

Sociology 316: Minority Groups
Summer 2008 (June 30 – August 8) Course Syllabus

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Instructor: Antwan Jones
205 Williams Hall
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Virtual Office Hours: 1:00 – 2:00 T TH
- Texts: Gallagher, C. A. 2007. *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity*. 3rd Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- D'Angelo, R. and H. Douglas. 2008. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Race and Ethnicity*. 6th Edition. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
- Additional readings are on Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the concepts of race and ethnicity by offering the tools necessary for understanding race and ethnicity through a sociological lens. A sociological analysis focuses on the social constructions of race and ethnicity and the structures that maintain racial and ethnic patterns of inequality and power. Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994: 55) discuss racial formations as “sociohistorical processes by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed.” We will be using this perspective to investigate how race has changed in the American context and beyond. In addition, this course will explore the ways in which racial and ethnic relations are locally and globally embedded in gendered and class-based structures.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Outcomes

The course is designed to focus on the development of skills and competencies that will help students to:

- better understand the views of different ethnic groups,
- develop a better understanding of the American multiethnic culture, and
- increase the understanding of basic concepts and terms in the sociology of race from both the individual ethnic group and the (inter)national perspective.

Department of Sociology Learning Outcomes

The following four learning outcomes (on the next page) were adopted by the Department of Sociology as learning objectives for its undergraduate program:

- Development of the sociological perspective--a recognition of the importance of culture and social structure as fundamental social forces that influence human behavior at the individual, group, organizational, institutional, and societal levels.
- An understanding of the diverse ways in which sociologists gather, interpret, and evaluate data.
- The ability to articulate sociologically informed opinions and arguments concerning social and behavioral phenomena, and the ability to critically read and understand an argument and to critically evaluate that argument.
- An understanding of the similarities and dissimilarities of behaviors, attitudes, values, beliefs, and opinions across diverse social groups, and an appreciation of how various aspects of the social experience are structured or influenced by such factors as race, ethnicity, age, gender, and social class.

General Education

This is a University general education course in cultural diversity in the United States. As such, it is designed to help you develop the following general education skills within the social and behavioral sciences:

- You will be able to communicate effectively by gaining proficiency in reading, writing, and presenting.
- You will be able to think critically through investigating and creative problem solving.
- You will learn how to identify sociological issues and problems and to form and frame them in ways that contribute to their solution.
- You will learn how sociological theory is applied to events to produce knowledge.
- You will be able to construct and present a sociological argument, identifying the evidence that supports it and the reasoning processes by which a conclusion is reached.
- You will be able to articulate the bases of evidence in the discipline, how they are used, and the assumptions on which they rest.

A course in this area also prepares you to assume your place as a citizen in the United States and world communities and to participate effectively in public life through critical thought, value judgment, and problem solving. As a course focused on cultural diversity in the United States, it investigates the ways in which ethnic cultures have shaped American political, social, economic, and cultural life. It fosters critical inquiry into the problems, the challenges, and the positive possibilities of a multicultural democracy and develops understanding of the concept of race and ethnicity.

- You will be able to utilize modes of inquiry into the ways in which ethnic cultures have shaped American life and understand the principles used to express their own interests.
- You will be able to identify issues and problems in cultural diversity from the perspectives of diverse cultures and to locate yourself in your own culture. In this process you will be able to ascertain and discuss the issues relevant to your daily life as well as to the ethnic groups' own lives.

- You will be able to engage in critical inquiry into the problems, challenges, and possibilities inherent in a multicultural democracy and to apply concepts of race and ethnicity.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Writing Assignments (37%)

- Journal/Diary on Race (18%)
- Reactions to Issues (5%)
- Final Paper – Take A Different Side (14%)

Non-Cumulative Exams (45%)

- Exam I – What is Race? (15%)
- Exam II – Transcending Race (15%)
- Exam III – Space and Race (15%)

Active Participation (18%)

- Class Discussion of Race (18%)

DETAILS FOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will have three types writing assignments each worth 15% of your overall grade. Papers are to be typed in Times New Roman, Garamond or similar 12-point font and double-spaced (The header should always be single spaced). As a sidenote, you may turn in these assignments before the due date.

The first writing assignment consists of you keeping a weekly Journal/Diary about race. Due on **Tuesday, August 5**, the journal should have at least six (6) different entries that highlight what knowledge or insight you have gained from the readings and how real-world experiences from that week can be applied to help illustrate what the central theme is for the readings. For an example of a journal entry, please to go Blackboard and under “Course Information”, you will find an example.

The second writing assignment consists of you writing your reaction to issues. Due **every Wednesday** by 5pm, you are to write a one-page response to the D’Angelo and Douglas issue of the week. There are 5 responses that are due for this class (The last week does not have a response). Details of the writing assignment are on Blackboard and under “Assignments”.

The third writing assignment is a final paper. Due on **Thursday, August 8**, this four-to-six page paper requests that you use the D’Angelo and Douglas text as a guide and come up with a new topic not discussed in the text and present both sides of that topic. Details of this writing assignment are on Blackboard and under “Assignments”.

There will be three non-cumulative exams for this course. The exams are essay-style, open book exams. The exam dates are listed in the course outline.

Participation is required for this online course. This is *your* class and its success depends, in large part, on your engaged participation and attendance. Participation is assessed through a class discussion of race. Each week, I will post a discussion question on Blackboard (under “Discussion Board”). You will need to adequately and logically respond to my question and adequately and logically comment on *at least* one of your fellow student’s responses. The purpose, to reiterate, is to encourage **discussion**. Thus, waiting until “the last minute” to chime in on the discussion is, in my opinion, not **actively** participating. By engaging in this behavior, the student must not expect **full** participation points. Rather, meeting the above requirements and doing so in an expedient way will earn you full participation for that week.

COURSE GRADING

- A (87-100)
- B (77-86)
- C (67-76)
- D (57-66)
- F (below 57)

The course is not structured around the traditional “10-point” grading scale because I feel that people who are at the upper cusp of two letter grades (i.e., those grades ending in 7, 8 or 9) should be bumped up to the higher grade. However, because of the structure of this grading scale, **no extra credit** will be offered in this class. It is expected that if you complete the course requirements with academic rigor, you could receive a high grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Academic Honesty Policy is designed to enhance and sustain an environment of ethical and principled intellectual pursuit, consistent with the core values of the University. This policy is based on respect for intellectual property as well as for one another. Academic honesty is essential to the academy. Honest pursuit of academic challenges and higher learning are the essence of the university experience. Respect for one another is fostered when our academic environment is free from **cheating, lying and stealing** not only of property but ideas as well.

Academic dishonesty is contrary to intellectual growth and pride in a job well done. BGSU graduates have met the challenges of achieving scholarly excellence and higher learning. Compromising academic honesty negatively impacts the foundations of our academy. We strive to nurture the respect inherent in the honest attainment of scholarly excellence. In short, academic dishonesty will **NOT** be tolerated. Persons found in violation of BGSU’s academic honesty policy will receive an **F** in the course and will have a meeting with academic honesty committee to address academic suspension or expulsion.

COURSE GUIDELINES**

- We always show respect for other people and other people’s ideas.
- We will actively pursue information about our own groups and those of others.

** Adopted from Lynn Weber Cannon, Director of the Center for Research on Women and Professor of Sociology, Memphis State University.

- We will share information about our groups with other members of the class and we will **never** demean, devalue, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences.
- We must acknowledge that *at least* racism, sexism and classism exist.
- We must acknowledge that one of the meanings of racism, sexism or classism is that we have been systematically taught misinformation about our own group and especially members of devalued/minority groups (this is true for both dominant and minority group members).
- We cannot be blamed for the misinformation we have learned, but we will be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
- Victims are not to be blamed for their own oppression.
- We will assume that people are always doing the best they can.
- We each have an obligation to actively combat the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls which prohibit group cooperation and group gain.
- We want to create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. Thus, at times, members of the class may wish to make a comment that they do not want repeated outside the classroom.
- If so, the student will preface his or her remarks with a request and the class will agree not to repeat the remarks.

RESOURCES

The Writing Center

Contact Information: 303 Moseley Hall; 419.372.2221
<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/writerslab/>

The Writers Lab is an effective resource for students at all levels of writing proficiency and at any stage in the writing process. Tutors, who are carefully selected undergraduate and graduate students, help with the identification and development of a topic, organization of the paper and theme, sentence structure, and mechanics. On-line and email assistance is available, and appointments with tutors are recommended. This course is writing intensive. If you need assistance crafting essays or tweaking your writing style, please visit the writing center.

Study Skills Center

Contact Information: 213 Moseley Hall; 419.372.8840
<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/sslab/>

The Study Skills Lab provides a variety of services such as individualized assessment, individual or small group instruction to improve specific study skills, and workshops on study skills like note-taking, textbook reading and time management. A mentor program is also offered for groups of students to learn about meeting with a student mentor who is qualified to assist students in learning "how to learn" material for large lecture classes. This center may help you specifically with studying for your exams. Please visit the study skills center at your discretion.

COURSE OUTLINE (*Italicized readings are from the Gallagher text; bold readings are from the D'Angelo/Douglas text*)

**All readings should be completed before the week we are slated to discuss it **

Week 1 (June 30 – July 4): Defining Race

- *Ten Simple Things You Can Do to Improve Race Relations* (pp 582-585)
- *How Our Skins Got Their Color* (pp. 7-9)
- *Drawing the Color Line* (pp. 9-20)
- *Racial Formations* (pp. 21-27)
- *Placing Race in Context* (pp. 85-91)
- **Issue 1: Do Americans Need a Common Identity?**

Week 2 (July 7 – July 11): Theories of Race

- *Theoretical Perspectives in Race and Ethnic Relations* (pp. 29-43)
- *Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position* (pp. 169-175)
- *Discrimination and the American Creed* (pp. 176-184)
- *Race and Civil Rights Pre-September 11, 2001: The Targeting of Arabs and Muslims* (pp. 185-196)
- *The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiblack Discrimination in Public Places* (pp. 214-223)
- Balibar, Etienne. “Racism and Nationalism” [on Blackboard]
- **Issue 16: Is Racism a Permanent Feature of American Society?**

****Exam I (Defining Race / Theories of Race)****

Week 3 (July 14 – July 18): Color-Blindness and Transcending Race

- *Color Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line in Post-Race America* (pp. 130-141)
- *The Ideology of Color Blindness* (pp. 143-149)
- Spencer, Rainier. “Thinking about Transcending Race.” [on Blackboard]
- Byrd, Charles. “Transcending Race Consciousness.” [on Blackboard]
- **Issue 9: Is the Emphasis on a Color-Blind Society an Answer to Racism?**

Week 4 (July 21 – July 25): Interracial Unions

- *Captain Kirk Kisses Lieutenant Uburu: Interracial Intimacies – The View from Hollywood* (pp. 534-541)
- *Discovering Racial Borders* (pp. 542-553)
- *The Changing Face of America: Intermarriage and the Mixed Race Movement* (pp. 554-570)
- *Ten Truths of Interracial Marriage* (pp. 573-581)

○ **Issue 6: Do Minorities and Whites Engage in Self-Segregation?**

****Exam II (Color-Blindness / Interracial Unions)****

Week 5 (July 28 – August 1): Race and Space in America

- *Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Conditions in U.S. Metropolitan Areas* (pp. 224-246)
- *Environmental Justice in the 21st Century: Race Still Matters* (pp. 262-276)
- *Why Are There No Supermarkets in My Neighborhood?: The Long Search for Fresh Fruit, Produce, and Health Food* (pp. 290-296)

- *Savage Inequalities* (pp. 280-289)

- Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. “American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass” [on Blackboard]

- **Issue 10: Are America’s Schools and Neighborhoods Resegregating?**

Week 6 (August 4 – August 8): A Global Race

- *Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City* (pp. 518-533)
- *The Arab Immigrant Experience* (pp. 498-513)

- Bhattacharyya, Gargi. “New Forms of Racialisation in the Global Economy” [on Blackboard]
- Paul, Kathleen. “Keeping Britain White” [on Blackboard]

****Exam III (Race and Space / A Global Race)****