

## Bioethics Book Club

Em Rabelais, PhD, MBE  
Assistant Professor  
University of Illinois at Chicago College of Nursing  
rabelais [at] uic [dot] edu

**Purpose:** Bioethics is only helpful when applied to real-world environments; our real-world environments include health professions and research education and practice. The Bioethics Book Club at UIC Nursing, part of Dr. Rabelais's scholarship dissemination, will provide an opportunity for attendees, through readings and discussion, to gain deeper understandings of sociopolitical concerns that affects all of us: students, staff, faculty, administration, researchers, clinicians, and the beneficiaries of our clinical practice and research endeavors.

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### 2019-2020 Theme *Racism and Whiteness*

This year's theme is *Racism and Whiteness*. Racism is racial discrimination in any and all aspects of life and society and relies upon the power structures of white supremacy. Whiteness is "a category of identity that is most useful when its very existence is denied"<sup>1</sup> and it is more than just about White racial identity. Centered whiteness is also about what is acceptable in being White and includes rules about how one looks, speaks, acts, and behaves. It defines what is normative in, for example, race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sexuality, able-bodiedness, geographic origin, body size and shape, religion, and our professionalisms regulating hair, dress codes, and (visible) body modification. Centered whiteness also relies upon the power structures of white supremacy.

In this series we will find out where our *structural racism* came from and how it has been enforced. We'll find out what we can do to resist structural racism; doing so will be uncomfortable because we need to acknowledge and own our relationships to structures that are racist. This is the first step. The next is to resist, bypass, usurp, break down, and rebuild those structures. This series will help guide you through these steps, with support and guidance where needed. The process isn't easy, but it is necessary and we can do it together.

### 2019-2020 Schedule

Initial links are to Goodreads entries. I also have links to UIC and Chicago Public Library. These books are also available from your local and independent bookseller.

#### 1. Late September 2019:

**Carol Anderson's** [White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide](#) (2016)

- a. *White Rage* provides an easy to understand outline of how the US arrived to its present location regarding structural racism. It also does a great job explaining how (we) white folks both historically and through the author's present in 2016 (with an afterward written in 2017) created and upheld racist law, policy, and social norms while reinforcing that all

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Eric Dyson, "Forward: Keyser Söze, Beyoncé, and the witness protection program," in *White fragility: Why it's so hard to talk to white people about racism*, Robin DiAngelo (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).

- folks learn these values as normal.
- b. Why are we reading this first?
    - i. This text solidifies the reader's understanding of structural racism and does a good job to hone the focus to structural rather than individual. While we all do individually play a part, we are driven and organized by structures.
    - ii. Starting with this text helps most folks to get on board with: *structural racial oppression was and is purposefully established and upheld by white folks.*
    - iii. The text also sets folks up for the mindset: *okay, I better understand what this country has done and how it uses me to play a role; now what can I do?*
  - c. Availability:
    - i. UIC Library: [one copy in Daley Library](#), a second will be purchased for the Health Science Library, [1 copy of the ebook is available](#), and other copies available [from this link](#) and this [link via iShare](#)
    - ii. Chicago Public Library as [Paperback](#) and [ebook](#)
      1. Use [Libby](#) to search your public library, if different.

**October 4, 2019:** "Decolonize Your Syllabus" workshops by Dr. Yvette DeChavez

10a-12p: 'usual' workshop on the East Campus (SSB)

2p-4p: "Decolonize Your Syllabus" for disciplines, such as nursing, dominated by white women (CON)

Details to follow!

2. November 2019:

**Robin DiAngelo's** [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) (Summer 2018)

- a. This text puts a pause on the "now what can I do?" to let white folks know that there's something else they need to understand before "taking action."
- b. Why are we reading this second?
  - i. This text starts with a brief review of structural racism. Its focus is to make plain what white folks do that disrupts any action against structural racism, even without realizing/intending it.
  - ii. *White Fragility* discusses the positionality of white feelings and how white folks's feelings, used as fodder for tone and content policing, disrupts meaningful conversations about structural racism and centered whiteness.
- c. The book ends with a small "what you can do" chapter, but our next text for this will do a better job with that question (see #3).
- d. Availability
  - i. UIC Library: available as an [ebook to UIC folks here through this link](#) that allows multiple readers at a time.
  - ii. Chicago Public Library as [Paperback](#) and [ebook](#) and [audiobook](#)
    1. Use [Libby](#) to search your public library, if different.

3. Late January or early February 2020

**Ijeoma Oluo's** [So You Want to Talk About Race](#) (January 2018)

- a. This text came from Oluo's 2017 article directed to white folks who wanted to take action post-2016 election.
- b. Why is this the third text?
  - i. This is the "what you can do" text.
  - ii. The content here breaks down information in texts 1 and 2 and includes bullet-

- point explanations and tips for how to address race as a white ally.
- iii. This text gives folks a vocabulary for how to talk about race, racism, and whiteness; not having this vocabulary is a barrier to meaningful discussion.
- c. Availability:
    - i. UIC Library: [one copy in Daley Library](#), an additional copy has been purchased, and more are available [via iShare](#)
    - ii. Chicago Public Library as [paperback](#) and [ebook](#) and [audiobook](#)
      1. Use [Libby](#) to search your public library, if different.
  - d. Additional reading:
    - i. Robin DiAngelo. 16 Jan 2019. "[White people assume niceness is the answer to racial inequality. It's not.](#)" *The Guardian*.
    - ii. This is an important follow-up from DiAngelo: privileging "niceness" in discussions about racism is not helpful; it is in fact harmful. It is harmful because white folks see niceness as the approach to racial inequities, where "people of color [and anyone else naming these issues] are required to maintain white comfort in order to survive."
4. April 2020
    - a. Readings TBD will focus on *Racism and Whiteness* in nursing. How has and does this affect us: teaching, learning, establishing curricula and policy, health practice, and health research?

I would love to have an additional meeting to discuss [Eve Ewing's 1919](#), poems based on texts about the "Red Summer", Chicago's Race Riots in 1919. Ideally this would sit between books 1 and 2, but will probably be easier to have in March 2020. With sufficient interest, I'd be happy to have this discussion at any time.

### Learning Objectives

Attendees will have the opportunity to:

- Understand the roles that systems of oppression, such as centered whiteness, play in the creation of ethical problems—and thus are ethical problems themselves.
- Identify centered whiteness and its manifestations in health professions and research education and practice.
- Recognize approaches to and vocabulary about how to discuss centered whiteness, structural racism, and white fragility.
- Explain how whiteness in nursing contributes to poor patient and community outcomes.
- Model and present creation of health educational spaces for discussions about the roles of racial and ethnic identity in communication, health, and well-being.

### Definitions

- *Centered whiteness* defines what is normal about: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, body size and shape, behavior, interpersonal interactions, word choice and all communication, xenophobia, privileging Christianity, and professionalisms that regulate hair, dress codes, and (visible) body modification. Centered whiteness relies upon the power structures of white supremacy.

- *Colonialism* uses the fuel of white supremacy. Its three key characteristics include taking possession of land by force, extermination of indigenous populations, and the enslavement and chattelization of black persons.
- *Race* is a product of racism, a sociopolitical construct with religious and political origins—stemming from white supremacy and colonialism—that has been and is used to influence power and the distribution of resources. Race is not biologic, genetic, or biogeographic.
- *Racism*, explicit and otherwise, is a large component of colonialism and was extant in America at its incorporation in the 1700s. It is racial discrimination in any and all aspects of life and relies upon the power structures of white supremacy.
- *Whiteness* prioritizes the knowledge of those in positions of power and privileges their knowledge and position over that of others. Whiteness relies upon the power structures of white supremacy.
- *White Supremacy* is not just Charlottesville. White supremacy established racial categories, and thus racism. White supremacy drove colonialism. White supremacy is the fabric upon which the United States was established and continues to function. White supremacy teaches all of us, every day, that the White race is superior to any other and that all norms for White people are superior to all others.

### References

- Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. Paperback ed. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
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- . "White People Assume Niceness Is the Answer to Racial Inequality. It's Not." *The Guardian*, January 16 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/16/racial-inequality-niceness-white-people>.
- Dyson, Michael Eric. "Forward: Keyser Söze, Beyoncé, and the Witness Protection Program." Chap. Forward In *White fragility: Why it's so hard to talk to white people about racism*, by Robin DiAngelo, ix-xii. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.
- Ewing, Eve L. *1919*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2019.
- Oluo, Ijeoma. *So You Want to Talk About Race*. First ed. New York, NY: Seal Press, 2018.

Bioethics. Bioethical concerns are probably as old as medical practice. Technological advancements in the life sciences, such as genome editing, pose new and unprecedented ethical questions that humanity will have to deal with. Bioethics is a serious business, in every sense of the word. A sub-domain of philosophy which deals with issues concerning life and health, it has to arbitrate not only over practical matters regarding patient care and medical experiments, but also over the very ontology of "life": its manufacturing, patenting and redefinition in and by the biotech industry. Since bioethics functions as a node in the complex nexus of social, political and economic forces, it is perhaps not surprising that