Sociology 321: Racializing the City: the Political Economy of Equality & Exclusion in the U.S. Urban Context

Fall 2015
T/Th. 3:00-4:15 p.m.
King 337

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office hours: Wed., 3-5 p.m. and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a historical and contemporary look at racial inequality in the United States through the lens of cities. As large-scale, concentrated spaces of wealth accumulation, poverty, habitation, education, social control, and, periodically, counter-hegemonic social mobilization, cities are and have been major sites of inequality generation and amelioration. With an abiding focus on how “the state” and “the market” combine to determine “who gets what, how, when, and why,” this course takes a political economy approach to race-making in urban America. Topics explored include social processes and policies related to housing, education, employment, urban redevelopment, and policing.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

describe the major ways in which the socio-spatial dynamics of cities have promoted both equality and exclusion along racial lines in the context of the United States;

assess the role of ‘the state’ and ‘the market’ in generating or ameliorating racial inequality over time, particularly in the context of institutions, policies, and processes related to housing, education, urban redevelopment, and policing;

interpret, evaluate, and apply quantitative social science data relevant to course content;

apply and assess alternative conceptualizations of racism (e.g., interpersonal, institutional, structural, laissez-faire, colorblind).

think and write systemically about how the social world works
ASSESSMENTS

25% for five memos, each addressing specific sets of weekly readings; post memos 2-5 to Blackboard by 7:00 p.m. on Monday
  (1) week 2
      --bring “S.W.A.B.” notes to class on Tuesday the 8th
      --submit memo to Blackboard by Friday the 11th at noon)
  (2) week 4 or 5 (Sept. 21 or Sept. 28)
  (3) week 9 (Oct. 26)
  (4) week 12 (Nov. 16)
  (5) week 14 or 15 (Nov. 30 or Dec. 7)

40% for two major papers
  (1) due Friday, Oct. 16 at noon (week 7); 5-6 pages; 15%; distributed by Tue., Oct. 6
  (2) due Wed., Nov. 25 at noon (week 13); 8-10 pages; 25%; distributed by Sun., Nov. 15

25% for a final exam or final project (either due on Saturday, Dec. 19 at 9 p.m.)

  option 1: The final exam will have a “big picture” focus with respect to weeks 1-11 and a more detailed one for weeks 12-15. Question types will include multiple choice, identification, short answer, and two essays.

  option 2: Use Social Explorer, scholarly articles, newspapers, verifiable statistics, and other reputable sources to do a research paper on a particular city or metropolitan area. The specific focus is up to you, but it must substantially integrate course material. This option requires my approval of your topic by the Thursday of week 14 (Dec. 3). Talk to me early and often about your ideas.

  note: If you have not gained project approval by Dec. 3, then the final exam is required. However, if you do gain such approval but then decide to take the final exam instead, that is fine.

10% for attendance, participation, and other in-class work

It is okay to use computers to promote your learning in this course. The Honor Code applies. I reserve the right to prohibit computers for specific individuals or the entire class if their use becomes a problem. Misuse of computers may also substantially erode your attendance and participation grade. -

Please do your part to maintain a respectful and engaged classroom environment.
   —Be ready with materials, concentration, etc. at the scheduled start of class.
   —Listen sympathetically.
   —Contribute to discussion.
S.W.A.B.
This is a method for actively and critically engaging the readings, while also ensuring that your critiques are sympathetic ones—that you have taken seriously the efforts and arguments of the author(s). Use it for taking notes every week, and also for writing memos.

S: summarize

W: think with the author(s) and text(s) and/or examine how different author(s) and text(s) ‘think’ with one another

A: think against the author(s) and text(s) and/or examine how different author(s) and text(s) ‘think’ against one another

B: think beyond the author(s) and text(s)

POLICIES, etc.
1. deadlines and tardy work:

   *memo 1*: half point deduction (out of five) for every 12-hour period, or portion thereof, beyond when it is due

   *memos 2-5*: a half point deduction for every hour, or portion thereof, beyond when it is due

   *papers 1 and 2*: two-thirds of a letter grade (e.g. A to B+) deduction for every day it is late

   *research project*: not accepted after end of final exam (Sat., Dec. 19 at 9 p.m.)

   *religious holidays*: make me aware about conflicting due dates by the end of week 2

2. computers in the classroom: see above

3. 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

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-
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 I will 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 very happy to schedule an alternative meeting time. In general, I can make appointments on Mondays and Wednesdays, as well as Thursdays between 4:15 and 5:30. Please do your best to make your request 24 hours in advance, particularly for proposed meeting times on Monday.

7. Contacting me outside of class, office hours, and appointments: 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 321: [reason for e-mail]. Thanks in advance.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS
All readings except The New Jim Crow are available via Blackboard or specified web addresses.

**Week 1 (Sept. 1 & 3) Course Introduction**


**Week 2 (Sept. 8 & 10) Conceptualizing Race & Racism**

--Smith, *Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, pp.32-35 and 53-54
--Grant-Thomas & Powell, “Structural Racism and Color Lines in the United States”, pp.118-142
--Desmond & Emirbayer, “What is Racial Domination?” pp.335-339 and 342-344

**Week 3 (Sept. 15 & 17) Housing and the Racialization of Space, Part I**

--Mohl, “Race and Housing in the Postwar City: an Explosive History.” pp.16-23
--Sugrue, “‘United Communities Are Impregnable’: Violence and the Color Line,” pp.231-258

**Week 4 (Sept. 22 & 24) Housing and the Racialization of Space, Part II**

--Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore*, pp. ix, 2-3, and 84-94
--Satter, “The Noose around Black Chicago,” pp.36-63

**Week 5 (Sept. 29 & Oct. 1) Housing and the Racialization of Space, Part III**

--Hanchett, “The Other ‘Subsidized Housing’: Federal Aid to Suburbanization, 1940s-1960s,” pp.163-179
--Massey & Denton, *American Apartheid*, pp.60-74
--Danielson, “Excluding Subsidized Housing,” pp.79-106

**Week 6 (Oct. 6 & 8) Post-Civil Rights Era Policy Responses to the Racialization of Metropolitan Space**

--Keating, “Shaker Heights: Integration Maintenance in a Once Exclusionary, Planned Suburb,” in *Suburban Racial Dilemma*, pp.96-113

**Week 7 (Oct. 13 & 15) The Link between Metropolitan Housing & Education Segregation**

--Frankenberg, “The Role of Residential Segregation in Contemporary School Segregation,” pp.548-570
--Sokol, *All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn*, pp.171-229
Week 8 (Oct. 20 & 22) … no class; fall break

Week 9 (Oct. 27 & 29) The Link between Metropolitan Housing & Education Segregation, Part II

--Lawrence, “Segregation Misunderstood: the Milliken Decision Revisited,” pp.183-200
--Hayward, “White Fences,” in How Americans Make Race, pp.151-173

Week 10 (Nov. 3 & 5) Consequences of the Racialization of Metropolitan Space, Part I


Week 11 (Nov. 10 & 12) Consequences of the Racialization of Metropolitan Space, Part II

--Shapiro, The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality, pp.60-64, 105-125, and 132-137

Week 12 (Nov. 17 & 19) The Old in the New?: Subprime, Urban Redevelopment, and Race


Week 13 (Nov. 24 only) Race, Policing, and Mass Incarceration, Part I

--Alexander, The New Jim Crow, pp.1-20 and 40-139

Week 14 (Dec. 1 & 3) Race, Policing, and Mass Incarceration, part II

--Alexander, The New Jim Crow, pp.140-220

Week 15 (Dec. 8 & 10) Race, Policing, and Mass Incarceration, part III

--Forman, "Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration: Beyond the New Jim Crow,” pp.21-69

Final exam or submission of final project: Saturday, Dec. 19, 7-9 p.m.