

RACE & ETHNIC RELATIONS

Sociol 321, Section 2, Fall 2009

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REQUIRED TEXT

Gallagher, Charles A. 2009. *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race & Ethnicity, 4th edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

HEALEY RESERVE & E-RESERVE

A handful of books and articles for this class are on reserve or E-reserve at the Healey Library. For the articles on reserve, you will need to go to the library to obtain these readings. For those articles on E-reserve, go to <http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/default.aspx> and select “Electronic Reserves & Reserves Pages.” Search by instructor using my last name. The password is ‘migration.’ Those readings that are available via reserve and E-reserve are noted in the listing of scheduled readings below.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & GOALS:

Race & Ethnic Relations in the U.S. will be the focus of this course. The U.S. possesses a long and complicated history with a variety of racial and ethnic minorities. While each group has undergone substantively different experiences throughout the country’s history, the factor that crosses all groups is the act of discrimination. Social scientists have explored not only the outcomes and the extent to which discriminatory actions have influenced the lives of racial and ethnic minorities; they have also put forth theories of the root of discriminatory action. This course will explore the various explanations for the U.S.’s unique racial and ethnic relations, as well as the many societal outcomes suffered by different groups.

By the end of this class, you should be able to articulate the many theories on U.S. race/ethnic relations and how time and place combine resulting in a unique experience for each racial/ethnic minority. Race and ethnicity are socially defined not only historically but today, as well. Through our readings and discussions you will gain understanding on what exactly this means and how exactly it occurs. We will also explore how the definition of race and ethnicity are legally defined and not easily determined. You will understand the role of the state in creating the stage on which many of the disparities we witness daily. Whether it is disparities in housing, employment, law enforcement or health, you will see how the experience of different groups varies, also, across time and space. Almost a decade into the 21st century, you will take away from this class not only an understanding of past and current race/ethnic relations in the U.S. but what you might be able to do to change future outcomes and relations among the U.S.’s ever-growing, racially & ethnically diverse landscape.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Attendance & Participation	15
2. Mid Term Exam	25
3. Group Led Discussion (2, 10 pts. each)	20
4. Final Essay (3-5 pages)	15
5. Final Exam	<u>25</u>
	100

1. **REGULAR ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (15 points)**

You can miss 1 class with no penalty. Each class you miss after that, you will lose 1 point from your attendance grade.

Being on Time: In order to receive full points for attendance, you must arrive to class on time (7pm) and stay for the entirety of the class. I will be keeping track of who attends class, as well as those who do and don't arrive on time.

Excused Absences: You will not lose any attendance points for excused absences. However, there are no special allowances for family or work related emergencies—but please note that you may miss 1 class with no penalty. This 'free miss' can be used toward work or family emergencies.

Extra Credit: You will receive an additional 5 points for attending the last day of class in its entirety **and** participating in the wrap up discussion. Please note this is the only extra credit available in this course.

2. **EXAMS (2):** During the term, 2 exams will be administered, which will be based on our readings and in-class discussions to-date. Both exams will consist of multiple choice AND a short essay portion. There will be 25 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each and 2 short essay questions worth 25 points each. The essay portion will include 3-5 questions, from which you will choose two questions to answer. Each exam is 'section-oriented' (i.e., not cumulative). The class day prior to each exam will have a review component for the up-coming exam. The number of points you receive on each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade (as indicated above).

3. **GROUP LED DISCUSSION (2):** You are required to sign up for two group led presentations. For each presentation, you will be expected to lead the class in a 30-40 minute group discussion for a selected reading assigned for that class. Being a lead discussant means that you:

- Complete a thorough read of the article/chapter that you have chosen to present amongst your co-presenters.
- Communicate with your co-presenters the order in which you will present your reading.
- Prior to class discuss the articles with your co-presenters and, as a group, zero in on a common theme amongst the readings—as a group, highlight this theme for the class.
- Present a brief and concise overview of the reading you have specifically chosen to present.
- Decide which of the issues from the “Questions for Discussion Leaders” handout that you will focus upon during your portion of the discussion.
- Determine which of the follow-up questions you will use to drive the class discussion.

Your grade for as discussion leader is based on the following:

- 3 points: Provide a coherent *individual* presentation which highlights 1-3 primary points of a reading. I suggest you direct the class to examples of specific passages in your reading that will serve as examples of these points.
- 3 points: Introduce at least one original issue/question to the class that is drawn from your own interpretation of the reading.

- 4 points: The overall presentation quality and coordination with other co-presenters. In other words, it should be clear that you coordinated with you co-presenters in advance of our class meeting. For example, while you will pose follow-up questions to the class for your own reading, the group may organize a thematic group of questions to field to the class as a wrap-up for the discussion.
4. **FINAL ESSAY (1)**: Drawing upon the various theoretical perspectives discussed in class on 9/15 and 9/22, in this essay you will focus upon the explanation that you feel best accounts for one of the contemporary outcomes discussed in the remainder of class. Thinking of this as a newspaper op-ed might aid you—you're trying to explain why a particular outcome has occurred. Your paper will need to address the following:
- Explain the situation/outcome. (2 points) [If relevant, provide current examples being discussed.]
 - How exactly does the theoretical perspective "explain" the outcome? Provide 2-3 ways. (3 points)
 - Where does the perspective fall short in adequately describing the outcome? (3 points)
 - How might we as a society, realistically, attempt to remedy the situation? Provide 2-3 ways. (3 points) [If policy is currently being debated, you could describe the policy's aims and how it might help.]

The remaining 4 points will be based on the clarity of your argument and reasoning. Throughout class, I will bring current op-ed pieces for us to review. You may use these as an example of style and approach. I suggest you begin to read op-ed pieces on-line available from *The New Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe* or other newspapers you might enjoy reading. Each writer has their own voice and style. This may aid you in finding your own voice and approach.

CLASS CONDUCT & MISSED CLASSES

1. *Class Conduct*

Sociological topics, especially issues raised in a Race & Ethnic Relations course, touch upon several sensitive issues. Students will likely differ in their opinion on issues. However, differences of opinion do not give any student the right to engage in inappropriate language that attacks others. Respect for your fellow classmates is required. Derogatory comments are unacceptable in this class. This includes remarks that demean others by virtue of race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical appearance, nationality, etc. You may be asked to leave class if you continue to use demeaning and offensive language after being called out for doing so. If you are unsure what exactly this means, please see me and ask for further clarification.

2. *Missed Classes & Missed Exams*

If you miss class, you must gather the information from another classmate. If you know in advance you will need to miss class, you might consider having a classmate tape record the class for you.

- 1). Only students who can provide documentation for excused absences will be allowed to make-up exams.
- 2). However, if you know you will need to miss class on an exam day, you must contact me **BEFORE** the scheduled exam to discuss rescheduling your exam **AFTER** the scheduled exams. No make-ups exams will be given prior to the scheduled exam. If you miss an exam for any other than the two reasons listed, you will not be eligible to take a make-up exam.

Final Considerations:

- All e-mail correspondence will be sent to your UMB e-mail account. If this is not your 'main' e-mail account, be sure to check it for course up-dates or communication. Additionally, when sending me e-mail, please sign your e-mail correspondence.
- Cell phones & other electronic devices: I understand the difficulty of always remembering to turn off your cell phone or pagers, etc. before class. However, to the best of your ability, please remember to turn it off before class begins.

PLAGIARISM

Students are required to adhere to the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating, to the University Statement on Plagiarism and the Documentation of Written Work, and to the Code of Student Conduct as delineated in the Catalog of Undergraduate Programs. The Code is available online at:

http://www.umb.edu/student_services/student_rights/code_conduct.html

ACCOMMODATIONS

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offers guidelines and support for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center for Disability Services, CC-2-2100, 617-287-7430. The student must present these recommendations and discuss them with each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of Drop/Add period.

SCHEDULED CLASS READINGS & OTHER DUE DATES*

(NOTE: ALL READINGS ARE TO BE READ PRIOR TO CLASS FOR THE DATE INDICATED.)

- Tuesday, Sept. 8th Course introduction and syllabus review; Watch Race, Part 2, “The Story We Tell”
[For more information, go to: http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm]
- Watching this segment serves to provide a cursory understanding of the origins of race/ethnicity and how over time people have shaped and constructed its meaning within society and the resulting relations between races. This film includes a discussion of a period in history when the scientific community attempted to quantify race among non-whites living in America. As such, this film asserts the need for solid research methods and design. Without a clear understanding of the methods and design used in social scientific studies, one unable to adequately probe further into whether the results are valid and reliable. Finally, the film brings to the light how race has been used in the U.S. to cut across religious and class lines, effectively categorizing people along racial lines and putting them into boxes.
- Tuesday, Sept. 15th -- Article #2 in Gallagher Reader
-- Chapters 1 & 2 of *Ethnicity & Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* by Cornell & Hartmann (on reserve in Healey)
- We will discuss race and ethnicity as sociological concepts, as well as their definitions. We will also read a short excerpt from renowned scholar, Howard Zinn’s work, *A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present*, which details the U.S.’s history of race/ethnic relations.
- Tuesday, Sept. 22nd Further Explanations of the Origins of Race & Ethnicity & the Resulting Relations
- Articles #3 & 4 in Gallagher Reader
-- Chapters 3 & 4 in of *Ethnicity & Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* by Cornell & Hartmann (on reserve in Healey)

Exploration of alternative theories of the origins of race and ethnicity are the focus of this class meeting. Explanations include the biosocial, competition, group identification, power/conflict, and contextual/historical. We will discuss the ways these theories do and do not the theories fully explain race/ethnic relations in contemporary U.S. society? What might you propose as a possible comprehensive explanation?

Tuesday, Sept. 29th

The Social Construction & Evolution of Race & Ethnicity

-- Articles 9 & 11 in Gallagher Reader
-- Chapters 1 & 4 in *White by Law* by Ian Haney Lopez (on reserve in Healey; available via e-books, also)
-- Karen Brodtkin's "How Did Jews Become White Folks?" in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 60-67 (on reserve in Healey)

Using last week's readings and discussions of the social construction of race as a springboard, this class will expand our understanding that not all persons considered white today were always considered white. Also, how much can phenotype (i.e., an individual's skin color) tell us about their racial identity? What exactly does it mean, for example, to be pan-ethnic (i.e., Asian or Hispanic)? We will explore the issue of how a person can be considered one race in one physical location but the same race in another location (i.e., the perception of a person's race can change by merely crossing international borders). The readings for today also examine how race was (and is still) legally determined.

Tuesday, Oct. 6th

How exactly do we see one another?

-- Articles #13, 14 & 16 in the Gallagher Reader

Wrapping up the first section of the course, we will read articles that discuss the cultural and political aspects of living in a color-blind society and how this perspective has reshaped racial relations in America in the post-civil rights era. The final article is a classic in sociological written by well-known symbolic interactionist and sociologist. Blumer explores the creation of the Other as a relational group experience.

Tuesday, Oct. 13th

MID-TERM EXAM

Tuesday, Oct. 20th

Watch *Race*, Part 3, "The House We Live In"

The final installment of the 3-part series, *Race: An Illusion*, which we saw on the first day of class, touches upon several of the racial & ethnic outcomes we see in contemporary America. Over the next several weeks of class, readings will expand on the issues raised in this final segment. In preparation for up-coming readings, we will discuss not only the outcomes highlighted in this segment but how it connects to what we have learned to-date in this class.

Tuesday, Oct. 27th

Housing Segregation

--Articles #21, 22, 23 & 25 in Gallagher Reader

The readings for this evening's class attempt to answer why and how residential segregation exists and its outcomes. Why do racial and ethnic groups tend to live in

similar areas/neighborhoods? What are the consequences of concentrated poverty? Our discussion will move then to how the neighborhood in which an individual lives influences their life perspective, as well as what is and is not included (e.g., trash dumps, thriving grocery stores, etc.) outside one's door.

Tuesday, Nov. 3rd

Crime & Punishment

-- Articles #26, 27, 28 & 29 in Gallagher Reader
-- Roger Daniels's "Detaining Minority Citizens, Then and Now in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 424-427 (on reserve in Healey)

The intersection of race and class are significant predictors of being incarcerated for longer periods of time. Tonight's readings delve into the experiences of several minority groups, both currently and historically, and their experiences with law enforcement. We will also discuss how "doing time" not only impacts poor minorities in terms of sentencing but also their life chances once they are released.

Tuesday, Nov. 10th

Socioeconomic Status and Wealth

-- Articles #6 & 8
-- Melvin Oliver & Thomas Shapiro's "Wealth Inequality Trends" in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 231-242 (on reserve in Healey)

The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s brought down many barriers for minorities yet many discrepancies remain. Why do blacks have substantially less wealth than whites? Educational strides have been made by many groups, not only among minorities but for various classes, too. Yet, how might we explain disparities then in education and income? Tonight's readings will describe the current state of things along racial and gender lines and venture potential explanations why differences remain almost a half century after Civil Rights in the U.S.

Tuesday, Nov. 17th

Employment

-- Articles #31 in Gallagher Reader
-- Cedric Herring's "Is Job Discrimination Dead?" in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 285-292 (on reserve in Healey)
-- Deirdre Royster's "Race and the Invisible Hand: How White Networks Exclude Black Men from Blue Collar Jobs" in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 293-302 (on reserve in Healey)
-- Marta Tienda and Haya Stier's "The Wages of Race: Color and Employment Opportunity in Chicago's Inner City" in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 303-312 (on reserve in Healey)

This evening we have a special speaker, Sonya Rao, Assistant Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for MA, who begin our discussion by talking about Title VII and the recent New Haven "firefighter case." The readings explore the realm of discrimination in the workplace for a variety of groups. We will also touch upon how today and historically certain groups have been tracked into certain jobs and lines of work.

Tuesday, Nov. 24th

The Welfare State & Health

- Article #7 in Gallagher Reader
- Stephan Kunitz's "The History and Politics of U.S. Health Care Policy for American Indians & Alaskan Natives" (on E-reserve)
- Introduction & Chapter 1, *The Color of Welfare* by Jill Quadagno (on reserve at Healey)

An extremely influential book, *The Color of Welfare*, explores the early years of U.S. Social Security formation and how it purposefully excluded Southern blacks from aid despite not specifically mentioning blacks in the legislation. Other readings explore the various health disparities for contemporary blacks and the spotty record of U.S. healthcare policy towards American Indians and Alaskan Natives. Tonight, we will not only explore how the U.S. has historically treated minorities in the areas of social security and health care but begin to delve into the role of politics.

Tuesday, Dec. 1st

Post-1965 Immigration: Identity Formation & Inequality

- Articles #41, 42 & 43 in Gallagher Reader
- Mae Ngai's "Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America" in *Race & Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*, pp. 189-193 (on reserve in Healey)
- Waters' & Eschbach's "Immigration and Ethnic & Racial Inequality in the United States" (E-reserve)

The Hart Cellar Act of 1965 dismantled race/ethnicity as a criterion for entry into the U.S. This resultant "changing face" of America has brought together a variety of racial and ethnic background not previously known. This evening's readings will explore the influence of this change on identify formation, racial & ethnic inequality and the role of these changes in the creation of the undocumented migrant.

Tuesday, Dec. 8th

Race & Ethnicity in 21st Century America

- Articles #12, 15 & 48 in Gallagher Reader
- Bonilla Silva's article "From Bi-racial to Tri-racial: Towards a New System of Racial Stratification in the USA" (on E-reserve)

In 2000, U.S. Census for the first time allowed persons to record more than one racial category. This evening's discussion will revolve around whether such a decision will refashion race/ethnicity as we know it. As we learned early in the course, race is a socially constructed concept and is dependent on time and place. Our readings will guide our discussion further into the areas of whether a new racial hierarchy/categorization is emerging at the turn of the 21st century. In closing, we will explore some changes that might be made to close the racial/ethnic gap that we learned about throughout this course.

Tuesday, Dec. 15th

Course Wrap-Up

- Article 49 & Graphs on pp. 419-438 in Gallagher Reader

We will wrap up the course this evening by reviewing Gallagher's Top 10 Things You Can Do to Improve Race Relations and graphs and charts that further illustrate many of the

outcomes and issues we have been discussing throughout the semester. We will also review any final questions you might have for the final exam.

Thursday, Dec. 17th FINAL EXAM @ 6:30pm

***This schedule is tentative. Every effort will be made to adhere to the schedule. However, if changes are necessary, students will be given ample notice.**