

Gilbert
Fall
2000

SOCY 1015: U.S. Race and Ethnic Relations (sec. 004)

Fall 2000/MWF 11-11:50/Ketchum 234
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Office hrs.: Wed. 1-2 and Fri. 10-11

Objectives

1. To become familiar with the history and current status of U.S. race and ethnic relations. This will include study of the past and present situation of various racial and ethnic groups from a social theory perspective, as well as some examination of U.S. policy with regard to racial and ethnic conflicts around the world, both historically and at present.
2. To give some thought to your own racial and/or ethnic heritage and how it impacts your definition of self and relations with others.
3. To develop critical thinking skills, including the ability to identify where your own attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about race and ethnicity come from, as well as the ability to critically evaluate outside sources of information.

Required Text

Parrillo, Vincent N. (2000). Strangers to These Shores: Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States. (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Optional Readings: May be assigned, at least 1 week in advance of deadline for completing the reading. Such readings will either be distributed in class or placed on reserve.

COURSE OUTLINE

Dates	Topic	Reading
WEEK 1: 8/28-9/1	Intro. to course	Ch. 1 (by Fri.)
WEEK 2: 9/6-9/8 (NO CLASS Mon. 9/4)	Defining Culture & Social Structure	Ch. 2
WEEK 3: 9/11-9/15	Defining Prejudice & Discrimination SHORT PAPER #1 DUE FRI. 9/15	Ch.3
WEEK 4: 9/18-9/22	Dominant-Minority Relations	Ch. 4
WEEK 5: 9/25-9/29	European Americans SHORT PAPER #2 DUE FRI. 9/29	Chs. 5 & 6 (skim)
WEEK 6: 10/2-10/4 (NO CLASS Fri. 10/6)	Jewish Holocaust	no reading
WEEK 7: 10/9-10/13	Native Americans SHORT PAPER #3 DUE FRI. 10/13	Ch. 7
WEEK 8: 10/16-10/20	East & Southeast Asian Americans	Ch. 8 (skim)

WEEK 9: 10/23-10/27	MIDTERM (10/25 & 10/27)	no reading
WEEK 10: 10/30-11/3	Other Asian & Middle Eastern Americans SHORT PAPER #4 DUE FRI. 11/3	Ch. 9 (skim)
WEEK 11: 11/6-11/10	African Americans	Ch. 10
WEEK 12: 11/13-11/17	Hispanic & Caribbean Americans FINAL PAPER DUE FRI. 11/17	Ch. 11
WEEK 13: 11/20-11/22 (NO CLASS Fri. 11/24)	Religious Minorities	Ch. 12
WEEK 14: 11/27-12/1	Women as a Minority Group	Ch. 13
WEEK 15: 12/4-12/8	I Have a Dream: Assessing the Past, Present, & Future	Ch. 14
WEEK 16: 12/11-12/13 (NO CLASS Fri. 11/15)	Wrap-up	
FINAL: TUESDAY 12/19, 4:30-7:00PM		

Requirements

EXAMS

There will be 2 in-class exams, each worth 100 pts. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions, as well as several essay questions. About 70% of the exams' content will be objective (multiple choice & true/false). The midterm will be taken over the course of 2 class periods: the first day will cover the objective questions, the second will cover the remainder. The exams are each worth 25% of your final grade.

SHORT PAPERS

Throughout the semester, you will have 4 short papers (each 2-3 pages in length) to complete. For each assignment, you will have at least 2 options to choose from. These papers are to be typed (no exceptions) in a standard format (i.e., double-spaced, reasonable margins, etc.). Make sure to number pages, and include your section number and the class meeting time somewhere at the top of your paper. There's no need to make up a title or to include a title page. These papers are graded primarily for content, although grammar or spelling that is poor enough to make your ideas difficult to follow will result in a lower grade. These 4 papers together will make up 25% of your final grade.

FINAL PAPER

The final paper is to be 8-12 pages in length. You may work with a partner, or in a larger group, if you so choose. It is your responsibility to make such arrangements, and please be aware that everyone in a group will share the same grade for the final product. Peer grading another person (or group's) paper will add a grade level to the score of own paper (e.g., a B becomes a B+, a B+ becomes an A-, an A- becomes an A, etc.), assuming you do an adequate job in peer grading. The final paper is worth 25% of your final grade.

OTHER OPTIONS FOR GRADING

We may decide, as a group, to add another element to the grading system. Options include an attendance and participation grade or an ongoing journal. We will discuss these options, and other ideas you might have, on the first day of class.

CLASSROOM DECORUM

There are certain things I expect from you all during class time. I expect you to be on time and to not leave class early without letting me know ahead of time. I also expect you to refrain from rude and distracting behaviors, such as reading newspapers, carrying on conversations with your neighbors, and passing notes. Anything I observe along these lines could result in my asking you to leave the classroom. Finally, please do not begin packing your bags while the class is still in session; the noise and movement is very distracting to me and to your fellow students. I tend to go until the very end of the 50-minute period, and I expect you to go the distance with me.

HONOR CODE

If you are caught cheating on an exam, you will fail the course. I have been known to make up 2 different versions of the same test, so it is probably not in your best interest to copy from someone else. In addition, evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper. Plagiarism is defined as: "steal[ing] and pass[ing] off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: us[ing] (a created production) without crediting the source" (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. [1989]. MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., p. 898).

FINAL PAPER

Objectives and Paper Topics:

The main objectives are the following:

- Integration of course material
- Personal importance
- Clarity of writing/style
- Critical thinking skills/logical presentation of ideas

Choose a topic that you have a personal investment in, whether that be based on some life experience, your professional goals, or something else that “matters” to you. The idea here is to learn how to integrate your own ideas and/or experiences with “formal” knowledge. You don’t need to bare your soul; do what feels comfortable. Just be aware that if I cannot perceive “you” as being present in the content of the paper, you will lose some pointy. Likewise, if you hand in something that reads like a journal entry, but contains no formal concepts from the reading or lecture, your grade will be reduced. I do not want this to be a research paper, but some use of outside sources is acceptable, especially if you are addressing a topic that you have little knowledge of or that is not covered well in the textbook.

I would suggest that you start by looking back through your notes from class, or looking through the textbook, and paying attention to anything that grabs your interest. Was there a day in class when we discussed something that caused you to think back on a personal experience (or experience of someone you know) and to question your interpretation of that event? Have you sometimes disagreed with ideas presented in class, but not felt comfortable challenging the instructor or your classmates? Are there situations, related to the content of the course, that you know will arise in the professional setting you hope to work in, and that you would like to understand better? Have you noticed that your view of your current surroundings has changed in some way through having taken this course? How do you see the things you have been taught (by family, clergy, friends, the media, educators, etc.) in light of this course? Asking yourself these kinds of questions should lead you to a topic that you can truly care about. If nothing comes to mind, then feel free to talk to me. I’ll do my best to help you come up with a good topic.

Mechanics and Grading Criteria:

- You must have a title. A title page is not necessary, but make sure your name, and the course and section number, appears somewhere on the paper.
- You must have at least one paragraph at the beginning that serves as your introduction, and at least one paragraph at the end that serves as your conclusion.
- The length is to be 8-12 pages. I will not accept less than 8 or more than 12. Please use double spacing, standard margins, and turn in a "clean" copy (a minimum of white-outs, erasures, etc.). Number all pages.
- Staple, don't paper-clip, your pages together.
- Headings are optional, but if you use them, make their appearance and style internally consistent.

I will grade (maximum 50 points) according to the following:

3 pts. for the basic mechanics listed above (title, length, spacing, general appearance, stapled, pages numbered, consistent headings, etc.).

4 pts. for overall structure, including proper use of headings, paragraph indentations, topic sentences, introduction and conclusion.

8 pts. for grammar and spelling.

8 pts. for organization and logical presentation of ideas (i.e., does one point flow logically into the next; do you construct a coherent argument or position; can I follow what you're saying?).

9 pts. for integration of course material.

9 pts. for use of "self" in your paper, including original thinking and skillful integration of personal experience or interests.

9 pts. for critical thinking skills (i.e., do you: examine alternatives to your point of view; compare and contrast different views; back up your arguments with different forms of knowledge?).

Objectives and Instructions for Peer Grading:

You will receive additional points on your paper (see main syllabus) for grading the paper of one of your peers. It is up to you to find a partner to work with on this. When you turn your paper in for grading, be sure to also include your rough draft (with your peer grader's comments/editing), and the Peer Grading Sheet that your partner filled out for your paper, so that I can give them credit for their grading efforts. They will turn in the same, so that I can give you credit for your peer grading of their paper.

The purposes of peer grading are two-fold. First, you are assisting your partner by providing constructive feedback that will hopefully improve the quality of his or her finished product. Second, you are gaining experience in reading someone else's work critically.

I will ask you to use the same grading criteria I will be using (see heading titled Mechanics and Grading Criteria for clarification of categories on the Peer Grading Sheet). Although the grade you assign to your partner's paper will not technically "count" (my assessment will be the only grade actually recorded), you are providing him or her with a preliminary assessment of what elements work well, and what could be improved upon.

The idea here is to be helpful, to suggest ways your partner's writing could be improved. I would like you to write comments directly on his or her paper (the rough draft provided to you). Include both positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

Here is a partial list of suggestions:

well-written	concise
nice transition	good logic
awkward wording	too choppy
need more detail/too much detail	nice flow of ideas
good point	expand on this
redundant	how do you know this?
meaning unclear	need to back this up

In addition, please fill out the attached form, assigning points for each category. Point totals give your partner a more concrete idea of where they stand (i.e., how much they need to work on a particular category in order to receive a higher grade).

SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1: Due Friday, 9/15.

Option A: Write about your own background with regard to race and ethnicity. How important is your race/ethnicity to your sense of self? Why is it important and how does it play out OR, if it isn't important to you, why not? What were you taught within your family about race and ethnicity (your own and also how other groups were seen)? Where else have you learned about race/ethnicity? Church? School? Work? Friends? End with a summary of your current feelings about race and ethnicity, both in your personal life and in society as a whole.

Option B: Write about an experience of discrimination, either something that happened to you or to someone you are acquainted with. Any type of discrimination is OK to write about, but relate it to concepts from reading and lecture. Describe and analyze what happened using terminology from class. Finally, describe how the experience affected you. Did it make you angry, sad, frustrated? Did you change your behavior or beliefs after the incident?

Assignment #2: Due Friday, 9/29.

Option A: Do some surfing on the Internet to see what's out there related to race and ethnicity. You might try looking for information directed at specific minority groups, multicultural sites in general, and also general sites. With general sites, pay attention to whether images and messages seem directed at a particular group, perhaps excluding others. You might also check out bulletin and message boards, as well as chat rooms to see if anything obviously related to race or ethnicity pops up. You can also check for hate groups or groups that you think might take some sort of definite stand on racial or ethnic groups/issues. Be careful with these last: watchdog and government groups sometimes monitor these sites and may track users. I recommend that if you, for example, look up the KKK, that you do no more than check out the content or, at most, lurk in a chat room. Do not participate in any exchanges with regular users. Write up a summary of what you find and provide a bibliography at the end of interesting website addresses that you run across.

Option B: Watch television over the course of a couple of days, and at different times of the day. Channel surf and check the TV Guide to make sure that you are watching a broad variety of what's on, including local and national news, public stations, and cable (if you have that). Pay attention to commercials and children's programming (yes, you now have a good reason to watch the X-Men), maybe even professional wrestling. Take notes on your observations, and hand them in with your paper. Ask yourself some critical questions about what you're seeing, and analyze using concepts from the reading and lecture. For example, who is represented in various types of programming, including advertisements? Are commercials different for "black" shows than for "white"? What are kids being exposed to with regard to race and ethnicity? Are messages explicit or less obvious? Are there any groups that are totally invisible, or portrayed in a particular manner? What American values related to racial or ethnic groups could you assume from what you see on TV? One way to approach this assignment is to act as though you are an alien from another planet, seeing this thing called TV for the first time. If you knew nothing about American culture or its citizens, what would you assume from television content, keeping race and ethnicity as the focus of your observations?

Assignment #3: Due Friday, 10/20

Option A: Imagine that you are heading up a government committee whose task it is to make recommendations for improving the current status and life conditions of Native Americans. What would you propose and why; how would you go about it; do you expect any resistance to your proposals—from whom and why; why is your program important, that is, why should people care about it and support it, even if it is expensive; who should pay for it? Be as convincing as you can in your arguments and use terminology from class as much as possible. You may need to do some outside research for this paper. If you don't think you know enough about the current status and life conditions of Native Americans to be convincing, seek out additional information. Avoid operating from stereotypes.

Option B: Imagine that you are the descendant of a survivor of the Jewish Holocaust, living in a community where a neo-Nazi group is planning a march through downtown. Write about your feelings and thoughts in this situation. Be sure to address the arguments that might be made on behalf of the group wishing to march, such as freedom of expression and the right to peaceably assemble. The paper must go beyond invective directed at the KKK; make a reasoned argument for your position, even if you have a strong emotional response. Part of the goal here is to weight democratic principles, which generally tolerate the expression of "differences" against past history of oppression and concern for the oppressed. If you like, you may address the paper to a potential marcher, or make it a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, or the statement opening a petition you hope to have signed by other townsfolk and sent on to the mayor. Anything that will help you organize your argument in this exercise is OK.

Assignment #4: Due Friday, 11/3

Option A: Write a position paper on the issue of bilingual education. Even though you will be choosing a position (pro or con), remember that to make an effective argument you must address the view of those who might disagree with you. Do additional research if necessary to understand both sides of the issue. Incorporate concepts and specific terminology from class into your paper.

Option B: Write a position paper on the issue of raising immigration quotas in the U.S. Even though you will be choosing a position (pro or con), remember that to make an effective argument you must address the view of those who might disagree with you. Do additional research if necessary to understand both sides of the issue. Incorporate concepts and specific terminology from class into your paper.