

Sociology 167W Race and Ethnic Relations
Winter 2003

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W03

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Office hours: TTH 11:00-12:00, and by appt.

In this course we will explore theories of race and ethnic relations. While our primary focus will be on ethnic relations within the United States, we will seek to analyze these within a more global context. Our goal will be to understand the social dynamics of prejudice and discrimination, and how these affect the participation of ethnic minorities in U.S. society. We will use conceptual frameworks by employing ideas from theories about ethnic stratification. Our focus will be upon the unequal distribution of resources, and how past and present discrimination can account for this variation among various ethnic groups.

Required Readings:

1. **Savage Inequalities**, Kozol
2. **Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans**, Nazli Kibria
3. **Racial and Ethnic Groups**, Richard Schaeffer
4. **Race, Identity, and Citizenship**, eds. Rudolfo Torres, Louis Miron, and Jonathan Inda
5. **Voices of Pain, Voices of Hope**, Jerome Rabow

Course Requirements: For each class meeting, you will prepare a 1-2 page position paper worth 25% of your course grade. Attendance is mandatory, or you will not receive credit for your position paper. You will also prepare a ten-page group paper worth 25% of your

grade. A fifteen-page research paper will be due the last day of class. This is worth 50% of your grade.

*******Reading Assignments are listed on the day they are Due.** Please come prepared to discuss the material assigned.

Tuesday, 1/7 - Introduction

Thursday, 1/9- Defining Terms

Chapter One "Understanding Race and Ethnicity" in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**
Voices of Pain, Voices of Hope

Tuesday, 1/14 – Defining Terms

Chapter Two "Prejudice" and Three "Discrimination" in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**
Voices of Pain, Voices of Hope

Thursday, 1/16 – Theories of Ethnic Relations

Savage Inequalities

Tuesday, 1/21 – Theories of Ethnic Relations

Savage Inequalities

Thursday, 1/23 – Ethnic and Religious Sources of Conflict

Chapter Four "Immigration and the United States" in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Tuesday, 1/28 - Ethnic and Religious Sources of Conflict

Chapter Five "Ethnicity and Religion" in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Thursday, 1/30 - Whiteness

Part IV “The Color(s) of Whiteness” in **Race, Identity, and Citizenship**.

Tuesday, 2/4 – Whiteness

Video – “The Bluest Eye”

Thursday, 2/6 - African Americans

Chapter 7, “The Making of African Americans in a White America” in **Racial & Ethnic Groups**

Chapter 8, “What’s in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond”, by Patricia Hill Collins in **Race, Identity, and Citizenship**

Tuesday, 2/11 – African Americans

Chapter 8, “African Americans Today” in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Video TBA

Thursday, 2/13 – Group Presentations

Tuesday, 2/18- Group Presentations

Thursday, 2/20 – Asian Americans

Chapter 11, “Asian Americans: Growth and Diversity”, Chapter 12 “Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans” in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Tuesday, 2/25 – Asian Americans

Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans, by Nazli Kibria

Thursday, 2/27 – Native Americans

Chapter 6 “The Native Americans” in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Tuesday, 3/4 - Latinos

Chapter 9, “Hispanic Americans” in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Thursday, 3/6 – Latinos

Chapter 10 “Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans” in **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Tuesday, 3/11 – Global Perspectives

Chapter 15 “Beyond the United States: The Comparative Perspective” **Racial and Ethnic Groups**

Part VIII “Globalized Futures and Racialized Identities” in **Race, Identity, and Citizenship**

Thursday, 3/13 – Conclusion

Research Papers are due.

Topics for Debates

Group 1 argues yes. Group 2 argues no.

1. The “first American dilemma”: How can a society that values equality and freedom engage in systematic discrimination against minority subpopulations? This question is rhetorical because the evidence is irrefutable that discrimination has occurred, and continues to occur, on a massive and long-term scale. Can the accumulated effects of such discrimination be undone?

Group 3 argues yes. Group 4 argues no.

2. The “second American dilemma”: Can the values of freedom and equality be used to justify efforts to compensate the descendants of past discrimination? An affirmative answer to this question has many implications, all of which are debatable: (a) Should Americans spend billions of tax dollars to create jobs, housing, and educational programs to overcome the effects of past discrimination? (b) Should private enterprise participate on a massive scale in creating jobs for members of particular ethnic groups who have been the victims of this legacy of discrimination? (c) Should white Americans give up some of their access to valued resources so that disadvantaged minority groups can increase their access, or is such action simply going to encourage accusations of “reverse discrimination”?

Group 5 argues for more prisons, police etc. Group 6 argues for alternative options.

3. If Americans are unwilling to meet the challenges posed by the second American dilemma, what is the alternative? The accumulated effects of past discrimination are reaching epidemic proportions. Conflict and violence among ethnic groups are escalating; poverty among ethnic groups is on the rise; the number of crimes committed by minority group members is increasing. This reality confronts Americans in their daily lives. What is to be done? Nothing? Build more prisons? Hire more police? Actively try to address the problems at enormous cost? What are the viable options?

Points of Debate

Group 1 argues for equality of opportunity. Group 2 argues for equality of results.

1. What is egalitarianism? Is it equality of opportunity or equality of results?

Group 3 argues for assimilation. Group 4 argues against assimilation.

2. Is assimilation the desired outcome of ethnic relations? Today, many argue that America must be a “pluralistic society,” but this raises the question: How much pluralism is possible? Historically, no society has endured without a cultural core that absorbs elements of diverse ethnic populations while remaining intact. When “ethnic pluralism” translates into competing cultural cores, history has shown that societal disintegration follows. When “ethnic pluralism” refers to a limited range of traditions such as religious beliefs and rituals, distinctive ceremonies and holidays honoring a cultural heritage and important figures in this heritage, and even maintenance of a secondary language, the disintegrative potential of ethnicity is reduced. Can the cultural core absorb important components of diverse ethnic populations? Must ethnic groups assimilate and, if so, to what degree? What are the consequences for society if assimilation does not occur? To what degree are members of the dominant Anglo-Saxon cultural core willing to accommodate change?

Group 5 argues for school vouchers. Group 6 argues for federally run schools.

3. Given that schools are unequal, many have suggested that the problem cannot be fixed with the current organization of public education. Some argue that all parents should be given school vouchers and allowed to choose their children’s schools. They argue that this would be best because schools would then compete for students, thus raising standards. Others believe that the federal government ought to take over all schools and standardize the quality and curriculum. This has been done in many European and Scandinavian countries.