

Sociology 134  
Fall Semester 2010  
Lectures: T/Th, 11:00-12:15  
Classroom: Social Science 6210  
Office Hours: Th, 10:00-11:00

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## American Racial and Ethnic Minorities

*Overview of the Course:* This course is an introduction to the sociological study of the major racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S., including African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians. But it also an introduction to the sociological study of whites and whiteness in America. The course examines key concepts in the study of race and ethnicity, such as the social construction of race and ethnicity, prejudice, and discrimination. It reviews the historical experiences of various racial and ethnic groups, and it addresses important contemporary issues such as racial politics, economic and employment inequality, residential segregation, educational inequality, criminal justice, whiteness and the arts, associational life, and intimate life. Although these issues are usually taught separately by group, this course deliberately covers these issues by topic rather than by group in order to see how the concepts intersect across groups.

*Readings:* The sole text for this course is *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America*, by Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. It can be purchased at Rainbow Bookstore (426 W. Gilman St.) and is on reserve at College Library. All videos shown in class can also be obtained on three-hour reserve at College Library.

*Grading Policy:* Eighty percent of your final course grade will depend on a series of four equally weighted in-class examinations. (Each examination will count for 20% of your final course grade.) The examinations will all be multiple-choice. All examinations will be non-cumulative—that is, focused exclusively on the material covered since the last examination. By “material covered,” I mean everything in the reading assignments as well as everything covered in lectures, sections, and videos. *Please note: no make-ups for these examinations will ever be allowed—so please don’t bother to ask—with the sole exceptions being personal illness and family emergency.* The final 20% of your course grade will be determined by your participation in sections. TAs will spell out their policies for grading during their initial section meetings. In general, the grading of section participation will be roughly comparable across sections and TAs, for the sake of overall fairness.

*Grading Scale:* Final grades will be on a 250-point scale (50 points for each examination and another 50 points for the section grade) curved at the end of the semester to approximate the following grade distribution (with Fs reserved generally for plagiarism): 15% = A, 20% = AB, 25% = B, 20% = BC, 15% = C, 5% = D. General results for each examination will be announced so that students always know approximately where they stand.

*Posting of Lecture Notes and Slides:* Lecture notes will not be posted. If a student misses a lecture or section, he or she must obtain notes from a classmate—not the professor or the TAs. Nor will

slides shown in class be distributed, although, in light of this policy, examination questions will not require that a student memorize specific facts or figures from the slides, only that he or she understand and remember the basic points.

*Attendance Policy:* Attendance all the way through each class meeting is required. I insist on this policy because I have found that, whenever I do not require it, students trickle out of the classroom one by one during the final several minutes, and they do so in a way that destroys our collective focus. I wish to discourage that as much as possible. Leaving before the end of class will be noticed by your TAs—I am instructing them to take careful note of it—and will absolutely result in your section grade (and therefore perhaps also your final grade) being lowered.

*On the Use of Laptops and Other Electronic Devices in Class:* I realize this will be an unpopular policy, but laptops and other electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, etc.) cannot ever be used in class (i.e., lecture), unless with special permission of the instructor, which will be granted only rarely. I am instructing your TAs to take note of this when determining your section grade. Whether or not laptops can be used during sections is up to each TA.

*Academic Misconduct (Cheating):* Students who cheat or attempt to cheat during an examination will automatically receive an F for that examination. (Use of electronic devices for any purpose during an examination will be considered cheating.) In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the Dean of the student's college as well as to the Dean of Students so that the latter may decide whether further disciplinary action is needed. A clear definition of plagiarism as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at the Dean of Students website: <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>. Knowledge of these rules is each student's responsibility, and lack of familiarity with the rules does not excuse misconduct.

*Special Needs:* Students with disabilities should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center and provide me with a hardcopy of their VISA at the beginning of the semester.

*Email Policy:* Due to the large size of this class, all emails should be addressed to TAs. If it is early in the semester and you do not have a TA yet, you should send your email to any one of the other TAs. The TAs and their email addresses are: Courtney Luedke ([cluedke@wisc.edu](mailto:cluedke@wisc.edu)); Molly Noble ([mollysociology@gmail.com](mailto:mollysociology@gmail.com)); Charity Schmidt ([charitysociology@gmail.com](mailto:charitysociology@gmail.com)); and Daniel Suarez ([TAdanielsuarez@gmail.com](mailto:TAdanielsuarez@gmail.com)). *Please note: I will only answer emails passed on to me by one of the TAs.* The sole exceptions to this rule should be instances when there is some conflict with a TA or when there is some other matter that can be taken up exclusively by me.

*Office Hours Policy:* Same as email policy (see above). If you have a question that requires an office hour visit, please first see your TA (or any one of the other TAs) during their office hours.

*Biographical Information About Your Instructor:* In case you might be interested to learn more about me, I have included extensive biographical information on my personal website, which is located at <http://ssc.wisc.edu/~emirbaye/>.

Course Syllabus  
(Always Subject to Change)

September 2: No reading. (Introduction; course organization; review of the syllabus.)

September 7 & 9: Preface, Ch. 1.

September 14: Screening of “A Class Divided.”

September 16 & 21: Ch. 2.

September 23: Examination #1.

September 28 & 30: Ch. 3. (September 28 is part lecture, part screening of “A Time for Justice.”)

October 5 & 7: Ch. 4.

October 12 & 14: Ch. 5.

October 19: Examination #2. (This examination is noncumulative.)

October 21 & 26: Ch. 6.

October 28: Screening of “Lost in Translation.”

November 2 & 4: Ch. 7.

November 9: Screening of “Tulia, Texas.”

November 11 & 16: Ch. 8.

November 18: Examination #3. (This examination is noncumulative.)

November 23: Screening of “Hip Hop”; start reading Ch. 9. (No class on November 25.)

November 30: Ch. 9.

December 2 & 7: Ch. 10.

December 9: Ch. 11.

December 14: Examination #4. (This examination is noncumulative.)