

Sociology 220: Ethnic Movements in the US

Spring ~~Fall~~ 2011

4:00-5:15 Tuesday & Thursday

5206 Sewell Social Science

Course Web Page: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~oliver/soc220/SOC220.HTM>

Lecture notes and links to resources are posted on the web page

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Office hours & Contacting Me:

Email: Oliver@ssc.wisc.edu I am easy to reach by email and will check email every evening, if not more often. This is an excellent way to get a quick question answered or to tell me about a problem. This is also an excellent way to ask for more detailed help finding sources for a paper topic, as it lets me do a little research and then get back to you.

Office hours: I will be available immediately after almost all classes to answer questions and address concerns that can be dealt with quickly. I will also generally be in my office 11-12 and 1:30-3 Thursday. Appointments are best if you have something serious to discuss. I am NOT available for any serious discussion in the 30 minutes before class.

NOTE: There are make-up procedures for illness as explained below. Do not come to class if you are ill.

This course will use a social movement perspective to discuss ethnic movements and conflict in the United States. Questions we will discuss include: (1) When do groups adopt collective rather than individual strategies for improving their status? (2) When and how are ethnic identities constructed? How and when do people come to see a common identity despite differences within the group? (3) How do economic and political conditions affect life conditions and shape the possibilities for collective action? (4) What are the interests and issues involved in inter-group conflict? (5) How does the history of inter-group relations affect the present? Substantively, most of our emphasis will be on African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. Lectures and supplementary articles will give information about other Hispanic groups, Jews, European immigrant groups, and nativist/racist movements among European Americans. We seek to understand current issues and conflicts by locating them in their historical and political/economic context. We will pay close attention to the resource mobilization and political opportunity questions: who controls the situation, what resources and capacities do aggrieved groups have to affect the situation? We will also give explicit attention to the ways in which different groups have different perspectives and interests. Some of the time we will be focusing on giving the facts about a particular group, and other times we will be discussing topics that cut across groups. There will be at least four films shown and at least two guest speakers, possibly more.

Discussion sections are required and are an integral part of this course. They have two purposes. First, they provide an opportunity to discuss class issues in a smaller group. Second, they will be the site of the writing instruction which meets the communications-b requirement. Your TA is a sociology graduate student who has special training in teaching writing as well as advanced knowledge in sociology. Your TA will be grading your papers, but the whole instructional team is working together to establish common assignments and grading standards.

Class Format and Classroom Policies

- Class sessions include lecture, discussion, films and guest lectures.
- I try to create a relaxed atmosphere. Food and drink are OK as long as they are unobtrusive and do not create problems for others.
- There are no tests. Attendance at lecture is an end in itself.
 - Your mind as well as your body must be present.
 - **You are required to be in a mental state that puts you at risk of learning something.**
 - You may not read, do homework for another class, work crossword puzzles, play video games,

answer email, surf the Internet, send text messages, or engage in any other activity that occupies your mind or distracts the people around you. If you are caught doing any of these activities, you will receive a zero for that day's class attendance.

- You MAY take notes on lectures and write lecture reaction comments in class.
- If you unintentionally fall asleep occasionally, apologize in your lecture comment.
- If your lifestyle or a health problem makes falling asleep in class a regular problem, or if you have some special circumstance regarding the "no distracting activities" policy, please speak privately to me or your TA.
- Respect others' rights and needs. Do not carry on private conversations or engage in other behavior which distracts others. University policy prohibits the disruption of classes, and students who are persistently disruptive will be asked to leave. Let us know if you have any concerns about these issues.
- Do your best to contribute to an environment in which people can express real opinions that others disagree with and can learn from hearing the opinions of others, even when you disagree. Do not expect to end class agreeing on one right opinion on controversial topics. Instead, expect to learn more about why different people have different opinions.
- **Never** intentionally insult another person or group in this class. This includes insults meant as jokes.
- If you are offended at or bothered by what someone else has said, please explain why so the person can learn from your view, but make the assumption that the other person did not mean to be offensive.
- If someone else says they are offended by something you said, listen respectfully and try to understand their concern. It is always OK to ask for more information before deciding what you think about the original statement and reaction. It is always helpful to apologize for hurting someone's feelings if you mean it. You can be sorry for hurting someone even when you did not mean to do it. It is OK to end up disagreeing, but do your best to use the experience to learn about the diversity of other people's opinions, perspectives, and experiences.
- The only cure for ignorance is education. Some people enter this class with no prior background in ethnic studies and little or no experience with other cultural groups. Please do not make noises or gestures to make people feel bad if they ask a "naïve" question that you already know the answer to. Some class sessions will provide "basics" so everyone can have some common background. Please tolerate these sessions even if you already know this material. Other sessions may assume more background than you have. Please let me know in your lecture comment if you feel this is a problem.
- Please be honest in your lecture reactions to help me know whether we have class process issues I need to deal with. Also please let me know if I say something that offends you, either in class when it happens, or in the lecture comment. Your lecture comments are not graded precisely so that you know you do not gain points for agreeing with the instructor or lose points for disagreeing. Effort points are based on engagement: writing why you disagree counts as engagement. So does writing reflections on how the material affects your thinking.
- You are invited to treat this class as an open forum.
 - You may announce any event which you believe may be of interest to others in the class.
 - You may arrange to address the class or to bring a speaker or film to the class, to raise issues which you feel are being ignored or distorted in lectures, to give voice to your own feelings and experiences, or to enrich the learning experience of yourself and others. Speak to me in advance to make arrangements for anything "big" (i.e. more than 5 minutes long).
 - Short impromptu speeches or reactions (not longer than 2-3 minutes) are welcome any time.
 - It is not appropriate for one or a few people to dominate class interaction; we do need to leave room for many voices. If I am concerned about someone dominating, I will speak to you. Students who feel that someone else is dominating should let me know in the daily reactions.
- For one lecture, a librarian will describe and demonstrate a number of bibliographic data bases especially relevant to ethnic studies in one class session during the semester.

- There will be zero tolerance for academic dishonesty in any aspect of this course. All acts of intentional dishonesty, no matter how small, will lead to a letter describing the incident being sent to the Dean of Students and an academic penalty that is triple the value of the academic harm caused by the dishonesty.

Books

As I will explain in class, I have chosen books which have explicit points of view because they are ultimately more interesting and instructive than books written from the standpoint of unconcerned observers. I will discuss why there are no "unbiased" books, and give you explicit information about how to locate each book in the larger debates within and around each group.

1. American Indians. Stephen Cornell. The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence. (A history of the 19th and 20th centuries with an emphasis on how a Pan-Indian ideology developed as a response to the policies of the American government. A great deal of information and sociological analysis with a broad historical view. Students with social science backgrounds thought this book was great, while others often found it difficult. Cornell is a European-American who now works closely with the tribes on economic development issues.)

2. African-Americans. Aldon Morris. The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing For Change. (Covers the Southern movement 1953-1963 with an emphasis on the roles of the NAACP and the SCLC. Some background on southern repression, and a lot of exciting stories about how people organized themselves to resist. Sociological discussion of social movements.)

3. Mexican Americans. Rodolfo Acuña Occupied America. Either the 6th or 7th edition will work; the 7th has a new chapter on recent history. (This history text is long and has a distinctive point of view. We will make some chapters on Mexican history optional. It is strong on revealing the "hidden" history of the Mexican people.)

4. Asian Americans. Ronald Takaki. Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian-Americans. Get the "updated and revised" edition published in 1998, not the older first edition. (A well-written book which mixes clear overviews of social and economic patterns with personal stories. Clearly distinguishes the separate histories of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Indian, Southeast Asian immigrants and their descendants. It is long but very interesting.)

Assignments and Grading

NOTE: We have made some big changes in how parts of the course work this semester, and some of the specific details may have to be modified as we work out the bugs of our new systems, but what you have to do and how things are weighted will be as explained in this syllabus.

Your grade will be a weighted average of five elements: several graded papers and an oral presentation that are assigned in the discussion sections (50%), attending and commenting on lectures (20%), reading and writing critical questions about four books (20%), attending and participating in discussion section (5%), and an evaluation of the level of your effort and engagement with the "ungraded" components (lecture, books, discussion). Each element is graded on a 4-point A-F scale (A=4, AB=3.5, B=3, BC=2.5, C=2, D=1, F=0), and these grades are averaged with the weights indicated. Letter grade ranges are: A = 3.75 and up, AB = 3.25 to 3.75, B = 2.75 to 3.25, BC = 2.25 to 2.75, C = 1.5 to 2.25, D = .5 to 1.5, F= below .5. All grades that are within +/- .05 of a cutting point will be examined by a human to determine which is the most fair and just grade, considering the overall pattern of your work and trajectory of your work.

Grading Standards: There are two kinds of grading in this class. The lecture and book comments and the grades for discussion participation and effort are all focused entirely on effort: the expectation is that everyone who is willing to do all the work will get an A. The papers are NOT graded this way: they are graded according to quality standards, and it is possible to put a lot of effort into a paper and still not make an A (although more effort is certainly likely to produce better results). We grade to absolute scales and do not “curve” papers. We expect that in a typical class, about 20% of the students will receive A’s on the papers: A papers indicate a high level of achievement and mastery of research, writing and thinking. If you do the basics and make no big mistakes, you get a B.

Assignment and Grading Summary

Item	Weight	Components	Grading Comments
Papers & Presentations	50%	Research and analyze both sides of two different controversial issues. 1. Oral presentation in groups with individual writing; assigned topics 2. Analytic research paper about both sides of a controversial issue; you choose the topic. Smaller assignments build toward the final papers.	Focused on communications-b + ethnic studies requirements. Assigned and explained in section and graded by your TA. Graded on a 4.0 A-F scale; the total grade for papers is a weighted average of these grades. Improved grades overwrite prior lower grades if there is serious effort.
Participation. Focused on the ethnic studies requirement and reflection on issues. Pedagogy of learning by writing and open-ended thinking about new ideas.			
Lectures & activities	20%	Attend classes & write at least 5 sentences of comments (or do make-ups if you are ill). Submitted through paper “journal folders” explained in class.	Doing less than half translates to 0 (F), above that, points for each thing you do accumulate and are transformed to a 4.0 A-F scale for averaging with other grades. Instructions in class for how to submit this material. Attending but writing less than 5 sentences or appearing to have no idea what is happening in class is worth half credit.
Participate in section	5%	Attend and participate in bi-weekly discussion section (or do alternate work if you are ill)	This is heavily weighted by attendance. If you miss more than half the section meetings, this grade will be an F. If you attend all section meetings but have low participation, this grade will be a B: AB and A grades require active participation as well as regular attendance.
Readings	20%	Read 4 books follow TA instructions for writing notes and critical questions and submitting to learn@UW. The goal is to experience and think about the books, not a close textual read or analysis.	You read at least 1/3 a book a week and follow instructions for critical questions. IT IS OK TO GET AHEAD ON THIS but you can submit no more than 1 book’s worth a week.
Effort & engagement	5%	Based on all your work, the assessment of how much you are engaging the ungraded course materials (lectures, readings, discussions) and going beyond the minimum to get by	

IF YOU MISS CLASS OR FALL BEHIND

1. **Making up a missed lecture:** (1) Talk to at least 4 different students to make sure you know what actually happened in the class you missed. Do not make assumptions. Sometimes the web site has not been updated. (2) Spend a minimum of 30 minutes doing reading, talking in some depth to 4 or more people from the class, or watching videos to find out what you missed. Then write (1) why you missed class (needed only if the absence should be excused) (2) what you did to make up the class (what you read, who you talked to) and (3) a minimum of 200 words describing what happened in the class that you missed. You still have to do a make-up even if the absence is excused due to illness, religious observance, or circumstances beyond your control. Note that the reason for absence should be put in the make-up; you cannot expect us to find a note you put elsewhere, nor to connect it with an email you sent.
 - a. Excused absences always get full credit. However, if you miss more than four classes for excused reasons, you may need to provide evidence. Communicate with your TA if you will miss more than three classes in a row.
 - b. If you have an illness or any other problem that may lead you to miss more than four classes in the semester, please disclose that problem in a timely fashion by writing a note of explanation in the journal at the beginning of the term (if it is a chronic condition) or by communicating with your professor or TA at the time the problem appears (if you have to miss more than two classes in a row).
 - c. Two unexcused absences may be made up for full credit.
 - d. Two more unexcused absences may be made up for half credit.
 - e. There is no deadline on the make-ups except that they must be done by the last class. They are best done AFTER the class you missed and after you check with other students to know what happened, but within two weeks of the absence.
 - f. If you have an excused absence the last week, you may arrange to submit a late make-up. Unexcused absences for the last class cannot be made up.
2. **Book comments are submitted on line and can be submitted even if you miss class. If illness or circumstances beyond your control prevent you from being able to do the work, you should communicate in a timely fashion with your TA to request that a late penalty not be applied.**
3. **Voluntary and involuntary absence.** You are entitled to accommodation for circumstances beyond your control, including illness and bereavement, as well as for religious observances, but not for voluntary absences or circumstances. A voluntary circumstance is anything that is under your control. This includes difficult choices you may have to make such as studying or attending review sessions for other classes, job interviews, or work hours as well as pleasurable choices such as vacations.

DETAILED JOURNAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Lecture reactions:** After every lecture session, turn in a page from the "lecture reaction" section with a short reaction (about 5 sentences,) to that day's class.
 - a. Reactions may include: a summary of what was discussed, things that you found upsetting or problematic, things you especially liked or found interesting, questions or confusions you would like me to respond to.
 - b. I especially ask that you give me feedback on the lecture. Tell me if you find anything I said to be upsetting or offensive and tell me whether you already knew the material, found it new, etc.
 - c. Many days there will also be specific questions that I ask you to answer in the journal—failure to answer that day's question(s) will lead to an assumption that you were not paying attention and may lead to reduced points for attendance that day.
 - d. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late or leave early, put your arrival/departure time in your lecture reaction. If you miss more than 15 minutes of a class, you will get a proportional reduction in credit for that class. There is no penalty for occasionally needing to arrive a few minutes late or leave a few minutes early, but if this adds up to more than 75 minutes (i.e. one class), your reaction grade

will be adjusted proportionately to reflect the missed class time. If needed, you can do “make ups” to get credit for up to 150 minutes of this missed class time: see the “make up” section, below.

2. **Lecture make-up entries.** If you miss a class, leave a blank entry in the journal: “missed class.” You may put the reason for absence if it is excused. When you do a make-up, clearly label it as “make up for DATE” and do not blend it in with the surrounding entries. Remember to repeat the reason for absence if it should be counted as excused. Before doing the make up, talk to people to be sure you know what actually happened in the class. (1) **spend a minimum of 30 minutes doing things to learn what you missed.** Read on-line lecture notes, watch the video, talk to four other students in the class to learn what you missed. (2) write a **200 word** make up lecture comment saying HOW you did the make up and WHAT you missed. You are responsible for finding students who can tell you what happened in class, so if the first person you ask can’t tell you much, you will have to ask other people. Make ups should be completed as soon as possible but must be completed before the last class. **YOU MUST DO THE MAKE UP ACTIVITY TO GET CREDIT FOR THE MISSED CLASS.** Religious accommodation counts as an excused absence.
3. **BOOKS.** We will read 1/3 of a book a week, and then have “book chats” in section every three weeks. You will write “critical questions” to be explained by your TA. The due dates for each 1/3 of a book are shown in the section syllabus. There are new assignments this term. You **MAY** turn these in late, but you will receive a 10% penalty for each week (or portion thereof) each assignment is late. You **MAY** turn these in early for full credit, but you can submit critical questions for only one book a week.
 - a. Cornell, Return of the Native. 1) Chapters 1-4; 2) Chapters 5-9 3) Chapters 10-13.
 - b. Morris, Origins of the Civil Rights Movement. 1) Chapters 1-5 2) Chapters 6-8 3) Chapters 9-11
 - c. Acuña Occupied America. Some chapters will be omitted; details will be given out later.
 - d. Takaki, Strangers from a Different Shore. NOTE: This is the longest book. 1) Preface & Chapters 1-4, 2) Chapters 5-8, 3) Chapters 9-13
4. Attend a “diversity dialog.” You will get an email within 2-3 weeks telling you how to sign up for this. They will take attendance, and you will get the equivalent of 2 lectures for attending, one for the attendance record (reported by the DD staff) and one for writing 200-300 words about the experience. A diversity dialog is a 90 minute discussion designed to enhance exposure, inter-relations, and understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. These dialogues occur in small groups (e.g., 8 - 10 students) in which participants are encouraged to talk about personal experiences and express views related to diversity. These dialogues are opportunities to engage in a meaningful dialogue about experiences related to diversity issues in an open manner. In past semesters, over 90% of the students who participated found it to be a positive experience. NOTE: This must be done by November 18. No Diversity Dialogs are offered after Thanksgiving