

SOC 270: Race and Ethnicity, Fall 2014

TR 2:45 PM-4:00 PM, Mills 102

Instructor: Kristi Brownfield

If you need to contact me:

Mills 206

Mon: 8:30 – 10:30 (viewing time available); Tuesday 12:15-2:15 (viewing time available); Wed 8:30-10:30; Thursday 12:15-2:15

brownfield@hendrix.edu (preferred) or 450-1209 (office)

We will be using Moodle frequently; this includes both turning in work and the weekly readings. If you have trouble accessing the course, let me know ASAP.

Required Texts:

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2013. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Conley, Dalton. [1999] 2010. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gallagher, Charles A., ed. 2012. *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Also recommended by not required:

Blazing Saddles. 1974.

Girlfight. 2000.

Lars and the Real Girl, 2007

Smoke Signals. 1998

You will NEED to get a copy of the required books to pass the class. The recommended works are all pieces of popular culture you will need to read/watch to complete review assignments. However owning the books/movies is not necessary so long as you are able to get copies to view (e.g., from the library, from a friend, Netflix, etc.).

Course Objectives:

This course involves a consideration of the evolving patterns of conflict and cooperation among racial and ethnic groups. Major attention is given to the socially constructed nature of group identities based on ethnicity and race; racist ideologies, prejudices, stereotypes and various forms of discrimination; as well as the ongoing struggles for social justice.

Race is in everything we do: what we wear, what media we consume, our interactions and relationships, and even in who we believe ourselves to be. This course is designed to introduce you to a new way of looking at the world – and the instances of race in it – than you may have been previously exposed to. When you leave this class at the end of the semester, you should be able to think critically and questions the assumptions you had about race, and what “being white” or “being black” or identifying with a particular ethnicity means. We will explore what we know about race and how we know what we know through readings, discussions, observations, movies, and online blogs and other websites.

You will be asked to examine the socio-historical context of the creation of racial ideologies, the effects of racial ideologies both historically and in your personal lives, and think critically about the ways in which race intersects with other statuses we hold such as gender, class, or sexuality.

Plagiarism:

See the student handbook for a definition of plagiarism. Taking another person's work and passing it off as your own will not be tolerated in this class. You will receive an immediate zero for plagiarized work. The second attempt at plagiarism will be reported to the university and I reserve the right to give a failing grade for the course at that point. Please be sure to **cite your sources** and do not assume that I do not check them or your writing.

Secondly, please **do not** cite Wikipedia. Feel free to use Wikipedia as an information resource but be aware that: (a) the information there is not absolute, is frequently changed, and may be wrong and (b) any information put on Wikipedia comes from *other sources* and it is those sources you should be looking at and citing.

Electronics:

Electronics are welcome and, on some days, will be encouraged in this class. However, your electronics use should be *related to* this class and should not be disruptive to other students. This means please turn off cell phone ringers. Do not play music or videos. No headphones. Be respectful of the classroom as a learning environment. Please note that if you're being disruptive or I notice your inattention you will be required to write a thousand-word essay about a sociological concept of my choosing.

Discussion Ground Rules:

During the semester students will be able to share thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about their own experiences. We will also read articles and books that will offer academic perspectives. The differences in these perspectives will add depth and richness to this course. Please be respectful of those differences. Here are some ground rules for discussion I expect people to follow in class:

1. Acknowledge your privilege! We all have advantages and information we have been given that colors our perceptions of the world and how the world works. Understand and acknowledge those privileges, from white privilege, to male privilege, to class privilege, to able-bodied privilege, to heterosexual privilege, and many other types of privileges.
2. Be willing to listen to the perspective of others – *especially* when they come from different backgrounds and experiences.
3. Acknowledge that discrimination – both individual and institutional – exists. Acknowledge that racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and other such prejudices exist and affect the lives of people every day.
4. We do not blame victims for their experiences of oppression.
5. We do not demean or put down anyone in this class for their experiences.
6. Anecdotes are not the best form of evidence to use for your claims. Anecdotes are a *type* of evidence and should be judged alongside other evidence such as scientific research or collected testimonials. If your claim begins with “I saw someone once” or “I knew someone who” be ready to back your claim up with other evidence.

7. The classroom will be a safe space to discuss issues that are often sensitive and the cause of strong emotions. If a student within the class makes a comment they do not wish repeated outside of the classroom, please preface your remarks saying so and the class will agree to the student's wishes.

ADA Accommodations:

It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student who needs accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. In order to receive accommodations, students with disabilities are directed to contact Julie Brown in Academic Support Services at 505-2954.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Midterm Exam: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

Reading Responses: 10 points each x 13 weeks = 130 points

Response Papers: 30 points each x 4 papers = 120 points

Presentations: 25 points each x 2 presentations = 50 points

Total possible points: 500 points

Grading Scale:

450 or above – A

400 to 449 – B

350 to 399 – C

300 to 349 – D

299 or below – F

Participation and Attendance:

I expect students to attend class every day and to come to class on Tuesdays having reviewed the assigned readings for that week, which we will discuss as the week progresses. I keep track of attendance, participation in classroom discussions, and visits to my office, all of which I take into consideration if your final grade is borderline. The more often you are here, participate, and come see me if needed, the more likely I am to raise a borderline grade. The more frequently you are absent without telling me why, or you come in late, the less likely I am to raise a borderline grade. Do not be late for class. Being late is disruptive and disrespectful.

Midterm and Final Exams:

There will be two short take-home essay exams in the course. Exams should be typed using 12-point, double-spaced font. The short answer questions will cover material from the readings, lectures, class discussions, movies, or online materials and *will be cumulative*. You are expected to do your own work! No blocks of quotes from the course materials! No use of Wikipedia! You will be given the option to either take the “traditional” written midterm/final exams OR take a “creative” option. More information (and past examples) about this option will be available as we get closer to the dates of the exams.

Midterm: Oct 9

Final: Dec 5

Reading Responses:

Students are expected to finish all the readings before class and participate in the discussion of the reading materials in class. In addition to in class discussions, the readings will be posted weekly on the class blog. Everyone is expected to post a 200-word response analyzing aspects of the readings due by 9am on Fridays. Some suggested topics to write about:

Questions the readings raised for you

Videos, articles, or other interesting internet-based material that is related to the readings (along with a discussion of how they are related)

Applying sociological theories and ideas in the readings to race in your life (e.g., how you act, popular culture you consume, etc.)

Responses and thoughts – connected to the readings – to things other people have posted to the group

You are required to post a response at least *thirteen* (13) times to receive full credit. These assignments are read and will be given comments to help you improve your analytical abilities but will be solely graded on the following criteria:

- (a) Does the writing assignment meet the required length?
- (b) Does the writing assignment address the prompt?

If both (a) and (b) are complete, you will receive the full ten points. If, for example, (b) is complete but you only write 180 words, you will receive partial credit. If (a) is complete but your writing does not address the topic, you will receive partial credit. You will receive a zero for weeks in which the assignment is not completed.

Response Papers:

There will be four short (500-750 words) out-of-class writing assignments, each worth 30 points, this semester as well. These are reflective writing assignments based on pop culture artifacts I assign you.

Presentations:

You will be asked to give two presentations throughout the course of the semester: a short, 3-5 minute presentation and a longer 5-7 minute presentation. These presentations will be timed so please make sure you are prepared.

The first presentation will be on an element of popular culture relating specifically to race you wish to share with the class. This could be a clip from a movie, a segment from a television show, song lyrics, a book, advertising, a set of clothing or an outfit, or even a video game. Your presentation should include a sample from your source (lasting no more than 90 seconds if this is a video clip) and then a short discussion of: (1) how your element relates to the course and (2) what you thought of the element. I will demonstrate the format during the first week of class. Time during class on Thursdays will be set aside for presentations. I will ask for volunteers to go the third week (09/11/2014) and will assign students a date after that.

You will work on your longer presentations as a pair and they will follow the same format as the individual presentations, but I will assign each pair a particular concept we have or will have

discussed in the course. Students must then find an element they think is a good example of that concept. So, for example, if you are assigned the concept of “power,” you might want to talk about the presentation of a president on the television show *24*. In your presentation, your group must discuss: (1) a brief introduction to the element, (2) a brief introduction and discussion of the concept, and (3) how the element you chose illustrates the concept. These presentations will take place during the second half of the semester.

At the time you are scheduled to present you must turn in a typed sheet of paper with your name, the element you are presenting (with appropriate links, if it is available online), and a brief (no more than a paragraph) summary of your presentation.

I ask that students turn their work in digitally through Moodle. If you have issues uploading, you may also email an attached copy of your work to [brownfield@hendrix.edu]. All work should be sent by 9:00am on the day that it is due. Assignments should be turned in as PDF or Word (.doc or .docx) files. No other formats will be accepted.

Late Work:

Turn in your assignments when they are due! **Late work will not be accepted within this class – you will receive a zero if you do not complete your assignments on time.**

Extra Credit:

There will be NO extra credit offered in this class. My preference is that students complete the *actual* credit rather than attempting to make up for missed assignments at the last minute.

Tentative Course Schedule: (topics/readings subject to change, full and complete reading lists will be available on Moodle each week)

RTCL: *Rethinking the Color Line*

RWR: *Racism Without Racists*

BBLR: *Being Black, Living in the Red*

Week 1 (Aug 26, 28): Introduction to the Social Construction of Race

Readings:

RTCL pg. 7-32, 53-63

RWR: CH1

Reading Response Due: 09/02

Week 2 (Sept 2, 4): Race and Ethnic Groups, Then and Now

Readings: RTCL pg., 39-52, 63-91

RWR: CH2

Reading Response Due: 09/02

Watch: Blazing Saddles

Week 3 (Sept 9, 11): The Color-Blind State

Readings:

RTCL: pg. 92-114

RWR: CH3

Response Paper Due: *Blazing Saddles*, Sept 11, 9am

Week 4 (Sept 16, 18): Theories of Racism

RTCL: pg. 117-122, 127-134, 139-157

RWR: CH4-5

Week 5 (Sept 23, 25): Race, Ethnicity, and Popular Culture

Readings: RTCL: pg. 285-321

RWR: CH6

Watch: *Girlfight*

Week 6 (Sept 30, Oct 2): Racialized Geography

RTCL: 158-211

RWR CH7-8

Response Paper Due: *Girlfight*, Oct 2, 9am

Week 7 (Oct 7, 9): Institutional Racism Part 1: In the Workplace

RTCL: 240-284

RWR CH9-10

Due: Midterm Exam, Oct 9

Week 8 (Oct 14): Institutional Racism Part 2: Crime and Punishment

RTCL: 211-239

RWR: CH11

BBLR: CH1

Week 9 (Oct 21, 23): Institutional Racism Part 3: Education

BBLR: CH2-3

Watch: *Smoke Signals*

Week 10 (Oct 28, 30): Sexuality, Romance, and Family

RTCL: 361-393

BBLR: CH4

Response Paper Due: *Smoke Signals*, Oct 30, 9am

Week 11 (Nov 4, 6): Racial Movements, Then and Now

BBLR: CH5

Week 12 (Nov 11, 13): Racial and Ethnic Countermovements

BBLR: CH6, Afterword

Watch: *Lars and the Real Girl*

Week 13 (Nov 18, 20): The Face of America

RTCL: 321-360

Response Paper Due: *Lars and the Real Girl*, Nov 20, 9am

Week 14 (Nov 25): Undoing Racism Part 1: Nationally
RTCL: 393-400

Week 15 (Dec 2, 4): Undoing Racism Part 2: Individually
Due Dec 5: Final Exam, 12pm