

SOCIOLOGY 108 – MINORITY GROUPS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
PROFESSOR CATHERINE LEE
FALL 2015: TUE & THU 2:50 – 4:10 P.M.
VOORHEES 105

Please read this syllabus carefully. You are responsible for everything stated below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office: Sociology - Davison Hall, Room 141 (Douglass)

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. and by appointment

COMMUNICATION THROUGH EMAIL AND SAKAI

The best way to reach me is by email. Please write “Soc 108” in the subject line so that I can recognize your email quickly. Also, please remember to sign your name in the email.

This syllabus provides answers to many questions you may have about the course. Please consult it regularly. It will help you to stay on top of the course. In addition, I will post regularly on Sakai. The default email address I have for you is your official Rutgers address. It is your responsibility to update your address with the university should you wish to use a different email address. You are responsible for all information I announce via email and Sakai.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce you to sociological concepts and tools that will enable you to critically evaluate the term “minority group.” This course is NOT a survey course of different racial or ethnic groups in the United States, although we will spend a significant amount of time reading and discussing works related to racial and ethnic minorities. Instead you will learn the political basis for the term “minority” and how a construction that extends back in time to the founding of the nation continues to frame much of our political, economic, and social debates. We will explore how minority status is rooted in particular historical moments but persists to affect people’s life chances today. You will also learn that the term “minority” is contested and that its meaning is shaped by people both inside and outside a particular “minority group.”

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY’S DIVERSITY STATEMENT AND RULE OF CONDUCT IN CLASSROOM

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

I strive to provide a classroom environment that supports the free exchange of ideas. We are all responsible for facilitating this. Behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes but is NOT limited to the following: talking without permission, cell

phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, tardiness, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, and discourteous remarks. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, following the University Code of Student Conduct, I will direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. After three warnings, one half of a letter grade will be deducted from the final grade. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is available at <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct>

Use of laptops in class is limited to note-taking only. In addition, cell phones must be put away. No surfing or texting allowed in class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and cheating are considered serious offences that damage the academic community and integrity. Any case of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance to university policy. You are urged to check and be familiar with the “Code Student of Conduct” (link above) in order to understand about what constitutes cheating and plagiarism. If you have any question of what might constitute plagiarism after reading the university policy, please ask.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Readings

This will be a challenging course. I do not employ an introductory textbook. You will read journal articles and book chapters written by leading scholars whose intended audience included graduate students and professors. This means that you may have to go over the materials more than once. I will provide weekly questions to help guide you. (These guides will be useful in preparing for the memos and exams). Please remember that I am available to assist you. You **MUST** do all of the week’s readings **PRIOR** to class. Some weeks require more readings than others. Pace yourself and plan accordingly. I have assigned an average of 40 pages of reading per week. ***Expect to devote a minimum of three to four hours each week for reading and preparing for class lectures.***

All readings are available online on the course website through Sakai.

Study Materials Online

Abridged lecture notes and weekly questions related to the week’s readings and lectures are on Sakai. I suggest you download each week’s materials prior to reading and attending lecture. I provide these to help you to focus on the week’s most important issues. Use them to stay on top of lectures and readings.

Evaluation

I do not grade on a curve. Everyone can earn an A if everyone earns an A. However, the entire class may also fail. Course expectations are clearly specified here. You will be evaluated by how well you do on the exams and by your completion of the weekly memos.

Exams	80%	Grade Scale	
Memos	20%	90-100	A

85-89	B+
80-84	B
75-79	C+
70-74	C
60-69	D
59 or lower	F

Attendance

I expect you to attend class and to be on time. You are responsible for all materials presented and/or discussed in lecture. Attending class regularly will help maximize your chances of doing well in the course. Periodically, I will take attendance. If you are absent more than three times without an approved excuse (see below), I will deduct half a letter grade from your final grade.

Tardiness

Please arrive on time for class. Tardiness is disruptive to me and to your fellow students. If you are repeatedly late to class, I will deduct half of a letter grade from your final grade.

Exams (80%)

There will be four exams (each worth 20%): 9/24, 10/27, 11/17, and 12/10. They may be administered at the beginning of class so please be on time. There will be NO make-up exams. The only exceptions are religious observances or medical excuses and family emergencies that can be properly documented (e.g., doctor's note, police report, funeral program) (see more below). University athletes with prior approval for events are also excused. Regardless of your situation or reason, you MUST see me if you miss an exam.

Weekly Memos (20%)

You must submit 10 memos (each worth 2%). No memo is due in weeks 1, 13, and 15. You also get a pass for two weeks of your choosing. On your "off" weeks, you do NOT need to submit anything to indicate this.

Memos should be about one-half page to one page in length. Memos can be brief syntheses of the weekly readings and raise questions for further discussion. Memos can also be reviews of a current event that is related to the week's topic. For example, in week seven, you can write a memo related to news coverage of a recent immigration issue. Memos are NOT answers to the weekly questions although you can provide more thoughtful, lengthier answers to the more open-ended questions.

I will grade memos on a pass/fail basis. Memos must be posted on Sakai by Tuesday at noon. I will not accept late memos. In weeks 9 and 12, because of Exams 2 and 3, memos will be due on Wednesday of that week by noon (10/28 and 11/18 for weeks 9 and 12, respectively).

Approved Excuses for Exams and Memos

Approved excuses include a medical excuse or family emergency that can be properly documented (e.g., doctor's note or police report). If you have a religious observation, which conflicts with a scheduled exam, in keeping with the university policy, you must notify me no less than two weeks prior to exams. University athletes with prior approval for events are also excused. Make-up exams and memos need to be approved and scheduled as quickly as possible.

Final Grade and Extra Credit

Your final grade is non-negotiable. There is NO extra credit for this class.

Seek Help Early

If you are having difficulties keeping up with the class, please come see me as soon as possible. I can help you to read more effectively, take better class notes, and comprehend the materials more fully. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to talk to me.

Letter of Recommendation

Many of you are interested in applying to graduate or professional school and will require a letter of recommendation for your application. If you are interested in requesting a letter from me, please see me early in the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Tue 9/01, Thu 9/03)

Introduction: What is a minority group? Are minority groups racial and ethnic groups? What are race, ethnicity, and group-making?

Begin reading:

Cornell, Stephen and Douglas Hartmann. 1998. *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press (pp. 15-38).

Wade, Peter. 1997. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. Chicago: Pluto Press (pp. 5-24).

Week 2 (Tue 9/08 – No class, Thu 9/10)

Are minority groups racial and ethnic groups? What are race, ethnicity, and group making? (Cont'd)

Finish reading:

Cornell, Stephen and Douglas Hartmann. 1998. *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press (pp. 15-38).

Wade, Peter. 1997. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. Chicago: Pluto Press (pp. 5-24).

Week 3 (Tue 9/15, Thu 9/17)

Race and group-making continued: Social closure and the historical roots of race-making in the U.S.

Davis, F. James. 2001. *Who is Black? One Nation's Definition*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press (pp. 1-18 and 31-58).

*I will begin lecturing week 4 materials on Thursday 9/17.

Week 4 (Tue 9/22, Thu 9/24 – Exam 1)

Race and group-making continued: How do categorization and political action “create” race?

Lee, Jennifer and Frank Bean. 2010. “Chapter 3: What is this Person’s Race? The Census and the Construction of Racial Categories.” Pp. 35-54 in *The Diversity Paradox: Immigration and the Color Line in Twentieth-First Century America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Nagel, Joane. 1995. “American Indian Ethnic Revival: Politics and the resurgence of Identity.” *American Sociological Review* 60: 947-65.

Film (9/22): “Race: the Power of an Illusion (Episode 2 - The Story We Tell)”

*** Exam 1: THURSDAY 9/24 (Covers Weeks 1 – 4) ***

Week 5 (Tue 9/29, Thu 10/1)

How did the massive wave of immigration from Europe to the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries challenge or affirm the meaning of minority, race, or ethnicity?

Dinnerstein, Leonard and David Reimers. 1999. *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration*. New York: Columbia University Press (pp. 49-72: SKIM).

Ignatiev, Noel. 1995. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge (pp. 92-121).

Film (10/01): “Race: the Power of an Illusion (Episode 3 - The House We Live In)” - 1st Half

Week 6 (Tue 10/06, Thu 10/08)

How did immigration from Asia to the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries challenge or affirm the meaning of minority, race, or ethnicity? Was it different from European immigration?

Almaguer, Tomás. 1994. *Racial Fault Lines: the Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. 153-82).

Hing, Bill Ong. 1993. *Making and Remaking Asian America through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (pp. 43-78).

Week 7 (Tue 10/13, Thu 10/15 – No class)

Are today’s immigrants different? How is this new immigration changing “minority” group relations?

Foner, Nancy. 2005. *In a New Land: A Comparative View of Immigration*. New York: New York University Press (pp. 11-42).

Lee, Jennifer, Frank D. Bean, and Gillian Stevens. 2003. "Immigration and Race-Ethnicity in the United States." Pp. 224-49 in *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*, edited by Frank D. Bean and Gillian Stevens. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Film (10/13): "Rabbit in the Moon"

Week 8 (Tue 10/20, Thu 10/22)

Does minority group status change? Are there ethnic options? What will a multi-racial identity mean?

Waters, Mary. 2005. "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?" Pp. 29-41 in *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality* (2nd edition), edited by Tracy E. Ore. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lee, Jennifer and Frank Bean. 2010. "Chapter 8: From Racial to Ethnic Status: Claiming Ethnicity through Culture." Pp. 137-54 in *The Diversity Paradox*.

Week 9 (Tue 10/27 – Exam 2, Thu 10/29)

What happens when there is enduring minority group status? Criminal Justice System

Hartney Christopher and Linh Vuong. 2009. "Created Equal: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System." *National Council on Crime and Delinquency*.

Kahn, Andrew and Chris Kirk. 2015. "What It's Like to Be Black in the Criminal Justice System." *Slate*, August 9.

*** Exam 2: TUESDAY 10/27 (Covers Weeks 5 – 8) ***

*Weekly memo due by Wednesday @ noon

Week 10 (Tue 11/03, Thu 11/05)

What happens when there is enduring minority group status? Labor participation and wealth accumulation.

Kirschenman, Joleen and Kathryn Neckerman. 2005. "We'd Love to Hire Them But ...': The Meaning of Race for Employers." Pp. 340-49 in *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality* (2nd edition).

Pager, Devah, Bruce Western, and Bart Bonikowski. 2011. "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." Pp. 364-87 in *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality* (5th edition).

Shapiro, Thomas M. 2011. "Chapter 7: Transformative Assets, the Racial Wealth Gap, and the American Dream." Pp. 49-52 in *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity* (5th edition), edited by Charles A. Gallagher. New York: McGraw-Hill

Film (11/05): "Race: the Power of an Illusion (Episode 3 - The House We Live In)" - 2nd Half

Week 11 (Tue 11/10, Thu 11/12)

What happens when there is enduring minority group status? Education.

Farkas, George. 2004. "Black/White Test Score Gap." *Contexts* 3(2): 12-19.

Selections from *Contexts* and *The New York Times*.

Week 12 (Tue 11/17 – Exam 3, Thu 11/19)

What happens when there is enduring minority group status? Health.

Williams, David R. and Pamela B. Jackson. 2005. "Social Sources of Racial Disparities in Health." *Health Affairs* 24(2): 325-34.

Reuss, Alejandro. 2011. "Cause of Death: Inequality." Pp. 401-05 in *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality* (5th edition).

Lee, Sandra Soo-Jin. 2005. "Racializing Drug Design: Implications of Pharmacogenomics for Health Disparities." *American Journal of Public Health* 95(12): 2133-38.

*** Exam 3: TUESDAY 11/17 (Covers Weeks 9-11) ***

*Weekly memo due by Wednesday @ noon

Week 13 (Tue 11/24, Thu 11/26 – no class)

What happens when there is enduring minority group status? Health (Cont'd).

Film (11/24): "Unnatural Causes" (Episode 1)

This episode will be shown in class. You can watch on your own if you are traveling for the holiday.

Week 14 (Tue 12/01, Thu 12/03)

How do people redefine or challenge minority group status? Youth culture and social movements

Warikoo, Natasha. 2005. "Gender and Ethnic Identity Among Second-Generation Indo-Caribbeans." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(5): 803-31.

Terriquez, Veronica. 2015. "Training Young Activists: Grassroots Organizing and Youths' Civic and Political Trajectories." *Sociological Perspectives* 58(2): 223-242.

King, Jay Caspian. 2015. "'Our Demand is Simple: Stop Killing Us': How a Group of Black Social Media Activists Built the Nation's First 21st Century Civil Rights Movement." *The New York Times Magazine*, May 4.

Week 15 (Tue 12/08, Thu 12/10 - Exam 4)

Conclusion

*** Exam 4: THURSDAY 12/10 (Covers Weeks 12-15) ***