SOCI 906: Seminar in Race & Ethnicity
(Topic: Race & Racisms)

Course Information

Instructor: Deadric T. Williams
Room: Oldfather Hall 707
Days/Times: 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Office: 715 Oldfather Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 1-2 pm or by appointment
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Course Description:
Race is a central element of social stratification—shaping life chances from the womb to the tomb. This class examines key theories explaining the birth of the concept “race,” the empirical dimensions shaped by racial phenomena, and the pervasiveness of racial inequality. Race and racism have, from their inception, been a highly contested political category. We will examine debates surrounding the social construction of race, the exclusion of racial phenomena from sociological theories, racialized social movements, and the history of whiteness as a racial category and social force. This class adopts an critical perspective on race and racisms in the U.S.

Required and Recommended Texts:

Course Objectives:

- To understand the differences between biological essentialist and social constructionist approaches to race.
- To develop a historical understanding of how racial epistemologies are legitimized.
- To broaden students’ understanding of the debates surrounding race in American sociology.
- To develop a theoretical understanding of the causes and consequences of racial inequality in the U.S.
- To help students develop analytic writing skills through weekly responses.
Class Requirements:

**Attendance/Participation (10%)**
This is a graduate seminar and thus attendance is mandatory. Given that this class meets on Mondays, we are out two days—Labor Day and fall break. In the event you need to miss class for personal reasons, please inform me immediately. As an enrolled student, missing class can result in a drop in your grade. You are expected to participate in classroom discussions.

**Class Discussion Leader/Presentation (20%)**
Students are required to lead at least two class discussion over the course of the semester. Class discussion leaders are required to have greater knowledge regarding the topic for the day, requiring more research than assigned readings for that week (meeting with the instructor is strongly encouraged). Specifically, you should be able to discuss the larger context around this topic as well as relevant debates and trends with the class. Discussion leaders are also required to prepare a power point presentation (2-3 slides) regarding the readings and provide discussion questions.

**Weekly Writing (30%)**
Each week, students are required to write a 1-2 page synthesis paper identifying and discussing one to two key themes connecting the assigned readings. The paper should compare and contrast the readings with attention to how the readings contribute to larger national and disciplinary debates both within Sociology or a related discipline. I want every student to actively engage the readings by understanding the authors’ point of departure (i.e., purpose of the study), the central research questions and/or hypotheses, the key findings, and conclusions. Thus, when writing, I want students to ask questions that address the following: strengths/weaknesses of the reading; data or variables; research methods or analytical design; hypothesis testing; theoretical conceptualization; policy implications; or directions for future research. The last paragraph (or two) should reflect your thoughts on the readings—what did you learn? What’s missing? How would you improve the study?

**Assignments are due by 11:59pm Saturday prior to each class.** Note: Discussion leaders are not required to write a piece for that week.

**Final Paper (35%)**
Final paper due **December 16th**. No presentation is required.

**Paper Intro & Outline (5%)**
The final paper will be evaluated in three phases: (1) a 1-page introduction due **September 9th**, (2) a detailed outline including introduction due by **October 14th**; (3) final paper due **December 16th**.

**Final Paper Options**
You have one of two options for your final paper:

**Option #1**
Students may write an empirical paper in peer reviewed journal format on a topic related to race and racisms. This paper should add to the field by testing untested hypotheses (or updating/improving previous hypotheses). The final paper should include an introduction which clearly states your research question/s, a review of relevant literature, discussion of data and methods used to test the hypotheses, data analysis section, and discussion and conclusion section which cohesively addresses the implications of the analysis and how it contributes to the existing literature. While this is not a statistics or methods course, the choice of data and analysis must be appropriate to the research
question and contemporary methods. Quantitative and qualitative analyses are both acceptable. Take advantage of this as an option for getting started on your thesis or dissertation. This paper may overlap with research being done in another class, or as part of your thesis/dissertation with the permission of the professor. Final papers should be 10 to 15 pages of text (not including references, tables, or figures; no cover pages please). Format: 12-point Times New Roman, one-inch margins, double spaced, stapled, with page number printed on the bottom of each page.

Option #2
Students may write a non-empirical paper. This paper would be an in-depth paper on key theoretical perspectives in the area of race and racisms not fully addressed in the class or in the current discussion. Because this is a non-empirical paper, you are (a) required to amalgamate key research in the field regarding your topic of interest and (b) summarize the major findings of existing research testing the competing perspectives around this topic. Paper topics can also build on areas discussed in the course specifically. This option can also include comparing and contrasting two or more major theoretical perspectives on race and racism. Please see me if you decide to go with this option. Final papers should be 10 to 15 pages of text (not including references, tables, or figures; no cover pages please). Format: 12-point Times New Roman, one-inch margins, double spaced, stapled, with page number printed on the bottom of each page.

Students with Disabilities:
In accordance with the University policy, if a student has a documented disability and requires accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, he/she should contact the Instructor via email as soon as possible and make this need known. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, you must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY. Please contact the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office as soon as possible to have them advance the paperwork to the instructor in a timely manner.

Course Conduct:
I place a high value on respectful conduct in the classroom and acknowledging different opinions and experiences. As a student, classroom conduct that is respectful to both the instructor and your classmates covers a range of areas that most of you are familiar with. Here are some examples of expectations to support the best learning environment for everyone:

- arrive in class on-time - late arrivals make it hard to hear the instructor
- use electronic devices for class tasks only
- Only students who have a medical necessity and who are registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office can do any recording of the class
- Direct attention to the lesson and participates in all classroom activities
- Conversations should only occur when the instructor asks the class to have a discussion
- Minimize distractions to classmates (e.g. keep eating during lecture at a minimum).
 ✓ Engage in productive dialogue, even on controversial issues; for example, focus on ideas, theories, and evidence using respectful language about people we disagree with.

**Academic Integrity:**
The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has set education objectives that aim to maintain academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, submitting unoriginal work in whole or part, fabrication or falsification, abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, and falsifying grade reports. At minimum, any student found guilty of committing an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the assignment, will be reported to the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the University Judicial Officer. Further academic and disciplinary sanctions may also be applied, however, including dismissal from the university. **Students have been dismissed from the University for Violations of academic integrity.** We therefore strongly urge you to maintain academic integrity.

If you are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see an academic advisor, talk to your professor/instructor, and become familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. (See [http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml](http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml)).

**Personal Identities & Class:**
The university Canvas system allows students to change personal information although the system resets every night. Not all students go by their legal name or find that the set information in Canvas does not accurately portray who they are. Please send an email and let me know what your preferred name and pronouns are.

For example, I prefer to be called Professor Williams or Dr. Williams and my preferred pronouns are him & he.
Tentative Course Schedule

**Week 1 – August 26: Syllabus/Introductions**


**Week 2 – LABOR DAY / NO CLASS**

**Part I. The Making of “Race & Inequality”**

Week 3 – September 9


**Part II. The Manufacturing of “Race & Inequality”**

Week 4 – September 16


Week 5 – September 23


**Week 6 – September 30: Reading Day!! No Class**


**III. The Maintenance of “Race & Inequality”**

Week 7 – October 7

Recommended Reading:


**Week 8 – October 14**


**Recommended Reading:**


**October 21: Fall Break/No Class**

**Week 9 – October 28**


**Week 10 – November 4**


**Week 11 – November 11**


**Week 12 – November 18**


**IV. The Manifestation of “Race and Inequality”**

Week 13 – November 25: Social Movements / Segregation


Week 14 – December 2: Health / Economic Inequality


Week 15: December 9: Education / Quantitative Methods


