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)


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


Week 5. (10/1) Race, Nation, Neoliberalism, and Citizenship: From “Peasants” to “Indians”


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


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


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


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*.


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


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.