

**Sociology 190: Race and Numbers**  
**Sociology 190**  
**Fall 2020, UC Berkeley**

**Instructor:** Robert Pickett

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Office Hours: TBD, online via Zoom

**Seminar:** Tuesday 4-6pm, online via Zoom.

**Course Website:** <https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/>

### **Course Description**

Statistics on race are often leveraged to identify and describe racial inequalities in the United States and guide efforts towards amelioration of those inequalities. This important work, however, can serve to make racial differences appear normal or inevitable. This course explores this tension between racial representation and essentialization. We will become acquainted with distinct perspectives on the social construction of race, discuss how race is measured in practice, review how race is often deployed in statistical work, and how this work is critiqued by critical race scholars. Finally, we will conclude with a sampling of recent work attempting to bring statistical practice closer in line with constructionist theory.

### **Elements and Evaluation:**

As a seminar, this course will primarily focus on reading and discussing the materials. Each class a group of students will provide a synopsis of the week's reading, develop several discussion questions, and lead the conversation in class. Each student will lead discussion ~3 times over the term. **Synopses and questions should be posted on bCourses no later than 24 hours before class.** All readings will be made available through the library or on bCourses. All students are expected to complete all readings and engage in discussions each week.

The course will also have a final paper component designed to help put these concepts into practice. The paper will be 15-20 pages (times new roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced) and will either be a critical engagement with existing quantitative race scholarship, or a proposal for a research project that integrates constructionist theory and statistical practice. Students will be asked to **provide early thoughts for their paper in week 3 (September 15<sup>th</sup>), an extended paper proposal (1-2 pages) in week 9 (October 27<sup>th</sup>)**, and to engage with and provide feedback on other student's thoughts and proposals.

Grades will consist of 35% leading weekly discussion, 40% final paper, 10% final paper thoughts, proposal, and peer feedback, and 15% class participation and attendance.

### **A Note on the Readings:**

All of the readings for this course are available for free through UC Berkeley or bCourses (note: you may need to enable your library proxy if you are accessing these readings from off campus, see: <https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/using-the-libraries/proxy-server>). If you prefer having copies of books and/or reading paper copies, here is a list of books referenced:

Alonso, William and Paul Starr. 1989. *The Politics of Numbers*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney and Britt Rusert. 2018. *W. E. B. Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America*. Princeton Architectural Press.

Nobles, Melissa. 2000. *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics*. Stanford University Press.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 3rd Edition. Taylor & Francis Group.

Ong, Paul M. 2000. *The State of Asian Pacific America: Transforming Race Relations*. Los Angeles, CA: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute.

Prewitt, Kenneth. 2013. *What is Your Race? The Census and our Flawed Efforts to Classify Americans*. Princeton.

Zuberi, Tukufu. 2003. *Thicker Than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie*. University of Minnesota Press.

Zuberi, Tukufu and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, 2008. *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

I have also tried to cite readings from authors here at Berkeley. The name of the Berkeley author is bolded for those readings. I recommend attending their office hours if you have questions for them.

### **Respectful Discussion**

It is my sincere hope that this class provides a respectful atmosphere for thoughtful discussion. I ask that mutual respect be our first and foremost goal. Efforts to intimidate, demean, or interfere with the participation of other students will not be tolerated. If at any time you feel that there are any barriers to your full participation in class discussions, please contact me.

### **Academic Integrity**

You can find the student honor code [here](#). If you are unsure about the expectations of academic integrity, please feel free to talk to me about it.

## **Student Accommodations**

It is my intention to make this an inclusive course. If you are experiencing disability related barriers in the learning environment, please contact DSP and they will assist you.

## **Getting Help**

College is difficult, especially in these new circumstances, but I will do my best to ensure that you are supported. If you find you are struggling, please feel free to come talk to me. You can find additional resources here: [counseling](#), [crisis/suicide prevention hotline](#), [social services counseling](#), [health services](#), and [food security and basic needs resources](#). You can find academic support services [here](#). Please do not wait until you are suffering to reach out, although you can certainly do so even at that point.

Students who do not have access to the technology resources they need should check out the [Student Tech Equity Program \(STEP\)](#). Resources available include: a new laptop, Wi-Fi hotspot, or other resources to support their studies in time for Fall semester. Devices will be mailed to students' homes directly. If you have questions, please email [ucbstep@berkeley.edu](mailto:ucbstep@berkeley.edu).

For coronavirus specific support please see <https://coronavirus.berkeley.edu> and/or <https://technology.berkeley.edu/COVID-19>.

For a longer list (borrowed from another grad student), please see the 'Resources to Support Student Well-being' pdf uploaded to bCourses.

## **Online and Asynchronous Accommodation**

One of the primary goals for this course is to provide a platform for high quality discussion about interesting sociological topics. The online format, however, can create unique challenges. It is my hope to provide a place for discussion despite anything that would make synchronous participation in face-to-face discussion via zoom difficult (e.g. if you have issues with consistent internet access, have time zone issues with the usual scheduling of our seminar, etc.). While zoom is still the preferred option, students can also participate in discussion (and fulfill the course requirements) through bCourses discussion boards (and/or slack/discord/other technologies).

## Course Calendar

### Orientation

Week 1: September 1<sup>st</sup>

There is no *required* reading this week, but I strongly recommend you peruse the following for orientation.

- *The Economist*. 2008. "Census Sensitivity: Numbers mean Power, which is why counting people is so controversial," December 22, 2007-January 4, 2008, pp. 97-99. <https://www-economist-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/christmas-specials/2007/12/19/census-sensitivity>
- Desmond, Mathew and Mustafa Emirbayer. 2009. "What is Racial Domination?" *Du Bois Review*. 6 (2): 335-355. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X09990166>

### Contours of the Debate

Week 2: September 8<sup>th</sup>

- Wilson, Mabel O. 2018. "The Cartography of W. E. B. Du Bois's Color Line." Pp. 37-50 in *W. E. B. Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America*, edited by Whitney Battle-Baptiste and Britt Rusert. Princeton Architectural Press. <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b25676154~S1>
  - Also look through the plates – pp. 51-137.
- Loveman, Mara. 1999. "Is 'race' essential?" *American Sociological Review*. 64 (6): 891-898. [www.doi.org/10.2307/2657409](http://www.doi.org/10.2307/2657409)
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1999. "The essential social fact of race." *American Sociological Review*. 64 (6): 899-906. [www.doi.org/10.2307/2657410](http://www.doi.org/10.2307/2657410)
- Hacking, Ian. 2005. "Why Race Still Matters." *Dedalus*. 134(1): 102-116. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027965>

### Covid and Race

Week 3: September 15<sup>th</sup>

- Reed, Adolph Jr. 2020. "Disparity Ideology, Coronavirus, and the Danger of the Return of Racial Medicine." *Common Dreams*. <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2020/04/04/disparity-ideology-coronavirus-and-danger-return-racial-medicine>
- Jilani, Zaid. 2020. "Don't Racialize the Pandemic." *National Review*. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/04/coronavirus-race-fight-pandemic-dont-get-bogged-down-racial-categorization/>
- Cowger Tori L, Bridgette A. Davis, Onisha S Etkins, Keletso Makofane, Jourdyn A.

Lawrence, Mary T. Bassett, and Nancy Krieger. 2020. "Comparison of Weighted and Unweighted Population Data to Assess Inequities in Coronavirus Disease 2019 Deaths by Race/Ethnicity Reported by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention." *JAMA Network Open*. 3 (7) [www.doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.16933](http://www.doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.16933)

- Conger, Kate, Robert Gebeloff, Richard A. Opiel and Sarah Cahalan. 2020. "Native Americans Feel Devastated by the Virus Yet Overlooked in the Data." *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/us/native-americans-coronavirus-data.html?referringSource=articleShare>

This is not new:

- **Obasogie, Osagie**. 2011. "Black Salt." *Slate*. <https://slate.com/technology/2011/04/blacks-and-salt-should-the-dietary-guidelines-single-out-african-americans-for-low-sodium-diets.html>
- Kahn, Jonathan D. 2011. "Race in a Bottle." *Scientific American*. 297. Pp. 40-45. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1950402](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1950402) (Click Download this paper, then under Gregg Gordon's blurb there's a "Download without registration" link).

### Perspectives on Constructionism:

Week 4: September 22<sup>nd</sup>

**DUE:** Initial thoughts on the final paper (a few sentences to a paragraph). Please post these thoughts to the bCourses discussion board, and provide feedback for at least two students.

- **Michael Omi** and Howard Winant, 2014, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 3rd Edition, Routledge. (pgs. 53-76) <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b22187446~S1>
- Barbara Fields, 1990, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review*, 181(May-June): 95-118 <https://newleftreview.org/issues/I181/articles/barbara-jeanne-fields-slavery-race-and-ideology-in-the-united-states-of-america>

Additional Recommended Readings:

- Brubaker, Rogers, **Mara Loveman**, Peter Stamatov. 2004. "Ethnicity as Cognition." *Theory and Society*. 33(1): 31-64. <http://www.doi.org/10.1023/B:RYSO.0000021405.18890.63>
- Saperstein, Aliya, Andrew Penner, and Ryan Light. 2013. "Racial formation in perspective: Connecting individuals, institutions, and power relations." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 39: 359-378. <http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145639>

### Numbers and the State

Week 5: September 29<sup>th</sup>

- Starr, Paul. 1987. "The Sociology of Official Statistics." Pp. 7-58 in *The Politics of Numbers*, edited by William Alonso and Paul Starr. Russell Sage Foundation.  
[www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610440028.5](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610440028.5) (Read 25-58)
- Hacking, Ian. 1982. Biopower and the avalanche of printed numbers. *Humanities in Society* 5:279–295. (available on bCourses).

**Race, Ethnicity, and the Census:**

Week 6: October 6<sup>th</sup>

- Melissa Nobles. 2000. *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics*. Stanford University Press. (pgs. 1-24, 163-170)  
<http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b25689435~S1>
  - Recommended: Ch 2. History of Racial Enumeration pgs. 25-84).
- Kenneth Prewitt, 2013, *What is Your Race? The Census and our Flawed Efforts to Classify Americans*. Princeton. (pgs 12-34).  
<http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b20752236~S1>

Week 7: October 13<sup>th</sup>

- **Mora, Cristina G.** 2014. "Cross Field Effects and Ethnic Classification: The Institutionalization of Hispanic Panethnicity." *American Sociological Review* 79(2):183-210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122413509813>
- Espiritu, Yen Le and **Michael Omi.** 2000. "Who Are You Calling Asian? Shifting Identity Claims, Racial Classification and the Census." Pp. 43-101 in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Transforming Race Relations*, Paul M. Ong (ed.), Los Angeles, CA: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute.  
[http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/resources/policyreports/Transforming\\_Race\\_Relations/Transforming\\_Who\\_Are\\_You\\_Calling\\_Asian.pdf](http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/resources/policyreports/Transforming_Race_Relations/Transforming_Who_Are_You_Calling_Asian.pdf)

**Race and the Census: International Perspectives.**

Week 8: October 20<sup>th</sup>

- Morning, Ann. 2008. "Ethnic Classification in Global Perspective: Across-National Survey of the 2000 Census Round." *Population Research Policy Review*, 27 (2), 239-272.  
[www.jstor.org/stable/41217947](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41217947)
- Simon, Patrick. 2017. "The failure of the importation of ethno-racial statistics in Europe: debates and controversies." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 40 (13):2326-2332.  
DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2017.1344278](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1344278)

- **Loveman, Mara**, Jeronimo O. Muniz, and Stanley R. Bailey. 2012. "Brazil in black and white? Race categories, the census, and the study of inequality." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 35 (8): 1466-1483, DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2011.607503](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.607503)

#### Additional Recommended Readings:

- Monk, Ellis P. Jr. 2016. "The Consequences of 'Race and Color' in Brazil." *Social Forces*. 63 (3): 413-430. <http://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spw014>

### Uses and Abuses of Racial Categories

Week 9: October 27<sup>th</sup>

**DUE:** Paper proposal (1-2 pages), submitted through bCourses assignments. You will also be asked to provide feedback as part of the assignment.

- John Levi Martin and King-To Yeung, 2003, "The Use of the Conceptual Category of Race in American Sociology, 1937-99", 18 *Sociological Forum* 521-543. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/B:SOFO.0000003002.90428.c2>
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and Tukufu Zuberi. 2008. "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods." Pp 9-30 in *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*. Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (eds) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b23312031~S1>

Week 10: November 3<sup>rd</sup>

- **Obasogie, Osagie K**, Julie N. Harris-Wai, Katherine Darling, Carolyn Keagy. 2015. "Race in the Life Sciences: An Empirical Assessment, 1950 – 2000." *Fordham Law Review* 83 (6): 3089-3114. <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol83/iss6/9>
- Dressler, William W., Kathryn S. Oths, and Clarence C. Gravlee. 2005. "Race and Ethnicity in Public Health Research: Models to Explain Health Disparities." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 34:231-252. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.34.081804.120505>

### New Approaches

Week 11: November 10<sup>th</sup>

- Zuberi, Tukufu. 2003. *Thicker Than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie*. University of Minnesota Press. Epilogue, Pp. 141-144. <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b24079848~S1>
- Monk, Ellis P. Jr. 2015. "The Cost of Color: Skin Color, Discrimination, and Health among African-Americans." *American Journal of Sociology*. 121 (2): 396-444. <https://doi.org/10.1086/682162>

## Measuring (Race)isms

Week 12: November 17<sup>th</sup> (Pages: 35)

- Horton, Hayward Derrick and Lori Latrice Sykes. 2008. "Critical Demography and the Measurement of Racism: A Reproduction of Wealth, Status, and Power." Pp 209-221 in *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*. Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (eds) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.  
<http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b23312031~S1>
- Garcia, Nichole M. and Oscar J. Mayorga. 2018. "The threat of unexamined secondary data: A critical race transformative convergent mixed methods." *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 21 (2): 231-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1377415>

## Statistics of race, not statistics by race

Week 13: November 24<sup>th</sup> (Pages: 66)

- Saperstein, Aliya and Andrew M. Penner. 2012. "Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology*. 118(3):676-727.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/667722>
- Bratter, J. L. & O'Connell, H. A. 2017. "Multiracial identities, single race history: Contemporary consequences of historical race and marriage laws for racial classification." *Social Science Research*, 68,102-116.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2017.08.010>

Week 14: December 1<sup>st</sup>

- Joane Nagel, 1995, "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity," *American Sociological Review*, 60(6):947-965. [www.jstor.org/stable/2096434](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2096434)
- **Mara Loveman** and Jeronimo O. Muniz, 2007, "How Puerto Rico Became White: Boundary Dynamics and Inter-Census Racial Reclassification" *American Sociological Review* 72(6): 915-939. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240707200604>

Week 15: December 8<sup>th</sup> - RRR Week

Week 16: December 15<sup>th</sup> – Final Paper Due