

Sociology 134: How Race & Ethnicity Shape American Social Life Spring 2008

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"We must continually remind students in the classroom that expression of different opinions and dissenting ideas affirms the intellectual process. We should forcefully explain that our role is not to teach them to think as we do but rather to teach them, by example, the importance of taking a stance that is rooted in rigorous engagement with the full range of ideas about a topic."
– bell hooks

"That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way."
– Doris Lessing

Course Description

This class provides a basic sociological understanding of how race relations shape social life in the United States. A sociological approach includes considering race and ethnicity as social constructs that permeate all social life, are entrenched in social structures and institutions, and shift and mutate over time and place, though often in ways that reproduce existing patterns of power relations. More concretely, we will attempt to understand the ways in which race and ethnicity continually shape public policy and our experience of the world and ourselves.

At times this class deals with issues that are quite controversial. Lively and productive discussion is the goal. It is critical to remember that everyone is living with a race and ethnicity (as well as a sex, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, nationality, etc.), that each individual has a relevant and vital perspective, and that a well-rounded understanding of the world cannot be achieved without the participation of all perspectives. You are expected to think critically about the ideas and issues raised in class, and to contribute arguments and viewpoints. Come with an open mind, respect the different experiences of others, and be prepared to rethink your own assumptions about racial and ethnic relations.

Textbook/Readings

There is one required course textbook:

Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity (Third Edition) by Charles A. Gallagher

Students will also need to purchase ONE of the following books:

On the Rez, by Ian Frazier

The Racist Mind: Portraits of American Neo-Nazis and Klansmen, by Raphael S. Ezekiel

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, by Anne Fadiman
Coyotes: A Journey Through the Secret World of America's Illegal Aliens, by Ted Conover
Ain't No Making It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-income Neighborhood (2004 edition,) by Jay MacLeod
Black Like Me, by John Howard Griffin

All books may be purchased from A Room of One's Own Bookstore, located at 307 West Johnson Street (at the intersection of State and Johnson.)

In addition to the course books, there are assigned readings which can be found on the course Learn@UW website.

The readings assigned for each week are noted in the syllabus; you are responsible for making sure you have completed all necessary readings. I expect you to have completed the readings before coming to class on the day of the week they are listed.

Tests and Assignments

Tests

- There will be three in-class full period tests on material covered in the lectures and readings. Tests will be comprehensive and will evaluate both whether or not you have completed readings/paid attention in lecture AND whether or not you understand the major theoretical concepts covered in the material.
- Tests will be a mix of short answer, fill in the blank, and essay questions. Students will be given a list of possible questions, from which the test essay questions will be drawn, before each test.
Tests together will comprise 75 percent of your final grade.

Final Paper

In addition to the tests, you will be asked to write a 5-6 page paper on ONE of the books from the supplemental reading list above. The paper will ask you to use concepts, ideas, or data covered in class lectures and readings and to compare them to concepts/ideas covered in the supplemental book. **The due date for the paper will be class 2, week 14 (April 23 and 24.)** We will spend time in class talking about the paper closer to the due date.

Extra Credit

- Yep, there will be extra credit options scattered throughout the course. Occasionally I will pose a question in lecture and invite you to write a short essay response to that question. For each 1-2 page essay that you turn in by the stated deadline, you will receive up to one extra-credit point (it doesn't sound like much, but since the class point total is only 100, it really can add up.)
- Extra credit essays will be "graded" on a zero to one scale depending on how well thought-out and well written they are (just like a paper.) A poorly organized essay, an essay that shows little thought or work, or an essay that shows you didn't bother to proofread or edit (meaning lots of spelling and grammatical errors) could receive no points at all.

EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE DUE, IN CLASS, ON THE NEXT CLASS DAY BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF LECTURE. Extra Credits sent by email will not be accepted. I also will not accept Extra Credit papers from students who show up for class late and attempt to hand them in after lecture has begun.

Grades:

Your grade in this course is made up of the following:

3 Tests (25 points each)= 75 points

1 paper (25 points)= 25 points

Total 100 points (plus extra credit)

Distribution:

93– 100 = A

88 – 92 = AB

83 – 87 = B

78 – 82 = BC

70 – 77 = C

60 – 69 = D

Under 60 = F

Yes, I reserve the right to shift the distro, but I promise it won't be to lower anyone's grade. Yep, I really promise. ☺

Expectations

Being Successful in this Class

This course has a tendency to attract a motley crew of students with widely diverse academic backgrounds, from freshmen to seniors. Also, and this pertains largely but not exclusively to those who are not Sociology majors, there is typically a wide array of reasons why students enroll in it (including motives that are personal, social, academic, ideological, professional, therapeutic, attitude-reconfirming, truth-seeking, humanitarian, and/or those of social relevance, etc.).

Therefore, it seems desirable to lay down a few ground-rules, and in a sense, an encouragement:

- Be here. This entails not simply showing your face in the classroom, but attending the entirety of class, listening, and participating as could be reasonably expected. If you have to be late, the least you can do is be sweaty and out of breath when you get here. Once you're here, please don't disrupt class. I expect that you will not in any way make class less pleasant for anyone else by making it harder for her/him to hear or to concentrate. This includes stuff such as talking to others, loudly slurping a Jamba Juice, or refusing to participate in group activities.
- Pay attention. This is a basic respect issue. You can't easily earn respect if you show up and sleep, read the paper, do Sudoku, play Spyder on your laptop, listen to your iPod, send text messages, or do other reading. I will give you respect and do my best; all I ask is that you do that same.
- Know that your participation is welcome. Learning is a collective enterprise. I encourage student reactions and responses during lecture, and am open to being interrupted with questions and comments. There will be times when you will disagree with another student or with me. That is just fine. Speak up! You're not graded on how brilliant your commentary is, so this should make you feel somewhat freer to speak your mind.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All work that you submit must be your own and must have been done for this class. This means no recycling of old papers (yours or anyone else's)

and ABSOLUTELY no plagiarism. Plagiarism includes more than just buying entire papers online, it also includes cutting and pasting chunks of text from other sources and presenting it as your own writing. Students will be asked to submit final papers in both hard and electronic form so that all work can be checked against plagiarism detection software. Extra Credit assignments will also be checked for plagiarism. All incidences of plagiarism, whether in the final paper or in extra credit assignments, will be reported to your Dean and will result in a lowered or failing grade for the course.

If You Need Help

Do not hesitate to contact me if you need assistance. If you cannot meet with me during office hours, we can make an appointment to meet at another time. In addition, you are welcome to stop by my office without an appointment. If I cannot talk at that time, I will let you know. The key to success is to head off problems before they turn into emergencies. I'm here to help.

If you need accommodations to succeed in this course, let me know at the beginning of the semester, and provide me with the relevant documents, such as a McBurney VISA, so we can get everything squared away for you as soon as possible.

Semester Schedule:

Week 1. (January 23/24)

Class 1: To Drop or not to drop?

Week 2. (Jan 28-31)

Class 1: Is Race Real?

Read: "How our skins got their color" by Harris **(RCL)**

"Does Race Exist: An Antagonist's Perspective" by Brace

"Seeking Ancestry in DNA Ties Uncovered by Tests" by Harmon

"Introduction: The Problem, Simply Stated" from *The Race Myth* by Graves

Class 2: Theories of Race

Read: "Racial Formations" by Omi and Winant **(RCL)**

"Theoretical Perspectives in Race and Ethnic Relations" by Feagin and Feagin **(RCL)**

Week 3 (Feb 4-7)

Class 1: Theories of Race, cont...

Read: "Racialized Social System Approach to Racism" by Bonilla-Silva **(RCL)**

"Placing Race in Context" by Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman **(RCL)**

Class 2: Fight for the White: who gets to be "white" and how has this changed over time?

Read: "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy" by Lipsitz **(RCL)**

"How Jews Became White Folks" by Brodtkin

"Anglo Saxons and Others, 1840-1924" from *Whiteness of a Different Color* by Jacobson

"Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City" by Waters **(RCL)**

Week 4 (Feb 11-14)

Class 1: Slavery and the Creation of the Color line

Read: *Killing the Black Body*, "Intro and Chapter 1" by Roberts

Class 2: Slavery and the question of reparations
Read: "The Case for Slavery Reparations" by Williams

Week 5 (Feb 18-21)

Class 1: The Eugenics Movement
Read: *Killing the Black Body*, "Chapter 2" by Roberts

Class 2: Reconstruction and Lynching
Read: Selections from *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century South* by Hodes

Week 6 (Feb 25-28)

Class 1: Jim Crow

Class 2: The Civil Rights Movement

Week 7 (March 3-6)

Class 1: **FIRST TEST**

Class 2: Crossing the Color-line: Interracial Marriage
Read: "Beyond Black and White: Remaking Race in America" by Lee and Bean
"Captain Kirk Kisses Lieutenant Uhura" by Kennedy
"Discovering Racial Borders" by Dalmage
"The Changing Face of America" by Wu
"Ten Truths of Interracial Marriage" by Root (**All in RCL**)

Week 8 (March 10-13)

Class 1: The White Supremacist Movement
Read: "Race Prejudice as a sense of group position" by Blumer (**RCL**)
"Discrimination and the American Creed" by Merton (**RCL**)

Class 2: The Native American Genocide
Read: Selections from *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by Loewen
"Civilize them with a Stick" from *Lakota Woman* by Crow Dog

Week 9 (March 17-21)
SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (March 24-27)

Class 1: Native Americans and the team logo controversy
Read: "Winnebagos, Cherokee's, Apaches, and Dakotas: The Persistence of Stereotyping of American Indians in American Advertising Brands." By Merskin (**RCL**)
"A Dutch Soccer Riddle" (*NY Times*, 3/28/2005) by Smith

Class 2: Rich Nation/Poor Nation
Read: Selections from *Harvest of Empire* by Gonzales

Week 11 (March 31-April 3)

Class 1: Immigration
Read: "Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities" by Espiritu (**RCL**)

"The Victimization of Asians in America" by Okihiro
"The Melting Pot and the Color Line" by Steinberg **(RCL)**
"The Changing Face of America: Immigration, Race/Ethnicity and Social Mobility" by Zhou **(RCL)**

Class 2: Immigration, cont. (with an Emphasis on Arabs/Middle Easterners in America)

Read: "Turning in for Registration" by Nguyen
"The Arab Immigrant Experience" by Suleiman **(RCL)**
"Race and Civil Rights Pre-September 11, 2001: The Targeting of Arabs and Muslims" by Akram and Johnson **(RCL)**

Week 12 (April 7-10)

Class 1: **SECOND TEST**

Class 2: Media and Stereotyping

Read: "Broadcast News Portrayal of Minorities: Accuracy in Reporting" by Klein and Naccarato **(RCL)**
"Distorted Reality: Hispanic Characters in TV Entertainment" by Lichter and Amundson **(RCL)**
"Sport in America: The New Racial Stereotype" by Lapchick **(RCL)**

Week 13 (April 14-17)

Class 1: Poverty (The Case of Hurricane Katrina)

Read: TBA

Class 2: Poverty, cont...

Read: "An Overview of Trends in Social and Economic Well-Being..." by Blank **(RCL)**
"The Color of Health in the United States" by Williams and Collins **(RCL)**

Week 14 (April 21-24)

Class 1: Education

Read: "Savage Inequalities" by Kozol **(RCL)**
Additional excerpts from *Savage Inequalities*
"Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Conditions in US Metro Areas" by Massey **(RCL)**

Class 2: Affirmative Action

PAPERS DUE!!

Read: "Getting in" by Gladwell
"Affirmative Action" by Jost
"Judges in U. of Michigan Case Skirted the Thorniest Issues" by Skrentny

Week 15 (April 28- May 1)

Class 1: Discrimination

Read: "The Mark of a Criminal Record" by Pager **(RCL)**
"We'd love to hire them but..." by Neckerman and Kirschenman **(RCL)**
"Kristin v. Aisha...What's in a name and how it affects getting a job" **(RCL)**
"The Problem: Discrimination" by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Class 2: Imprisonment and Law Enforcement

Read: No Equal Justice: The Color of Punishment by Cole **(RCL)**

“...and the Poor Get Prison” by Reiman **(RCL)**

Week 16 (May 5-8)

Class 1: Race and Sexuality

Read: "The Yellow Fever Pages" by Eng

“Selling Hot Black Pussy” by hooks

Selections from *Mail Order Bride* by Kalesniko

Class 2: Final Class

TEST THREE

NO Cumulative Final!!! (Ignore the Final Exam date posted on the university timetable)