Sociology 270: Comparative Race/Ethnicity in Latin America & U.S.
Spring 2016
M/W/F 3:30-4:20 p.m.
King 323

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office hours: Mon & Wed 4:30-5:30, and by appointment (see #6 under “Policies”)
pREFERRED CONTACT METHOD: E-MAIL

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course offers a comparative and historical perspective on the social meaning and consequences of ethnicity and race in the Americas. Countries across the Americas were forged in a colonial crucible that brought people of African, indigenous, and European origins into enduring relation with one another. From this common background there has emerged important similarities and differences in the social significance of skin color, culture, and descent. Using historical and contemporary material from a range of country cases, this course examines these similarities and differences, including their consequences for the making of groups and inequality. Countries examined will include Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and the United States.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course aims to help you:

to comprehend ethno-demographic variation within and between countries;

to analyze potential connections between the colonial and independence eras in the making of race and ethnicity in the Americas;

to develop an understanding of historical and contemporary differences between the United States and Brazil in terms of the social, political, and economic significance of African descent;

to compare and contrast discourses, policies, and other social processes related to “mestizaje” and indigeneity across several Latin American countries

to develop an understanding of variation in countries’ experiences with and policy responses to indigenous and African-descent social movements;

to apply social science concepts related to social boundaries to course material;

to interpret quantitative data on ethno-racial identification, inequality, and attitudes
ASSESSMENTS

25% for 10 weekly synopsis/reflection memos:

--due at start of class on Friday of weeks 2-6 and 9-13
--graded pass/fail
--about 500 words; typed; 1.5 or double spacing; two-sided is okay
--address readings and other course materials from M, W, F

65% for two take-home essay exams:

--mid-term (30%): distributed on Wednesday of week 7; due by Friday of week 7 at 11:59 p.m. via Blackboard
--final (35%): distributed by Wednesday, May 11 at 11 a.m.; due by Friday, May 13 at 11 a.m. via Blackboard

10% for attendance and in-class work

--be present and prepared with course materials at the scheduled start time

POLICIES, etc.

1. Please let me know, by the end of the second week of class, about any religious holidays that will affect your participation in the course.

2. Honor Code: This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please include the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” in all written work. Please contact me if you have any questions about the relationship of the Honor Code to any of your work in the course. For more information: https://new.oberlin.edu/arts-and-sciences/academic-resources-and-support/honor-code.dot

3. computers in the classroom: I allow and encourage the use of computers during our class meetings for in-class, Soc 270 work. No other use is permitted.

4. disabilities: The College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28 and their instructor of any disability related needs. For more information, see http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/index.dot If you are eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability, please let me know by the end of the second week.

5. If I change the syllabus, I will notify you in class or via e-mail, and post an updated version on Blackboard.
6. office hours: The regular times are stated at the beginning of the syllabus. If this time frame does not work for you, I would be happy to schedule an alternative meeting time. In general, I can make appointments on Monday and Wednesday evenings until 9 p.m., or on Fridays between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. If these time frames do not work for you, I might also be able to meet on Sunday evening. Please do your best to make your request 24 hours in advance for any alternative meeting time on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. If you would like to meet on a Sunday evening, then please make your request by Friday at 9 p.m. No notice is of course required for visits to my office during regularly scheduled office hours.

7. contacting me: Please use e-mail. If your query is rather involved, I will ask you to see me in person. I will respond to e-mails sent between Sundays at noon and Fridays at noon within twenty fours. It might take me longer to respond to e-mails sent outside this time frame.

8. communicating with me via e-mail: Few would mistake me for a member of the formality police, but I do appreciate when e-mails contain a salutation. More importantly, strive for maximum clarity when composing your e-mail. Please format the subject line in this way: Soc 270: [reason for e-mail]. Thanks in advance.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS
All readings are available via the course Blackboard site.

WEEK 1 (Feb. 1-5) Introduction

1.1 Monday
introduction

1.2 Wednesday


1.3 Friday


WEEK 2 (Feb. 8-12) The significance of skin color, culture, and descent in the colonial era

2.1 Monday
Peter Wade, Race and Ethnicity in Latin America [2010] pages 24-30 (“Africans and ‘Indians’ in Colonial Latin America”)

Mara Loveman, National Colors: Racial Classification and the State in Latin America [2014] pages 43-46 and 61-78


2.2 Wednesday

3.3 Friday

WEEK 3 (Feb. 15-19) Race and the transition from colony to nation-state

3.1 Monday

3.2 Wednesday
Peter Wade, Race and Ethnicity in Latin America [2010] pages 30-35 (“Black and Indigenous People in the New Republics”)

Edward Telles et al., Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America [2014] pages 14-24 (“A Short Ethnoracial History”)

3.3 Friday

WEEK 4 (Feb. 22-26) Whiteness & legal equality in Latin America & USA

4.1 Monday


4.2 Wednesday

4.3 Friday


WEEK 5 (Feb. 29-March 4) Comparing Brazil, Cuba and the U.S.

5.1 Monday
Thomas E. Skidmore, Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought [1993] pages 38-48 and 64-77 (“Racial Realities and Racial Thought after Abolition”)


5.2 Wednesday

5.3 Friday
WEEK 6 (March 7-11) Racial democracy? Boundaries, groupness, inequality, & ideology in Brazil

6.1 Monday

6.2 Wednesday

6.3 Friday

WEEK 7 (March 14-18) Racial democracy & stratification beliefs in Brazil and beyond

7.1 Monday


7.2 Wednesday

7.3 Friday
no class; take-home exam due at 11:59 p.m.

WEEK 8 (March 21-25)
no class; mid-semester break

WEEK 9 (March 28-April 1) Shifting the focus to indigeneity in comparative perspective

9.1 Monday
re-read Telles & Bailey 2013 from week 7: “Understanding Latin American Beliefs about Racial Inequality” pages 1559-1578 and 1585-1591

re-read Wagley from Week 1 (“On the Concept of Social Race in the Americas”)
9.2 Wednesday


9.3 Friday

WEEK 10 (April 4-8): Mexico & Peru

10.1 Monday


10.2 Wednesday

10.3 Friday
Pierre L. van den Berghe and George P. Primov, Inequality in the Peruvian Andes: Class and Ethnicity in Cuzco [1977] pages 116-142 (“Cultural Dynamics”) and 251-264 (“The Structure and Dynamics of Inequality”)

WEEK 11 (April 11-15): Guatemala

11.1 Monday

11.2 Wednesday


11.3 Friday
Commission for Historical Clarification (Truth Commission), *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* [1999] pages 11-45 and 83-86

WEEK 12 (April 18-22): Bolivia and Ecuador

12.1 Monday


12.2 Wednesday


12.3 Friday

WEEK 13 (April 25-29): Comparisons: ethno-movements, politics, & policy

13.1 Monday

13.2 Wednesday

13.3 Friday

WEEK 14 (May 2-6): More comparisons: movements, mestizaje, stratification

14.1 Monday


14.2 Wednesday

14.3 Friday
wrap up; evaluations