

Race Relations
Sociology 306
02:920:306
Fall 2017
Tues/Thurs 3:20-4:40
Rutgers Cinema #3

Instructor: Jason Torkelson
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Office Hours: By appointment. Before or after class around Livingston. Ill also often be in my office on the Douglas campus on Tuesdays & Thursdays: Davison Hall 119.

Background/Introduction: Contrary to the “common sense “ perceptions of many, race possesses no core biological reality. Race is rather best understood as a social construction, albeit one that is certainly consequential in our society. In this course we will focus primarily on race in the United States by charting its socio-historical underpinnings, its changes over time, and consider the ways race still shapes social life. In this vein, and line with the “Relations” portion of the course title, we will also examine power. Where power is a relational concept, we will centrally examine how race—and ethnicity too—condition the institutions and social interactions that govern lived experience and life outcomes in the contemporary United States.

Goals/Objectives:

- develop familiarity with sociological concepts on race and ethnicity
- understand and apply principles of racial formation and social exclusion
- understand race and ethnicity—often falsely assumed to be “inherent”, “biological”, “natural”—from a properly historicized social constructionist perspective
- understand causes and consequences of racial and ethnicity inequality
- develop and awareness of both past and modern forms of racism and ideologies of prejudice
- develop an understanding of your own place within the contemporary multi-racial, multi-ethnic landscape
- apply a sociological imagination to contemporary racial issues

Email: If you email me, I’d rather not accidentally delete your email, so please type SOCIOLOGY 306 or RACE RELATIONS (or something similar) in the subject line and also include your name somewhere in the body of the email. I will attempt to check my email regularly and I should be able to respond to you promptly under most circumstances.

Text(s): Healy, Joseph; O’Brien, Eileen. (2015) *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, & Class* 7th Edition. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA

*There are many additional readings interspersed throughout the course/reading schedule, and these are available on sakai. To access these readings, go to sakai.rutgers.edu, log in to our class page, and click on “resources” on the left-hand toolbar. Readings are provided there.

Class Requirements:

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Highest Exam Score ☺	30%
Lowest Exam Score ☺	25%
Final Paper ☺	25%
Participation ☺	20%

Grading Scale: The below scale is merely a rough guideline. I reserve the right to curve this scale up or down as I see fit. **No extra credit will be given under any circumstances.**

90-100%	A
88-89%	B+
80-87%	B
78-79%	C+
70-77%	C
60-69%	D
<59%	

EXAMS

Exams will possess 2 components:

Multiple Choice: Questions will focus on understanding and applying ideas from the articles and texts. Questions will be less aimed at testing your ability to memorize statistics or definitions, but instead measure your ability to interpret the meaning of arguments, apply concepts, and/or follow the logic of the question.

Essays: There will be a few short answers questions and essays as well. Essay writing, even in short answer form, is likewise not just about simply recalling information. Questions will primarily test your ability to apply sociological concepts and/or to put different perspectives into conversation with each other.

PARTICIPATION

An active, lively, and engaged classroom is of paramount importance for a topical course such as this. Participation will be evaluated based upon a few possible components: 1) *in-class thought pieces/free writing* 2) *daily reading question* 3) *general participation*, 4) *short presentations/group projects*.

In-class thought pieces/free writing: At the beginning of class I will sometimes give a short answer question that pertains to the course readings that I expect you to provide handwritten responses to in class (in many cases a few sentences should suffice for answers so long as they are thoughtful and well-structured). I may likewise simply ask you to assemble your thoughts on the day's readings on paper. There are several benefits to getting you to write at the beginning of class: it gets your creative juices flowing; it helps you make connections between readings; it helps you become more comfortable engaging and critiquing authors; it lays a foundation for class discussion; it can also provide you an avenue to reflect upon how the course material can apply to your own life; it can help me assess how various topics are resonating with the class; it can help you to understand what I may place on exams; it can importantly help you to focus on concepts rather than rote memorization of basic facts.

I will likewise only grade a random sample of these papers from each student. It is likewise not my intention to evaluate you in any rigorous manner—I am not expecting a polished essay, just evidence that you have thought about the course material.

Daily reading questions: I provide an avenue for you to pose questions you may have for each day's readings prior to class. This can simply be a specific issue with the reading(s) you are having difficulty with, a question as to how a particular day's readings pertain to one another or those from other class meetings, or questions about the extent of various concepts' applicability to contemporary society. Likewise, feel free to ask questions that are critical of various authors or that interrogate certain assumptions theorists might be making—it makes for excellent discussion material in class!

You need not post reading questions for every class, but I would strongly urge you to post questions where and when you are inspired. Please post questions to the sakai site no later than one hour before class in the module labeled "blog". I will check the "blog" before each class meeting, and will often answer your question(s) in class.

General Participation: I will simply be mindful of who is putting forth effort to engage the course material in the classroom. You will have room to speak up in class to share your thoughts as well as ask questions (to me and/or the class more generally) that you think might be relevant. Here, you should express questions, interests, or problems you have related to readings and lectures (chances are you are not alone). Bringing your concerns into the

arena of the classroom *in a respectful and thoughtful manner* and posing questions to the class can be of great benefit to both you and your classmates.

Short Presentations/Group Projects: I may assign small presentations and group work in and out of class at various points in the term. Details to come.

FINAL PAPER

The final paper for this course will be an integrative literature review on a topic of your choosing related to race. Further details will be announced later. However, a literature review is based on your own research of and/or assessment of existing sociological literature—what's already been written—in your selected (sub)field. Good literature reviews frequently identify 1) what has been done in an area in terms of research and/or extracted themes in how thinkers approach an area, and 2) direct the reader to fresh avenues for research and/or lend a new narrative voice on how scholars might approach a topic based upon rethinking/reorganizing existing accounts. There is no hard minimum or maximum length, but I imagine most good reviews should juggle between 7-10 core sources and be between 5-10 pages when completed. You may use material from the course, from your own search in the library, or both!

Disabilities: If you have a disability and require accommodations please let me know as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity: Academic freedom is a fundamental right in any institution of higher learning. Honesty and integrity are necessary preconditions of this freedom. Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses.

Maintenance of the standards of academic honesty and the successful administration of this policy depend on the mutual cooperation of faculty and students. Dissemination of the Academic Integrity Policy to all faculty, staff, and students will ensure that all members of the community are informed about academic integrity.

Faculty cooperation is essential for successful application of the procedures defined by the Academic Integrity Policy. Faculty members can help promote academic integrity by making clear on their syllabi their expectations concerning homework assignments, collaborative student efforts, research papers, examinations, and the like. Efforts should be made to detect and to prevent cheating and plagiarism in all

academic assignments. If faculty members have evidence of academic dishonesty, they are expected to report such evidence promptly.

Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. This policy seeks to demonstrate the University's concern with academic dishonesty and to guarantee a fair procedure for resolving complaints of academic dishonesty.

Violations of Academic Integrity: The various ways in which academic honesty can be violated are discussed below. The comments and examples within each section provide explanations and illustrative material, but in no way exhaust the scope of these violations.

1) Cheating: Cheating is the use of inappropriate and unacknowledged materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The use of books, notes, calculators and conversation with others is restricted or forbidden in certain academic exercises. Their use in these cases constitutes cheating. Similarly, students must not request others (including commercial term paper companies) to conduct research or prepare any work for them, nor may they submit identical work or portions thereof for credit or honors more than once without prior approval of the instructor.

2) Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Students who knowingly or negligently allow their work to be used by other students or who otherwise aid others in academic dishonesty are violating academic integrity. Such students are as guilty of intellectual dishonesty as the student who receives the material even though they may not themselves benefit academically from that dishonesty.

*For more detailed information on academic dishonesty go to
<<http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

(This schedule may indeed alter significantly as we move through the semester. Readings may be added and readings may be omitted at any point.

I will continuously update the syllabus on sakai. It is your responsibility to take account of announcements in class and updates on sakai).

Week 1 (9/5-9/7)

The Social Construction of Race

READINGS:

-Harris, Marvin. "How our Skins got their Color" *sakai

- Zerubavel, Eviatar. "Nature and Culture" *sakai
- Roberts, Dorothy. "The Invention of Race" *sakai (skim)

Week 2 (9/12-9/14)

Basic Terminology, Basic Theory, Prejudice, Privilege

READINGS:

- Healy & O'Brien pages 4-27; 68-95
- Johnson, Allan. "Privilege, Oppression, and Difference" * sakai
- Merton, Robert. "Discrimination and the American Creed" *sakai (p 131-133, rest optional/skim)
- Blumer, Herbert. "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position" *sakai (p 3-4, rest optional/skim)

Week 3 (9/19-9/21)

Identity Construction, (American) History

READINGS:

- Healy & O'Brien 101-118
- Zinn, Howard. "Drawing the Color Line" *sakai
- Cornell; Stephen; Hartmann, Douglas. "A Constructionist Approach" *sakai
- Nagel, Joane. "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity" *sakai
- OPTIONAL Hanson, Allan. "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and its Logic" *sakai

Week 4 (9/26-9/28)

Race: The Power of an Illusion (film)

Week 5 (10/3-10/5)

Whiteness, Immigration/Assimilation, White Ethnicity

READINGS:

- Healy & O'Brien 32-65
- Lipsitz, George. "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness" *sakai
- Brodin, Karen. "How the Jews Became White" *sakai
- Waters, Mary. "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?" *sakai
- Gans, Herbert. "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America" *sakai
- OPTIONAL Perry, Pamela. "White Means never having to say You're Ethnic" *sakai

Week 6 (10/10-10/12)

Civil War, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Resistance of the Oppressed

READINGS:

- Healy & O'Brien 124-136; 154-162
- Schudson, Michael. "Telling Stories about Rosa Parks" *sakai

Eyes on the Prize (film)

Week 7 (10/17-10/19)

Catch up Day and/or Review for Exam

***EXAM 1 10/19**

Week 8 (10/24-10/26)

Race in the Post-Civil Rights Era

READINGS:

- Healy & O'Brien 162-180
- Bonilla Silva, Eduardo. "Racism without Racists" *sakai
- Alexander, Michelle. "The New Jim Crow (ch1 & 5)" *sakai
- Dowd, Jeff. "Public and Academic Questions on Race" *sakai
- OPTIONAL – Gallagher, Charles. "Color-Blind Privilege" *sakai
- OPTIONAL – Ford, Richard. "Racism without Racists" *sakai

Week 9 (10/31-11/2)

Lingering/Transforming Issues: Environment, Housing, Employment, Economics, Crime & Punishment

READINGS:

- Pager, Devah; Shepherd, Hanah. "The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets" *sakai
- Pager, Devah. "The Mark of Criminal Record" *sakai
- Bullard, Robert. "Environmental Justice in the 21st Century: Race Still Matters" *sakai
- Western, Bruce. "Punishment and Inequality in America (ch 1-2)"
- Cost of being black *sakai
- Saperstein, Aliya. Penner, Andrew. "Racial Fluidity and Inequality in America" *sakai
- Shapiro, Thomas. "The Cost of Being Black and the Advantage of Being White" *sakai
- Shapiro, Thomas et al. "The Racial Wealth Gap Increases Four Fold" *sakai

Week 10 (11/7-11/9)

Lingering/Transforming Issues: Environment, Housing, Employment, Economics, Crime & Punishment (continued)

Color of health: Unnatural Causes (film) OR The House I live in (film)

Week 11 (11/14-11/16)

The Native American Experience

READINGS:

-Healy & O'Brien 186-209

-Crow Dog, Mary; Erodes, Richard. "Civilize them with a Stick" *sakai

Broken Rainbow (film)

Week 12 (11/21)

11/21 OPEN DATE – TBA, Catch Up Day, but most likely final paper consultations

Week 13 (11/28-11/30)

The Hispanic Experience

READINGS:

-Healy & O'Brien 216-247

-Telles, Edward. "Mexican Americans and Immigrant Incorporation" *sakai

Asalto al Sueno (film)

Week 14 (12/5-12/7)

Asian American Experience

READINGS:

-Healy & O'Brien 252-280

-Zhou, Min, "Are Asian Americans becoming White?" *sakai

-Kim, Claire. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans" *sakai

Week 15 (12/12)

***EXAM 2 12/12**

Week 16

***FINAL PAPERS DUE 12/19**

***I reserve the right to alter any aspect of this schedule at any point**