

SOCI 325: Departmental Seminar in Sociology
“Great Books on Race, Ethnicity, and Multiculturalism”
Case Western Reserve University: Spring 2008

Professor: Dr. Sandra L. Barnes
Class: T, Th 10:00-11:15 a.m. Location: Mather Memorial, Room 222
Office: Mather Memorial 223B
Office Hours: T, Th 3:45-5:00 p.m. or by appointment
Office Phone: 368-5091, email address: sbarnes@case.edu

COURSE CONTENT:

Four Texts:

Roedinger, David R. 1991. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. London: Verso.

Rumbaut, Ruben and Alejandro Portes. 2001. *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. CA: University of California Press.

West, Cornel. 1993. *Race Matters*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Zhou, Min. 1992. *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Course books will be available in the Campus Bookstore. Students will also read several excerpts provided by the instructor.

Course Description and Discussion Format:

This course fulfills the SAGES requirement of a Departmental Seminar. It focuses on close readings of contemporary classics in sociology, analytical writing, and intensive seminar-style discussion. The course examines theoretical perspectives and methodological issues in sociology such that students are able to investigate, analyze, and present research findings in written form. Research is always an inherently collaborative process and thus the course will utilize seminar-style discussions to formulate and examine ideas. The seminar will focus on topics germane to a critical reading of books that inform our understanding of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism in the U.S. context. Students will be introduced to the sociological imagination as an overarching framework to examine groundbreaking classical and contemporary books about race and ethnicity as social constructs. Readings will emphasize the unique experiences of various groups and provide a sociological perspective for understanding and analyzing topics to encourage and stimulate critical thinking beyond “common sense” interpretations of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism.

Course Requirements:

Assignments and Quizzes:

Course grades will be based on the following:

4 Short Essays	60% (15% each)
Presentation #1	10%
Presentation #2	10%
Short Quiz #1	5%
Short Quiz #2	5%
Attendance/Class Participation	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Short Essays:

Each student is required to write a short essay based on each of the four course books. This assignment provides students with the opportunity to synthesize course readings and related material and develop academic writing skills. Essays will be graded based on whether they adhere to the course guidelines (provided below) and illustrate the student's ability to understand the reading and apply sociological information. Essay #4 will undergo a peer review assessment (peer reviews to be submitted with final versions).

Class Presentations:

Students, in teams of two, will give two 10-15 minute presentations of assigned readings. Each presentation should summarize and analyze the reading. Students should provide the class with discussion questions one class period prior to making their presentations. If necessary, each team can meet with the instructor in advance of the presentation to discuss how they plan to organize and execute their presentations. Whoever presents the reading during the first presentation will lead the discussion during the second presentation and vice versa. The best presentations provide a clear, concise summary of the reading, are timely, and exhibit creativity on the part of the speakers. Presenters should also be prepared to respond to questions from peers. A presentation guideline will be provided.

Short Quizzes:

Quizzes will include a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the blank, and short answer questions. Quizzes are provided to encourage students to remain abreast of assigned readings and to test basic knowledge and application of assigned books. Quizzes must be taken as scheduled. Make-up quizzes will only be offered in case of an excused emergency.

Attendance/Class Participation:

Students are expected to attend class regularly, on time, and remain until the conclusion of class. Additionally, students are expected to be prepared in advance to participate in class assignments and discussions in a positive manner. Attendance will be taken during each class. **Three or more unexcused** absences will result in the lowering of the course grade by **one letter grade**. Students who are absent are responsible for getting notes from a classmate. Students with special academic needs should notify the instructors during the first week of classes such that the appropriate arrangements can be made to facilitate

their participation in the course. After students have been notified of a pattern, frequent tardiness will also be considered absences.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they understand the assignments and the respective due dates. If you have questions, feel free to ask questions in class, come to office hours or inquire via e-mail. Please be aware that the course instructor observes normal working hours (8:30 am - 5:00 pm) and may occasionally travel for business. Keep these factors in mind and send e-mails in a timely manner.

Grading: Assignments will be graded as follows:

90 - 100 = A
80 - 89 = B
70 - 79 = C
60 - 69 = D
Below 60 = F

Grades will not be posted or verbally reported over the telephone. Assignments will be devalued one grade per day if submitted late.

Cheating/Plagiarism:

Ethical conduct is expected. Violation of the cheating/plagiarism policy will result in a grade of "F" for the course. Refer to the university catalog for additional information.

Course Environment:

Certain topics often elicit a variety of comments and opinions. Your input is important and encouraged. Students will be expected to provide meaningful, positive input and maintain respectful interaction with the instructor and fellow classmates. Each student is expected to help create a learning environment that is free from discrimination, intimidation, and harassment. Disruptive students will be removed from the course.

REQUIRED READING:

(Outline is subject to change as dictated by class participation and needs.)

Jan. 15, 17 Course and Student Introductions
 Sociological Imagination, Writing Guidelines, Race and
 Ethnicity as Social Constructs, Structure vs. Agency

The Asian American Experience

Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave by Min Zhou
Jan. 22, 24, 29, 31 Class Discussions of Reading

Jan. 21 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday (No Classes)

Feb. 5 Book Summary and Sociological Application
 Essay #1 Due

The African American Experience

Race Matters by Cornel West

Feb. 7, 12, 14, 19 Class Discussions of Reading

Feb. 21 Book Summary and Sociological Application
Review for Quiz #1

Feb. 26 **Quiz #1**
Essay #2 Due

Feb. 28 **Presentation #1**
Review of Quiz #1

The Hispanic American Experience

Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America by Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes

March 4, 6, 18, 20 Class Discussions of Reading

March 11, 13 Spring Break (No Classes)

March 25 Book Summary and Sociological Application
Essay #3 Due

The White American Experience

The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class by David Roedinger

March 27, April 1, 3, 8 Class Discussions of Reading

April 10 Book Summary and Sociological Application
Essay #4 Due

April 15 **Presentation #2**

The Multicultural Experience

Excerpt from *What Are You? Voices of Mixed-Race Young People* by Pearl Gaskins
(provided by the instructor)

April 17, 22 Class Discussions of Reading
Excerpt Summary and Sociological Application (April 22)
Review for Quiz #2 (April 22)

April 24 **Quiz #2**

April 28 Classes End

April 29 Reading Period
(Pick up Quiz #2 in Mather Mem. 223B, 10:00-11:15 am)

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Essay Format

Each student is required to write a short essay based on each of the four course books. Essays should summarize the reading (answer who, what, where, when, why, and how) and discuss the book based on concepts and themes germane to the course.

A well-written essay will include the following:

- a. Summary of the book
- b. Summary of the Structure vs. Agency discourse *and* a thorough analysis of the book based on this debate
- c. *At least 3* references/linkages to course concepts within the essay
- d. Critique of the book
- e. Reference page with complete citations of all articles/books noted in the essay

Essays are to be no longer than 4 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. This length limitation will require concise writing. Be sure to use 1-inch margins on all sides, use a reasonable font size, and check essays for spelling and grammatical mistakes. The best essays will be organized and thorough, yet concise. Essay #4 will undergo a peer review assessment (peer reviews to be submitted with final versions).

