

SOC 356 Race and Ethnicity

Winter 2008

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Because America is a nation of immigrants and is known as the "melting pot" society, it can teach us much about the issues of race and ethnicity. In this course we will examine minorities in a sociocultural context by studying the perspectives, experiences and socioeconomic status of a variety of racial and ethnic minorities; for example, U.S. policies towards Native Americans and the Japanese internment of World War II.

A sociological perspective and an understanding of the institutional basis of racism and discrimination is an important focus of this course, as is understanding the role of the media and other institutions in forming and maintaining attitudes and ethnic identities.

Two other major areas will be addressed: a global perspective, contrasting and comparing the situation in the United States with other countries, and an investigation of the loss of ethnicity by "white" Euro-Americans and its consequent impacts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course the student should:

- Apply sociological approaches and perspectives to the causes of racism and discrimination
- Understand and define the concept of the social construction of race and class.
- Be aware of ethnocentrism in themselves and others.
- Understand and define the difference between prejudice and institutionalized racism.
- Be able to contrast and compare their understanding of the values, ethics, family, work and social responsibility with those of other ethnic groups.
- Be able to analyze and integrate coursework with current events and trends in the social

LIFE SKILLS:

- Learn to relate to people who are "different" from themselves by:
 - a. demonstrating respect for different cultures
 - b. demonstrating the ability to work effectively within a diverse group.
 - c. demonstrating sensitivity to biases, (her/his own and others').
- Learn how to solve problems by being active citizens, participating in the community and society.
- Developing critical thinking skills, student will:
 - a. make accurate observations
 - b. identify, distinguish, and define facts, data and opinions
 - c. use relevant questions to solve problems
 - d. practice effective communication skills in groups through the forum

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:

My teaching strategy and the system of student evaluation employed in this class is predicated on several fundamental beliefs about the nature of education and the process of learning:

- The primary responsibility of educators is to teach students how to think and learn not what to know.
- Learning the "material" of any particular field or domain of knowledge should be primarily an act of discovery, rather than passive absorption.
- Development of the ability to "think better" should be associated with the acquisition of specific skills and qualities that can be put to use in the world, both in a "practical" sense and in the sense of enlarging and enriching the life experience of the student.
- Just as the professor's primary responsibility is to facilitate active learning, students must bear the primary responsibility for being active learners.

TEXTS:

Alexander, Christina. *Cultural Therapy: Addressing the Impact of Assimilation and the Loss of Ethnic Identity Among European-Americans*.

Schaefer, Richard T. *Race and Ethnicity in the United States*

Kotlowitz, Alex. *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*

GRADING CRITERIA:

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| Participation (Forum/discussion) | 100 points |
| Diversity/ Multicultural Interview | 100 points |
| Assessment Diary | 50 points |
| TOTAL POINTS | 250 points |

ASSIGNMENTS:

Forum/Discussion Groups: I will post a question each week by referring to course material assigned for that week. Students are required to participate in the forum on a weekly basis, according to deadlines posted in the class schedule.

Diversity/Multicultural Interview: You will be interviewing someone from a different racial or ethnic background than yourself. The goal is to broaden one's outlook and gather details and perspectives you wouldn't have encountered, become aware of discrimination, and learn more about "the other" as well as oneself.

*Note: Please see the Diversity Interview Guidelines and Grading Criteria for more details.

Assessment Diary: This diary is a form to record the progress you have made in reaching the course objectives and is due at the end of the class.

*Note: Please see the Student Objectives Assessment Diary

CLASS SCHEDULE:

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| Week One 1/2-1/6 | Reading: Schaefer: Understanding Race and Ethnicity: Chapter 1 Begin Alexander: <i>Cultural Therapy</i> . Assignments: Respond to discussion question by Thursday evening (any time). Respond to another student's (or the discussion in general) by Sunday evening (anytime) |
| Week Two 1/7-1/13 | Reading: Schaefer: Prejudice Chapter 2 Complete Alexander: <i>Cultural Therapy</i> Assignments: Respond to discussion question by Thursday evening (any time). Respond to another student's (or the discussion in general) by Sunday evening (anytime) |
| Week Three 1/14-1/20 | Reading: Schaefer: Discrimination Chapter 3 Begin Kotlowitz <i>There Are No Children Here</i> Assignments: Respond to discussion question by Thursday evening (any time). Respond to another student's (or the discussion in general) by Sunday evening (anytime) |
| Week Four 1/21-1/27 | Reading: Schaefer: Immigration Chapter 4 Continue Kotlowitz <i>There Are No Children Here</i> Assignments: Respond to discussion question by Thursday evening (any time). Respond to another student's (or the discussion in general) by Sunday evening (anytime) |
| Week Five 1/28-2/3 | Reading: Schaefer: Ethnicity & Religion Chapters 5 & 6 Complete Kotlowitz <i>There Are No Children Here</i> Assignments: Respond to discussion question by Wednesday evening (any time). |