

**Sociology 190**  
**Ethnoracial Politics in Latin America**

Fall 2019  
Tuesdays 2-4  
402 Barrows

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Office Hours: Thursday 2-3:30 or by appointment

Recent decades have witnessed a resurgence of ethnoracial politics in Latin America. Struggles grounded in a politics of indigeneity and of blackness have emerged throughout the region, shaping claims by historically marginalized and excluded populations for recognition, rights, redistribution, and redress. In some countries, another sort of ethnoracial politics has coalesced as well: a politics of reactionary nonracialism, grounded in ideas of mestizaje or whiteness. In this course, we will examine historical formations of race and nation in Latin America, and trace how their articulation with contemporary economic, political, and cultural forces has made possible and fueled the rise of new forms of ethnoracial politics. We will consider how these politics create possibilities for transformative social change, and also how they may form new foundations for volatile, and sometimes violent, reactionary forces.

As part of this broader aim, we will explore a range of additional questions along the way: Why and how do the meanings of “race” and “ethnicity” differ across the Americas and how do these differences matter for peoples’ lived experience and politics? 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 and why have they made more gains in some contexts than others? How are contemporary struggles over ethnic rights shaped by historical processes even as they play out in the present? How do transnational politics affect ethnoracial politics within and across and beyond the boundaries of nation-states? How do ethnoracial mobilizations and politics relate to the rise of populist and nationalist movements in recent years, of both left and right?

This seminar will equip students with the knowledge and tools to answer these and related questions about ethnoracial and nationalist politics in contemporary Latin America. 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.

As 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.
- (4) **Write.** There are two types of writing assignment for this course: (1) Response memos; (2) a final paper. The response memos are short (~ 300 word) 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 assumptions or steps in their argument, 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 3pm on Mondays** (to allow time for everyone to read them 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 in class.

### **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. (9/3) Introduction**

#### **Week 2. (9/10) Concepts, Bodies, Histories, Categories, 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)

Charles Wagley. “On the Concept of Social Race in the Americas.” In Heath, Dwight B. and Richard N. Adams (eds.) *Contemporary Cultures and Societies of Latin America*. Random House: New York, 1965 (pp.531-545).

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 (9/17). Race and Nation: Ideologies of Mixture, Whitening, and Racial Democracy**

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

Wade, Peter. 2005. “Rethinking Mestizaje: Ideology and Lived Experience” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37, 239-257.

Recommended: Martínez-Echazábal, Lourdes. 1998. *Mestizaje and the Discourse of National/Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845-1959*. *Latin American Perspectives*. 25:3, 21-42.

#### **Week 4. (9/24) Race and Nation: inclusionary exclusion?**

Knight, Alan. "Racism, Revolution and *Indigenismo*: Mexico, 1910-1940. In Graham, Richard (ed.) *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*. Austin, University of Texas Press: Austin, 1990 (pp.71-113).

De la Fuente, Alejandro. "Racial Order or Racial Democracy?" (Ch 1) in *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001

#### **Week 5. (10/1) Race, Nation, Neoliberalism, and Citizenship: From "Peasants" to "Indians"**

Yashar, Deborah J. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*. Cambridge University Press. 2005 (selections).

Van Cott, Donna Lee. "Latin America's Indigenous Peoples" *Journal of Democracy*. 18(4) Oct 2007: 127-142.

#### **Week 6. (10/8) 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*

Hooker, Juliet. "Indigenous inclusion/black exclusion: Race, ethnicity, and multicultural citizenship in Latin America" *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2): 285-310.

#### **Week 7. (10/15) The Politics of Authenticity: Representation and Power**

Jose Antonio Lucero. "Representing "Real Indians": The Challenges of Indigenous Authenticity and Strategic Constructivism in Ecuador and Bolivia" *Latin American Research Review* 41(2): 2006, 31-56.

Florence E. Babb. "Theorizing Gender, Race, and Cultural Tourism in Latin America: A View from Peru and Mexico" *Latin American Perspectives* 187(39: 6): 2012, 36-50.

Gordillo, Gaston, and Silvia Hirsch. "Indigenous Struggles and Contested Identities in Argentina: Histories of Invisibilization and Reemergence" *The Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 8(3): 4-30, 2003.

#### **Week 8. (10/22) Who owns the State? Politics of affirmative action**

Mala Htun: "From Racial Democracy to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil" *Latin American Research Review*, 2004.

Watch: “Brazil in Black and White” on pbs/Wide Angle  
(<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/brazil-in-black-and-white/video-full-episode/2104/>)

**Week 9. (10/29) Whose state? Decolonizing the state**

Reading to be determined

**Week 10. (11/5) Socialist and post-Socialist Racial Politics: The Cuban Experience**

Watch video: posted on bcourses website.

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

Alejandro de la Fuente. “The New Afro-Cuban Cultural Movement and the Debate on Race in Contemporary Cuba” *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 40 (697-720).

**Week 11 (11/12) Global Politics of Ethnoracial Recognition, Rights, and Redress**

Tianna S. Paschel & Mark Q. Sawyer. “Contesting Politics as Usual: Black Social Movements, Globalization, and Race Policy in Latin America”, *Souls*, 10:3, 197-214.

Tianna S. Paschel. “The Right to Difference: Explaining Colombia’s Shift from Color Blindness to the Law of Black Communities.” *American Journal of Sociology* 116 (3): 2010: 729-69.

**Week 12 (11/19) New Reactionary Politics: From Silence to Violence**

Reading to be determined.

“The Assassination of Marielle Franco is as much about Brazil’s past as its Future” <https://www.equaltimes.org/the-assassination-of-marielle?lang=en#.XW2-JZnKi3V>

**Week 13 (11/26) Presentations**

**Week 14 (12/3) Presentations**

Dec 9-13 RRR week  
Dec 13-20 finals week.

**Dec 20.** Final paper due.