

Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States Sociology 3900, sec. 851
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Welcome to Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States!

Let me begin by stating that this is my first online class. I have researched, read, and prepared but I am sure there will be adjustments along the way so we will all need to be patient with each other. The best way to contact me is through the email listed above. I will **check email Monday through Thursday between the hours of 9:00 to 3:30 pm (Central Daylight Time) and most Friday mornings** so if you send me an email on Friday afternoon I might not read it until Monday morning. There is no reason to panic and very few things can happen that we cannot work through. Within the parameters listed above I will answer email within 24 hours.

If you need help with technical issues please call or email the UNO help desk at: 402-554-4357 and unohelpdesk@unomaha.edu

Course Objective:

This class is structured to expose the student to areas of “race” and “ethnicity” and their effects on people’s everyday lives. We will examine both the group and individual lives of different people(s) focusing on the main “racial/ethnic” groups represented in the United States including White Ethnic Americans, African Americans, Latinos, American Indians and Asian Americans. We will examine both oppression and resistance. We will look at myths and stereotypes and how they came to be; but also how we (as individuals and as groups) came to believe in them and the credibility of such beliefs. The class will also analyze related areas including gender, socioeconomic class, nationality and sexuality. The main objective is to see how (y)our world connects with the lives and world of others and how terms like race and ethnicity structure, and are structured by that connection.

Format

Class will be a combination of readings, lectures, online discussion, and videos. We will learn from each other with the readings serving as a guideline. I have a great deal to share with you in terms of my educational training and personal experience but I also believe that you all have much to share with each other and with me.

Because this class raises many sensitive and controversial issues, it is important to remember that you will not always feel “comfortable” in this course. At times you may feel angry which is not only okay but normal. The issues covered in this class are not often discussed openly or they are discussed without knowledge of the “facts”. These issues are also at times very personal and evoke passionate responses as we are all affected by them in one way or another. When you feel strongly about a particular topic I would encourage you to examine where your feelings are coming from—you really can learn a great deal about yourself and others in this way. If you cannot, or do not wish to, talk about such issues “in class”, please send me an email. Although you may experience strong emotions in this class, this is never an excuse to be disrespectful to any member of the class.

Text and Required Materials

Cornell, Stephen and Douglas Hartman. 2007. Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World. (2nd ed.) London: Pine Forge Press.

Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins, eds. 2013. Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology. (8th ed.) NY: Wadsworth.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class participation/discussion	100 points
Discussion starter	25 points
Media presentation	50 points
Ethnic biography	50 points
final papers/research projects	100 points
6 tests x 35 points each (drop the lowest)	<u>175 points</u>
Total	500 points

Grades: 490 to 500 points A+, 489 to 460 A, 459 to 450 A-
449 to 440 points B+, 439 to 410 B, 409 to 400 B-
399 to 390 points C+, 389 to 350 C,
349 to 340 points D+, 339 to 310 D, 309 to 300 D- and below 300 is failing

As the instructor I know more about the Sociological side of race and ethnic relations in the United States (or so you hope!) but you are also a member of our society and the following assignments are meant to allow you to add some of your knowledge to the class's assigned readings. It gives you some power over what is covered and what is not, what we refer to in Sociology as "agency". I certainly have expectations about what is good scholarship and what is not but if you do a good job that is outside my expectations, it simply widens my expectations.

Instead of one or two big projects I have included numerous smaller papers and discussion assignments. I will adjust assignments as necessary as we work through the term (see note above on this being my first online class). There are video tutorials within Blackboard but if you are still lost please contact the UNO help desk at the number or email listed above.

Class Participation – Reading and Discussion 100 points

This is 20% of your grade so please take it as seriously as exams and written assignments. Previous classes have stated that this is one of the most valuable parts of the course. You are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to discussion, ask relevant questions, make statements or educated opinions about the articles, and reply to others' posts. **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU READ THE ASSIGNED READINGS BEFORE YOU POST DISCUSSION IDEAS AND THAT YOU RESPOND TO ONLINE DISCUSSION THREADS IN A TIMELY MANNER.** Reading notes are highly recommended as they will help you determine what is most important to you and what is worthy of discussion. They also help you participate in meaningful discussions. You will be expected to ask relevant questions about the readings and other topics you do not understand and discuss the topics you know about and understand from the readings. You should always be thinking about your biographical relationship to the class discussion topics. How are these readings related to you and your life? What do you understand? What is hard to understand? "Why is it hard for me to relate to the reading and what is different about my Social Location that makes it hard?"

You are expected to add at least one *original* discussion point and two responses per week. I am hoping for more than this but this will be a minimum. Although your discussion posts will be graded on quality as opposed to quantity, your original discussion post should be a complete paragraph, a minimum of three sentences. [some sample questions to ask yourself. What was your favorite part of the readings? Worst? What did you disagree with? Agree with? What did you understand well and what was more difficult?] I highly recommend that you post your original before you look at anyone else's post so you are not simply rewording what someone else posted. A portion of your grade will be originality. Your responding posts should be in complete sentences. ("I agree" is not a good response, explain why you agree or disagree if relevant.) So that people have something to respond to, your original discussion posts for each week (or section) must be completed by 5:00 pm on the Thursday of that week. For example, in week two you should have an original discussion post by 5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 29. Your responses must be completed by Monday at 9:00 am after that week or section ends. So for week two your response discussion posts are due by Monday, June 2, at 9:00 am. **Note: I am using week #2 as examples here because we will spend week 1 making sure you know how to post and I know how to read and respond.** My hope is that you and the other students discuss the material in a relevant and timely manner. I will not respond to EVERY post but I will try to be active in the discussion when appropriate.

Discussion Starter – 25 points

Discussion should include, the primary claim(s) of the section and at least two open-ended, discussion type questions. ("What did you think about the articles?" will not suffice) Write a short hypothesis for each section or article, sum it up in a sentence or short paragraph and state what you think is relevant. Include your perception of the quality of the evidence to support the author's claim. If you want an "A" here be sure to have good organization and clarity, something you can easily understand. Keep in mind that these are discussions of the main ideas and will not include everything from the chapter or group of articles but since you are starting the discussion you can focus on a minor issue, one that stood out to you, in addition to the summary and broader questions mentioned. Be sure to include what you think is important and not just what the author and/or instructor thinks is important. **You do not need more than one page, double spaced, but make it as long as YOU need it to be.** Students will lead discussion for sections of the Race, Class, and Gender text and I will lead discussion/lecture from the Ethnicity and Race text. There will be at least two discussion starters for each section for which students lead discussion. You will be discussion leader for a specific section with multiple readings. You may focus on one or two articles or summarize them as a whole but you should have something for each article.

Media Presentations: News or Entertainment – 50 points

News

For this assignment you will be required to find a news story related to the class readings for that section and to state with specific terms, theories and ideas, including page numbers, how that news story is related to the readings. You can include your reaction to the news and whether you think the article is representing the truth. You should look for another side to the story, one not directly represented in the video or print but something we covered, or will cover in class or in the readings. How is this story or video related to class and does it confirm or disprove what was discussed in class about the articles' particular issues? Topics related to class include gender, social class, sexuality, religion, and education. Look especially for articles or news reports related to proposed legislation, either here in Nebraska or in Washington DC, as this may have

the most immediate affect on our lives. The article and/or video you “present” should be current. Have fun with this assignment and use your imagination.

Or

Entertainment

The second option for the Media assignment will require you find a piece of entertainment, could be a song, music video, part of a movie or sitcom, or simply something from Youtube, and treat it similarly to the “News” piece for the above assignment. How does it relate to the current readings?

To keep things as simple as possible your Discussion Starter and Media Presentation will be over the same reading section although they will remain separate grades. Your Discussion Starter summary and questions will need to be posted no later than 12 noon (CDT) **the day before the readings are scheduled**. If the readings are scheduled for Monday you must submit summary and questions by 12 noon the Friday before those readings are scheduled. Your media presentation must be submitted by 5:00 pm the day the readings are scheduled. These due dates are so students who may be working on different schedules can have a reasonable amount of time to read (the scheduled readings), view (video links for media presentation) and digest the information in order to add reasoned thoughts on the material.

Biography 50 points Due Friday May 30

You will complete a short autobiography on Race/Ethnicity. You will write about your life, including your family history and how that has affected you. There are some examples of ethnicity affecting lives in our readings. I have included below ideas and specifics on what is expected. In the end this is worth 10% of your final grade and should be relatively easy. You may have to ask parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc. for information but most of you will not need to do library work or extra research for this. Be careful with this assignment. Be sure you take the time to think about what you want to write and review for organization and to make sure you have what you need for the grade you hope to achieve.

Final paper/Project

You have a choice for the final paper/project. You can interview persons from two different generations (a generation is generally 20 to 25 years) or you can choose and describe photographs as representations of race and/or ethnicity.

Interview

Interview two different people from two different generations on some aspect of race and/or ethnicity. For research purposes, and for your interest, the farther apart the individuals are in age the better. You are examining how individuals ideas and concepts of race and ethnicity change with time, or may not change. Possible questions can include the person’s “race” history, their awareness of racial differences, interaction and experience with members of a different race, feelings towards their own and different races, their perceptions of how society has changed viz a vie race or ethnicity including people’s attitudes but also laws, education, media, sports, etc. You can ask a total of 5 main questions and as many follow up questions as necessary

Photographs

Acquire 5 photographs that represent some aspect of race and ethnicity. You may take the photos yourself, get them from another source or some of both. Describe in detail how the picture represents race or ethnicity. What part of race and ethnicity does it describe? Is it focused on one group, if so which group and why or how does it represent that group?

[You can also do some combination of interview and photos]

You will also need to include some kind of scholarly background to either the interviews or the photographs. For example, if I was writing about my father's experience picking cotton in Texas in the 1940s I would include some context as to the history of picking cotton and the racial demographics of those involved, from the farmers to the workers. Or if I was examining someone who is or has been in a "mixed" marriage I would include the number and percentage of mixed marriages when the marriage occurred and the current statistics. Overall this part should include some combination of numbers, statistics, demographics and a scholarly source or two.

TESTS

Tests will be a combination of multiple choice/True false and essay although it is possible that some tests will be all multiple choice/true false and others will be all essay. All exams are worth 35 points each. We will have an exam each Friday on that week's information. The lowest exam score will be dropped (hopefully making the exam #1 less threatening). Exams will be available at 12 noon on Friday of each week and they will be due by 9:00 am on the following Monday giving you the weekend to study and take the exam. The sixth and final exam will be available at 12 noon on Thursday, June 26 and must be completed by 5:00 pm (CDT) on Friday, June 27, 2014.

If you have any questions on these assignments or any other aspect of class please ask! Please use twelve point type and **double space everything**. Use one inch margins. You will be graded on what is included in your paper not how long it is. Be sure not to plagiarize, give credit to the writings of others.

Policies

Be sure not to plagiarize, give credit to the writings of others.

Late papers will be accepted for half credit up to one week after they were originally due. I will not accept any course work after June 27, the last day of class, at 5:00 pm Central Daylight Time (CDT).

See the Schedule of Classes for policies concerning withdrawal, credit/no credit and audit.

Special notes:

- 1) If you have a special disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the instructor as soon as possible in order to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner.
- 2) To avoid misunderstandings, all students are expected to uphold the academic integrity and conform to the policies and practices set forth in the section on Academic Integrity in the UNO Student Handbook. Embarrassing, ridiculing, etc. another student or disrupting normal class functions will result in dismissal from class and a grade of "F" for the course.

This syllabus will be changed at the instructor's discretion. Changes will be small and you will be made aware of them in a timely manner. The area most ripe for change is the discussion due dates and times but those will be worked out as we proceed through the course. The areas least likely to change are the readings and assignments.

Class schedule: Immediately following the dates is a sentence or two summarizing the contents of that particular section; many times in the form of questions. There is a great deal of reading at the beginning of the term and less reading and more videos and assignments due toward the end of the term. This is a deliberate attempt to get us up to speed as far as the social construction of race and ethnicity and to give us some vocabulary, ideas and theories with which to examine the articles, examples and vignettes in the Race, Class, and Gender reader (Anderson and Hill Collins text) which is listed as "R,C,G on the schedule and the Ethnicity and Race text (Cornell and Hartmann). I have arbitrarily divided the week into two sections of Monday/Tuesday and Wednesday/Thursday but how you approach the material and when you read and complete the necessary assignments is up to you.

Week One- May 19-May 23 Introduction, syllabus and vocabulary video - *Slip of the Tongue*

Getting acquainted with the instructor (me), the other class members, and the material.
Vocabulary - Power, Hegemony, Dichotomy, etc.

Monday and Tuesday

Read: Ethnicity and Race Forward and Prefaces and chapter 1 (through page 14) and Race, Class and Gender (R,C,G) Preface and article #1 (through page 20)

Wednesday and Thursday

Read: Ethnicity and Race Ch 2 and R,C,G articles # 2, 3 and 4 [Racial Formation Theory]
Read Ethnicity and Race chapter 3

Exam #1 (Friday)

Week Two May 26-29 What is Race and what is Ethnicity and is there a difference?

Monday and Tuesday

Read: R,C,G pages 37-84

Youtube video: Race and Intelligence: Science's Last Stand

Ethnic Biography due

Wednesday and Thursday

Read: Ethnicity and Race Chapter 4

Read: R,C,G articles 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Exam #2 (Friday)

Week Three June 2-6 How is Race and/or Ethnicity formed and what other issues are present in the construction of Race and/or Ethnicity? How does social class relate?

Monday and Tuesday

Read: Ethnicity and Race Chapter 5 (Case studies of ethnic construction)

Ethnic Notions - video

Wednesday and Thursday

Read: R, C, G articles # 13, 14, 15, 17, and 45 (social class)

Youtube video: People Like Us [click on the “12 videos” icon and watch the “opening tease” and 2 or 3 other clips]

Exam #3 (Friday)

Week Four June 9-13 How do Gender and Nationality affect racial and ethnic identity?

Monday and Tuesday

Read: R, C, G chapters 18, 20, 21, 22, 36 and 43 (gender and sexism)

Killing Us Softly 4 Video

Wednesday and Thursday

Read: Ethnicity and Race chapter 6 and R,C, G article #16, 35

Read: R,C, G articles #19, 24,25,26, 37, 41 (ethnicity and nationality)

Exam #4 (Friday)

Week Five June 16-20 How do Race and Ethnicity affect our Institutions and how are they affected by our institutions? Where do issues of sexuality intersect with race, class and gender?

Monday and Tuesday

Read: R,C,G pages 265-276 articles 32 and 33

Thursday and Friday

Read: Ethnicity and Race Chapter 7

Read: R,C,G articles #27, 28, 29, 30, and 39 (sexuality and heterosexism)

Exam #5 (Friday)

Week Six June 23-26 Education! A history of race relations in Omaha, Nebraska in 1966. One of the oldest racial/ethnic groups in the US (American Indians) and one of the newest racial/ethnic groups in the US (Muslims).

Monday and Tuesday

Read: R,C, G articles 47, 48, 49, 50 (education)

Read: R,C, G articles # 44, 23, and 3 *In Whose Honor? Video*

Wednesday and Thursday

A Time for Burning

Read: R, C, G #56 (Arab Americans) 30 days segment on living in Arab community

Final exam Thursday June 26, 2014

No assignments will be accepted after 5:00 pm (CDT) on Friday, June 27, 2014