SOC182: ELEMENTARY FORMS OF RACIAL DOMINATION
SPRING 2022 – provisional syllabus (to be updated)

ZOOM LINK:  https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/91927233497

PROFESSOR LOÏC WACQUANT
Tuesday/Thursday 2:10-3:30pm, 170 SSB
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Office Hours: Thursday 3:30-5pm and by appointment

The primordial task of a capable professor is to teach his students to recognize that there are uncomfortable facts, by which I mean facts that are unpleasant to the personal opinion of an individual. Indeed, there are facts that are extremely unpleasant for every opinion, including mine.

Max Weber, 1918

This course is a comparative sociohistorical inquiry into the bases and mechanisms of racial domination as a “disguised form of ethnicity” anchored in culturally salient (putative) physical differences. It is organized in three parts.

First, we examine the epistemological obstacles standing in the way of an adequate grasp of “race” as a principle of social vision and division (including the confusion and conflation of folk with analytical notions, the uncontrolled universalization U.S. national experience, and the hold of the logic of the trial) and review fundamental concepts needed to formulate and tackle the question: ethnicity, honor, closure, and naturalization and the diagonal of racialization.

Second, we probe the peculiar social (il)logic and implications of “race” as a form of classification—a manner of dividing and ranking human beings and groups with (overt or covert) reference to their biological makeup. We contrast and compare the bases, structure, and implications of the racial taxonomies evolved by different societies with an eye towards understanding how these both reflect and predetermine patterns of group relations. We pay special attention to the role of the state in validating and inculcating these classifications.

Third, we consider the conversion of classification into stratification, that is, how various societies have drawn, enforced, conjoined or dissolved ethnoracial boundaries, focusing on five elementary forms of racial domination: categorization (prejudice, stigma, implicit bias), discrimination (differential treatment based on imputed group membership), segregation (differential allocation or disparate impact in physical and social space), ghettoization (the forced development of parallel institutions), and violence (ranging from intimidation and aggression, to lynching and pogroms, and climaxing with racial warfare and extermination).

Readings include a wide range of sociological, historical, and anthropological studies of ethnoracial vision and division, accomodation, and conflict in Latin America, Asia, Western Europe, the United States, and Africa from medieval times to the present. They are geared toward helping us uncover the social mechanisms that lead to the rise, reproduction, and transformation of ethnoracial inequality, wherever and whenever it is found. This course is problem-oriented, not group-oriented; its purpose is neither to celebrate nor to denigrate the
experiences of this or that particular category but to explain and understand them in generic sociological terms.

**Requirements:** This class is designed for sociology majors and others who have had prior exposure to social science disciplines. It is not an easy class; it demands serious work (reading, thinking, writing): you are to do the readings before class and attend every lecture, as each builds and extends onto the others. You need to take extensive notes on both the readings and lectures to assimilate the materials we will cover. (You will be instructed as to reading and note-taking techniques). In so doing, you will not only learn dizzying facts are the stupendous way humans ranks and judge each other; you will also learn to compare and explain them.

Most importantly, you must be prepared to approach the subject matter, readings, lectures, and class discussion with a wide open mind and with the firm intention to learn to think about things that may seem familiar in novel and sometimes startling ways. You must be willing to consider new ideas that may unsettle you, facts that may disturb or offend you, and subject your (pre)conceptions and personal experiences to the disciplined scrutiny of critical reasoning and systematic empirical observation.

**Readings:** Required books are available from the usual bookstores. All readings are on reserve at the undergraduate library and on line on the course page on bcourses.

**Grading:** your course grade will come in equal proportions from two exercises that are to be done and turned in ON TIME (no makeup or extension of any sort will be allowed):

1. An open-book mid-term provisionally scheduled for week 9, combining in-class exam and take-home essay; it will cover the first 8 weeks of the course.
2. A final exam taking place on the campus appointed day, covering the entire course but with special emphasis on weeks 7 through 14.

**Required books**


**I. WALKING THROUGH LAND MINES, FUMBLING FOR CONCEPTS (weeks 1-2)**

(18 and 25 January)


**Difficult texts we will make an effort to work with through the semester:**


Bachelard, Gaston. Selections to be announced.

**II. CATEGORIZATION: THE SOCIAL (IL)LOGIC OF RACIAL CLASSIFICATION**

*(weeks 3-4) (weeks of 1 and 8 February)*


Telles, Edward. “Racial Classification,” chapter 4 in *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*, pp. 78-106.


**III. PREJUDICE, STIGMA, IMPLICIT BIAS** *(weeks 5-6)*

*(weeks of 15 and 22 February)*
Frederickson, Racism: A Short History, Chapter 2, pp. 49-96.
*texts on the Roma in Eastern Europe TBA.

>>EXCURSUS 1: IS RACE THE ROOT OF THE SPAWN OF SLAVERY?

Orlando Patterson, “The Denial of Slavery in American Sociology” (2019)
Orlando Patterson, “Slavery as a Social Institution” (2004)

Recommended

IV. DISCRIMINATION (weeks 7-8)
(weeks of 1 and 8 March)

Michael Weiner, Japan’s Minorities. Routledge, 2008, chapters TBA.

>>EXCURSUS 2: THE LOGIC OF CASTE, SPECIFIC OR GENERIC?
Jodhka, Surinder S. "Ascriptive hierarchies: Caste and its reproduction in contemporary India." 
*Current Sociology* 64, no. 2 (2016): 228-243.

**Recommended**


**MIDTERM TUESDAY 15 MARCH IN CLASS & AT HOME**

**V. SEGREGATION (weeks 9, 10)**
*(weeks of 15 and 29 March)*


**SPRING BREAK (22-24 March)**

**VI. SECLUSION: CAMPS, GHETTOS, RESERVATIONS (weeks 11-12)**
*(weeks of 29 March-5 April)*


**Recommended**


**VII. EXCLUSIONARY VIOLENCE: POGROMS TO EXTERMINATION (weeks 13-14)**
(weeks of 12 and 19 March)


>>EXCURSUS 3: SETTLER COLONIALISM

Recommended

VIII. RECAPITULATION: REASSEMBLING RACIAL DOMINATION
(week of 26 April)

Loïc Wacquant, “Resolving the Trouble with Race” (redux).

To go further

LAST DAY OF CLASS THURSDAY 28 APRIL
EXAM WEEK 9-13 MAY