Discussion led by Dr. Jolie A. Sheffer, Associate Professor of English and American Culture Studies, and Director of the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society at Bowling Green State University. She teaches and writes on race, ethnicity, and gender in nineteenth and twentieth-century American literature and popular culture. She is the author of The Romance of Race: Incest, Miscegenation, and Multiculturalism in the United States, 1880-1930 (Rutgers University Press, 2013) and the forthcoming Understanding Karen Tei Yamashita (University of South Carolina Press, 2020). Contact her at jsheffe@bgsu.edu.

AGENDA

I. Ground Rules for Discussion

II. Introductions

III. Key Terms

IV. Discussion Questions

V. Further Reading
I. **GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION**

1. **Show respect** for others as individuals by learning and using their preferred names and pronouns.

2. **Our conversation is confidential.** We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.

3. **Our primary commitment is to learn from each other.** We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. Consider the difference between responding to **express yourself** and responding to **communicate an idea** to people who may have different preconceptions than yours. We acknowledge differences among us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We value these very differences for helping us to learn from each other.

4. **Trust that people are doing the best they can and respond with generosity.** Respond to what is said without assuming the motivation of the speaker. Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said. Comments (such as asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker. You can challenge, disagree with, or criticize the **idea** and not the **person**.

5. **Be courteous.** Do not interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking. Be aware of messages communicated with body language, as well as words.

6. **Support your statements.** Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.

7. **Do not to generalize about groups (even groups with which you identify) and do not ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.**

8. **Step Up, Step Back.** Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. Consider who gets left out, who is marginalized, under-represented, or erased by particular claims. On the other hand, if you think something is missing from the conversation, don’t wait for someone else to say it.

9. **Speak your discomfort.** If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, don’t leave it for someone else to have to respond to it.

10. **Recognize that we are all still learning.** Be willing to change your perspective, and make space for others to do the same.

11. **Be aware of different communication styles**—the ways we communicate differently based on our backgrounds and current contexts—and look for ways to expand your communication tool kits.

12. Know that **it is okay to be emotional** about issues and to name those emotions as we discuss difficult subjects.

*Adapted for use from the Center for Research on Language and Teaching, University of Michigan (http://www.crlt.umich.edu/node/58410) and the LSA Inclusive Teaching Initiative, University of Michigan (http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/).*
II. INTRODUCTIONS

- Who are you?
- Why are you here today?
- What question(s) do you hope to have answered?

III. KEY TERMS & CONCEPTS

Affirmative Action (p. 99)
Cultural Appropriation (142)
Intersectionality (70)
Microaggressions (162)
Model Minority Myth (189)
Privilege (53)
Race (biology/social construction/effects)
Racism (individual acts vs. institutions/systems)
School-to-Prison Pipeline (121)
Tone Policing (47)

IV. POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the difference between terms like “black” and “African American”?
Is everyone and everything racist?
If I can’t see it, how do I know racism exists in my community?
What can I do about racism and inequality?
What is the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation?
How is the model minority myth negative?
What’s the difference between terms like diversity, equality, equity, inclusion, and access?
V. FURTHER READING


Ava Duvernay, *The 13th* [documentary film available on Netflix]


