

Sociology 131AC  
UC Berkeley  
Spring 2019

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## **The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity in the United States**

This course examines the role of race and ethnicity in the making of United States society, and the efforts to achieve social justice in the United States. The course revolves around several questions:

- What is race? What is racism?
- What is ethnicity? How are ethnic communities organized? How are they divided?
- How does racism intersect with other social dynamics of inclusion, domination and subordination in the making of U.S. society? How does anti-racism intersect with efforts to liberate people from class, gender, sexual, religious and national oppressions?
- What are the impacts of historical racism on U.S. society today?
- How have neo-liberalism and globalization altered the dynamics of race and racism in American society?
- What is social justice? What has been done to advance social justice in various social arenas?
- What are realistic strategies for social justice in this era?

This course is centrally concerned with a critical examination of the efforts made in the United States to advance social justice in the face of societal racism. The course introduces students to the study of race and ethnicity as social processes and examines the formation and transformation of racial systems throughout American history. Throughout the course, the dynamics of race and ethnicity are located in relationship to class, gender, sexuality and nationality, and are examined in the context of global socio-economic processes. Sociological theories are used to identify important themes, which are then studied through an examination of history, institutional dynamics in the present, and consideration of strategies for social justice.

Course requirements include class participation (25% of course grade), a midterm exam (20% of course grade), a final exam (25% of course grade), and a ten to twelve-page final paper (30% of course grade). For the final paper, students will utilize the concepts, issues and data addressed in

this course to investigate a specific racial/ethnic barrier to equal opportunity and to critically assess efforts made to overcome this barrier.

Unlike ‘traditional’ lecture courses, this course succeeds only when all students actively participate in the teaching and learning process. All students are asked to come to class meetings having done the reading assigned for that day, with the expectation that everyone will be actively engaged in critical discussion of the readings and lecture material. Towards this end, I have included the discussion topics and dates at the end of the syllabus. If you are having difficulty keeping up with the course work for any reason, immediately bring this to my attention. I am here to support your learning and success!

### **Required Course Readings:**

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi We Were Eight Years in Power New York: Norton, 2016.
- Nicholls, Walter J., The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigration Debate Stanford University Press, 2013.
- Noguera, Pedro, City Schools and the American Dream New York: Teachers College Press, 2003.
- All other readings are PDFs on the course website (b-course.berkeley.edu)

## **Topics and Readings**

Introduction to the course (January 22)

### **I. Race and Ethnicity**

a. The Social Construction of Race (January 24)

Basic data: <https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Race-and-Ethnicity>

American Sociological Association, “The Importance of Collecting Data and Doing Social Scientific Research on Race” [PDF]

Eddo-Lodge, Reni, “What is White Privilege?” in Why I am No Longer Talking to White People About Racism London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2017 [PDF]

b. Ethnicity (January 31-February 5)

Bedolla, Lisa Garcia “A Thin Line Between Love and Hate” in Fluid Borders: Latino

Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles Berkeley: UC Press, 2005 [PDF]

Castillo, Ana, “A Country-less Woman”, Massacre of the Dreamers N.Y.: Plume Books, 1995 pp. 21-41 [PDF]

## II. Sociological Theories of Race and Ethnicity

### a. Order theory and social justice (February 7-February 12)

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee, Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation And Contemporary Immigration, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, Ch. 6, pp. 215-270) [PDF]

Thernstrom, Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom, America in Black and White N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1997, pp. 183-202 [PDF]

Shelby Steele The Content of Our Character N.Y.: Harper, 1990, pp 111-125 [PDF]

### b. Internal colonial theory and social justice (February 14)

Malcolm X “The Black Revolution” [PDF]

Coates, We Were Eight Years in Power “The Legacy of Malcolm X, pp. 85-105

### c. Group conflict theory and social justice (February 19)

Collins, Patricia Hill “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination” from Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990 pp.221-238 [PDF]

Ruby Sales “Where Does It Hurt?” [Podcast]

<https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt-aug2017/>

## III. The Enduring Significance of Race

### a. Slavery and the origins of race (February 21-February 26)

Fredrickson, George “The Social Origins of American Racism” [PDF]

Coates, We Were Eight Years in Power pp.61-82

### b. Jim Crow and the universalization of race (February 28 and March 7)

Katznelson, Ira, from Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time, Liveright Publishing 2013, pp. 133-194

Rothstein, Richard from The Color of Law Liveright Publishing 2017 pp. 39-75 [PDF]

**MIDTERM EXAM: MARCH 5**

c. Racial structuring in the 1950s-1960s (March 12)  
Coates, We Were Eight Years in Power “The Case for Reparations” pp.151-208

d. Globalization, Neo-Liberalism and Race (March 14)

Barlow, Andrew L., “Globalization, Race and the Politics of Fear” in Michelle Bertho, Globalization Comes Home Vol. II, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, 2009 [PDF]

**IV. Social Justice in Contemporary Issues of Race and Ethnicity**

a. Ending mass incarceration (March 19-March 21)  
Wacquant, Loic “From Slavery to Mass Incarceration” New Left Review 13,  
(January-February 2002) [PDF]

Roberts, Frank Leon “How Black Lives Matter Changed the Way Americans Fight for Freedom” ACLU blog July 3, 2018  
<https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight>

**SPRING BREAK: MARCH 26-March 28**

b. Ending Anti-Immigrant Racism (April 2 -April 9)

Nicholls, Walter, The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigration Debate

c. Towards Social Justice in Education (April 11- April 18)  
Noguera, Pedro City Schools and the American Dream Chapters 1-3

**V. Strategies for social justice**

Student Presentations on Social Justice Movements (April 23-April 25)

FINAL PAPER DUE ON MAY 5 (by 11:59PM) on class bcourse site.  
(Late papers lose one grade for each calendar day late)

**REVIEW CLASS: MAY 9**

**FINAL EXAM GROUP 10: MAY 15 11:30AM-2:30PM**

### SCHEDULE OF CLASS DISCUSSIONS

1/22: introductions: how do you identify yourself? What do you want to learn in this course? (CIRCLE)

1/24: How do you experience race (self and others): (TABLES: IDENTIFY THEMES)

1/31: experience of ethnicity (community/identity/divisions) (TABLES: IDENTIFY FOUR THEMES) (AND CIRCLE on 2/5)

2/7: How has your family's experience of assimilation (or not)? (TABLES)

2/12: critique of order theory (TABLES)

2/14: What do you think is Malcolm X's significance for today? (TABLES)

2/19: How do you experience intersectionality in your life (both individually and socially)? Responses to MLK/ Ruby Sales' concept of social justice (CIRCLE)

2/26: Impact of slavery on U.S. today (TABLES)

3/5: Midterm exam

3/7: Impact of Jim Crow on the U.S. today (TABLES)

3/12: Responses to Coates' "The Case for Reparations" (TABLES)

3/14: How can we best deal with fear-mongering politics today? (TABLES)

3/19: How have you experienced the criminal justice system? (CIRCLE)

3/21: How do we evaluate proposals to end racism in the criminal justice system? (TABLES)

4/2: Immigrant stories (CIRCLE)

4/4: What would be a just immigration policy? (TABLES)

4/11: Experiences of racism in education (CIRCLE)

4/16: Responding to Noguera's proposals for racial justice in education

4/23-4/25: Group presentations on strategies for social justice.

5/9: Review for final exam

