates on individual assignments, take your own notes, and talk generally about ideas, not about organization or wording. This helps to ensure that you will put ideas in your own words. Remember to credit people in your collaboration statement.

Difficult Conversations

In our in-class and online discussions and dialogues, we will have the opportunity to explore challenging, high-stakes issues and increase our understanding of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy. We sometimes will make mistakes

in our speaking and our listening. Sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. We will always need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our classroom interactions will be for us to increase our facility with difficult conversations that arise inside issues of social justice, politics, economics, morality, religion, and other issues where reasonable people often hold diverse perspectives. This effort will ultimately deepen our understanding and allow us to make the most of being in a community with people of many backgrounds, experiences, and positions.

Content Advisory

This course examines some texts, images, and videos that contain descriptions of violence and/or scenes depicting violence. I will do my best to provide individual warnings on the syllabus for course materials and in presentation slides for class content that are particularly sensitive. My hope is that these notifications will help your engagement by allowing you to prepare to work through challenging material. I encourage you to do what you need to care for yourself. If taking care of yourself means that you need to step outside during class, either for a short time or for the rest of the class, you may do so without academic penalty. If you do leave the class for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

Accessibility

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please affiliate with the DRC. I encourage all students to benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu. For students already affiliated, make sure that you have requested Academic Access Letters, where you intend to use accommodations. You can also request to meet privately with me during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible. I would like us to discuss how we can implement your accommodations in this course to ensure your access and full engagement in this course.

Intellectual Property

The materials in this course are the intellectual property of their creators. As a student, you have access to many of the materials in the course for the purpose of learning, engaging with your peers in the course, completing assignments, and so on. You have a moral and legal obligation to respect the rights of others by only using course materials for purposes associated with the course. For instance, you are not permitted to share, upload, stream, sell, republish, share the login information for, or otherwise disseminate any of the course materials, such as: video and audio files, assignment prompts, slides, notes, syllabus, simulations, datasets, discussion threads. Conversely, any materials created solely by you (for example, your videos, essays, images, audio files, annotations, notes) are your intellectual property and you may use them as you wish.

Religious Accommodation

UC Santa Cruz welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation without penalty. You should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your instructor early in the term. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students office.

All-gender restrooms

UC Santa Cruz is committed to the well-being of all students and cares about all students feeling safe and welcome, regardless of their gender identity, expression, and/or embodiment. The <u>Lionel Cantú Queer Center</u> has worked with students and campus staff to create more safe and accessible restrooms for transgender and genderqueer students, staff, faculty, alumni, and UCSC visitors. A <u>complete list of all-gender restrooms</u> on campus was compiled and is maintained by the Cantú Queer Center.

Principles of Community

University of California, Santa Cruz expressly prohibits students from engaging in conduct constituting unlawful discrimination, harassment or bias. I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and supports inclusivity. We need to work together to build this community of learning. I ask all members of this class to:

- be open to and interested in the views of others
- consider the possibility that your views may change over the course of the term
- be aware that this course asks you to reconsider some "common sense" notions you may hold
- honor the unique life experiences of your colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
- listen to each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- ground your comments in the texts we are studying. Refer frequently to the texts and make them the focus of your questions, comments, and arguments. This is the single most effective way to ensure respectful discussion and to create a space where we are all learning together.

Please see more here.

TITLE IX/CARE Advisory

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault,

domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. This reporting responsibility also applies to course TAs and tutors (as well to all UCSC employees who are not designated as "confidential" employees, which is a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through <u>CARE</u>. Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu.

In addition to CARE, these resources are available to you:

- If you need help figuring out what resources you or someone else might need, visit the <u>Sexual Violence Prevention & Response (SAFE) website</u>, which provides information and resources for different situations.
- <u>Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)</u> can provide confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
- You can also report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence directly to the University's <u>Title IX Office</u>, by calling (831) 459-2462 or by using their <u>online reporting tool</u>.
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Police Department, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
- For emergencies, call 911.

Report an incident of hate or bias

The University of California, Santa Cruz is committed to maintaining an objective, civil, diverse and supportive community, free of coercion, bias, hate, intimidation, dehumanization or exploitation. The Hate/Bias Response Team is a group of administrators who support and guide students seeking assistance in determining how to handle a bias incident involving another student, a staff member, or a faculty member. To report an incident of hate or bias, please use the following form: Hate/Bias Report Form.

Student Services

Counseling and Psychological Services

Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may impact their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including

individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Student Success and Engagement Hub

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

Tutoring and Learning Support

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

Slug Support Program

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.

To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the <u>Dean of Students</u> Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at <u>deanofstudents@ucsc.edu</u>.

Slug Help/<u>Technology</u>

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts

For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, Click here to go to UCSC's <u>Emergency Services</u> page. Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.