

## **Race and Ethnicity**

### **Course Description**

The aim of this course is twofold. First, to introduce students to the study of race and ethnicity within the field of political science by exploring how the terms “race” and “ethnicity” are used by different scholars. As we will see, neither term is as simple as it might first appear. We will explore some of the different ways that these two concepts have evolved and changed over time in the United States, as well as how conceptions of culture, nationality, language and identity have influenced these terms. Secondly, this course aims to challenge students to engage honestly and openly with the often contentious and politically explosive issue of race politics and racial discrimination in America.

Some of the issues we will explore include: What it means to say race is a social construct. What distinguishes race from ethnicity. How our understanding of “race” has changed over time. How immigrants shaped America's racial and ethnic identity. Why a colorblind society is problematic. How white privilege and white supremacy continue to shape American society. Current racial trends in education, housing, employment and the criminal justice system. How theories of intersectionality can help expose institutional racism and complicity. And finally, how to develop anti-racist politics.

### **Course Goal**

The central goal of this class is to help students develop a critical analysis and understanding of the past, present and future impacts of racial and ethnic politics in the United States. In particular, this class aims to challenge students to examine their own privileges and ask how these may be linked to ongoing political inequalities today. As students of a predominantly white, elite private university in the heart of the racially and ethnically diverse South Bronx, how do we relate to our neighbors beyond the gates? At the end of this course, students should have basic skills and the ability to address and respond to the emotionally and politically charged issues of racial politics and prejudice in society today.

### **Required Books**

**The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege.** Robert Jensen. San Francisco: City Lights. 2005.

**Understanding Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework (2nd edition).** Lynn Weber. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2010.

**The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.** Michelle Alexander. New York: The New Press. 2010.

*Additional course materials will be posted on the class Blackboard site.*

# Course Requirements

## Class Participation

Students are expected to read and reflect on the assigned material before class, and to actively participate in the seminar in an informed and respectful way throughout the semester. You are expected to bring any assigned readings with you to class .

## Class Assignments

- **Online Posts:** Students will be asked to write a blog entry reflecting on class readings and discussions or to respond to a short article posted by the professor.
- **Group Projects:** Students will be broken into small groups and each group will be responsible for leading a class discussion based on the assigned material.
- **Short Papers:** Students will be asked to write three short papers (approx. 5 pgs) addressing different topics discussed in class. Paper topics and guidelines for papers will be handed out 2 weeks before each assignment is due in class.

## Grading Breakdown

Class Participation – 30%      Online Posts – 20%  
Short Papers – 30%              Group Projects – 20%

# Policies and Procedures

## Attendance

Per Fordham policy, more than 4 unexcused absences can result in a grade reduction for the course. Coming to class significant late will count as one unexcused absence. The full attendance policy is available in Fordham's [Student Handbook](#).

The only exceptions are as follows:

- Personal illness or death in the immediate family (documentation required)
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Participation in university-sanctioned activity
- An act of nature or cosmic event making attendance impossible (flood, earthquake, apocalypse)

## Electronic Distractions

All laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class, unless the computer is being used for note taking. Violation of this policy may result in a reduced letter grade or possible failure of this course. Facebook and Gchat do not constitute active class participation.

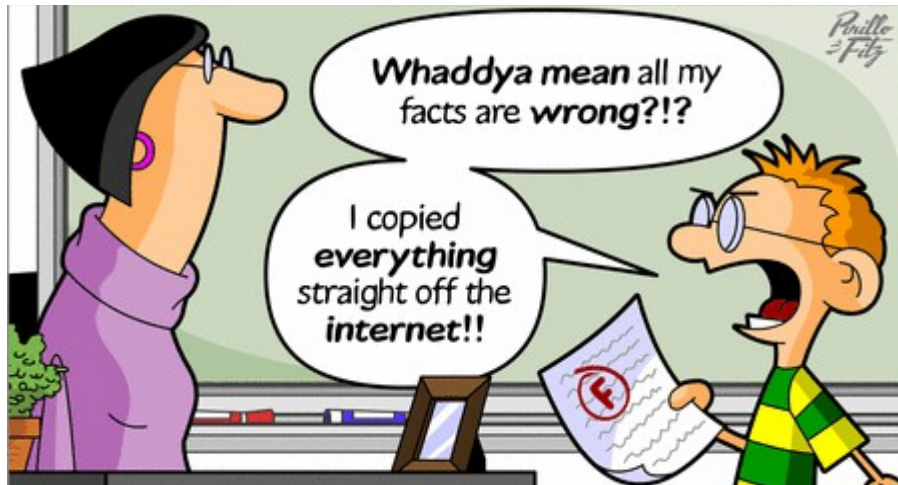
## Due Dates

Any late assignments will have points deducted from the total. This is a firm policy, except in the extenuating circumstances noted above (documentation is required). There are no makeup assignments or extra credit papers. No credit will be given for any assignment more than a week late (7 days).

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a sign of poor academic skills and laziness, and will not be tolerated. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will receive an automatic F for the class, no exceptions. Fordham's statement on plagiarism can be found in the Student Handbook under [University Regulations, Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity](#):

*"Plagiarism occurs when individuals attempt to present as their own what has come from another source. Plagiarism takes place whether such theft is accidental or deliberate. It is no defense to claim that one has "forgotten" to document ideas or material taken from another source."*



## Writing Help

Students needing additional writing help should contact the Writing Center, which is located on the 5th floor of Dealy Hall. More information is available at: [www.fordham.edu/writingcenter](http://www.fordham.edu/writingcenter)

## Disabilities

Any students who requires differently-abled assistance is encouraged to contact Disability Services. [http://www.fordham.edu/campus\\_resources/student\\_services/disability\\_services/](http://www.fordham.edu/campus_resources/student_services/disability_services/)

# Part I: Ethnicity, Race and America in Transition

## Week 1 (1/14 and 1/17): Welcome

Intros. Hand out and review course syllabus and class logistics. Discuss basic approach to the course, goals of the semester and structure of how the class will operate. Discussion about politically charged topics and contentious issues, and creating a safe space for difficult dialogue in the classroom.

Readings: (read for Thursday)

- 1) *"Languages of Race—Politics of Difference"* (pgs 1-20). In *The Shadow of Race*. Victoria Hattam.
- 2) *"American Anthropological Association Statement on "Race"'"* ([www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm)).

**!!Note: No class on Mon (1/21) - Martin Luther King Jr. Day !!**

## Week 2 (~~1/21~~ and 1/24): The Power of Naming

*\*\*No class on Monday (1/21)*

Readings:

- 1) *"From 'Historical Races' to Ethnicity: Disarticulating Race, Nation and Culture"* (pgs 21-43) in *In The Shadow of Race*. Victoria Hattam
- 2) *"Part I: Contexts and Concepts"* (pgs 1-24). *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the US*. Peter Rose.
- 3) *"Race as a Social Construct"*. Anthropology Net. 2008. ([Read Online](#)). Emanuel Lusca.

## Week 3 (1/28 and 1/31): America Becoming

Readings:

- 1) *"Fixing Race, Unfixing Ethnicity: New York Zionists and Ethnicity"* (pgs 45-76) in *In The Shadow of Race*. Victoria Hattam.
- 2) *"From Immigrants to Ethnics"* and *"From Other Shores"* (pgs 52-117) in *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the US*. Peter Rose.

**Hand out writing assignment #1**

## Week 4 (2/4 and 2/7): Ethnicity, Race and the Melting Pot

Readings:

- 1) *"The Causes of Race Superiority (1901)"* (pgs 1-24). Edward A. Ross.
- 2) *"The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?"* (pgs 20-46) in *American Quarterly* 16.1 (Spring 1964). Philip Gleason.
- 3) *"Zangwill's The Melting Pot Plays Chicago"* (pgs 3-20) in *MELUS* (Autumn, 1995, 20:3). Guy Szuberla.

## Week 5 (2/11 and 2/14): The Unwashed Multitudes

Readings:

- 1) *"New Immigrants, Race and 'Ethnicity' in the Long Early Twentieth Century"* (pgs 1-34) in *Working Toward Whiteness: How American's Immigrants Became White*. David Roediger.

2) “*Are Jews a Race? Are Mexicans White? The State and Ethnicity*” (pgs 77-110) in *In The Shadow of Race*. Victoria Hattam.

\***Writing assignment #1** due in class Monday (2/11).

**Hand out writing assignment #2**

**!! Note: No class on Mon (2/18) – President's Day !!**

**Week 6 (~~2/18~~ | 2/19 and 2/21): Social Contestation in America**

\*\*No class on Monday (2/18), class meets Tue (2/19) instead

Readings:

- 1) “Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” April, 1963.
- 2) “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. August, 1963.
- 3) “*The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*”; “*Law and Order: Civil Rights Laws and White Privilege*”; “*Immigrant Labor and Identity Politics*” (pg 1-69) in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. George Lipsitz.

**Week 7 (2/25 and 2/28): Race and American Empire**

Readings:

- 1) “*Whiteness and War*” (pgs 70-104) in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. George Lipsitz.
- 2) “*Introduction: Just a Joke*”; “*Race Words and Race Stories*”; “*Facing the Truth: Past, Present and Future*” (pgs xiii-44) in *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege*. Robert Jensen

\***Writing assignment #2** due in class Monday (2/25).

**Hand out writing assignment #3** (*Last short writing assignment*)

**Week 8 (3/4 and 3/7): How Racism Shapes Collective Memory**

Readings:

- 1) “*'Gone With the Wind': The Invisibility of Racism in American History Textbooks*” (pgs 137-170). *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. James Loewen.
- 2) “*The Emotions of White Supremacy: Fear, Guilt and Anger*”; “*Playing the Fool*”; “*Against Diversity, For Politics*”; “*Conclusion: White People's Burden*” (pgs 45-96) in *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege*. Robert Jensen.

**!! Note: Spring Break – No classes !!**

**Week 9 (~~3/12~~ and ~~3/15~~): Spring Break – No Class**

## Part II: Developing an Intersectional Perspective

### Week 10 (3/18 and 3/21): Foundations of Intersectionality

Readings:

1) “*Section I: Laying the Foundation*”(pgs 1-78) in *Understanding Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework*. Lynn Weber.

\***Writing assignment #3** due in class Monday (3/18).

\*\***Group #1 Presentation**

**!! Note: No class Thu (3/28) – Easter Recess !!**

### Week 11 (3/25 and 3/28): Intersectional Concepts

\*\**No class on Thursday (3/28)*

Readings:

1) “*Section II: A Conceptual Framework-Five Themes*” (pgs 79-132) in *Understanding Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework*. Lynn Weber.

\*\***Group #2 Presentation**

**!! Note: No class Mon (4/1) – Easter Recess !!**

### Week 12 (~~4/1~~ and 4/4): American Schools and Intersectionality

\*\**No class on Monday (4/1)*

Readings:

1) “*Section III: A Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality Analysis of Education*” (pgs 133-210) in *Understanding Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework*. Lynn Weber.

\*\***Group #3 Presentation**

### Week 13 (4/8 and 4/11): Confronting Our Racial Reality

Readings:

1) “*Introduction*”; “*The Rebirth of Caste*”; “*The Lockdown*” (pgs 1-94) in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Michelle Alexander.

\*\***Group #4 Presentation**

### Week 14 (4/15 and 4/18): Race and Injustice

Readings:

1) “*The Color of Justice*”; “*The Cruel Hand*” (pgs 95-172) in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Michelle Alexander.

\*\***Group #5 Presentation**

**Week 15 (4/22 and 4/25): Racial Politics in the Age of Obama**

Readings:

“*The New Jim Crow*”; “*The Fire This Time*” (pgs 173-248) in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Michelle Alexander.

**\*\*Group #6 Presentation**

**Week 16 (4/29 and 5/2): From Here, Where do We Go?**

No Readings:

Open conversation on race, ethnicity and racial politics in the future. Where do we go from here?

Building alliances and building trust. Moving from the classroom to our everyday lives. How can we be allies for social justice?

**Week 17 (5/6 and 5/9): No Final Exam**

**\*\*No class Mon 5/6**

*Cheers. Sayonara. Mahalo. Adios.*

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