Sociology 262: Making Race & Ethnicity in the United States  
Fall 2015  
T/Th. 9:30-10:50 a.m.  
King 341  

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

What does it mean to speak of the “making” of race and ethnicity? What is the difference, if any, between “race” and “ethnicity”? What social processes have led to the currently prevailing ways of classifying people (oneself and others) by ethnicity and race in the United States, as well as to the patterns of inequality that correlate with those classifications? How are ethnic and racial boundaries changing, and with what consequences for the future? And what do scholars mean when they speak of “boundaries” and “boundary changes” and “boundary consequences”? What does all of this have to do with identity, with interests, with who gets what? In pursuit of questions such as these, this course examines the social construction of race and ethnicity in the United States as a historical and ongoing process. Major historical developments such as territorial settlement, slavery, Jim Crow and civil rights receive due attention, along with more contemporary patterns of boundary-making, power, and inequality across a range of social domains.  

COURSE OBJECTIVES  

This course aims to help you:  

- to comprehend “race” and “ethnicity” as analytical rather than folk concepts, and to arrive at your own understanding (even if only provisional) of their proper conceptualization based on a critical engagement with divergent scholarly viewpoints on the matter;  

- to speak and write in an informed manner: about variation over time in the ethnic/racial composition of the United States, about some major social processes that shaped this varying composition; and about the conceptually awkward character of this use of “composition” in a course devoted to understanding the “making” and “social construction” of race and ethnicity;  

- to develop an understanding of major types of assimilation theory, including how these are linked to boundary concepts (ethnic/racial boundaries, boundary change, boundary consequences), and how these have been used to understand the making of race-ethnicity over time;
to develop a critical understanding of divergent perspectives on the future trajectory of ethnic/racial boundaries and consequences in the United States;

to arrive at an informed, if provisional, assessment of how breaking the conceptual and empirical confines of the nation-state frame affects our understanding of the making of race & ethnicity in the United States.

ASSESSMENTS

60% for four analytical papers on specific readings & topics (~3-5 pages each)
  (1) week 2; due Tuesday, Sept. 22 at 3:00 p.m. (week 4)
  (2) weeks 3-6; due Friday, Oct. 16 at 1:00 p.m. (week 7)
  (3) weeks 7 & 9; due Friday, Nov. 6 at 1:00 p.m. (week 10)
  (4) weeks 10-12; due Wednesday, Nov. 24 at 1:00 p.m. (week 13)

30% for a comprehensive final exam (question types: multiple choice; identification; short answer; essay)

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 analytical papers.

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:

   *analytical papers*: one point deduction (out of fifteen) for every 24-hour period, or portion thereof, beyond when it is due

   *final exam*: must be taken at the scheduled time: Friday, Dec. 18 from 9 to 11 a.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-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 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 262: [reason for e-mail]. Thanks in advance.
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS
All readings are available via the course Blackboard site.

Week 1 (Sept. 1 & 3) Introduction: the U.S.’s “ethno-racial pentagon”
For Thursday, examine the following, focusing on categories and population proportions:

Week 2 (Sept. 8 & 10) Concepts: alternative perspectives on “ethnicity” and “race”

*alternative perspectives*

*on the distinction between racial/ethnic categories and specific individuals*

Week 3 (Sept. 15 & 17) Socio-historical overview & explanatory approaches

—Fitzgerald (2014) selections from *Recognizing Race and Ethnicity: Power, Privilege, and Inequality*
  —“Emergence of the US Racial Hierarchy” 105-133
  —“Race Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” 137-172
  —“Race Relations in Flux: Post-WWII Activism,” 175-210

Week 4 (Sept. 22 & 24) The hypo-descent rule & the white/black boundary

—Davis (2001) *Who is Black? One Nation’s Definition*, 4-6, 8-15, & 51-80

Week 5 (Sept. 29 & Oct. 1) Whiteness and the making of “Hispanics” or “Latinos”


**Week 6 (Oct. 6 & 8) Changing stereotypes and categories: the making of “Asian Americans”**


**Week 7 (Oct. 13 & 15) History’s window into emerging race-ethnicity trends, 1**


**Week 8 (Oct. 20 & 22) … no class; Fall Break**

**Week 9 (Oct. 27 & 29) History’s window into emerging race-ethnicity trends, 2**

  —“The Puzzle of Ethno-Racial Change,” 21-51
  —“Solving the Puzzle,” 52-89

**Week 10 (Nov. 3 & 5) Whither race-ethnicity making in the US?, 1**

—Lee and Bean (2007) “Redrawing the Color Line?”, 49-62
Week 11 (Nov. 10 & 12) Whither race-ethnicity making in the US?, 2

—Alba (2009) selections from Blurring the Color Line
   —“Contemporary Dynamics of Minority Mobility,” 90-135
   —“An Extraordinary Opportunity: the Exit of the Baby Boomers,” 136-165

Week 12 (Nov. 17 & 19) Whither race-ethnicity making in the US?, 3

—Hollinger (2005) “The One Drop Rule & the One Hate Rule,” 18-28

Week 13 (Nov. 24 only) Race-ethnicity and the national security state, 1

Methodological Nationalism and the Study of Race-Ethnicity in the U.S.
—reading to be announced

Week 14 (Dec. 1 & 3) Race-ethnicity and the national security state, 2

Arab Americans & Muslims before and after 9/11
—listen to “Shouting Across the Divide,” This American Life (Dec. 15, 2006)
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/322/shouting-across-the-divide
—Desmond & Emirbayer (2010) two sections from chapter “Crime and Punishment” (The Arabization of Terrorism; Profiling Arab Americans), in Racial Domination, Racial Progress, 271-275

Week 15 (Dec. 8 & 10) Race-ethnicity and the national security state, 3

Seeing without the Lenses of ‘Methodological Nationalism’
—Brubaker (2015) section on Citizenship from “Difference and Inequality,” in Grounds for Difference, 19-21
—Bonilla-Silva (2015) “Unpacking the Imperialist Knapsack”, 146-165 (focus on 152-159)

Final Exam: Friday, December 18 from 9-11 a.m.