

Race Relations¹
SOC/A 235

MWF 10:30-11:20
250 Hodges Hall
Spring 2006

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Room 315 Knapp Hall
Office Hours: MW 12:30-2:00 pm
And by appointment
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General Course Description

This course will present a sociological study of the racial division of society with special emphasis on “black” and “white” relations². It is important to critically examine race and racial ideology because one way that we divide and rank individuals (stratify) is by physical and cultural distinctions. This ranking system affects the ways that goods, services, and rewards are distributed. When we use race as an important way of identifying and ranking people, it becomes the basis for differential access to resources and opportunities in our society (i.e., stratification).

Course Objectives

- 1) To understand the major terms in current and past discourses on race and ethnicity.
- 2) To learn the major theoretical understandings of the racial division of society.
- 3) To examine and understand the mechanisms of race construction--that is, how race is created, represented, and maintained by various institutions such as the judicial system, the educational system, the occupational structure, language, mass media, and science.
- 4) To examine the consequences of race for people of color and whites--how people of color and whites experience race in their everyday lives in the home, workplace, or on the streets and how these experiences differ by gender, class, age, and/or sexuality.
- 5) To provide a safe environment in which students from a diversity of experiences and backgrounds can openly share, discuss, and/or debate.

To Achieve Course Objectives

You are expected to finish your readings prior to class time and to attend class. Lectures will be used frequently and they will cover outside readings. Consistent attendance and participation in class discussion will boost borderline grades. I will randomly take attendance throughout the semester. If you are present on the majority of the days I documented attendance (i.e., 12 out of 15 times) an additional four points will be added to your final grade.

Make-up exams will only be given in extraordinary circumstances, beyond the control of the student.

¹This course counts as a primary course for the Women’s Studies major.

²Two-thirds of the class is centered around African American women and men. The other third of the class focuses on Asians, Native Americans, Latinos/as, and whites. The Soc/A 238 Ethnic Groups course covers Asians, Native Americans, and Latinos/as more extensively.

WVU and the Division of Sociology and Anthropology have official documents about your rights and responsibilities as students. According to these documents, “West Virginia University expects that every member of its academic community shares the historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth”(WVU undergraduate catalog, 1999:49). Plagiarism, regardless of intent, is academic dishonesty. Consult these documents for further discussions of plagiarism and its repercussions.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

WVU is committed to social justice. I concur with this commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Therefore, you are expected to adhere to the ground rules for discussion listed in the syllabus.

Required Texts and Abbreviations for Syllabus

Racism: An American Cauldron. Third Edition (Doob). Christopher Bates Doob. Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1999.

White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism. Second Edition (Rothenberg) Paula S. Rothenberg. Worth Publishers, New York, 2005.

Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States. (Silva) Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2003.

The Many Costs of Racism. Joe R. Feagin and Karyn D. McKinney. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2003.

Racial Equality: Public Policies for the Twenty-first Century. The American Assembly. 2001
Download this report at www.americanassembly.org.

Course Evaluations

Your course grade is based on two 100 point exams and one 100 point special project (i.e., described in the syllabus). You may anticipate the following approximate point ranges for each letter grade at the end of the course:

- A 270 to 300
- B 240 to 269
- C 210 to 239
- D 180 to 209

F 179 or below

Ground Rules for Discussion³

1. Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist.
2. Acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and the like is that we are all systematically misinformed about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups.
3. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. Agree not to "blame victims" for the condition of their lives.
5. Assume that people--both groups we study and members of this class--always do the best they can.
6. Actively pursue information about our own groups and those of others.
7. Share information about our groups with other members of the class, and never demean, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences.
8. Agree to combat actively the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain.
9. Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. If members of the class wish to make comments that they do not want repeated outside the classroom, they can preface their remarks with a request that the class agree not to repeat the remarks.

Tentative Class Schedule

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| Jan. 9 | Part I: Rethinking "Race" Introduction, definitions |
| Jan. 11 | Chapter 1 (Doob), Begin Lecture-Theories of Racial Stratification |
| Jan. 13 | Chapter 1 (Silva) |
| Jan. 16 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday |
| Jan. 18 | Chapter 2 (Doob) |

³Source: Lynn Weber Cannon, "Fostering Positive Race, Class, and Gender Dynamics in the Classroom", *Women's Studies Quarterly* 1990: 1 & 2, 126-134.

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| Jan. 20 | Chapter 2 (Silva) |
| Jan. 23 | Overview of History/Misrepresentations of Racism in U.S. |
| Jan. 25 | Chapter 3 (Doob) |
| Jan. 27 | Chapter 7 (Doob) |
| Jan. 30 | Part II: Production and Reproduction of Race-Language and the Mass Media Part III Chapter 1 (Rothenberg) |
| Feb. 1 | Lecture-Racist stereotyping in the English language and Hate speech, Racial and Ethnic humor, Stereotypes |
| Feb. 3 | Chapter 8 (Doob) |
| Feb. 6 | Lecture on stereotypes of Native Americans, Latinos, and Asians |
| Feb. 8 | Chapter 3 (Silva) |
| Feb. 10 | Exam 1 |
| Feb. 13 | Begin Information for Test 2 Introduction and Part I (Rothenberg) |
| Feb. 15 | Lecture on hate groups and scientific racism |
| Feb. 17 | Part II (Rothenberg) |
| Feb. 20 | Politics, Criminal Justice, and Violence Chapter 4 (Doob) |
| Feb. 22 | Work and Housing Chapter 5 (Doob) |
| Feb. 24 | Affirmative Action |
| Feb. 27 | Chapter 4 (Silva) |
| March 1 | Chapter 5 (Silva) |
| March 3 | Continue Ch. 4-5 (Silva) |
| March 6 | Education Chapter 6 (Doob) |

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| March 8 | Chapter 6 (Silva) |
| March 10 | Lecture on racism and sports |
| March 11-19 | Spring Break!!!! |
| March 20 | Chapter 7 (Silva) |
| March 22 | Chapter 8 (Silva) |
| March 24 | Exam 2 |
| March 27 | Part III Consequences, Resistance, Coping, and Change Part III (Rothenberg) |
| March 29 | Introduction (Feagin and McKinney) |
| March 31 | Chapter 1 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 3 | Chapter 2 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 5 | Chapter 3 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 7 | Chapter 4 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 10 | Chapter 5 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 12 | Chapter 6 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 14 | Bring music to class that is anti-racist (i.e., attempts to reduce or eliminate racism) |
| April 17 | Discuss "Black colorism" In class poetry analysis |
| April 19 | Envisioning Change Chapter 7 (Feagin and McKinney) |
| April 21 | Part IV (Rothenberg) |
| April 24 | Chapter 10 (Doob) |
| April 26 | Discuss <i>Racial Equality</i> |
| April 28 | Personal Socialization Project due |

The purpose of this typed project is to get you to take all the information you have learned about the costs and consequences of racism and apply it to your own life. This project is worth 100 points.

Ten points will be deducted for each day the project is late.

For this project you should describe your own "race" socialization. You may choose to focus either on one period in your life or give a broad overview. **YOU MUST include in your paper relevant course material.** The questions you should address in your essay are as follows:

1. What were you taught in regards to your "race"/ethnicity? In other words, what were the messages you received about your "place" in society as compared to other "races"-- an African American male, an Asian American female, a white Italian female, a Native American male, etc.? Was it appropriate" for you, given current U.S. race ideology? 5 points

2. How were you taught this and by whom? In other words, what individuals (i.e., parents, siblings, teachers, police officers, etc.) or institutions have played a major role in shaping your current perceptions of "race"? How did you learn this information (i.e., did direct experiences with prejudiced **or** unbiased people affect your self-perception or was it more subtle indirect messages)? 5 points

3. How does your "race" socialization compare to your parents or other relatives? 5 points

4. How does your socialization compare to other girls/boys, women/men of your social class (i.e., do you feel like your "race" socialization is similar to or different from other males or females in your age category, do males get different messages than females)? 5 points

5. How are you a product of socialization (i.e., to what extent do you act the way you were taught to act)? To what extent have you managed to transcend/reject your socialization? How have you done so, with what rewards and at what cost? 5 points

6. What do you feel has been or potentially will be some of the long term consequences (both positive or negative) of your "race"? You must list at least 12. 25 points

7. How does your potential costs and benefits differ from someone else in another racial/ethnic categories? In other words, if society perceives and treats you as "white", list and explain some potential costs and benefits of being a person of color in this society. You must list at least 12. 25 points

8. Based on the information presented in class, what are some potential ways to reduce racism? What do **you** think could be done to reduce racism in our society and/or promote more harmonious racial relations? Why? You must list at least 12. 25 points