

CRMJUS/ SOCIOL321L: Race & Ethnic Relations  
Spring 2012  
Thursday, 4:00 – 6:45 pm

Instructor: Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna  
Office: W-4-144/31  
Office Hours: Thursday, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm  
By appointment  
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**Course Description:**

This course will examine how race, ethnicity, and social identities are constructed and maintained in the United States. Students will examine the history of racial and ethnic relations and the connection between that history and contemporary social relations. The course will be oriented around several themes in which students will learn to identify the social and institutional structures, including law, that support oppression, domination, and privilege. In addition, students will evaluate the various forms of resistance used by different groups engaged in efforts to create social equality.

**Objectives**

1. To be able to discuss the mechanisms that support identity based oppression and domination.
2. To be able to identify and discuss the social and institutional structures that maintain oppression, domination, and privilege.
3. To develop an understanding of the history of marginalized group creation.
4. To understand the construction of racial identities, in particular white identity.
5. To identify the social and institutional structures that support white privilege.
6. To understand the forms of resistance used by marginalized groups historically and currently.

**Required Materials:**

All readings, podcasts, online videos, and other materials will be made available on WikiSpaces.

**Course Grading:**

- Attendance & Participation - 30%
- Random reading quizzes - 20%
- Individual data collection assignments - 25%
- Group project - 25%

**Grading Policy:**

Students earn attendance and participation points separately. Participation points are earned by participating in class discussion and peer reviews. However, if you do not attend class, you will lose both attendance and all available participation points for that day.

All assignments are expected to be completed and turned in via Wikispaces on the day they are due. Assignments will be accepted as late as 11:59 pm on the day they are due. You may bring a hard copy to class (which is appreciated) but all assignments must be uploaded to WikiSpaces by midnight. Late assignments will **not be accepted** without documentation of an emergency.

At the end of the semester, you will be evaluated by your fellow group members. Your final grade may be adjusted **up or down** depending on how you are reviewed by your peers. Please keep this in mind when you work with your group members and when you get your final grade.

### **Academic Integrity (Standard Warning)**

Students are expected to adhere to the code of academic integrity as stated in the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating (see [http://www.umb.edu/admissions/ugrad\\_catalog/plagiarism.html](http://www.umb.edu/admissions/ugrad_catalog/plagiarism.html) for the details of this policy). You are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work. If you have questions about how to properly cite and reference the work of others, please see me or send me an email **before** turning in your assignments.

### **Other Important Policies**

Laptops are not allowed during lecture and discussion days unless you have a documented reason to use them. Laptops will be allowed during group work days.

Cell phones are expected to be off during class. If you are seen to be texting, IM'ing or using their cell phone or any other portable communication device (including e-book readers), you will lose that day's participation points, regardless of how well you participated in class discussion.

At the end of the semester, you will be evaluated by your fellow group members. Your final grade may be adjusted up or down depending on how you are reviewed by your peers. Please keep this in mind when you work with your group members and when you get your final grade.

Regular attendance is crucial to the performance of the class. This class is a mixture of lecture, practice, and most importantly, discussion. You are expected to attend each and every class. There are no "free days." Absences due to illness, family death, or other legitimate reason may be excused only when accompanied with documentation.

Students are also required to attend class until the last day of presentations, which may occur on the day of the final exam. Please make your holiday travel plans with this in mind. If you miss another group's presentation, you will lose double attendance and participation points. No exceptions will be made for this.

### **Expectations:**

- You are expected to attend every single class.
- You are expected to read the assigned readings or watch/listen to assigned podcasts or videocasts before class.
- You are expected to participate in class discussions.
- You are expected to turn in your assignments on time.
- You are expected to work constructively with your team.
- You are expected to communicate with me, most especially if you are having a difficult time keeping up with the readings, listening, or viewings, completing the assignments, or working productively with your group. Please come see me during office hours or by appointment. I will not be able to help you be successful in this class unless you communicate with me.

### **What you can expect from me:**

- I will return assignments with grades and detailed feedback within 2 weeks

- I will answer questions sent to me via email within 2 days if received during the week or 3 days if received over a weekend or holiday.
- I will be available for face to face meetings by appointment outside of regular office hours (on Thursday on campus or almost any day if you are available to meet off campus) if the appointment is made in advance.

### **Some detail about the assignments:**

Please see the detailed reading and assignment schedule below for due dates. If you have questions about any assignment, your group work, or your grades, please send me an email or come see me.

### Reading Quizzes

There will be random quizzes based on the day's reading, podcast, or videocast. These quizzes will evaluate your understanding and reflection of the material. Quizzes will take place in class. All quizzes take place in the first 5-10 minutes of class. Please be sure to arrive to class on time in order to take the quiz. There will be NO opportunity to make up the quizzes if you arrive to class late, nor will you be able to make up quizzes even if your absence is excused.

### Individual Data Collection Assignments

All assignments will be submitted on the class Wiki. **All written assignments are limited to 800 words (2 pages double spaced)**. Please see the schedule below for due dates. Additional details will be made available in class and on the Wiki.

#### *Assignment #1: Social Structures*

In this assignment you will find a modern (within the last 10 years) example of racial or ethnic oppression or domination of any type in the United States. This can occur in any place in the country or in the U.S. as a whole. You will need to find at least 3 newspaper, magazine, or blog articles around this example. You will identify the social and institutional structures that create or maintain that domination or oppression and describe the forms of resistance are being carried out by the oppressed or marginalized group.

#### *Assignment #2: Interviews around white privilege*

In this assignment, you will interview at least 3 people of your same racial or ethnic heritage to determine whether they believe that white privilege exists and why or why not? If they do, what do they think needs to be done to dismantle it? If they do not, how do they explain racial disparities in income, education, and health? Your essay should briefly describe the patterns of responses you received. It should focus mainly on explaining those patterns in terms of identity formation, and social and institutional structures.

#### *Assignment #3: Census analysis on economic disparities*

In this assignment you will collect census data about the economic status of different ethnic groups in your assigned cities and towns, compared to Massachusetts and US as whole. You will write a summary of the data and the comparison. You are required to include a table and a chart of the data. Your essay should focus on explaining the patterns you see in terms of social and institutional structures.

#### *Assignment #4: Health disparities*

Using MassCHIP or any reports from the state or local departments of public health, you will compare the health status of different ethnic groups in the same cities and towns you used in

assignment #3 as well as Massachusetts. You are required to include a table and a chart of the data. Your essay should focus on explaining the patterns you see in terms of social and institutional structures.

### Group Project

In the last two weeks of the semester, you will work in teams of 3-5 students to create a 5 minute presentation in which you address the issue of racial and ethnic domination, oppression, and privilege in one of the following areas:

- 1) Identity in an increasingly diverse America
- 2) “Immigrants” versus “native” Americans
- 3) Having a voice
- 4) Political participation
- 5) The role of education in social mobility
- 6) Mass media representation (or lack of it)
- 7) The importance of self-expression
- 8) The importance of having a vote

Team members and the issue areas will be randomly assigned. The presentation can be in any audio-visual or performance format, including:

- 1) PowerPoint
- 2) Movie/ Video (YouTube, Vimeo, other)
- 3) Mock debate
- 4) Photo montage
- 5) Something else? – Maybe. Propose it to me first.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

I reserve the right to change the details of this syllabus at anytime for any reason (i.e. snow days, illness, conference presentation). I may change the order of readings or the due date of assignments. If this occurs, you will be notified via email and in class. A revised syllabus will be distributed via email and/or in class, as well as on WikiSpaces should this occur.

Week	Date	Materials to read/watch/listen	Assignments Due
1	1/26		
2	2/2	Wise, Born to Belonging  Irish American Workers and White Racial Formation, from <i>Wages of Whiteness</i> (p.133-150) (library e-book, will need barcode for access)	
3	2/9	Angry Asian Man Blog: Chinese Workers "Excised" Out of AMC's Transcontinental Railroad Drama <i>Hell On Wheels</i>  Skloot, Chapters 1 - 2	DUE: Social structures assignment
4	2/16	Wise, Privilege  Video: Louis CK: Being White	
5	2/23	Ali, et al, The Roots of Islamophobia  Carnes, "In the City of Brotherly Love," in <i>Us and Them: A History of Intolerance in America</i> .  Video: Maz Jobrani: Did you hear the one about the Iranian-American?	
6	3/1	Marks, <i>If I Were A Poor Black Kid</i>  Kochhar, Fry, & Taylor, <i>Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics</i>	DUE: Interviews assignment  IAP test results – BRING TO CLASS
7	3/8	Wise, Collaboration  DeVega, Iowa and Beyond: For the Tea Party GOP "Common Sense" Racism is the Road to the White House  Sullivan, An Antichrist Obama in McCain Ad?	
8	3/15	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	

Week	Date	Materials to read/watch/listen	Assignments Due
9	3/22	Skloot, <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	DUE: Census analysis of economic disparities
10	3/29	Video: We Shall Remain: Episode 5 Video: Our Spirits Don't Speak English	
11	4/5	Eberhardt, Looking Deathworthy Pert, Why is the NYPD after me?	DUE: Health disparities assignment
12	4/12	Hirabayashi vs. US The Case of Sacco & Vanzetti: Justice on Trial	
13	4/19	Ngai, <i>The Strange Career of the Illegal Alien</i> National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Under Siege	
14	4/26		
15	5/3		Final project presentations