

## **Race and Ethnicity in Latin America (JINS 338)**

Spring 2018, Truman State University  
BH 201, MWF 1:30-2:20  
Office: MC 227

Marc Becker  
marc@truman.edu  
Office Hours: typically MWF 12:30-11:15 & MW 2:30-5:00  
Phone: x6036

### **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.

See the syllabus addendum on Blackboard for additional class policies.

### **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.

### **Readings**

Following are the required books for this class. Several additional articles will also be posted to Blackboard.

González, Fredy. *Paisanos Chinos: transpacific politics among Chinese immigrants in Mexico*  
Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017. ISBN: 9780520290204

Gotkowitz, Laura, ed. *Histories of Race and Racism: The Andes and Mesoamerica from colonial times to the present*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780822350439

Michaels, Walter Benn. *The Trouble With Diversity: How we learned to love identity and ignore inequality*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2016. ISBN: 9781250099334

Paschel, Tianna S. *Becoming black political subjects : movements and ethno-racial rights in Colombia and Brazil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. ISBN: 9780691169385

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

## Assignments and grades

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Identity self-awareness study	100
Home discipline handout	100
Response papers	500
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 and post it to the class google drive (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gHeGUFKHWvfEKcql7Ar19010wY8t3qLy>) 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.

**Response papers:** Prepare a 3-5 page typed response to each assigned book. Identify the author's main arguments and disciplinary assumptions, and examine the use of sources, methodology, and theory. Provide your own assessment or critique of the readings, including how effectively each author engages issues of race and ethnicity. In writing your essays:

- Identify one main point in the reading that strikes you as most interesting or important
- Don't just summarize the contents—exploring significance is more important
- Be sure to engage the entire reading
- Acknowledge authorship, especially since I want you to engage the authors' main arguments and the evidence that they use, their use of sources, methodology, and theory
- Be sure to provide your own assessment or critique of the readings.

The essays must be typed, double-spaced, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers.

**Discussion questions:** For each class period post one question or discussion topic related to the

readings to the class google drive

(<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gHeGUFKHWvfEKcql7Ar19010wY8t3qLy>). If a document for that reading does not already exist, please create a new one. If someone else has already raised the theme you planned to post, it is perfectly fine to expand on that post. Please clearly label your contribution with your name.

**Discussion leaders:** For each class period, one student will sign up on the class google drive to lead the discussion (organize the discussion questions into a logical flow) and another to moderate discussion (run stack) to assure that everyone has equal space to speak.

**Participation:** This is a discussion-based class. Exchange of ideas, personal thoughts, arguments, and perspectives is the central benefit of the class format. We are not here to impress one another, but to engage in an honest dialogue about crucial issues. Please be mindful that we may not all have the same level of expertise, and that everyone's unique perspectives are of equal importance. We need to respect one another while challenging alternative perspectives. As you cannot participate in discussion if you are not present, unexcused absences will be taken out of your participation grade. Inappropriate use of electronics during class will also negatively affect the participation grade. Discussion will be graded at the end of the semester based on the following criteria:

- Depth and content: participation beyond mere opinions; keeping discussion open for further development; ask yourself: can peers respond to my comments?
- Consistency: daily engaged involvement; paying attention to the comments of others
- Leadership: encouraging peers to participate; being prepared to discuss that day's readings (and how they relate to those of previous class periods)
- References: to readings, experiences, and/or past discussions

**Race and ethnicity essay:** How have your views on race and ethnicity changed throughout this course? How have discussions reinforced or challenged the disciplinary assumptions you brought to this class? This final essay should draw on the readings from this class, be typed, double-spaced, about 20 pages long, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers.

**Final Exam:** Tues, May 8, 1:30-3:20

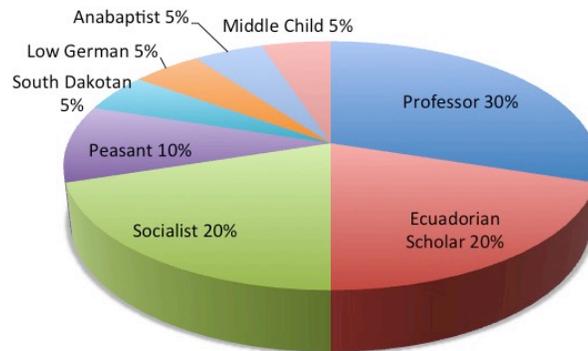
## Identity self-awareness study

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?