SOCIOLOGY 134: THE SOCIOLOGY OF RACE AND ETHNICITY  
FALL 2020

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Office Hours: MW 10-11 and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
The tumultuous events of the past several months—in particular the Covid-19 global pandemic and the racial protests spurred by the police killing of George Floyd—commands a special urgency for a class on the realities of race and ethnicity in the United States. This course introduces students to a uniquely sociological perspective on the nature, dynamics, and inequalities of race and ethnicity. Taking a sociological approach requires (in part) that we understand race and ethnicity as socially constructed processes of categorization, meaning, and behavior that shift over time and operate at 1) the structural/institutional level; 2) the cultural/symbolic level; and 3) the interpersonal level. We will explore the ways in which race and ethnicity permeate social life, in particular how race and ethnic hierarchies emerged historically and persist in the present. We will also tackle the difficult—and often controversial—task of defining and deconstructing the concepts of racism, prejudice, discrimination, ideology, privilege, etc. In doing all of the above we will also consider the consequences of race and ethnic hierarchy on the lives of real people, both those who are disadvantaged by, AND those who benefit from such a social system. Finally, we will consider alternative visions of race and ethnic justice, and the ways we might achieve them.

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- TEXT: *Race in America (2e)* by Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer (available as an ebook)
- SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS/VIDEOS (posted electronically as pdf files in Canvas)
LEARNING GOALS
To get the most out of this course, you need to open yourself up to being challenged, perhaps even feeling uncomfortable at times; and of course, you need to do the necessary work! If you do, by the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Participate in informed conversations about issues relating to race and ethnicity with a variety of people.
- Articulate sociological perspectives, theories, concepts, and debates relating to race and ethnicity in the U.S. and use these to better understand the world around you.
- Demonstrate an understanding of race and ethnicity as a structural, not just an individual phenomenon.
- Develop a “sociological imagination”—that is, understand how your personal experience intersects with and is shaped by a larger social and historical context.
- Critically assess current issues in the news, politics, and your community using a sociologically-informed race and ethnicity lens.

EMAIL/CONTACT POLICY
I respectfully request that if you need to contact me about routine issues or questions, please contact your TA first. If your TA is unable to resolve the issue, then by all means feel free to contact me. Also, if you have a very important or sensitive issue that you'd rather address directly with me, that's also fine. I do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours. If you haven't heard from me after that time, please send a reminder email and I'll see to it that I respond ASAP.

GRADE SCALE
92.5-100: A
87.5-92.4: AB
82.5-87.4: B
77.5-82.4: BC
70-77.4: C
60-69: D
<60: F

GRADING
Your grade for the course will consist of the following components:

- MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAM (30% each, 60% of total grade): Exams will be a combination of mostly Multiple Choice, some True/False, and will include a short answer/essay element. We will update you soon after the semester begins about the exact format.
  - The majority of the exam will cover lecture material and supplemental readings; another (somewhat shorter) part of the exam will be based on TEXTBOOK readings. As an example, if there are, say, 50 questions, perhaps 15-20 of those questions will come directly from the text.
  - Each week I will provide you a set of “practice” test questions for the textbook readings. The actual test questions will be very similar to these, so if you can
answer the practice questions, you should be well-prepared for the actual test questions!

- **WEEKLY QUIZZES (7.5 points each; 15% of total grade):**
  - Every Friday morning, we will post a short, timed quiz to Canvas (about 15 minutes). The quiz will cover that week’s lecture and reading material and you have until the end of the day to take it. The questions are NOT exam-caliber questions; they are designed to be straightforward and relatively easy as an incentive for you to keep up with the lectures and readings. If you’ve done so, you’ll be fine!

- **DISCUSSION ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION (10% of total grade)**
  - Because there are different discussion formats (in-person vs. online), there will be some variation in how your scores are determined. Your TA will give you specific details in their discussion syllabi.

- **DISCUSSION SHORT WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (15% of total grade)**
  - You will have a short writing assignment each week for discussion sections. Each will be worth 5 points. Again, your TA will have details in the discussion syllabi.

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

We’re all responsible for creating a respectful, scholarly environment in which we grow as critical learners, informed citizens, and compassionate human beings. Each of us has something unique and valuable to contribute, based on our different identities and life experiences, varied college majors, and backgrounds; this diversity is a strength and a resource that we will draw upon to learn from one another. Please join me in creating an inclusive learning environment for students that supports a diversity of perspectives and experiences and honors one another’s identities (including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, age, citizenship status, etc.).

We will be exploring sensitive and challenging material in class, which may evoke strong emotions and opinions as well as disagreement. It is essential that we safe and trusting atmosphere in the classroom, in which we can explore uncomfortable topics and diverse perspectives in a thoughtful, deep, and respectful manner. Students are invited to share their personal experiences and beliefs, always reflecting on how they relate to class material.

Part of fostering critical thinking skills is challenging assumptions—those of others and your own. You will get the most out of this class if you open yourself up to being challenged and feeling uncomfortable. You are welcome to disagree with one another (and me!), but let’s respectfully challenge each other’s argument/comment (not each other, personally). If someone unintentionally says or does something offensive or hurtful, let’s assume best intentions rather than demonize them, and use it as a collective learning opportunity to explain why what they said or did was offensive or hurtful.
PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS and the USAGE of AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES
See information about privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures.

Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement
Lecture materials and recordings for [insert class name] are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university’s policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

STUDENTS’ RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES
During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

UW-MADISON FACE COVERING GUIDELINES
While on campus all employees and students are required to wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19)
Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be worn correctly (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason. Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.
Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

**QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19**

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

**ACADEMIC POLICIES**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/

[Links to an external site.]

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement:

“The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional
accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.”
http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
Institutional statement on diversity:
“Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” https://diversity.wisc.edu/
WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

WEEK 1 (Sept. 2): Course Introduction

- New York Times, "In a Homecoming Video Meant to Unite Campus, Almost Everyone was White"
- Harris and McClure, "But My Mother Told Me It's Rude to Talk About Race: How and Why We Need to Discuss Race in the U.S." (pp. 1-9)

WEEK 2 (Sept. 7-11): A Sociological Approach to Race and Ethnicity

- Text, Chapter 1, pp. 1-6; 16-19; 26-33
- Buffington, "Blacks are Naturally Good Athletes: The Myth of a Biological Basis for Race"
- Podcast: Racial Categories in Brazil (NPR)

WEEK 3 (Sept. 14-18): Historical and Current Formations of Race and Ethnicity

- Text, Chapter 2, pp. 38-42; 47-54; 61-72
- Omi and Winant, “Racial Formations”

WEEK 4 (Sept. 21-25): Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism

- Text, Chapter 1, pp. 6-12; 20-26
- Thornhill, “Silencing the Myth of a Colorblind Society”
- Rice, “The Three Degrees of Racism in the U.S.” (The Atlantic)


- Text, Chapter 4, pp. 117-26; 137-41
- Ioanide, "The Myth of Meritocracy"
- Jones, “Why So Many Minority Millennials Can’t Get Ahead” (The Atlantic)

WEEK 6 (Oct. 5-9): Housing and Residential Segregation

- Text, Chapter 5, pp. 153-72
- Ellis, “Minneapolis Had This Coming” (The Atlantic)

WEEK 7 (Oct. 12-16): Education

- Text, Chapter 7, pp. 225-34; 239-41
- Kohli and Quartz, “Modern Day Segregation in Public Schools” (The Atlantic)
- Ochoa, “I’m Watching Your Group”
WEEK 8 (Oct. 19-23):

- Exam week, no new reading

MIDTERM EXAM: WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21

WEEK 9 (Oct. 26-30): Affirmative Action

- Poon, “The Legal and Social Realities of the College Admissions Process”
- Wong, “Asian Americans and Affirmative Action” (The Atlantic)

WEEK 10 (Nov. 2-6): Race, Ethnicity, and Health Disparities

- Mouzon, “Confronting Myths about Ethnoracial Health Disparities”
- Gravlee, “Racism, not Genetics Explains why Black American are Dying of Covid-19 (Scientific American)

WEEK 11 (Nov. 9-13): Race and Ethnic-Based Social Movements

- Text, Chapter 3, pp. 81-97
- Chotiner, “A Black Lives Matter Co-Founder Explains Why This Time is Different” (The New Yorker)
- Crane-Murdoch, “Standing Rock: A New Moment for Native American Rights” (The New Yorker)

WEEK 12 (Nov. 16-20): Crime and Punishment

- Text, Chapter 6, pp. 187-203
- Ray, “If Only He Hadn’t Worn the Hoodie: Race, Selective Perception, and Stereotype Maintenance”
- VIDEO: Watch first half of 13th (Netflix)

WEEK 13 (Nov. 23-27): Crime and Punishment (cont’d)

- Text, Chapter 6, pp. 211-22;
- Alexander, “The New Jim Crow”
- Finish Watching 13th

WEEK 14 (Nov. 30-Dec. 4): Cultural and Interactive Spaces

- Text, Chapter 8, pp. 268-78
- Text, Chapter 10, pp. 346-48; 351-56
- WATCH: Crash
WEEK 15 (Dec. 7-11): Where are We Headed? The Future of Race and Ethnicity in the U.S

- Text, Chapter 11, pp. 361-73
- Waldman, “The White Fragility that Prevents White Americans from Confronting Racism” (New Yorker)
- Parker et al. “Multiracial in America: Proud, Diverse, and Growing in Numbers” (Pew Research Center)

FINAL EXAM: DECEMBER 16