

Race and Ethnicity in Latin America (JINS 338)

Spring 2016, Truman State University
MC212, MWF 10:30-11:20
Office: MC 227

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Description

How have Latin Americans constructed and interpreted racial, ethnic, class, and gender identities and ideologies? We will begin this course with a theoretical discussion of race, class, and gender, and then proceed to an evaluation of how they intersect and influence each other in a Latin American context. How do these identities help us understand Latin American history and culture? What functions have these identities played in Latin American societies, and how have they influenced cultural, economic, and political developments? How have the intersections of these identities contributed to the emergence of new forms of identity that contribute to the rich diversity that is Latin America? Throughout this entire process we will constantly critique our assumptions of these categories in order to understand better the purposes they play in society.

Junior Interdisciplinary Writing Enhanced Seminar

This course focuses on intersections between disciplines, and interrogates their assumptions on race, class, and gender. We will emphasize the political and social roles that race, class and gender have played in Latin America, examine how various disciplines have interpreted these political and social changes, and then use this critique in order to reflect on the roles of race, class and gender in our own societies. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of how content from several disciplines interacts through classroom discussion, written reactions to the readings, and other assignments. Our goal is to transcend dichotomies that pit disciplines against each other and instead move toward an integrated synthesis that reflects the benefits of utilizing the tools of various disciplines to understand a problem.

Writing Enhanced

This is a writing-enhanced course, which means that writing is central to the seminar, and that we will emphasize cognition, process, and product. Cognition is not an isolated process, but rather an integral, active part of our activities. This class will emphasize writing as a process and will encourage both deep reflection on and deep revision of student writings. Written assignments in this class require students to write for a variety of audiences including private reflective essays on identity, collaborate essays to inform classmates, and analytical essays that portray higher levels of thought.

Requirements

Our goal in this class is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of human experiences, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Regular attendance and active participation are also necessary.

Please drop me a note if you are unable to attend, or if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

Readings

Following are the required books for this class. Several additional articles will also be posted to Blackboard. Read the assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class.

Andrews, George Reid. *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-19-515233-6

Elkin, Judith Laikin. *The Jews of Latin America*. 3d ed. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. ISBN: 9781588268723

Young, Elliott. *Alien Nation: Chinese migration in the Americas from the coolie era through World War II*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014. ISBN: 9781469612966

Wade, Peter. *Race: An introduction*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. ISBN: 9781107652286

Wearne, Phillip. *Return of the Indian: Conquest and Revival in the Americas*. Philadelphia [Pa.]: Temple University Press, 1996. ISBN: 1-56639-501-1

Assignments and grades

Course grades will be based on the following assignments. Students can check their grades on the class Blackboard web page (there is a total of 1000 possible points in the class). Assignments are due at the beginning of class, and I do not accept “drop and run” papers or papers submitted without the physical presence of the student. Grades on late assignments will be penalized 10 percent for each day that they are late. Successful completion of all assignments is required to receive credit for this class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Identity self-awareness study	100
Home discipline handout	100
Chapter reviews (10 pts each)	500
Presentations/participation	100
Race and ethnicity essay	200

Identity self-awareness study. This essay asks you to reflect on the construction of identities through an examination of your own identity. See below for more information on this assignment.

Home discipline handout. We will break the class into groups according to discipline. Discuss what holds a discipline together (subject matter, methodology, shared assumptions, theories, concepts, ideas), who do practitioners of that discipline do or study, and what topics or issues related to race, class and gender in Latin America might one study using that discipline. Write up a handout on how your discipline views these issues for posting to Blackboard and present it to the class. See below for a list of suggested epistemological questions to consider in this essay, but do not write the handout simply as answers to the questions.

Chapter reviews. For each essay or book chapter write a short essay identifying the main theme or argument of the reading, what disciplinary assumptions and perspectives the authors bring to the subject, what interpretative framework they employ, their use of sources, and how effectively they engage issues of race and ethnicity. Each essay is due before the start of class.

Presentations/participation. In small groups, lead the discussion for one chapter from each book. Prepare a list of discussion questions to guide the discussion and prepare other activities to engage the class.

Race and ethnicity essay: How have your views on race and ethnicity changed throughout this course? This final essay should draw on the readings from this class, be typed, double-spaced, probably about 10-20 pages long, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers.

Introductory readings

Mills, C. Wright. "The Sociology of Stratification." In *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz, 305-23. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Templeton, Alan R. "Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective." *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (September 1998): 632-50.

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-75.

Final Exam: Thursday, May 5, 9:30-11:20

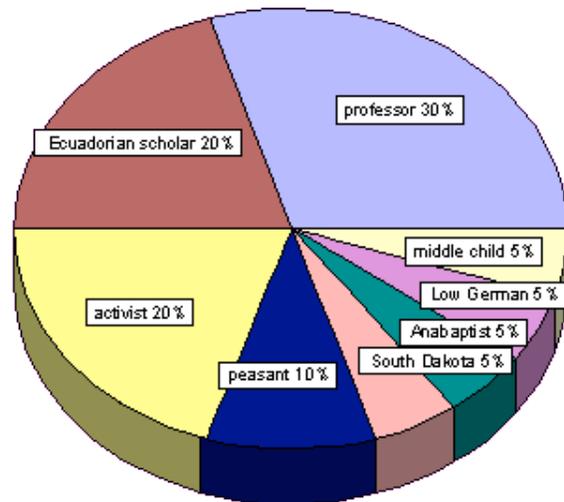
Identity self-awareness study

Reading (on Blackboard): Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.”

This assignment is designed to lead you to think more critically about race and ethnicity in Latin America through an analysis of your own identity and what that means to you. This project will be developed in two stages.

Part I: Think about your own identity as a person. It may help for you to talk with your friends or family members to think through this process. What are your values and beliefs? Items and issues you might want to think about in analyzing who you are may include:

- race or ethnicity
- class or socioeconomic status
- gender
- sexual orientation or civil status
- religion
- geographic location
- family heritage
- age
- exceptional abilities
- education
- nationality/citizenship
- occupation
- language
- political beliefs



Take the items that are appropriate for you, add others that are important to you, and draw a pie chart indicating what percentage of your identity each item comprises. For example, above is an example of how such a chart might look for me. In class, briefly present your chart to the class, and we will discuss the implications of what comprises an identity.

Part II: The second part of this assignment is to write an essay reflecting on your identity. Please feel free to utilize the assigned readings in this class as a guide to help you think about these issues. Questions you might consider in writing this essay are:

- What label would you place on your identity?
- What factors have helped form your identity?
- How do other aspects of your identity interact with each other?
- What role have race/ethnicity, class, and gender played in your family's history?
- How does your identity affect your daily life?
- How do you think your identity will affect your future? What bearing does it have on your political and economic prospects?
- How does your identity affect your values, beliefs, and purpose in life?
- Does your identity change as you are in different environments (do you think of yourself differently here at college than you might at home)?

The essay should be typed, double spaced, include citations and a bibliography as appropriate, and follow good essay form. I am not so much interested in the length of the essay as the depth of thought you exhibit, but three pages might be an appropriate length. There are no right or wrong answers for completing this assignment. I will grade the essay based on how well you think about, reflect on, and present the issues involved in this question. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or hesitations with this assignment.

Epistemological questions for your discipline

Reading (on Blackboard): Michael Seipel, "Interdisciplinarity: An Introduction."

1. What kind of problems solving occurs in your discipline? What tools do practitioners of your discipline use to solve problems?
2. What is the main goal of your discipline?
3. What types of jobs/careers do people in your discipline find themselves carrying out?
4. What stereotypes do others have of people who work in your discipline?
5. What other disciplines do you draw on?
6. Does your discipline have any theories? If new theories come up, how do you test them?
7. What are some methods of research in your discipline?
8. What do people in your discipline find important in the world?
9. What conflicts do you run into in your discipline?
10. What constitutes a fact?
11. Do you think your discipline has an audience? If so, who is it?
12. What kind of events would cause your field to change over time?
13. Would you consider your epistemology more objective or subjective?
14. How does your worldview differ from other disciplines' worldviews?
15. Do you use emotion or intuition to solve a problem?
16. Why do you do research?
17. In 50 years will your discipline be more important or less important than it is today?
18. What are the major problems in your field?
19. What separates your discipline from discipline X?