WHY ARE WE STILL TALKING ABOUT RACE?

SOCY224

Spring 2015

Section 0101 (66319)

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00pm-3:15pm

Art-Sociology Building 2203

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

With the election of President Barack Obama, many claim that the United States is finally post-racial and that Americans can take pride in a true colorblind society. However, recent incidents such as L.A. Clippers owner Donald’s Sterling’s racist rant, the killings of Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Jonathan Ferrell, Michael Brown, and Relisha McBride as well as the protests and riots in Ferguson, MO give us reasons to pause that a post-racial America really exist. Some may simply dismiss these incidents as individual acts of a few lingering racists. However, the Department of Justice’s $82 million ruling that the Bank of America and Chase Bank co-opted in predatory lending against individuals living in predominately Black and Latino neighborhoods shifts race to a systemic issue, suggesting that racism operates in our social institutions and not just in the beliefs, ideologies, and behaviors of a few racists. Collectively, these incidents continue to put race at the center of news segments and dinner tables across America. They lead one to ask: Why are we still talking about race? Each week this course focuses on a specific topic to answer this complex question. Examining major theoretical and empirical approaches about race/ethnicity, this course explores the major debates and assumptions that construct individuals’ perceptions of what race is and how race matters. Using various sociological theories, social psychological theories, and subcultural approaches, this course will give students a historical and present day frame with which to view race and ethnic relations in the twenty-first century. The course will regularly discuss assigned readings, which consist of sociological articles and books as well as popular magazine articles, while integrating aspects of mainstream media (movies, songs, and television programs) to add context to our discussions.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate critical reading and analytical skills, including understanding an argument’s major assertions and assumptions and how to evaluate its supporting evidence by summarizing journal articles
- Define key theories that have implications for racial inequality
• Demonstrate an understanding of key terms including race, ethnicity, prejudice, discrimination, racism, colorism, tokenism, and lookism
• Articulate how this course has invited them to think in new ways about their lives, their place in the university and other communities, and/or issues central to their major disciplines or other fields of interest
• Explicate the racial processes that create or fail to create just, productive, egalitarian, and collaborative societies
• Understand the importance of validity and reliability in research studies
• Provide details about the study design of qualitative methodology
• Conduct ethnographic observations
• Write-up data results from an originally produced qualitative research study

REQUIREMENTS
1. Readings—Two books and several articles are required reading for this course. The books are available at the UMD Bookstore. You will be expected to read the assigned readings before the assigned date and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Chapters from the books will have page numbers or essay number beside them. All other readings are available at https://elms.umd.edu/

Listed as: (RR, pgX)

Listed as (Essay X)

2. Attendance—Class attendance is expected. Students are also expected to be on time and not leave early. Some of the material covered in class will not be covered by the readings. Therefore, attendance is vital to discuss the connection between theories and concepts and to be prepared for exams. If you are late to class or leave early, you will be marked absent for half of the class. Two late classes equal one absence. If you miss class, you are responsible for the material covered in class and announcements made in class. If you are late for class, it is your responsibility to make sure I mark you as late instead of absent. Multiple or prolonged absences, and absences that prevent attendance at a major scheduled grading event as noted under course requirements, will require either: 1) written documentation from an appropriate health care provider/organization or 2) advance notice in writing of a religious observance or university-sanctioned event. Make up exams and extensions of deadlines for exams and writing assignments will be given only when the student has a university-recognized excused absence. If you will be missing a major scheduled grading event for a legitimate reason, please contact me prior to the scheduled date and time. If advance notice is not possible, please contact me within 24 hours of the missed event. If a student misses an exam or assignment deadline for any unauthorized reason, she or he will not receive credit for the assignment. For information on the university’s absence policy see: http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540

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3. **Active Participation**—Throughout the semester, I will ask questions during class. I want to hear your responses, opinions, and comments. I strongly encourage you to share your insightful, as well as mind-boggling thoughts. All viewpoints are welcome in class and all of us will be respectful of each other as we discuss race and ethnic relations candidly. A large part of active participation will be based on attendance.

4. **Clickers**—Students are expected to purchase Clicker software for the course. These clickers will be used to participate in a series of survey questions posed through the semester that link the readings and lecture to actual attitudes and opinions about race and ethnicity. Students can purchase Clicker software for their smart phones through the University of Maryland. If a student does not have a smart phone, please see the Teaching Assistants. Students can purchase a one-year license for $15 or a four-year license for $32. More information on how to sign-up and register is at the website below.

http://www.clickers.umd.edu/

4. **Opinion Editorials (Op-eds)**—Students will be expected to post op-eds to ELMS by 5pm the day before class. So if an op-ed is assigned on Tuesday during class, the assignment is due by 5pm on Wednesday. If an op-ed is assigned on Thursday during class, the op-ed is due by 5pm on Monday. Failure to post the op-ed by 5pm will result in no credit for that week. Op-eds can be thought of as reflection statements on the readings. Each statement should be no shorter than 250 words and no longer than 500 words. Each op-ed should be double-spaced in Microsoft Word with your name, op-ed number, date, and chosen title. Each reflection statement is worth 5 points. Students are required to post 10 op-eds. Example op-eds can be seen in the Discussion Board folder on ELMS. The op-eds will be graded on your ability to—1) Define concepts discussed in class and in the readings; 2) Summarize the main points of the reading; 3) Critique the reading (What do you think? From your perspective, was the main point right or wrong?); 4) Offer alternative explanations if you disagree with the readings, and 5) Answer the questions posted in class on ELMS. In addition to the content, students will be graded for correct grammar and spelling.

5. **Exams**—There will be **two in-class exams (February 24, April 14)** that will be based on the assigned readings and class lectures. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer/essay questions. The exams will be the entire class period. Each exam is equally weighted. Makeup exams will not be given except under extreme, unusual, and documented circumstances. To be fair to the students who took the exam as scheduled, makeup exams will be more difficult exams.

6. **Final Paper**—Students will be expected to write a 7-10 page final paper. The paper should be double-spaced in Microsoft Word with your name, date, and chosen title. In addition to the content, students will be graded for correct grammar and spelling. **The paper will be based on an ethnographic assignment that will be completed throughout the semester with the guidance of the Teaching Assistants.** The paper will be due at the time the class final exam is scheduled. The final paper is due on May 21 by 1230pm, which is the time that our exam would end. Failure to submit your paper by 1230pm will result in a 10-point reduction in your paper grade every ten minutes it is late. A hard copy of the paper is mandatory. REFER TO FINAL PAGE OF SYLLABUS FOR ASSIGNMENT DETAILS
7. **Copyright**—Class lectures are copyrighted and may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without my written permission.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

"...Essential to the fundamental process of the University is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic honesty." The following constitutes violations of the UMCP Code of Academic Integrity:

(a) **CHEATING**: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. Submitting assignments that have been used in earlier courses without the express permission of the instructor.

(b) **FABRICATION**: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise (This would include signing the attendance sheet for another student who is not present).

(c) **FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONEST**: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.

(d) **PLAGIARISM**: Intentionally or knowing representing the works or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

*University of Maryland, College Park Code of Academic Integrity*  
(approved by the Campus Senate, February 13, 1989)

**By turning in assignments you are consenting to the Honor Pledge. The Pledge reads:**  
*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.*

**SPECIAL NEEDS**  
Students with special needs that might impact their ability to complete the requirements for the course should inform me as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation. This information will be kept confidential and I will do my best to accommodate special needs.

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**  
Please notify me in advance of any absences due to religious observance. The University System of Maryland policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances.

**GRADING**

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<td>100</td>
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<td>Exam 2: April 14, 2014</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper: May 21, 2014</td>
<td>150 (100 for paper; 25 for project overview; 25 for ethnography statement)</td>
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**Total Possible:** 400 points
Final Grade Calculations in points:

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COURSE SCHEDULE

1/27  What is race?

The Science of Race video

1/29  Are racial differences linked to genetics?

Ray—Race and Ethnic Relations in the Twenty-First Century (RR, pg 1)

Jones—The Embedded Nature of “Race” Requires a Focused Effort to Remove the Obstacles to a Unified America (RR, pg 7)

Ray—The Science, Social Construction, and Exploitation of Race (RR, pg 21)

2/3  Is race socially constructed?

Zuberi—The Evolution of Racial Classification (RR, pg 29)

Feagin—Racist America: Racist Ideology as a Social Force (RR, pg 41)

Perform Implicit Association Tests

2/5  How is race used to justify human atrocities?

The Willie Lynch letters

Drake—White Racism and the Black Experience (RR, pg 59)

Roots movie

2/10  How is race formed?

Omi and Winant—Racial Formation: Understanding Race and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era (RR, pg 91)

Unz—Race, IQ, and Wealth
Harris and McClure—“But My Mother Say’s It’s Rude to Talk about Race!”: How and Why We Need to Discuss Race in the United States (Essay 1)

Thornhill—“If People Stopped Talking about Race, It Wouldn’t Be a Problem Anymore”: Silencing the Myth of a Color-Blind Society (Essay 5)

Race: The Power of Illusion-The Difference between Us video

2/12 **How important was the Civil Rights Movement?**
(Readings under Civil Rights and Black Power Movements)

The National Black Political Convention—*The Gary Declaration*

Eyes on the Prize documentary

2/17 **How did race shape the economic landscape of the United States?**
(Readings under Civil Rights and Black Power Movements)

King—*Letters from Birmingham Jail*

2/19 **How did race shape the political landscape of the United States?**
(Readings under Civil Rights and Black Power Movements)

Malcolm X—*The Ballot or the Bullet*

Black Panther Party—*What We Want*

Angela Davis—*Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation*

Womack, Bridgeforth, and Beasley—“Black People Voted for Obama Just Because He’s Black”: Group Identification and Voting Patterns (Essay 16)

2/24 **Why was Affirmative Action created and does it disadvantage Whites?**
Katzenelson—*When is Affirmative Action Fair? On Grievous Harms and Public Remedies* (RR, pg 391)

Poon—“I Had a Friend Who Had Worse Scores than ME and He Got into a Better College”: The Legal and Social Realities of the College Admissions Process (Essay 15)

Moore—“Now All the Good Jobs Go to Them!”: Affirmative Action in the Labor Market (Essay 20)

Lee and Shaw—*Harvard Graduate Students in Education for Diversity*
Ray—*Stalled Desegregation and the Myth of Racial Equality in the U.S. Labor Market*

2/ 26 EXAM 1

3/3 **How easy is it to be prejudice?**
Blumer—*Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position* (RR, pg 129)

Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes

3/5 **How easy is it to discriminate?**
Pager—*Mark of a Criminal Record* (RR, pg 343)

3/10 **What if Trayvon Martin didn’t have on the Hoodie?**
Ray—*“If Only He Hadn’t Worn the Hoodie…”: Race, Selective Perception, and Stereotype Maintenance* (Essay 7)

3/12 **Can kids be racists?**
Ray—*Racial Attitudes Research: Debates, Major Advances, and Future Directions* (RR, pg 81)

Hughey—*“They Should Get Over It!” The End of Racial Discrimination* (Essay 3)

Ioanide—*“Oprah, Obama, and Cosby Say Blacks Should Just Work Harder, Isn’t that Right?: The Myth of Meritocracy* (Essay 6)

Khanna—*“But What about the Children?”: Understanding Contemporary Attitudes toward Interracial Dating* (Essay 11)

Race and Kids documentary

03/16-22 SPRING BREAK
3/24  **Why Are Black people only allowed to use the “N Word?”**
Bobo—Racial Attitudes and Relations at the Close of the Twentieth Century (RR, pg 163)


Harkness—“Why Do They Get to Use the N-Word but I Can’t?”: The Politics of Language (Essay 22)

Black is Beautiful: The N Word documentary

3/26  **Why are there racial differences in academic achievement?**
Ray—The Cumulative Pipeline of Persistent Institutional Racism (RR, pg 269)

Lewis and Pattison—Cracking the Educational Achievement Gap(s) (RR, pg 291)

Meanwell, Patel, McClure—“Well, That Culture Really Values Education”: Culture Versus Structure in Educational Attainment (Essay 13)

3/31  **Why are Blacks more likely to be unemployed and have less wealth?**
Oliver and Shapiro—Black Wealth, White Wealth: Wealth Inequality Trends (RR, pg 329)

Bertrand and Mullainathan—Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination (RR, pg 301)

20/20 Discrimination Special

4/2  **How segregated are American neighborhoods?**
Sewell—A Different Menu: Racial Residential Segregation and the Persistence of Racial Inequality (RR, pg 279)

Why Can’t We All Live Together documentary

4/7  **Does race cause differences in health outcomes?**
Gilbert and Leak—Root and Structural Causes of Minority Health and Health Disparities (RR, pg 369)

4/9  **Why does it seem like all Black males are criminals?**
Sampson and Wilson—Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality (RR, pg 351)
Doude—“If Black People Aren’t Criminals, Then Why Are So Many of Them in Prison?”: Confronting Racial Biases in Perceptions of Crime and Criminals (Essay 19)

Race to Execution documentary

4/14  EXAM 2

4/16  What does it really mean to be a U.S. citizen?
Noy—Citizenship, Nationalism, and Human Rights (RR, pg 261)

Cebulko—“We Need to Take Care of ‘Real Americans’ First”: Historical and Contemporary Definitions of Citizenship (Essay 18)

4/21  How does America assimilate immigrants?
Bonilla-Silva—From Bi-racial to Tri-racial: Towards a New System of Racial Stratification in the U.S.A. (RR, pg 109)

4/23  Is ethnic conflict inevitable?
Pettigrew—Reactions toward the New Minorities of Western Europe (RR, pg 137)

Read—“But Muslims Aren’t Like Us!”: Deconstructing Myths About Muslims in America (Essay 9)

Crash movie

4/28  What happens when groups come in contact and one is threatened?
Dixon—The Ties that Bind and those that Don’t (RR, pg 233)

4/30  Do people with lighter skin live better lives?
Ray—“One-Drop” to Rule them All? Colorism and the Spectrum of Racial Stratification in the Twenty-First Century (RR, pg 221)

Takaki—Asian Americans: Myth of the Model Minority


Beauty documentary and Beauty Commercial
5/5  Do Whites Really Benefit from White privilege?
McIntosh—White Privilege

Maier—Invisible Privilege

Scanzi—Straight White Male: Easiest Setting There Is

White Privilege Documentary

5/7  Do minority women have it harder than everyone else?
Ray and Rosow—Getting off and Getting Intimate (RR, pg197)

McClure—“They Don’t Want to Be Integrated, They Even Have Their Own Greek Organizations”: History, Institutional Context, and “Self-Segregation”(Essay 14)

Mouzon—“Blacks Don’t Value Marriage as Much as Other Groups”: Family Patterns and Persisting Inequality (Essay 12)

5/12  Are sports the great racial equalizer?
Hoberman—Darwin’s Athletes

Eitzen and Zinn— “It’s Just a Mascot!”: The Dark Side of Sports Symbols (Essay 10)

Foy and Ray—Colorism in College Basketball

Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes documentary

Can racial inequality ever be eliminated?
Bobo—What Do We Think about Race? (RR, pg 425)

Ray—Engaging Social Change by Embracing Diversity (RR, pg 383)

Harris—“I’m Not Racist. Some of My Best Friends Are . . . ”: The Shift From Being a “Friend” to Becoming an Ally (Essay 23)

Mauro and Robertson—Engaging Future Leaders: Peer Education at Work in Colleges and Universities (RR, pg 407)

5/21  Final Paper due by 12:30pm (Exam time is scheduled for 10:30am-12:30pm)
ETHNOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT

Prince George’s County is the most affluent Black area in the United States. On one hand, residents report being happier than in other locations because the concentration of affluent Blacks helps to alleviate some of the negative interactions they have centered on race and social class. On the other hand, county residents still report racial discrimination in school, work, and public settings. Most of this discrimination centers on treatment in social interactions as their racial identities become more salient than their social class identities.

Given this information, Prince George’s County becomes a fascinating place to conduct research. Conduct an ethnographic study in Prince George’s County. For Prince George’s County, areas may include Bowie, Mitchellville, and Upper Marlboro. The study may also have a comparison in another part of Prince George’s County or in a neighboring county.

Ethnography is a method that allows researchers to observe social meaning in everyday life. In other words, you observe behavior in the natural settings in which they occur instead of in a laboratory. Ethnographies are either participant observation or non-participation observation. Ethnographies also may include interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Many ethnographies center on treatment and differences in experiences in comparable social contexts among a particular group of people. Most of these social contexts occur in neighborhoods. Some possible social contexts include restaurants, public transportation, recreational facilities, churches, parks, hair salons or barbershops, and malls.

Ethnographies often begin with a central research question that can be explored in the “field.” Normally, ethnographies take months or years to complete but given the time constraints, students are expected to spend at least fifteen hours in the field collecting data. The point of ethnography is to be as objective as possible. Normally researchers have expectations or hypotheses based on the central research question that can be explored in the field. The plan of analysis is the methodological design or blueprint that the researcher implements to answer the central research question and test the hypotheses. The ethnographic statement is a document that details what has been completed. Valid and reliable research allows for others to replicate the study and test findings. In this regard, ethnography can be as rigid as quantitative methods. Historical and archival data also are important for ethnographic studies. Pictures and visual forms of data are encouraged.

Refer to the following power point for more details on conducting ethnographies. [http://www.slideshare.net/Usography/ethnography-101-by-usography](http://www.slideshare.net/Usography/ethnography-101-by-usography)

Assignments
1) Project Overview—Students will submit a one page, double-spaced methods statement with research questions, hypotheses, and plan of analysis that will be utilized in the paper. This assignment is due March 10 in class.

2) Ethnography Statement—Students will submit a 3-page, double-spaced methods statement. This assignment is due on April 16 in class.

3) The final paper is due on May 21 by 2pm.