

Racial and Ethnic Minorities In The United States (SOC 255.01)
101 Garland Hall • MWF 11:10p-12:00p • <http://majorsmatter.net/race>

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*“A fully functional multiracial society can not be achieved without a sense of history
and open, honest dialogue”* Cornel West

*“I hope that people will finally come to realize that there is only one race—the human race—and
that we are all members of it.”* Margaret Atwood

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the sociological study of race in the United States of America. The main purpose of this course is to broaden our understanding of racial and ethnic relations in the United States. Any sociological approach to this topic begins with the assumption that race and ethnicity are socially and politically constructed phenomena. This course will take that approach. In the first section of the course, we'll address three broad categories of explanations for race relations in the United States: macro approaches emphasizing class relations and internal colonialism, interactionists and social-psychological approaches that look at the role of face-to-face relations and other micro-level processes, and middle-range structuralist approaches that emphasize ethnic competition, ethnic enclaves, and the cultural division of labor. In the second section of this course, we will study how American understandings of race and ethnicity has varied significantly across time and place. Finally, we will ask what the future might hold for race relations in our country and consider the necessary conditions for bringing about social change in the area of race relations.

TEXTS

There are five texts for this course. The books are available in the bookstore. Dates for reading the texts and any additional readings are listed here in the syllabus. Lectures will usually be drawn from that day's text reading; the texts should be seen as assisting in your understanding of the lectures, class discussions, or town meetings. Additional readings are marked with an asterisk and can be found on the course webpage. The texts are as follows:

Brodkin, Karen. (2002). *How Jews Became White Folks & What That Says About Race In America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Frankenberg, Ruth. (1993). *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Gallagher, Charles A. (2003). *Rethinking The Color Line: Readings In Race and Ethnicity*. New York: NY: McGraw Hill

Payne, Richard J. (1998). *Getting Beyond Race: The Changing American Culture*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Rodriguez, Clara E. (2000). *Changing Race: Latinos, The Census, And The History Of Ethnicity In The United States*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade in this class is based on your performance on the following forms of evaluation. Each of you starts with an “A” (500 points) and you move down from there. The buffer for each full letter grade is 50 points. Pluses and minuses are earned in the 15 point margins at the top/bottom of the letter grade range. Once you go below the threshold for any given grade, there is NO way to move back up unless you've managed to earn extra credit points (see below). Your continued enrollment means that you understand and accept this grading policy. All written assignments should be typed, single-spaced, with 1” margins, and no more than a one line header with your name, the date, and the assignment.

A=450-500

B=400-449

C=350-399

D=300-349

F=0-299

A) Paidiea Memos and Class Discussion (50 points): Every day, one of you will prepare a memo/abstract on a reading. The memos should be *no less* than one page in length. Pretty much, what I want you to do is summarize the reading and highlight the major issues raised by the reading. Sum up the reading's argument, point out central issues and concepts in the text, present 2 key quotes, and offer two questions or critiques that can serve as points of discussion (see model on the webpage). I would like to post copies of the memo for your classmates, so a copy of your memo is due to me *as an email attachment in ".doc" or ".rtf" format* by 8am of the day your reading is assigned or you'll lose 10 points. If it appears that you may need to miss your day, it is expected that you will notify me no later than 8am by e-mail. You will still be responsible to send a memo by midnight that day, but can only earn 30 points on it. Memos will be judged on degree of completeness of the summary and "seriousness" of the questions asked. You will be expected to do one memo for a total of 50 points.

B) Engaging The Blog (100 points): Everyone doesn't talk in class but everyone's contribution to the class discussions is still necessary. In order to make sure that everyone has a voice (and uses it), I am requiring every student to write comments about the course conversations or lectures. Every student is required to initiate 10 threads on the course web-blog. These threads will each be worth up to 10 points. A thread can be a link to an interesting and relevant webpage (with an explanation), a link to a relevant report or article (with a summary), your comments on the class discussion or lecture, or questions that you might have for me or other students in the class. Every thread will start at 8 points and work up from there based on how much interest it garners. Yes, that means you should make your contribution worth our while. In order for you to get credit for all of your contributions, you must ALSO comment on 10 other students' contributions. For each comment you're missing, we will take away 3 of your points for your initiated threads.

C) Town Meetings (100 points): On eight Fridays, we will hold a mock town meeting about an issue. You will be responsible to serve as a panelist in one of the meetings. We will evaluate you in two ways. Fifty percent of the grade will be based on the persuasiveness of your arguments and your level of preparedness. The other fifty percent of the grade will be based on a four-page paper that you will write, in character, explaining your position on your town meeting's issue. The paper must include a minimum of 5 sources from the course readings or some other academic (non-website) resource. The final paper is due as an email attachment by midnight of the day you present.

Extra Credit (Possible 16 points): Because town meetings are not intended solely as a learning opportunity for the people assigned to them, it is important that presenters remember that they are accountable to you, the other students in the class. With that in mind, I have created an online response form where you can evaluate each presenters' presentation. In order to receive **the two extra credit points**, you have to complete the checkbox portion of the form, and you must give useful written comments to at least *three* of the presenters. These forms must be completed by midnight on Saturday after the town meeting being evaluated. I will consider these comments when I grade the presenters and they will receive an anonymous summary of your comments with their grade.

D) Mini-Project (50 points): On January 14th, we will discuss Helms' and Cross' theories of minority and majority racial identity development. You will then have a graded opportunity to take a self-assessment of your own racial identity development (BRIAS and WRIAS) and then write a 2 page response to the assessment's findings. Links to the BRIAS/WRIAS webpages are on the course webpage. These are due in class on January 19th.

E) Examinations (2 @ 100 points each): I would like for you to master the theoretical underpinnings of this class at the following levels of understanding: (1) basic knowledge, (2) comprehension and understanding, (3) application, and (4) analysis and comparison. With that in mind, there will be two take-home examinations. The first will be on the material from the theory unit of the course. The second will be semi-cumulative and will require students to combine most of what they've learned in the class to answer the question successfully. Eight questions will appear on the first exam and students will be required to choose a subset of them to answer. Because this is an open-book exam, appropriate citation will be required and expected. The exam will be posted on the website on February 23 and will be due in Dr. Pitt's office by 12pm on February 27. The second exam will have three possible questions and students are to pick one to answer. Those exams will be posted on April 20 and are due by email attachment by 5pm on April 27.

OTHER IMPORTANT THOUGHTS

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses: With the astonishing incidence of sickness and death that invariably occurs just around due dates, my policy is to let you know in advance that if you need to hand in something late because of family or personal illness, or death in the family, I'll need either a copy of the plane ticket, the funeral bulletin, or a note from your doctor.

Academic Integrity: The dictionary defines plagiarism as simply "taking and using as one's own the writing or ideas of another." It is a violation of the *Code of Academic Integrity*. Plagiarism is easily detected and WILL NOT be tolerated. If I suspect that plagiarism (writing other people's thoughts or ideas without citing them) has taken place, you will receive no credit for the assignment. If you are worried about this, please talk with me BEFORE you think it might be an issue.

"I'll Do Anything": Don't wait until the last minute to ask questions about the material covered in this class. Also, please come by my office to review your papers and projects. Don't wait until the end of the semester to worry about your grade. An emergency on your part does not constitute one for me. Oh yeah . . . and the time for "I'll do anything to raise my grade, Professor Pitt" is on the date things are assigned, not the last weeks of the semester.

Academic Etiquette: As a sign of respect to your fellow classmates, please avoid walking in late or leaving early. Please TURN OFF CELL PHONES and PAGERS before class. Respect the views and opinions of others. Avoid talking when others are making a point. You will have your chance. Don't read the paper, talk to your friends, etc., during class. Not only are those things disrespectful and disruptive to your classmates and me, but they also limit your ability to participate in class discussions and understand the material.

Final Thoughts on Respect: People often have strong opinions about the topics discussed in a race and ethnic relations course. Many people have ideas about race and ethnicity that are based on misinformation and prejudices which are very prevalent in the society in which we live. We will try to help each other come to a better understanding of racial and ethnic relations. In the process it is possible that members of the class will make comments which are based on misinformation or an interpretation that other members of the class find objectionable. Given this, it is essential that we treat each other with respect, that we do not demean or devalue the comments of class members, and that we stick to the issues rather than engage in personal attacks. If something is said in class that makes you uncomfortable and you want to discuss it, you can either address it in class or you can speak to me personally. When you discuss such comments, remember to do so in a way which meets the ground rules described here.

Curricular Units

Unit 1: Introduction To The Class

January 7:	Introduction	
January 9:	Getting On The Same Page I	
January 12:	Getting On The Same Page II	Gallagher Ch. 1
January 14:	Minority/Majority Identity Development I	Gallagher Ch. 3
January 16:	Minority/Majority Identity Development II	Gallagher Ch 9

Unit 2: Prejudice, Discrimination, and Theories of Ethnic Relations

January 19:	Where'd You Come Out . . . Analyzing Miniprojects	Gallagher Ch. 4
January 21:	Prejudice Positions As Attitudes	Gallagher Ch. 16
January 23:	Discrimination Positions As Actions	Gallagher Ch. 18
January 26:	Ideological Racism and Merton	Gallagher Ch. 17
January 28:	Social Psychological Theories	Gallagher Ch. 38
January 30:	Status Expectation Theory	Gallagher Ch. 39

February 2:	Split Class Theory	Gallagher Ch. 32
February 4:	Split Labor Theory	Gallagher Ch. 33
February 6:	Competition Theory	Gallagher Ch. 31
February 9:	Competition Theory	Gallagher Ch. 30
February 11:	Colonialism Theory	Gallagher Ch. 34
February 13:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Is An Obama Presidency Good For Black America?”	Gallagher Ch. 13
February 16:	Assimilation Theory	Gallagher Ch. 40
February 18:	Adaptations to Prejudice and Discrimination	Gallagher Ch. 19
February 20:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Why Are All The *** Kids Sitting Together In The Cafeteria?”	Gallagher Ch. 24

Unit 3: Sorting By Color: Why We Attach Meaning To Race

February 23:	Sociohistorical Constructions I	Payne Ch. 2
February 25:	Sociohistorical Constructions II	Rodriguez Ch. 2
February 27:	NO CLASS – TAKE HOME EXAMINATION DUE!	None
March 2-6:	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	None
March 9:	How The Idea Of Race Changes Over Time I	Rodriguez Ch. 4
March 11:	How The Idea Of Race Changes Over Time II	Rodriguez Ch. 5
March 13:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Why Aren’t MY Homies Niggaz Too?”	Gallagher Ch. 14
March 16:	US Race Changes Over Time – Colonized Minorities	Rodriguez Ch. 6
March 18:	US Race Changes Over Time – Migrant Minorities	Gallagher Ch. 11
March 20:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Gay Marriage: What Would MLK Do?”	Yancey Ch. 2*
March 23:	US Race Changes Over Time – White Ethnic	Brodkin Ch. 1 and 2
March 25:	US Race Changes Over Time – White Ethnic	Brodkin Ch. 5
March 27:	TOWN MEETING . . . “My Grandpa Didn’t Own Any Slaves”	Payne Ch. 5
March 30:	The Social Construction Of Whiteness	Frankenberg Ch. 2 and 3
April 1:	The Social Construction Of Whiteness	Frankenberg Ch. 6 and 7
April 3:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Is Interracial Adoption Just Cultural Genocide?”	Payne Ch. 8

Unit 4: Color-Blind or Color Bind . . .Thinking Through The American Dilemma

April 6:	Race and Romance – Blurring Boundaries	Gallagher Ch. 44
April 8:	Black, White, Or Other . . . Being Interracial	Payne Ch. 7
April 10:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Is Hispanic Immigration Hurting Black America?”	Peshkin Ch. 6*
April 13:	Constructing A Nonracist World Through Contact	Payne Ch. 3
April 15:	Getting Beyond Race . . . Possible?	Payne Ch. 1
April 17:	TOWN MEETING . . . “Is It Time To Stop Talking About Race?”	Gallagher Ch. 6
April 20:	Getting Beyond Race . . . Likely?	Gallagher Ch. 49
April 27:	Final Examination Due By 5pm	