

How Race & Ethnicity Shape American Social Life Sociology 134

Social Science 5206
1:20pm – 2:10pm Mon/Wed/Fri

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Teaching Assistants

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Discussion Sections

Section 341	W 11:00 – 11:50	Soc Sci 6310	Kaan
Section 342	W 12:05 – 12:55	Soc Sci 6314	Kaan
Section 343	Th 1:20 – 2:10	Soc Sci 6109	Nick
Section 344	Th 2:25 – 3:15	Soc Sci 6314	Kaan
Section 345	Th 3:30 – 4:20	Soc Sci 6310	Kaan
Section 346	W 2:25 – 3:15	Soc sci 6121	Kaan
Section 347	W 3:30 – 4:20	Soc sci 6121	Nick
Section 348	Th 7:45 – 8:35	Soc sci 6121	Nick
Section 349	Th 8:50 – 9:40	Soc Sci 4314	Nick
Section 350	Th 9:55 – 10:45	Soc Sci 4314	Nick

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The official title of this course is “Problems of American Racial and Ethnic Minorities.” As you can see, I have unofficially renamed the course. Rather than examining problems of specific groups of people, we will be exploring the social structures that shape and are shaped by race, ethnicity, racism, and racial/ethnic inequalities. Through this course, you will learn to apply the “sociological imagination” to social issues relating to race and ethnicity. This means understanding race and ethnicity as social constructs, and learning how race and ethnicity exist within social structures and institutions. This class meets the University of Wisconsin’s Ethnic Studies requirements, which aims to “increase understanding of the culture and contributions of persistently marginalized racial or

ethnic groups in the United States, and to equip students to respond constructively to issues connected with our pluralistic society and global community.”

I expect you to participate in lecture, discussion section, and independently with your peers through a variety of course requirements. Most people have not had much practice talking about race and ethnicity, and some of the topics we will explore are controversial. Participation will likely feel uncomfortable at times - both as a speaker and as a listener - but productive conversation is the goal. It is crucial that we all remember that every person is living with a race and ethnicity (and sex, gender, sexual orientation, class, size, belief system, nationality, etc), and each person’s individual perspective is relevant to our conversation. Speak up and feel free to disagree with me, the TAs, or your peers, but always stop and think about how you can phrase your words to respect everyone in the room and their unique experiences. Likewise, push yourself to assume that everyone else in the class is coming from a place of good intentions, of trying to learn and struggle with the concepts of the class. Come with an open mind, respect the different experiences of others, and be prepared to rethink your own assumptions about racial and ethnic relations.

COURSE MATERIAL

All required readings will be available on Learn@UW (learnuw.wisc.edu).

Abridged Powerpoint slides will be uploaded to Learn@uw after each lecture. The Powerpoint slides you see in lecture will be more detailed than those on Learn@UW.

LECTURE ETIQUETTE

Please avoid disruptions such as arriving late, leaving early, checking email, or packing up before I finish lecturing. Do not use laptops or tablets to surf the web – it’s distracting to your classmates and to me. *Smart phone/cell phone use will not be permitted during lecture.* If you have a phone, turn it off or put it on silent. Not just vibrate mode, which is still distracting – but completely silent.

Laptops and tablets will be permitted for taking notes during lecture. However, *I reserve the right to prohibit their use at any time* during the semester if they become a distraction.

This is a 200-student lecture in a room that seats 218. This makes it especially important not to arrive to class late or leave early. Please find a seat in the middle of a row when possible to facilitate the seating process.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Due to the large size of this class, please follow the following email etiquette.

1. Compose emails in formal, professional language.
2. If you have questions or concerns, always check the syllabus first.
3. If you can't find what you need there, contact your TA.
4. If your TA can't help you, she/he will contact me on your behalf or you may contact me directly. You are always welcome to come to my office hours or schedule an appointment to speak with me at another time.

Other than stopping by office hours, email is the best way to contact me. You can expect a response within 24 hours, unless the message is received during or just before a weekend or holiday – in such cases, I will respond by the end of business hours on the next business day.

Except for cases of emergencies, do not ask last-minute questions about an assignment (i.e., do not email us after 5:00PM prior to a scheduled due-date for an assignment).

Grading

Final grades will be allocated as follows:

93-100%	=	A
89-92.9	=	AB
84-88.9	=	B
78-83.9	=	BC
70-77.9	=	C
60-69.9	=	D
Under 60	=	F

Your final course grade will be based on the following:

Applied Analysis Essay #1	12%
Applied Analysis Essay #2	15%
Applied Analysis Essay #3	15%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Exam #3	15%
Section Participation	8%
Section Attendance	5%
Total	100%

APPLIED ANALYSIS ESSAYS

Over the course of the semester, you will write **three short essays** (five paragraphs; **800-1000 words**) on course-related topics of your choice. For these essays, you will need to select a real-world artifact – a news report, blog post, book, article, movie, or TV show – to analyze using a sociology of race/ethnicity framework and concepts from class. This artifact must be about race/ethnicity. The essays are due on **Sunday, September 7th, Sunday, October 25th, and Sunday, December 7th**. The essays should be uploaded to Learn@uw by 11:59pm on the due date.

Guidelines:

- You must incorporate at least three course readings into your analysis. For the first essay, the three required readings must come from the assigned readings for weeks 1 through 7. For the second essay, the three required readings must come from the readings assigned for weeks 8 through 14.
- Your first paragraph should consist of a description of the event or topic of choice, ending with a **bolded thesis statement** that tells the reader your key analytic point about the topic.
- In each of the three body paragraphs, you should make analytic arguments that support your thesis statement. You should use concepts from our class in your analysis, and you should clearly use evidence from the artifact of choice to support your analysis. You must cite sources appropriately (lecture, required readings, outside sources – note that outside sources other than the reading/movie/news report/etc. are not required), though we do not have any preference of citation style – APA, MLA, ASA, etc. As long as we can tell where you got your information and we can distinguish between your ideas and someone else’s ideas, you are doing an adequate job with citation.
- Your concluding paragraph should include a brief synopsis of your argument, and might include other applications of the ideas in your essay, benefits of accepting your argument, and/or limitations of your argument.
- To earn an “A” on these essays, you must demonstrate originality and critical thinking (beyond restating key concepts from lecture, required readings, and discussion). Simply explaining key concepts is not sufficient; you should clearly demonstrate how the concepts are applicable and useful for an analysis of the artifact you’ve chosen to analyze.

Your essays will be graded according to the following rubric (20 points total):

6 points – Quality of argument (originality, thoughtfulness, critical thinking)

6 points – Engagement with and understanding of course material

4 points – Substantive evidence (strength of information, how well it supports the argument, quality of topical information)

4 points – Writing quality (organization, flow, sentence structure, voice) and technical requirements (cited evidence, proper document naming and upload, word count, bolded thesis statement, appropriate topic)

EXAMS

There will be three non-cumulative exams. They will cover material from the readings, lectures, and videos. The exams will be administered during lecture on **Monday, October 5th, Friday, November 6th, and Monday, December 14th**. Each exam is worth 15% of your final course grade, and they will include 40 multiple-choice questions.

Make-up exams will be permitted, at my discretion, only in cases of severe illness, serious family emergencies, or participation in UW athletics, but you must notify me ahead of time. Students who miss an exam without prior approval will receive an F for that exam.

COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will be detected and detested. It is truly not worth it. Ignorance of the rules is NOT an excuse.

All work that you submit must be your own and must have been done for this class. This means no recycling of old papers or projects (yours or anyone else's) and absolutely no plagiarism. This means no buying papers online, no cutting and pasting chunks of text from other sources and presenting it as your own writing, and no paraphrasing and presenting it as your own ideas. All work will be submitted in electronic form and checked against plagiarism detection software.

All incidences of plagiarism and academic dishonesty will be reported to the Chair of the Sociology Department as well as the Office of the Dean of Students, and you will receive a failing grade for the course. I expect you to acquaint yourself with the University's policy on academic misconduct, found here:
<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>

If you have questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, the Writing Center has numerous resources and tutorials online on their website (<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html>).

Office Hours and Getting Help

Many students are intimidated by the idea of going into office hours – I know I was as an undergrad. Don't be afraid to stop by your TA's or my office hours or make an appointment to meet. You do not have to be experiencing difficulty or even have profound questions to come to office hours. We are happy to answer questions and discuss ideas stemming from lecture, readings, or current events that relate to the course.

Do not hesitate to contact your TA or me if you need assistance. Head off problems before they turn into emergencies. If you cannot meet with us during office hours, we can make an appointment to meet at another time.

Accommodations

Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university's web page for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

The Writing Center

It is always useful to develop your academic writing skills as early as possible. The UW Writing Center provides you with a diverse range of resources to help you write as a scholar and with style. The Writing Center is located in 6171 Helen C. White Hall. Their hours are Mon-Thu 9:00am-8:30pm; Fri 9:00am to 3:00pm. For more information, visit their website at www.writing.wisc.edu or call 263-1192.

Questions and Complaints about Grading

The TAs and I are human, and we do make mistakes in grading. If you have a question about how an assignment was graded, please communicate with us. Note, however, that any time we look back to an assignment to evaluate the grading, that your grade may go up or down. Please follow this procedure for grade questions and complaints:

- 1) Wait 24 hours, and review the assignment description – often, students are able to identify why their work was marked down by doing this.
- 2) 24 hours after a grade has been posted, submit to me (not your TA) an one page paper with the following:
 - a. Clearly and specifically describe your question or complaint (hint: this tends to be better received if you can frame this around *learning* rather than your *grade*)
 - b. Justify any complaints with a description of *how* you believe you met the requirements
 - c. Request a meeting. Include several days and times when you can meet with the grader to discuss the issue.

- 3) I will reply to you within 48 hours (except on holidays or weekends, when it will be by the end of the following business day) to confirm the meeting time.
- 4) Meet with the grader.
- 5) In exceptional cases, when I agree that the original grade is in question, I may re-grade your paper. Note, again, that grades may go up or down.

Department learning objectives

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

- **Communicate Skillfully:** Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- **Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:** Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Week 1: Welcome to the Sociological Study of Race and Ethnicity

September 2nd and 4th

Reading: "The Promise of Sociology" – Mills

Week 2: History of Race, Ethnicity, and Racial Domination

September 9th and 11th

Reading: "Racial Formations" – Omi and Winant

Listen: "Remembering Jim Crow" (about 50 minutes; link on LearnUW)

Week 3: The Social Construction of Race

September 14th, 16th, and 18th

Reading: "How Our Skins Got Their Color" – Harris

"Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?" – Waters

"Immigration, Intermarriage, and the Challenges of Measuring Racial/Ethnic Identities" – Waters

"Black and White Twins and the Social Construction of Race" – Wade

Week 4: Privilege, Prejudice, and Discrimination

September 21st, 23rd, and 25th

Reading: “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” – McIntosh
“Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person” – Crosley-Corcoran
“Silent Technical Privilege” – Guo
Racism without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States – Bonilla-Silva, pp. 1-11 and 25-49

*****Applied analysis Essay #1 due Sunday, September 27th at 11:59PM. Focus on concepts and readings from weeks 1 through 4*****

Week 5: Economics

September 28th and 30th, October 2nd

Reading: “When Work Disappears” – Wilson
“Getting a Job in the Inner City” – Newman
“In Job Hunt, College Degree Can’t Close Racial Gap” – Luo

Week 6: Politics

October 5th, 7th and 9th

Reading: “Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies” – Bentele and O’Brien, pp. 1088-1093 (stop reading when you get to section entitled “An Empirical Approach”)
Colorblind: The Rise Of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equality – Wise, pp. 11-25 and 36-62

*****Exam #1 on Monday, October 5th in lecture*****

Week 7: Residential Space

October 12th, 14th, and 16th

Reading: “The Creation of Underclass Communities” – Massey and Denton
“Fences and Neighbors: Segregation in 21st Century America” – Farley and Squires
“Why are there no Supermarkets in my Neighborhood? The Long Search for Fresh Fruit, Produce, and Healthy Food?” – Zenk et al.

Week 8: Criminal Justice System

October 19th, 21st, and 23rd

Reading: “Beyond Crime and Punishment: Prisons and Inequality” – Western and Pettit

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness – Alexander, introduction

“Political Violence and Privilege” Harwood

“Two Americas: Ferguson, Missouri vs. the Bundy Ranch, Nevada” – Cesca

“Sociologists Issue Statement on Ferguson: 400 Sociologists Demand Justice and Change in Policing of Communities of Color” – pp. 1-2

*****Applied analysis Essay #2 due Sunday, October 25th at 11:59PM. Focus on concepts and readings from weeks 5 through 8*****

Week 9: Education

October 26th, 28th, and 30th

Reading: “Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools” – Kozol

“Charter Schools and the Risk of Increased Segregation” – Rotberg

“The Acting White Theory Doesn’t Add Up” – Toldson

“Stop Blaming Black Parents for Underachieving Kids” – Perry

Listen: “The Problem We All Live With” (about 60 minutes; link on LearnUW)

Week 10: Identity, the Body, and Health

November 2nd, 4th, and 6th

Reading: “Race and Ethnicity in Public Health Research: Models to Explain Health Disparities” – Dressler, Oths, and Gravlee

“Double Consciousness” – Schaefer

Listen: “Ally’s Choice” (8:45 to end; link on LearnUW)

*****Exam #2 on Friday, November 6th in lecture*****

Week 11: Associations

November 9th, 11th and 13th

Reading: “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks” – McPherson et al., pp. 415-422

“Interracial Friendships in the Transition to College: Do Bird of a Feather Flock Together Once They Leave the Nest?” – Stearns et al.

“Getting a Man or Getting Ahead: A Comparison of White and Black

Sororities,” – Berkowitz and Padavic

Week 12: Sports

November 16th, 18th and 20th

Reading: “Sport and Society” – Washington and Karen, pp. 191-196, 200-203
“Gone With the Wind? Sports, Race, and the Modern Athlete – Zirin
“Dump the ‘Redskins’ Slur!” – Zirin
“The Donald Sterling Controversy Lets Everyone Off Too Easily”
– Chotiner

Week 13: Art, Pop Culture, and the Media

November 23rd and 25th

Reading: “Study: TV May Perpetuate Race Bias” – Park
“Racist *Hunger Games* Fans Are Very Disappointed” – Stewart
“Get Your Freak On: Sex, Babies, and Images of Black Femininity” – Collins
“Miley Cyrus Brings Her Racism Problem to the VMAs” – Makarechi

Week 14: Relationships and the Family

November 30th, December 2nd and 4th

Reading: “How Your Race Affects the Messages You Get” – Rudder
“Not Just a Preference” – Rowlson
“Social Science Theorizing for Latino Families in the Age of
Diversity” – Baca Zinn

*****Applied analysis Essay #3 due Sunday, December 6th at 11:59PM. Focus on concepts and readings from weeks 8 through 14*****

Week 15: Toward Racial Justice

December 7th, 9th and 11th

Reading: “How the New Working Class Can Transform Urban America” – Kelley
“Policy Steps Toward Closing the Gap” – Lui et al.
“Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally” – Kivel

Week 16: Exam #3

*****Exam #3 on Monday, December 14th in lecture*****

*****Syllabus may change based on class needs as they arise*****