Prejudice, Privilege, & Power

A Course Formerly Known as: Minorities

Sociology 337U
Spring 2020
Alex Stepick

Course description: The goal of this course is to provide students with a general understanding of the politics of race and social control in the US. To accomplish this, students will first need to understand the roots of the social construction of race, which is embedded in European colonialism, the genocide of Native Americans, the trans-Atlantic slave trade in African peoples, and specific immigration patterns within and outside North America. By unpacking the historical legacy of institutional racism and white supremacy, students will be able to recognize the implicit and explicit ways these forms of social control operate today. Students will be asked to reflect critically on various topics relating to discrimination. Specifically, students are expected to challenge the way they have come to understand racism and inequality (regardless of whether or not you consider yourself anti-racists) by connecting course content to their daily lives and their personal histories.

Course expectations:

Workload: As a general rule, in any 4-credit course, students are expected to spend 4 hours per week in the classroom and 8-12 additional hours per week doing coursework outside the classroom. The time commitment may vary from week to week, depending on the amount of reading and other assigned work. Some weeks may require significantly fewer hours, some may require more.

Active Participation: This course was originally intended to be face-to-face, but as you undoubtedly know, all courses were pivoted to remote learning for the Spring 2020 term. I was truly looking forward to engaging, lively discussions on this critical topic. Rather than having them in the classroom, we will now have them online via D2L. Your participation online is critical to your success in this course and is therefore required. You must have access to the Internet on a regular basis. Specific points:

• You must log on to the D2L course at least every three days to check for announcements and email.
• All coursework must be submitted in the D2L course.
• If you encounter problems with D2L, click on D2L Help at the top of the page. It’s a very good idea to print a copy of the contact info found there in case you are unable to access D2L at some point during the term.
- Problems with your computer are NOT an acceptable reason for deadline extensions. If you encounter computer problems that cannot be resolved in time, you should use another computer to complete the work prior to the deadlines. It’s a good idea to have an alternative computer identified BEFORE you run into problems.

- Participation in online group discussion is expected from all students.

- In participation, reading others’ posts and being able to synthesize and form a thoughtful response (not just making sure you write something) is critically important. As some people say, 'throw glitter not shade.' In other words, try your best to add something to the discussion. If you criticize someone, make sure it is constructive criticism, how something might be rephrased to be clearer or to add nuance.

**Course policies:**

*D2L:* The instructor will post the syllabus on D2L. Students will submit journal entries via D2L. The instructor will also post comments on response papers and grades for all assignments on D2L.

*Email:* The instructor regularly communicates with the class via PSU email so be sure that you are receiving my emails. It is your responsibility to check your email daily during the school week and respond in a timely manner. In emails to the instructor, please put the title of the course in the subject line and sign your emails using your first and last name. Use the email addresses on the first page of the syllabus. The instructor will generally respond to email within 24 hours. Emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday will generally be answered by 5:00pm on Monday. Since weekly assignments are generally due on Sundays at midnight, you must plan ahead. **Please do not email me through D2L.** I check my PSU email daily and do not expect to receive emails through D2L.

*Academic honesty:* You are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU policies. Cheating or plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

*Plagiarism:* If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else’s words), you must include it in quotation marks and cite the source, including author(s) name(s), the date of publication, and the page number. If you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source, including author(s) name(s) and the date of publication. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

*Access and inclusion for students with disabilities:* If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the DRC to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drd@pdx.edu, http://www.pdx.edu/drc. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and to discuss your accommodations.
**Title IX reporting:** As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals at [http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help](http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help) or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672.

**Required texts**

- There is only one required book to buy, *Pride against Prejudice*, by Alex Stepick. You should be able to find a used copy and it has been ordered by PSU bookstore. All of the rest of reading material in this course is available on D2L under *course content*.

**Course assignments and grades:**

There are four bases to your grade, each of which is explained further below:

- Critical Reflections 40%
- Documentary Analysis 20%
- Online Discussions 20%
- Final Exam Paper 20%

**Critical Reflections (40%):** Throughout this course, you will be asked to keep a journal and this will be the most important part of your grade. Your journal entries will be due each Sunday by 11:59 PM on D2L. In these journals, you are expected to record your critical reflections on course content. This will mostly consist of you connecting points made in various readings, as well as responding to my feedback from previous entries (I get that you cannot respond to my feedback in the first entry that is fine).

A strong journal entry should open with a brief (five to seven sentences) review of all the readings from that period and accomplish at least two of the following:

1. explore how current readings are connected to each other;
2. explore how current readings relate to previous readings or documentaries in the course;
3. connect readings to personal experiences or knowledge;
4. respond to any questions posed by the instructor in the previous reflection. The goal of these reflections is to get you to think hard about these readings.

The four points made above are recommendations, not requirements.

You may spend all of your reflection commenting on how these readings remind you of a personal experience or a movie. As long as you stay on topic and have an in-depth discussion, you will receive full credit. You should write as much as you think is necessary. See D2L for an
example of a well-written reflection and guidance on how to provide feedback to others’ postings.

The grades for these journals are compounded, meaning each journal entry is worth more than the last. This is setup so that your ideas to build on one another (so keep this in mind while writing). Please do not be afraid to get creative early on. One way to think about these journals is as a dialogue with me. Not every student has the same academic skillset. Thus, you will be graded on your own standards. Late journal entries will be docked points. The point deduction will be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Documentary Analysis (20%)**: For each of the 4 sections of this course, you will be required to watch a documentary film and write a 500-word analysis. In order to access these films you will need a Netflix account and/or a Youtube account. Note, when accessing the documentaries via Youtube you will need to pay $2.99 (everyone will at least have to do this once and it is much cheaper than a book). The way to access these documentaries is indicated in the course schedule (see below). Your documentary analysis should consist of a brief review of the content (no more than 200 words), followed by an analysis of how the documentary corresponds to other content explored in the course. You are welcome to write a critique of the documentary based on course readings, expand on a point made in the documentary, or discuss its relevance to events today.

The key here is that you have an **Argument**. Do not just review the documentary and discuss how various points correspond to readings. You need to be building a consistent argument. For example, in week one you may want to connect *Slavery by Another Name* to *dialectical expropriation and exploitation*. This is a great approach, however, you need to do more than write about how specific moments in the documentary demonstrate this theory. You can critique the message of the film using *dialectical expropriation and exploitation*, or discuss how reconstruction follows the logic of *dialectical expropriation and exploitation*. Each of these approaches require an argument.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: The documentaries watched for this class are graphic but are absolutely required to watch for this course. There are images of lynching, discussion of police brutality, and description of heavy violence. If you feel that looking at this material will be too difficult for you personally, please consider dropping this course.***

**Online Discussions (20%)**

Each week students must post a discussion question in the discussion forum for that week based on the readings and/or lecture by Friday at 11:59pm.

Students must then post at least two responses to other students’ discussion questions also by Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Responses should reflect engagement with the material, not just an opinion. Further, you must follow the guidelines described in Etiquette and Communicating Online. In particular you must be: Be polite and respectful; Be tolerant of views expressed by others; When reacting to
someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person; and, Be careful when using sarcasm and humor, and do not include any obscenities in your messages.

*Final Paper: Creating a Better Future (20%):* Final papers should be a minimum of 1,200 words.

This assignment will have three components:

1. One paragraph description of central topic, i.e. what you will focus on for making a better future. (5% of the 20% of Grade) Due 5th
2. Detailed outline of your paper. (15% of the 20% of Grade) Due May 26th
3. Final paper itself. (75% of the 20% of Grade) Due June 18th
Course Schedule

Part 1: Power

Week 1 March 30-April 5: The capitalist origins of racism

Required readings: Cox, Oliver. “Race Relation: Its meaning, beginning, and progress”
Fraser, Nancy. “Is Capitalism Necessarily Racist?”
Mcwhorter, Ladelle. “Sex, Race, and Biopower: A Foucauldian Genealogy”

- Post Discussion question by midnight Friday April 3rd
- Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, April 5th
- Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, April 5th

Week 2 April 6-12: The capitalist origins of racism cont.

Required readings: Zinn, Howard. “Columbus Indians and Human Progress” A people’s history of the United States.
Dubar-Ortiz, Roxanne “What White Supremacists Know” Boston Review
Hudson, Peter J. How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean.” Boston Review

Documentary analysis: The Differences Between us: Race the Power of Illusion
Reconstruction, Slavery by another Name (documentary can be accessed through the PSU library using this link https://fod-infobase-com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=49734). If you are not on campus, to watch this film you will have to make sure you are signed into the library via:library.pdx.edu

- Post Discussion question by midnight Friday April 10th
- Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, April 12th
- Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, April 12th
- Turn in Documentary Analysis by midnight Tuesday, April 14th

Part 2: Privilege

Week 3 April 13-19: Privilege in the United States

Required reading: Baldwin, James. “Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White”
Harris, Cheryl I. “Whiteness as Property”. Harvard Law Review

- Post Discussion question by midnight Friday April 17th
Week 4 April 20-26: Privilege and color-blindness


- Peeking inside the (White) house of color-blindness: The significance of Whites’ segregation,
- Are all Whites refined Archie Bunkers? An examination of White racial progressives,

**Documentary analysis: White Like Me** (documentary can be accessed using this link [https://psu.kanopy.com/video/white-me-0](https://psu.kanopy.com/video/white-me-0))

- Post Discussion question by midnight Friday April 24th
- Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, April 26th
- Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, April 26th
- Turn in Documentary Analysis by midnight Tuesday, April 28th

**Part 3: Prejudice**

Week 5 April 27-May 3:

Required reading: Loury, Glenn. “Why are so many Americans in Prison?” *Boston Review*

Kantrowitz, Stephen. “White Supremacy has always been Mainstream” *Boston Review*

- Post Discussion question by midnight Friday May 1st
- Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, May 3rd
- Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, May 3rd
- Topic for Final Paper. One paragraph description of what you will focus on for making a better future. Due by midnight Tuesday May 5th

Week 6 May 4-10: Prejudice in Latin America, the and of migrants


Post Discussion question by midnight Friday May 8th
Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, May 10th
Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, May 10th

Week 7 May 11-17 The Case of Miami

Required Reading: Stepick, Alex Pride Against Prejudice, Allyn and Bacon.
Portes, Alejandro and Alex Stepick City on the Edge, University of California Press, Chapters 1 & 2.

Documentary analysis: The Harvest. (Available to rent on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tW9w8nY73-M&has_verified=1) Due Sunday by 11:59 PM

Post Discussion question by midnight Friday May 15th
Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, May 17th
Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, May 17th
Turn in Documentary Analysis by midnight Tuesday, May 20th

Part 4: The continued Legacy of Power and Privilege

Week 8 May 18-24:

Murch, Donna. “How Race Made the Opioid Crisis” Boston Review

Post Discussion question by midnight Friday May 22nd
Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, May 24th
Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, May 24th
Final paper detailed outline by midnight Tuesday May 26th. See D2L for resources

Week 9 May 25-31:

Metzl, Jonathan. “Dying of Whiteness” Boston Review
Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. “We are all Americans!: the Latin Americanization of racial stratification in the USA”.

Post Discussion question by midnight Friday May 29th
Turn in Reflections by midnight Sunday, May 31st
 Respond to someone else’s Discussion question by midnight Sunday, May 31st

Week 10 June 1-7 How Can We Overcome the legacies of Power, Privilege and Prejudice

Documentary analysis: Documenting Hate: Charlottesville. (Available through here https://www.pbs.org/video/documenting-hate-charlottesville-1120-ie0mod/)

No Discussions or Reflections due this week
Turn in Documentary Analysis by midnight Sunday, June 7th

Finals Week

Final Exam Paper, Creating a Better Future, Due Thursday June 18th at Midnight