

SOC 6620
Sociology of Race & Racism
SPRING 2023

Instructor: Dan Hirschman

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Time and Location: 11:20am-1:15pm Thursdays, Uris Hall 360

Office Hours: 2:00-4:00pm Tuesdays, by [appointment](#) & on Zoom (or in-person in Uris Hall 338 by request)

Overview & Objectives

This graduate seminar offers an introduction to the sociology of race and racism. We will cover the historical emergence of race and racism, debates over the relationship between racism and capitalism, and contemporary patterns of racial inequality and structural racism. The course will emphasize dynamics in the contemporary United States but will place those dynamics in historical, comparative, and global perspective. Finally, the course will cover how these dynamics overlap with topics from other sociological subfields such as education, economic sociology, organizations, and social movements, as well as methodological implications of sociological theories of race and racism.

Requirements

Attendance and Participation: You are required to attend and participate in class. If you are unable to attend class (for health, family obligations, religious obligations, etc.), please let me know in advance.

Readings: This course is a doctoral seminar. As such, it carries a substantial reading load. You are expected to read all assigned material before coming to class. We will devote most of our class time to exploring the readings.

Presentations: In most weeks, one or two students will lead the class discussion, beginning with a short presentation. These presentations should be 15-20 minutes, and include a handout with a summary of key terms and claims made in the readings, but may also include activities, videos, etc. We will discuss expectations for the presentations in class.

Response Memos: Each week (other than the first and the last), you are expected to write a structured response memo approximately 500 words long. This memo should do two things. First, it should attempt to summarize the major argument (as you see it) of one or more of the week's main readings. Second, it should identify a particular passage or topic that you would like to discuss further and offer a question or commentary about that passage or topic. Each memo is due at midnight on the day before the associated class meeting.

Respect: There are many ways to interpret the course readings and many competing views on the topics we will discuss, and I hope we will debate many contrasting viewpoints during the course of the semester. To facilitate good discussion, please keep in mind that we are debating ideas, not each other as individuals. This type of debate might take the form of “I disagree” instead of “you are wrong.” Please keep the difference in mind so that we can engage in useful and vigorous discussion!

In the context of a graduate seminar, respect takes on an additional, specific meaning. In graduate seminars, there is a tendency to try to show off by “name dropping” (or, read more sympathetically, to make exciting intellectual connections to material outside of the immediate scope of the class). This tendency can lead to stifled discussions and alienation as students who are unfamiliar with a particular thinker or concept are forced out of the conversation. Thus, as a rule, if you want to introduce a term or theorist that we have not explicitly discussed in the class, you must briefly explain who the theorist is/was or the meaning of the concept, and then why that theorist or concept is relevant to our discussion. The goal here is not to prevent bringing in outside material, but to make sure that we can have a productive conversation by building a shared vocabulary — one of the central purposes of a graduate seminar.

Final Paper: The course has one major writing assignment. You will have your choice of writing one of the following: a detailed literature review, a theoretical exploration, a research proposal, or an empirical paper. The topic will be of your choosing, with approval. We will discuss expectations for the final paper early in the term. Students will workshop rough drafts of the final paper in small groups on Thursday, 5/4, during our scheduled class time. The final draft will be due on Thursday, 5/18, at midnight.

Grading

Your grade has four components.

Participation: 20%

Attending class is a necessary but insufficient condition for full participation. You must also engage with the readings and your colleagues, and do so respectfully. This is not the same as talking a lot — for example, you might make only occasional interventions into the conversation, but ones that show clear engagement with the readings and the flow of discussion. And one of the most important forms of participation is asking basic clarification questions, especially as we begin our discussion. If you have concerns about your participation, please raise them with me in office hours before the end of the term.

Presentation: 10%

Each student will be expected to present approximately once, depending on the size of the class.

Response Memos: 20%

Each of the 12 weekly memos (for classes 2-13) will be graded out of 10 points. You will be

graded on your best eight memos (which means you can skip up to four weeks as long as you are satisfied with your grade on the eight you turn in).

Final Paper: 50%

The final paper is worth 50% of your grade.

Grade Appeals: If you feel that an *error* has been made, you may appeal your grade to me within *one week* of receiving your grade. To appeal your grade, you must provide a written explanation of the error you believe has been made, and I will re-grade the assignment. Please be advised that there is no guarantee that I will raise your grade; in fact, it is possible that I may lower it. For this reason, you should appeal a grade as a last resort when you feel *certain* that you have been graded unfairly.

Administrative Issues

Academic Integrity: Students in the course are encouraged to discuss course material and assignments with each other. However, anything you submit for credit should represent your own work. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable. Information on the University's academic code is available [here](#). Any student who plagiarizes will fail the course and may face other sanctions imposed by the University. Students agree that by taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.¹

Accommodations for Learning: Cornell University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class, by email, or during office hours. For more information, please contact [Student Disability Services](#) (phone: 607-254-4545, email: sds.cu@cornell.edu).

General Advice

PhD programs can be overwhelming. For two very useful perspectives, I recommend Fabio Rojas' [Grad Skool Rulz](#) (an ebook based on blog posts) and Jessica Calarco's [A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum](#) (a traditionally-published book).

Required Texts

The following are books you might want to own (or borrow from the library), and which we will read substantial portions from. They are listed in the order we will read them.

¹This paragraph adopts language from Erin York Cornwell's 5010 syllabus, as well as language provided by Cornell for discussing Turnitin.

- Fields, Barbara J., and Karen Fields. 2012. *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*.
- Mills, Charles. 2022. *The Racial Contract*. 25th Anniversary Edition.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd edition.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2021. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Sixth edition.
- Ray, Victor. 2022. *On Critical Race Theory*.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America*.

The rest of the readings will be available on the course Canvas site as pdfs and/or as links. The readings for each week are listed in the order you might want to read them.

Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction & Overview (1/26)

- Morris, Aldon. 2007. "Sociology of Race and W.E.B. Du Bois: The Path Not Taken." Pp. 503-504 in *Sociology in America*.
- Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2016. "A Critical and Comprehensive Sociological Theory of Race and Racism." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2(2):129-41.
- American Sociological Association. 2023. "Statement on the Importance of Teaching and Learning About Race and Racism." Available [here](#).

Class 2: The History of Race & Racecraft (2/2)

- Fields, Barbara J., and Karen Fields. 2012. *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*. Introduction, Chapters 1, 4, 7 and Conclusion (and the rest if you have time).
- Torres, Mo. 2023. "Against Race, Toward the Abolition of Racism." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 9(1):124-27.

Class 3: The Racial Contract (2/9)

- Mills, Charles. 2022. *The Racial Contract*. 25th Anniversary Edition.
- Arriaga, Felicia, Freedom Blume Oeur, B. Brian Foster, and James M. Thomas. 2022. "A Symposium on Charles W. Mills and The Racial Contract." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 8(4):431-32.
- Maghbouleh, Neda. 2022. "Twenty-Five Years of Charles Mills's Racial Contract in Sociology." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 8(4):433-42.

- Mueller, Jennifer C. 2022. “‘Imagine an Ignorance That Fights Back’: Honoring Charles Mills, Our Inheritance and Charge.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 8(4):443-50.
- Selod, Saher. 2022. “The Racial Contract: Challenging White Supremacy in Sociological Theories and Providing a Global Theory for Race.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 8(4):451-55.

Class 4: Settler Colonialism and Indigeneity (2/16)

- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2015. “Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender Formation.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1(1):52-72.
- Brown, Hana E. 2020. “Who Is an Indian Child? Institutional Context, Tribal Sovereignty, and Race-Making in Fragmented States.” *American Sociological Review* 85(5):776-805.
- McKay, Dwanna L. 2021. “Real Indians: Policing or Protecting Authentic Indigenous Identity?” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 7(1):12-25.
- Sabbagh-Khoury, Areej. 2022. “Citizenship as Accumulation by Dispossession: The Paradox of Settler Colonial Citizenship.” *Sociological Theory* 40(2):151-78.
- Steinman, Erich W. 2022. “Settler Colonialism and Sociological Knowledge: Insights and Directions Forward.” *Theory and Society* 51(1):145-76.

Class 5: Du Bois & Racial Capitalism (2/23)

- Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America*, Ch 1-4, 9, 13, 14.
- Itziszohn, José and Karida Brown. *The Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois: Racialized Modernity and the Global Color Line*. Chapter 2.
- Go, Julian. 2021. “Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism.” *Sociological Theory* 39(1):38-47.

Class 6: Racial Formation (3/2)

- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd edition.
- Saperstein, Aliya, Andrew M. Penner, and Ryan Light. 2013. “Racial Formation in Perspective: Connecting Individuals, Institutions, and Power Relations.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(1):359-78.

Class 7: Intersectionality and Black Feminist Thought (3/9)

- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Social Problems* 33(6):s14-32.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989:139-68.
- McCall, Leslie. 2005. "The Complexity of Intersectionality." *Signs* 30(3):1771-1800.
- Luna, Zakiya. 2016. "'Truly a Women of Color Organization' Negotiating Sameness and Difference in Pursuit of Intersectionality." *Gender & Society* 30(5):769-90.
- Grundy, Saida. 2021. "Lifting the Veil on Campus Sexual Assault: Morehouse College, Hegemonic Masculinity, and Revealing Racialized Rape Culture through the Du Boisian Lens." *Social Problems* 68(2):226-49.

Class 8: Critical Race Theory (3/16)

- Ray, Victor. 2022. *On Critical Race Theory*.
- Bell, Derrick A. 1980. "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma." *Harvard Law Review* 93(3):518-33.
- Bell, Derrick. 1991. "Racial Realism." *Conn. L. Rev.* 24:363-379.

Class 9: Colorblind Racism (3/23)

- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2021. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Sixth edition.
- McKay, Dwanna L. 2019. "Masking Legitimized Racism: Indigeneity, Colorblindness, and the Sociology of Race." Pp. 85-104 in *Seeing Race Again*. University of California Press.

Class 10: Whiteness (Ignorance, Diversity, & Violence) (3/30)

- Lewis, Amanda E. 2004. "What Group?" Studying Whites and Whiteness in the Era of 'Color-Blindness.'" *Sociological Theory* 22(4):623-46.
- Mueller, Jennifer C. 2017. "Producing Colorblindness: Everyday Mechanisms of White Ignorance." *Social Problems* 64(2):219-38.
- Bell, Joyce M., and Douglas Hartmann. 2007. "Diversity in Everyday Discourse: The Cultural Ambiguities and Consequences of 'Happy Talk.'" *American Sociological Review* 72(6):895-914.
- Berrey, Ellen. 2014. "Breaking Glass Ceilings, Ignoring Dirty Floors The Culture and Class Bias of Diversity Management." *American Behavioral Scientist* 58(2):347-70.

- Smångs, Mattias. 2016. “Doing Violence, Making Race: Southern Lynching and White Racial Group Formation.” *American Journal of Sociology* 121(5):1329-74.

Spring Break: No class on 4/6!

Class 11: Racial Boundaries, Racial Fluidity, and Colorism (4/13)

- Fox, Cybelle, and Thomas A. Guglielmo. 2012. “Defining America’s Racial Boundaries: Blacks, Mexicans, and European Immigrants, 1890-1945.” *American Journal of Sociology* 118(2):327-79.
- Saperstein, Aliya, and Andrew M. Penner. 2012. “Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States.” *American Journal of Sociology* 118(3):676-727.
- Mora, G. Cristina, and Dina Okamoto. 2020. “Boundary Articulation and Emergent Identities: Asian and Hispanic Panethnicity in Comparison 1970-1980.” *Social Problems* 67(1):56-76.
- Schachter, Ariela, René D. Flores, and Neda Maghbouleh. 2021. “Ancestry, Color, or Culture? How Whites Racially Classify Others in the U.S.” *American Journal of Sociology* 126(5):1220-63.
- Branigan, Amelia R., and Matthew Hall. 2022. “Colorism in the Rental Housing Market: Field Experimental Evidence of Discrimination by Skin Color.” *Social Psychology Quarterly*

Class 12: Comparative, Transnational, and Global Approaches (4/20)

- Telles, Edward, and Tianna Paschel. 2014. “Who Is Black, White, or Mixed Race? How Skin Color, Status, and Nation Shape Racial Classification in Latin America.” *American Journal of Sociology* 120(3):864-907.
- Kwon, Yaejoon. 2017. “Transcolonial Racial Formation: Constructing the ‘Irish of the Orient’ in U.S.-Occupied Korea.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3(2):268-81.
- Christian, Michelle. 2019. “A Global Critical Race and Racism Framework: Racial Entanglements and Deep and Malleable Whiteness.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5(2):169-85.
- Quisumbing King, Katrina. 2019. “Recentering U.S. Empire: A Structural Perspective on the Color Line.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5(1):11-25.
- Beaman, Jean, and Amy Petts. 2020. “Towards a Global Theory of Colorblindness: Comparing Colorblind Racial Ideology in France and the United States.” *Sociology Compass* 14(4):e12774.

Class 13: Methodological Reflections (4/27)

- Martin, John Levi, and King-To Yeung. 2003. "The Use of the Conceptual Category of Race in American Sociology, 1937-99." *Sociological Forum* 18(4):521-43.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and Tukufu Zuberi. 2008. "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods." Pp. 3-30 in *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*.
- Roth, Wendy D. 2016. "The Multiple Dimensions of Race." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39(8):1310-38.
- Sen, Maya, and Omar Wasow. 2016. "Race as a Bundle of Sticks: Designs That Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19(1):499-522.

Class 14: Final Paper Workshop (5/4)

- Circulate final paper draft in advance of this meeting!

Final Paper due Thursday, 5/18.