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.

In addition to our treatment of others, I ask that you please turn off cell phones, pagers, etc. Our class is an hour and five minutes – it can wait. Music listening devices are not appropriate in the classroom. If you want to have a side conversation, please feel free to do so, but please do it outside where you won’t disturb others who came to participate.

**Communication Information:**

The best way to get hold of me (other than face-to-face interaction) is by email. If you want a prompt response, email is the way to go.

In using email, 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.

Your other option is to use the internal email function in Desire2Learn

**Books and Other Information Sources:**


**Grading and Evaluation:**

There will be three (3) mixed-mode exams consisting of multiple guess and short answer questions. 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.

In order to take advantage of the new technology, exams will be available on D2L. The exams will be open from the Saturday before the exam is due through 11:59pm on the day it is due. This gives you four days in which to complete each exam. You will have one hour to take the exam.

**Missed Exams:**
Outside of exceptional circumstances (e.g., documented medical emergency) I do not allow make up exams. Forgetting the due date, internet problems, transportation issues, lost course materials, etcetera do not qualify as exceptional circumstances.

**Grades:**

The exams are worth the following percentage of your grade:

- Exam 1 20%
- Exam 2 40%
- Exam 3 40%

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**Total:** 100%

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.

**Things that You Can Do to be Successful:**

1. Attend class regularly and fanatically. Much of the information that winds up on exams is talked about in class. The lecture notes online, while helpful, are not a replacement for coming to class, but rather a tool you can use to enhance your classroom experience.

2. Download the lecture notes. Everything (text wise) that is up on the screen is on the lecture note downloads. There will be video and (hopefully) music which won’t be in the notes. If you have the notes with you, you can fill in the blanks, and take more effective notes because you are not madly writing down everything up on the screen or everything I say (both of which are pointless to do).

3. Take good reading notes. As you read, USE your book. Highlight. Underline. Make notes in the margins. “Dog-ear” corners. This isn’t high school anymore where you are the fifth person to use the book and there will be a dozen after you – this is YOUR book. But after you are done marking and underlining, go back and make notes on the chapters or articles you’ve read. The summaries, you will find, are more valuable to you than searching back through your book for answers.

4. If you don’t know or understand something, ask! I like to think of myself as being fairly clear, but that isn’t always the case. If you run into something that’s confusing, ask. If I don’t have the answer, I’ll help you find it. If you ask questions during our time together in class, chances are (research tells us) that you are not the only one with that question. Do yourself and your shyer colleagues a favor – ask questions!

**Desire2Learn:**

PSU has adopted the Orwellian named Desire2Learn (D2L) as an online package to help in the process of teaching and learning. On D2L you will find important course information including copies of the lecture notes as well as your exams. Please make sure that you are comfortable with the operation of D2L prior to the first exam being due.
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 fail the course and the evidence 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.
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<td>T – Chapter 1</td>
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<td>A Bit of Theory</td>
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<td>European Colonialization &amp; The Origins of White Supremacy</td>
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<td>W – <a href="http://www.eugenicsarchive.org">Eugenics Archive</a></td>
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<td>4 4/22-4/26</td>
<td>Exam 1 covering 4/1-4/19 – Must be completed by 11:59pm on 4/23</td>
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<td>Reservations and Plantations</td>
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<td>Early Industrialization and European Immigration</td>
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<td>Early Asian Immigration</td>
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<td>7 5/13-5/17</td>
<td>Exam 2 covering 4/22-5/10 – Must be completed by 11:59pm on 5/14</td>
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<td>Great Depression &amp; World War II</td>
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<td>Final must be completed by 11:59pm on 6/11.</td>
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**Reading Key:**

- **T** = Takaki, *A Different Mirror*
- **W** = Web ([http://www.eugenicsarchive.org](http://www.eugenicsarchive.org))
- **A** = Article