Introduction:
What is it to be a ‘minority’? What are the effects of minority status? Are there basic similarities in the minority experience? These are the kinds of questions which sociologists ask when looking at the study of minorities. As a term, ‘minority’ is rather broad – and it should be. There are many groups which can fit under this heading and rightfully so. Issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, (dis)ability, citizenship and other categories can all be examined as minority groups.

Emphasis for this class:
This class will focus on the concepts of race and ethnicity. I do this for several reasons. First, the classic sociological literature and our fundamental understanding of what it is to be a minority is rooted in the study of first race and then ethnicity. Secondly, because of the wide diversity of topics from which to choose, some sort of delimitation was required in order to make sure that we were getting well into the necessary concepts. Third, the area in which we focus is not necessarily done elsewhere in the university in this way.

Our Approach – Historical and Sociological
History presents itself as a handy laboratory in which to examine the plight of groups of people. While much of the history which you experienced in high school and possibly in college deals with “dead white men in Washington” our historical focus will be different. Will we talk about the dead white rich men? Sure. But we talk about those people in a context which includes and, indeed, is focused on minorities. Rather than taking the approach most textbooks in this area do where each chapter focuses independently upon a different group, we are going to look at how the different groups interact, play off one another, engage in competition with each other for scarce resources and develop a more holistic picture of what it is to be a minority in the United States.

The “BIG” Goals:
I am hoping that by the end of this class you will be able to do at least the following:
• Define and explain (to anyone) concepts of race, ethnicity, prejudice, discrimination and minority.
• Explain how history and events both affect and effect groups of people.
• Utilize your understanding of the concepts of prejudice and discrimination to examine other groups which may or may not fall into our study in this course.

Rules of the Course:
It is imperative that you treat others in this course kindly. Over the course of the term, we will encounter subjects which may make you or others feel uncomfortable. We will be discussing the tools of language and image which may not be pleasant. I make no apologies – it is neither my language nor my images. I bring them to you and present them so we can together
understand and, most likely, attack the ideas that they represent. I will not tolerate or accept ad homonym (against the person) attacks. Attack ideas – fine; DO NOT attack others. If you engage in attacks against others in the classroom you will be asked to leave.

Communication Information:
The best way to get hold of me is by email preferably through the mail function in D2L. I try to check my mail in D2L often. I do not, however, check my mail over the weekends. If you send me something over the weekend, it will have to wait until Monday before I look at it.

If for some reason you have to use PSU Webmail, I ask that you put something in the subject line which will identify which course you are in – either the course number or title (i.e., “337” or “Minorities”). I ask that you do this for two reasons. First, I teach several courses and it will help me identify you and answer your question more easily. Secondly, PSU’s email system has a wonderful propensity to collect a lot (and I mean a LOT) of spam messages. The spammers are getting better and better about making their messages look legitimate, and I have taken to deleting most things which have common email subjects (e.g., “hi”, “hello”, “question”, “help”, etc.) that are from people I do not recognize immediately.

Books and Other Information Sources:
Takaki, Ronald. 2008. A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America, revised ed. New York: Little, Brown and Co. (Note: It is VERY important that you get a copy of the second/revised edition – the second edition is a substantial revision and expansion)

You also need to find the following article (available through PSU’s library databases – I will also try to put a link in D2L but I don’t trust it to work all the time):

Grading and Evaluation:
Exams:
There will be three (3) multiple guess exams online in the quiz area. The tests are not cumulative in the traditional sense, but I do expect that basic concepts will be retained throughout the course and that you will be able to identify patterns throughout history. These exams will cover lecture material.

Missed Exams:
The exams will be open for a good block of time. Please print off the due dates sheet and keep track of when things are due. I will not open exams or quizzes back up for you because you forgot when they are due. The due dates are listed in the course calendar on D2L and you have a quick summary of due dates available for you to print out.

Reading Quizzes:
There are short answer quizzes based on your reading, both of the book and the outside materials (the Bonacich article) that you need to complete. These online quizzes are worth 10 points each.
Grades:

The exams are worth the following percentage of your grade:

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<th>Exam</th>
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<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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Total: 160 points

I follow the standard rules for A-F grading with one exception: if you achieve 90% or better in the class, you will receive an A for the course. I only utilize A- to push people on the line between B+ and A over the line.

A Word on Academic Honesty:

The world of academia is based on integrity. To take someone else’s work and claim it as your own is, in the academic world, the worst of offenses. The process of creating your own work and ideas is sacred and expected. If you violate this sacred trust by cheating, you will receive a zero score on the assignment and the offending paper will be turned over to the Office of Student Affairs. Sanctions which can be levied by the University for cheating include suspension and expulsion – I take dishonesty very seriously. For more information on the student code of conduct check out the following web page:
http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html

Disabilities Statement:

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and the Disability Resource Center. Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately.