Race Relations  
920:306:01  
Rutgers University, Spring 2014

Spring 2014  
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M/W: 1:10-2:30  
MU 212 (CAC)

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:30 am-12:30 pm or by appointment

Course Overview:

In this class, you will be introduced to key sociological tools and theories that will enable you to critically examine concepts of race and race relations in contemporary American society. We will focus on the historical and political forces that shape and construct recurring and changing patterns of race relations. In addition, we will pay particular attention to the complex ways by which race and race relations mediates people’s everyday lived experiences (at the micro level), by focusing on the ways by which it interacts and intersects with gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion. We will also address institutionalized definitions of race and various forms of racisms (at the macro level). Even though we will learn about and discuss systems of domination and oppression, it will be equally important to focus on and address possibilities for change. We will draw on major sociological and feminist theorizations in order to unpack the concepts together. Our discussions will include: histories of race, racisms, immigration, privilege, power, social inequalities, subordination, and justice. We will also look at the role of the media and discuss links between race, class, gender and sexuality.

Objectives:

1. Critically analyze historical and contemporary patterns of race relations
2. Understand the creation of racial differentiations and how they are maintained
3. Think about the ways by which race and race relations shape our everyday lives and interactions, with a focus on power and social inequality
4. Address possibilities for change and think of our roles in anti-racism
5. Appreciate the complexity of people’s lives by using intersectional analysis
Classroom Conduct and Learning Environment:

This class explores issues that might invoke strong emotions. Therefore, you are expected to think openly and critically.

1- You do not have to agree with the readings or others in the class, however you need to approach them with a critical and an open mind.

2- You will find that not everyone will agree with you on principles that are important to you, and thus, listening to and engaging with others’ points of view will be a valuable learning experience. Interesting and valuable discussions are best in an environment where everyone is comfortable to openly discuss and question their ideas and thoughts.

Even though this is not a small class, group work and participation will be essential to learning the material. Therefore, you are expected to read the assigned material before class in order to meaningfully participate in class discussions, group work and debates.

This is a class for students who are committed to learning and applying the sociological imagination to their daily lives and the texts, and who are willing to challenge themselves. I understand that some people might be hesitant to openly discuss issues of race and racism in society; however, in this class, we are all responsible for creating a safe environment for intellectual discussion and learning. It is required that you are respectful to others and that you use sociological analyses in your discussions.

Disrespect for others and their points of view or ideas will NOT BE TOLERATED. Students who fail to behave and act respectfully will be asked to leave the class.

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Such behavior will affect your attendance and participation grade.

Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu/
**Laptops:** If you need to use a laptop, you are required to sit in the front rows of the 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 “student code of conduct,” in order to know more about what constitutes cheating and plagiarism. http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf

*If you have any question of what might constitute plagiarism after reading the university policy, please ask.*

**Evaluation:**

There will be two exams: one mid term exam and a final exam. In addition, you will be assigned two sociological exercises/reflection statements (2-3 pages) from which you have three options to choose from. These are not research papers, however, they will be part of exercising your sociological imagination and relating what we study to everyday life situations.

**Attendance:** I will **not** be taking attendance in the class, **even though it is required if you want to do well in the class.** It is your responsibility to show up to class, take notes and participate in discussions. In the case of an absence, it is also your responsibility to follow up on what happened during the class, since you are responsible for all materials covered in the class. **Lateness is disruptive to the class; so if you are more than ten minutes late, please do not come to the class.**

**Participation and In-class group work (5%):**
Participation entails **active** engagement with the material in the class and participating in discussions and group work. Simply showing up to class is **not** considered **active participation.** There will be unannounced **in-class group-work exercises.**

**Short group presentations (10 %):** These will be short (15-20 minute) informal presentations in a group of seven students. In this presentation, the group is required to bring up critical points regarding the readings and pose questions at the beginning of assigned classes. Each group will present **once,** and the groups with the specific dates will be assigned at the beginning of the term. The group is required to submit the questions on Sakai under “Discussions” **at 5:00 pm the day before the presentation.**

**Two Reflection Exercises (2-3 pages) (25%):** You have to pick **two** out of three reflection statements/exercises, which are explained in detail at the end of the syllabus:
1- **Personal Reflection:** Race, Privilege, and Anger (Monday, February 29)
2- **Race and the Media** (Monday March 31)
3- **Countering Racism and Prejudice** (Monday, April 28)
You should submit these papers in class, no electronic submissions accepted. Late papers will be subject to penalties. Each paper is graded out of 25 points, both combined constitute 25% of the final grade.

**Mid term Exam (25%) Monday, March 5:** Multiple Choice, True/False and Short essay questions – you are responsible for all readings, movies and any materials discussed in class

**Final Exam (35%):** Multiple choices, True/false, Short essay questions

The final grade will be a combination of the above and will be out of a 100. A=100-90, B+=89-87, B=86-80, C+=79-77, C=76-70, D=69-60, F=59-0

**Deadlines:** Deadlines are to be respected and unexcused late assignments will be subject to penalties.

*The reading list is subject to change during the term as I see fit*

**Required Texts and Readings:**
2. All other materials posted on Sakai

**Course Schedule:**

**Wednesday, January 22**
Introduction: Syllabus, course requirements and policies


**Monday, January 27**
- hooks, bell. “Engaged Pedagogy.” (Sakai)
- Anthias, Floya, and Yural Davis-Nira. “The concept of race and the racialization of social divisions” (pp. 1-10) (Sakai)
- Race as biology is fiction, racism as social problem is real (Sakai)

*Social and Historical Constructions of Race and Ethnicity*

**Wednesday, January 29**
- “Defining Race” (H &A)
- “The Race Myth” (H & A)

**Monday, February 3**
- **Movie:** “Race: The Power of an Illusion: The Story We Tell”
Wednesday, February 5

- “On Racial Formation” (H&A)
- “Planting the Seed” (H&A)

Contemporary Racisms and Prejudice

Monday February 10

- American Racism in the Twenty-first Century (H &A)
- Tatum, Beverly. “Defining Racism” (pp. 3-17) (Sakai)
* Rethinking Racism (Sakai)- optional

Wednesday February 12

Group presentation

- My Freshman Year (H & A)
- Mixed-Race Chic (H & A)
- The Myth of the Latin Woman: I just met a girl Named Maria (H&A)

Power and Privilege

Monday, February 17

- Color Blind Privilege (H & A)
- McIntosh, Peggy. “White and Male Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (Sakai)
- Waters, Mary. “Optional Ethnicities” (Sakai)

Wednesday February 19

- Lorde, Audre “Uses of Anger” (Sakai)
- hooks, bell “Killing Rage” and “Beyond Black Rage” (1-30)(Sakai)

Race and Identities

Monday, February 24- Reflection one due in class

- Tatum, Beverly. “Complexity and Identity” (18-28) (Sakai)
- Drawing the Boundaries (H & A)

Wednesday February 26

Group presentation

- “How did Jews become White Folks?” (H & A)
- “No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion after Sept 11 ” (Sakai)
- “Are Asian Americans Becoming White” (Sakai)
Monday, March 3

*Group presentation*
- Arab Americans, affirmative Action and Quest for Racial Identity (Sakai)
- Barack Like Me (H & A)
- White Like Me (H & A)

Wednesday, March 5
Midterm Exam Review

Monday, March 10
Midterm Exam in class

*Inequality and Justice*

Wednesday March 12

*Group presentation*
- The Mark of a criminal record (H & A)
- Punishment and Inequality in America (H & A)
- Debunking the Myth of Immigrant Criminality (H & A)

------Spring Break------

*Gender, Race, and Class*

Monday, March 24
- Towards a New Vision (H & A)
- Theorizing Race, Gender and Class (H & A)

Wednesday, March 26

**Movie:** Crash + Discussion

*Representing Race and Ethnicity: The Media and Popular Culture*

Monday, March 31- **Reflection 2 due in class**

*Group presentation*
- How to NOT Be 21st Century Venus Hottentots (H & A)
- Maria de la Barbie (H & A)
- Unmasking Racism (H & A)

Wednesday, April 2

*Group presentation*
- Black Youth and the Ironies of Capitalism (H & A)
- Why There Are No Male Asian Anchors (Sakai)
- Arabs in Hollywood:
Global Constructions of Race and the Media

Monday, April 7
Group presentation
• The Color of Sex (Sakai)
  *The Photograph as an intersection of Gazes (Sakai)

Immigration and Citizenship:

Wednesday, April 9
• Citizenship and Inequality (H & A)
• Race, Civil Rights and Immigration Law after September 11 (H & A)

Monday, April 14
Group Presentation
• Impossible subjects (H & A)
• From Ellis Island (H & A)

Wednesday April 16
Group presentation
• Places and Peoples: The New American Mosaic (H&A)
• Between Two Worlds (H & A)
• Salsa and Ketchup: transnational Migrants Straddle Two Worlds (H & A)

Race, Sexuality and Relationships

Monday April 21
Group presentation
• Interracial Relationships (H & A)
• Breaking the Last Taboo (H & A)
• The Family and Community Costs of Racism (H&A)

Wednesday April 23
Group presentation
• Sexuality and Ethnicity- Nagel, Joane (Sakai)
• Sexuality, Migration and the Shifting Line Between Legal and Illegal Status
  Luibheid, Eithne (Sakai)

Social movements and change

Monday April 28- Reflection three due in class
Group presentation
• Post-Racism (H & A)
• Ten Ways to Fight Hate (H & A)
Wednesday, April 30
- Embracing a Cross Racial Dialogue- Tatum, Beverly (Sakai)
- **Movie:** “What’s Race Got to do with it?”

Monday May 5
- Ending Racism and Where is the Love- hooks, bell (Sakai)
- Class wrap-up

**Reflection Statements and Exercises**

Exercise 1: Personal Reflection: **Race, Privilege and Anger [Due: Monday February 24 in class]**

This exercise is divided into two parts: First, you will briefly write about how you “discovered” or came to know about your own “race.” How did you know what your racial category was and how did you know about “other” racial categories? Did someone tell you? Did you ask? (Taken from Higginbotham and Anderson)

Second, you should link the first part to a discussion on the ideas of anger and privilege as discussed by Lorde “Uses of Anger,” and McIntosh “White Privilege.” You can choose one or both concepts and reflect briefly about it.

To make it easier, I have listed a number of questions you might want to consider, however you are free to write about any ideas that struck you in these articles.

**Privilege:**
- Is it important to recognize different forms of privilege while studying race?
- How does recognizing your own privilege (gender, race/ethnicity, class, physical ability, religion, sexuality, body etc..) help you understand your life and the lives and circumstances of other people? (Choose an example from your daily life and write about how it is a form of unearned privilege).
- What do you think of McIntosh’s argument?

**Anger:**
- What do you think of Lorde’s proposition on anger as something useful and productive? How does she define anger?
- Do you think anger can be used productively for social change?
- Are there any specific issues that come to mind? (give examples of issues that you are personally interested in)

Exercise 2: **Race and the Media [Due: Wednesday March, 30 in class]**

In this exercise you should pick a TV sitcom or series (it doesn’t have to be current) and watch one or two episodes. Following that, you briefly describe it and discuss the ways in which race issues are brought up or not. How are different groups portrayed? How does it
vary by gender and class? You should analyze and pay attention to differences in representation between groups and within one group itself. You should not only look at how whites and non-whites portrayed, however, you should also look at whether there are different depictions among racial groups themselves? Does that differ by gender? Sexuality? Class?

In what ways do the shows reinforce common stereotypes? In what ways do they contradict common stereotypes? Why is it important to pay attention to and analyze how race is framed in films or TV? (Inspired from Higginbotham and Anderson)

Your analysis should be intersectional that is you take into account: race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation (or any other attributes that are relevant).

Exercise 3: **Countering Racism and Prejudice** [Due: Monday April 28 in class]

For this exercise, you have two options.

**First option:** For a week, be more careful and attune to the ways in which you hear people talking about race (your friends, family, etc…). Even though people choose to avoid talking about race, describe patterns that you hear with regards to talking about race (do you see patterns or colorblind racism?). During those discussions, you are required to interject and make the person/group aware of how this is a racist comment or attitude that was expressed. Following that reflect on the exercise by answering these questions:

1- Do you think exercises like these help in countering everyday life racist comments?
2- How can learning about intersectionality and race help us counter racist attitudes and actions? What is your role in this?
3- How does colorblind racism make it harder to sometimes counter racisms?
4- What do we do with our knowledge about race, racism and prejudice?
5- How can we use it to fight racism (classroom, university, clubs, etc…)

**Second option:** Do a brief research on an anti-racist campaign, activist group or community project in the US (it can range from a blog, website, community project, a campus wide initiative, to a national race awareness project). Describe the importance of possible ways to counter racism in society:

1- Describe what are the goals of the organization, group, campaign or websites.
2- How are they implementing their goals? What resources do they have? How can they be accessed?
3- Do you think this is important? What other aspects should be incorporated?
4- Is intersectionality being taken into account? If not, how would you propose for it to be taken into account?
5- How can you contribute to change?
6- How can learning about race, racism and domination help to counter racism in everyday life?