

**SOC/AMS 522 American Racial and Ethnic Relations: *A Service-Learning Course***  
**Dr. Tanya Golash-Boza, Departments of American Studies and Sociology**  
Spring 2009

Meeting Time and Place

SOC/AMS 522  
Thursdays: 4:00 to 6:30  
Fraser Hall 107

Professor Contact Information

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Office: 721 Fraser  
Office Hours: Fridays, 2:30-3:30pm. By Appointment

Course Overview

Race is one of the most critical, divisive, and defining issues in life in the United States today. In this course, we will read several book-length ethnographies as well several articles and book chapters that provide insight into how race and racism define each of our lives. Substantively, the material in this course focuses primarily on the experiences of African-Americans, with a few comparisons to the experiences of American Indians and Latinos and Latinas in the United States. Nevertheless, the theoretical focus on systemic and structural racism, categorization, ethnic identification, assimilation, pluralism, intersecting oppressions, and racism could be used to understand the experiences of other ethnic and racial groups.

My primary goal for this class is that you gain a profound understanding of how racism and each of our racial statuses affect every aspect of our lives. Race is important at the individual level and the institutional level. On an individual level, your racial status affects how others perceive you; how you perceive others; and your social relationships and identity. In addition, your gender, sexuality, class, and citizenship status affect what your racial status means to you and to others. On an institutional level, your racial status is linked to your economic success, your educational success, your potential marriage partners, and the neighborhood you are likely to live in. In this class, we will discuss these and other ways in which race is important in our society.

**Class Goals** – By the end of the semester you will have developed an understanding of

- 1) What a social theory is and why it is useful.
- 2) How the historical processes which created the idea of race and the contemporary processes that give meaning to race today work.
- 3) How various racial ideologies are used to reproduce and justify racial inequality today, and how these differ from racial ideologies that were used in the past.
- 4) How structural racism has worked historically to reproduce inequality and of how it works today.
- 5) How the possession or lack of dominant and alternative social and cultural capital affects life chances as well as identities.
- 6) How race, class, and gender work together, and the intersecting nature of oppressions and identities.
- 7) How cultural representations and institutional practices work together to create identities as well as inequalities.
- 8) How hegemonic masculinity affects institutional and social practices as well as identity formation.

Throughout this course I will introduce you to social theories that are useful for understanding how inequalities are reproduced in our society. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to give a presentation in which you apply one of these social theories in order to determine whether or not it is useful for explaining how inequalities are reproduced here in our community.

Required Books – Can be purchased in the bookstore

Feagin, Joe. R. 2001. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities and Future Reparations*. Routledge.  
Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2006. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Rowman and Littlefield.

Pattillo-McCoy, Mary. 1999. *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class*. University of Chicago Press.

Ferguson, Ann. 2001. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. University of Michigan Press.

Oliver, Melvin and Thomas M. Shapiro. 2006. *Black Wealth, White Wealth*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Routledge:

Patricia Hill Collins. 2004. *Black Sexual Politics : African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. Routledge.

**Required Electronic Readings:**

The electronic readings are all of the readings that are not in the required books. These are available through the campus library system. Please familiarize yourself with the system and download these two articles as soon as possible. You must be logged into the KU system to download these.

Carter, Prudence L. 2003. “Black’ Cultural Capital, Status Positioning, and Schooling Conflicts for Low-Income African American Youth” *Social Problems* Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 136-155.  
 Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3096826>

Marullo, Sam. 1998. “Bringing Home Diversity: A Service-Learning Approach to Teaching Race and Ethnic Relations” *Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Oct., 1998), pp. 259-275  
 Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1318767>

**Teaching Methods**

This class is organized around discussion, small-group work, and in-class writing. This class is reading and writing intensive. To do well in this course, you must keep up with all of the reading, attend class daily, and turn in high quality writing assignments. In-class work will include writing and small group projects. Through group work, you will have the opportunity both to make your voices known in a less intimidating format and to meet a variety of your classmates and engage them in discussion. I include in-class writing because it encourages students to come to class prepared and ready to participate; it helps you improve your writing skills; and we get immediate feedback on whether or not the students understand class materials. Each day, discussion will be based on readings for that day’s class in addition to your experiences. Topics will be explored in small groups and then return to the large group for discussion of common themes, differences, and critical engagement.

**Grade Policy**

In this course, we will be using the new +/- grading scale, approved by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to describe intermediate levels of performance between a maximum of A and a minimum of F. Intermediate grades represented by plus or minus shall be calculated as .3 units above or below the corresponding letter grade to calculate your GPA. In this class, we will use the 100 point scale below.

A	93-100	B-	80-82.9	D+	67-69.9
A-	90-92.9	C+	77-79.9	D	63-66.9
B+	87-89.9	C	73-76.9	D-	60-62.9
B	83-86.9	C-	70-72.9	F	<60

**Description of Writing Assignments**

*Weekly Questions*

These are one page, in-class essays that you will be responsible for completing each time class meets. I will either present a question to you about the readings, or ask you to reflect on the readings and your life experiences or service-learning. Doing well on these in-class writing assignments is dependent on you having done the reading prior to coming to class. You will be given about ten minutes to write down an answer. I will either use these questions for class discussion, group discussion, or have you hand them in

immediately. These will be graded on a scale from 1 to 10. You will get five points just for attending class on that day, and the other five points are earned based on the quality of your response.

#### *Grading Rubric for Weekly Questions*

10 points: You present a clear and direct response to the question, and draw from examples in the reading to make your points.

9 points: You present a response to the question, and draw from examples in the reading to make your points.

8 points: You answer the question and provide at least one example from the readings.

7 points: You answer the question and allude to the readings.

6 points: You answer the question.

5 points: You write your name on the paper.

0 points: You are absent and miss the question.

You are allowed to make these questions up if you miss class. However, you can only earn a maximum of five points for make-up questions, and these must be turned in within one week of the day the question is posed.

#### *Attendance*

I will not ask for nor accept any excuses for missing class. If you miss class for an emergency, you will have the opportunity to make up your absence by participating in an extra credit activity. Attendance is vital in this class, and I expect you to come to class prepared every day.

#### *Papers*

You will be responsible for two five-page papers in this class. I expect you to engage both the readings and the class discussion in your papers. I will hand out specific guidelines for each paper as the due date approaches.

I encourage all students to use the facilities at the Writing Center to improve their writing skills for this and other classes. Most colleges and universities have a writing center, a place for students to talk about their writing with trained peer consultants. I strongly encourage you to contact the KU Writing Center. At the Writer Center you can talk about your writing with trained tutors or consult reference materials in a comfortable working environment. You may ask for feedback on your papers, advice and tips on writing (for all your courses), or for guidance on special writing tasks. Please check the website at <http://www.writing.ku.edu/students/> for current locations and hours. The Writing Center welcomes both drop-ins and appointments, and there is no charge for their services. For more information, please call (785) 864-2399 or send an e-mail to [writing@ku.edu](mailto:writing@ku.edu). The website is loaded with helpful information about writing of all sorts, so even if you consider yourself a good writer, check it out!

***Please note: This is a service-learning course, and you must be willing and able to complete twenty hours of community service in order to fulfill the requirements of this course. ***
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#### Service Learning – Volunteering in the Community

To complement the readings in this class, students will participate in service-learning. You will choose your community placement, and will be responsible for completing at least **20 hours** of community service. We will discuss the placements in detail, and we will decide together who gets placed in which site. Placements will be based on students' interest, language abilities and other skills, transportation, and schedules. Your final presentation will be based on fieldnotes and reflections that you write about your volunteering experiences.

### Preparing for the final presentation – Fieldnotes and Reflections

You will be going to your service-learning site for an average of two hours per week, for a total of about **20** hours over the course of the semester. Each time you go to your site, you will write up fieldnotes and reflections. Your **fieldnotes** will be a summary of everything that happened while you were there. You should describe the place, the people you encountered, and the interactions that you witnessed and that you had with the people at your volunteer site. Your **reflections** should be a summary of how you felt after leaving the site, or while you were at the site. You can describe in detail either a particular interaction or event, or how what you saw was different from what you expected. While your fieldnotes are a log of what you saw; your reflection is a log of what you felt. You will use these fieldnotes and reflections to develop your final presentation. You will be handing in these fieldnotes and reflections every class.

You may miss four of these, but late fieldnotes will **not** be accepted. If you turn in more than ten, I will take your highest ten grades. I highly recommend you attempting to volunteer each week that you can, because there may be weeks when your field site is closed (for example the local school's Spring break, snow days, and Parent and Teacher conferences). This also will not be an acceptable excuse, since you only have to go ten of fifteen weeks.

#### *Grading Rubric for fieldnotes and reflections*

Specific, concrete examples from your volunteering that day:	6 points
Reflect on how you felt that day:	2 points
Make connections to class topics or readings:	<u>2 points</u>
	10 points maximum

### **Grade Calculation**

#### Service Learning – 40 percent

Fieldnotes and Reflections

Service Learning and Social Theory Presentation

\*\*To receive full credit, you must complete 20 hours of volunteer work. Each hour below that will take 5% off of your grade for this portion of the class. Students who complete more than 30 hours will receive extra credit.\*\*

#### In-class Writing – 20 percent

Weekly Questions

#### Papers Based on Readings – 40 percent

Paper One Structural Racism and the Black Middle Class

Paper Two Culture, Masculinity, and the Reproduction of Racism

### **Important Dates and Deadlines:**

Service-Learning Agreement Due: January 22, 2009

First Fieldnotes Assignment Due: January 22, 2009

Paper One - Structural Racism and the Black Middle Class - Due: March 12, 2009

Paper Two - Culture, Masculinity, and the Reproduction of Racism – Due: April 23, 2009

Final Presentation – Service Learning and Social Theory

Due: 4/30/2009 (Last name A-L)

Due: 5/7/2009 (Last name M-Z)

Service Learning Time Log Due: 5/7/2009

## Reading Schedule:

1/15/2009 Introduction to Service Learning

*Why are we doing Service-Learning?*

*What is Service-Learning?*

*How will we use Service-Learning in this course?*

*What are the available options for Service-Learning?*

*What will students do at each site?*

*What are fieldnotes?*

Students pick a site and commit to volunteering

1/22/2009 *What does it mean to say race is a social construction?*

Race: The Power of an Illusion, v.1 (Film and Discussion)

Reading: Joe Feagin, *Racist America*, Chapters One and Two

1/29/2009 *What are Racist Ideology and Practices?*

Reading: Joe Feagin, *Racist America*, Chapters Three, Four and Five

2/5/2009 *What is Structural Racism?*

Race: The Power of an Illusion, v.2 (Film and Discussion)

Reading: Oliver and Shapiro, *Black Wealth, White Wealth* Intro, Chapters 1, 2

2/12/2009 *How are wealth and income inequality different?*

Reading: Oliver and Shapiro, *Black Wealth, White Wealth* Chapters 4, 5, 6

2/19/2009 *Who is The Black Middle Class?*

Reading: Mary Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences* Chapters 1, 2, 3

2/26/2009 *How do Social and Cultural Capital affect life chances?*

Reading: Mary Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences*, Chapters 4, 5, 6

3/5/2009 *What is alternative cultural capital?*

Reading: "'Black' Cultural Capital, Status Positioning,...." article

Writing Workshop

3/12/2009 Color Blind Racism

Reading: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*: Chapters 1, 2, and 3

### **Paper One: Structural Racism and the Black Middle Class DUE**

3/19/2009 **Spring Break – No class**

3/26/2009 *What are Black Sexual Politics?*

Reading Patricia Hill Collins *Black Sexual Politics*: Chapters 4, 5, 6

4/2/2009 *How do Institutional practices and cultural representations work together?*

Reading Ann Arnett Ferguson *Bad Boys*: Chapters 1, 2, 3

4/9/2009 *How do Punishment and School Rules Create Inequality?*

Reading Ann Arnett Ferguson *Bad Boys*: Chapters 4, 5

4/16/2009 Why do Black Boys Perform Masculinity?

Reading Ann Arnett Ferguson *Bad Boys*: Chapters 6, 7, 8

4/23/2009 SL, Reflections, and Presentation Prep

### **Paper Two: Culture, Masculinity, and the Reproduction of Racism: DUE**

Reading: Marullo Article on Service-Learning

Students will work on their presentations in class together

4/30/2009 Service-Learning Presentations

Students with last names A-M will present.

5/7/2009 Service-Learning Presentations

Students with last names N-Z will present

### **Important Information about this course**

#### **Drop Policy**

If you are having trouble succeeding in this course, it is especially important that you consult with me so that we can develop a plan of action that may enable you to complete the course. If you decide to drop this class, please refer to the Website below: [http://www.registrar.ku.edu/timetable/add\\_drop.shtml](http://www.registrar.ku.edu/timetable/add_drop.shtml)  
From February 6-April 16 you will be assigned a grade of W. Advisor approval is recommended if you drop a course that is a major requirement. **You may not drop or withdraw after April 16, 2009.**

**PLAGIARISM:** It is perfectly acceptable to use others' materials, so long as you cite the sources from which they were obtained. However, whenever you use someone else's ideas or words, it is necessary to give credit to the source from which you took them. For those unfamiliar with the word, to plagiarize is to appropriate and present as one's own the writing, ideas, or thoughts of someone else. In other words, you may not use another person's words, ideas, opinions, interpretations, theories, or thoughts (either paraphrased or in direct quotes) without indicating the source from which you obtained them (no matter

what that source is). If the words you are using are direct quotes of someone else's spoken or written words, you are required to indicate this by enclosing the directly quoted material in quotation marks and by providing explicit and precise information on the sources from which you obtained the material. If you use someone else's ideas but paraphrase them and don't quote them directly, you are still responsible for indicating the source from which you obtained them.

**Plagiarism will result in an automatic failing grade for the entire course. There will be no exceptions to this rule!** If there is any ambiguity about this definition or you have any questions about what comprises plagiarism, please contact me before you submit a written essay. **I will not accept the excuse that you did not know that what you were doing constituted plagiarism.**

*How to Avoid Plagiarism:*

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- \* another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- \* any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge;

For example: You do not have to cite: Barack Obama is the President of the US.

You do have to cite: Nearly one million black children live in dire poverty.

- \* quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or
- \* paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.