This course explores the social significance of race and ethnicity in Latin America in comparative perspective. Why and how do the meanings of “race” and “ethnicity” differ across the Americas? How unequal are contemporary Latin American societies, and how is inequality in the region related to ethnic and racial distinctions? What explains the emergence of indigenous and black social movements over the last few decades? Why have they made more gains in some contexts than others? How are contemporary struggles over ethnic rights shaped by historical ideologies and patterns of national development? What efforts have states made to mitigate ethnoracial inequality in Latin America? How do transnational politics affect local ethnoracial politics and identities?

This seminar will equip students with the knowledge and tools to answer these and related questions about the politics of race and ethnicity in contemporary Latin America. We will learn about the historical development of racial and national ideologies in the region and consider how historical projects to build modern nations and states continue to shape social relations in the present. More generally, this course will introduce students to the benefits of adopting a historical and comparative perspective to improve understanding of any sociological issue or problem.

Additionally, as a Capstone seminar for Sociology majors, this course provides the opportunity to undertake an independent research project on a topic of your choice related to the content of the course. Detailed information about the research project, including a list of suggested topics, will be provided in class.

Requirements

The basic requirements of the course are:

(1) **Attend class.** Attendance is required. Participation in discussion is a core component of this course, so the attendance policy is strict. Unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade. Absences for legitimate reasons (such as medical crises, family emergencies, and religious observances) do not count towards this policy. It is your responsibility to inform me of the legitimate reason for an absence in a timely manner or it will count as an unexcused absence. For absence due to religious observances, this means informing me ahead of time. For absence due to illness or medical emergencies, this means letting me know why
you missed class at the very first opportunity to do so. Depending on the situation, documentation may be requested for an unexcused absence.

(2) **Read.** You are expected to read the required texts before each class meeting. This course is a seminar, not a lecture course. A seminar provides the opportunity for informed discussion of ideas and scholarly arguments. In order to be a productive participant in an informed discussion, you need to be prepared for class. If you are not prepared for class, you not only undermine your own learning, you also lower (or at least do not help to elevate) the overall level of the discussion, and thus detract from the learning experience of others. Make sure to budget your time so that your reading for this class is done on time.

(3) **Participate.** Informed participation in seminar discussions is required of each student. The *quality* of participation will weigh more heavily than the *quantity* of participation. We will discuss acceptable forms, styles and levels of participation during the first week in class. Students who are concerned about this requirement of the course, due to shyness or for any other reason, are encouraged to meet with the instructor early in the semester to discuss individual strategies for meeting this course requirement.

(4) **Write.** There are two types of writing assignment for this course: (1) Response memos; (2) the final paper. The response memos are short (~ one paragraph) reactions to the reading that you will post to the Discussion board on the class bcourses site each week. The memos are an opportunity to register some of your initial reactions to the reading prior to class discussion. You should not use the memos to summarize the reading; the point is to respond to the reading. This might mean asking questions about points you did not fully understand, critiquing the author’s framework, noting particular strengths of an argument or analysis, drawing connections or noting divergences between the ideas of different authors, or relating what you have read to discussions from previous weeks of the seminar or current events (among other possibilities). Memos should be posted to the class website **no later than 5pm on Mondays** (to allow sufficient time for everyone to read them over before the class meets on Tuesdays).

The second writing assignment for the class is a 12-15 page research paper due at the end of the semester. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

(5) **Present your research.** Each student will share the key findings from their research in an oral presentation to the class. Guidelines for these presentations will be handed out before spring break.

**Evaluation**

- 20%: Attendance and Participation
- 20%: Response memos
- 20%: Presentation
- 40%: Final Paper
Required Reading

All required reading for the course is available on bcourses.

*Please Note: This reading list is not set in stone. Some items may be substituted at a later date in response to emergent student interests and class discussions. The overall amount of reading will not change.

Course Outline

Week 1. (1/17) Introduction

Week 2. (1/24) Categories, Concepts, Identities

Peter Wade, “The Meaning of Race and Ethnicity” and “Blacks and Indigenous People in Latin America” in Race and Ethnicity in Latin America. Chapters 1 and 2 (pp.4-40)


Edward Telles and Tianna Paschel. 2014. “Who is Black, White, or Mixed Race? How Skin Color, Status, and Nation Shape Racial Classification in Latin America”

Week 3 (1/31). Race and Nation in Latin America (I): Ideologies of Mixture, Whitening, and Racial Democracy

Watch Film: Brazil: A Racial Paradise? http://video.pbs.org/video/1906000944


Week 4. (2/7) Race and Nation in Latin America (II): Defining Moments and Enduring Legacies


**Week 5. (2/14) Categories of Citizenship: From “Peasants” to “Indians”**


**Week 6. (2/21) The Rise and Spread of Black and Indigenous Social Movements**

Wade, Peter. “Black and Indigenous Social Movements” Ch 6 in Race and Ethnicity in Latin America


**Week 7. (2/28) The Politics of Authenticity: Representation and Power**


**Week 8. (3/7) Who owns the State? Politics of affirmative action**


**Week 9. (3/14) Socialist and post-Socialist Racial Politics: The Cuban Experience**

Watch video: tba.

Alejandro de la Fuente. “The Special Period” and “Epilogue” in A Nation for All.

Morrison, Judith. “Behind the Numbers: Race and Ethnicity in Latin America” http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/behind-numbers-race-and-ethnicity-latin-america
Sulmont, David, and Juan Carlos Callirgos. “¿El país de todas las sangres?: Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary Peru” Ch4 in Telles, et.al., Pigmentocracies.
Telles, Edward, and René D. Flores. “A Comparative Analysis of Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America Based on PERLA Findings” Ch6 in Telles, et.al., Pigmentocracies.

Week 11 (3/28) No Class. Spring Break

Week 12 (4/4) Global Politics of Ethnoracial Recognition, Rights, and Redress


Week 13. (4/11) Paper presentations

Week 14. (4/18) Paper presentations

Week 15. (4/25) Paper presentations

Final Papers Due 5/9

Spring semester ends 5/12