

Sociology 134: The Sociology of Race & Ethnicity in the United States

**1131 Mosse Humanities Building
11:00am – 12:15pm Tues/Thurs**

Instructor: Morgan Henson

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:30am

Aldo's Café; 330 N Orchard St. (inside the Discovery Building)

Email: mlhenson@wisc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the social structures that shape and are shaped by race, ethnicity, racism, and racial/ethnic inequalities. Through this course, you will learn to apply the “sociological imagination” to social issues relating to race and ethnicity. This means understanding race and ethnicity as social constructs, and learning how race and ethnicity exist within social structures and institutions. This class meets the University of Wisconsin’s Ethnic Studies requirement, which aims to “increase understanding of the culture and contributions of persistently marginalized racial or ethnic groups in the U.S., and to equip students to respond constructively to issues connected with our pluralistic society and global community.”

Disclaimer: Most people have not had much practice talking about race and ethnicity, and some of the topics we will explore are controversial. This course is meant to be uncomfortable as we discuss difficult and contentious topics that affect our understandings of ourselves and the world around us. However, this course is not meant to make any students feel guilt, shame, anger, frustration, or fear. Everyone will come to discussion with different personal histories and understandings of the concepts we discuss, and these differences must be respected. Critical engagement is the aim of this course; so, if there are disagreements or tensions around the readings or concepts we’re covering, students must defend their positions critically and academically using the course materials as support for their arguments. There will be no tolerance of microaggressions or hate of any kind toward other students in the discussion section or people around the world based on race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, class, or any other social identity. We will all make mistakes, and this is the place to do so. But we must all treat one another (and the material) with respect, kindness, and an open mind.

COURSE MATERIAL

All required readings and listening assignments are available on the course’s Canvas page, which you can access through MyUW. *You will not be asked to purchase any reading material for this course.*

Power point slides will be uploaded to Canvas either directly before or directly after each lecture.

LECTURE ETIQUETTE

Avoid disruptions such as arriving late, leaving early, or packing up before I finish lecturing. Do not use cell phones, laptops, or tablets to scroll the internet or check email — it's distracting to your classmates and to me.

Laptops and tablets will be permitted for taking notes during lecture. However, *I reserve the right to prohibit their use at any time during the semester if they become a distraction.*

Attendance is optional but encouraged.

Remember, our classroom is a learning community, and individual perspectives are valuable. Everyone's learning trajectory is different. We are here to learn from and with each other. Some baseline rules:

- Critique *ideas*—not *people*.
- Do not assume what other individuals are thinking or what groups they represent.
- Opinions are different from facts. Both are good, but let's be clear about when we're making a factual claim and when we're expressing our opinion.
- We are all colleagues; please treat each other as such. Disagreement and critique are healthy and normal, but animosity and disrespect are not tolerated.

OFFICE HOURS

This is time I set out in my schedule specifically for you. If you need help with the material, want to talk through strategies for studying and writing, or just want to chat, this is the space to do it. I'd prefer that you email me (or tell me in class) if you plan to attend office hours beforehand, but walk-ins are also welcome! If you can't meet during my assigned office hours (stated at the top of this syllabus), email me and we will find another option for you!

Please don't hesitate to come and speak with me if you need anything. **But don't wait until the last minute to ask me for help.**

COMMUNICATION

Due to the size of the class, please follow the following email etiquette.

1. If you have a question about logistics (e.g., grading policy, exam format, course schedule, etc.) always check the syllabus first.
2. If you can't find what you need there, contact your TA.
3. If your TA can't help, either she will contact me or you may contact me directly. You are always welcome to come to my office hours or schedule an appointment to speak with me at another time.

If you can't come to my office hours, email is the best way to contact me. My email is mlhenson@wisc.edu and I will usually respond within 24-48 hours, but I will not answer emails after 6:00pm on weekdays and only once on weekends. Except in case of emergencies, I will not respond to last-minute emails about essays, quizzes, or exams.

GRADING

Final grades will be allocated as follows:

93-100%	=	A
89-92.99	=	AB
84-88.99	=	B
78-83.99	=	BC
70-77.99	=	C
60-69.99	=	D
Under 60	=	F

Your final course grade will be based on the following:

Weekly Quizzes	30%
Applied Analysis Essay	15%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Exam #3	15%
<u>Section Attendance AND Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Questions and Complaints about Grading

The TAs and I are human, and we do make mistakes in grading. If you have a question about how an assignment was graded, please communicate with us. Note, however, that any time we look back to an assignment to evaluate the grading, your grade may go up or down. Please follow this procedure for grade questions and complaints:

1. **YOU MUST WAIT 24 HOURS AFTER RECEIVING A GRADE TO CONTACT ME OR YOUR TA ABOUT A PROBLEM.**
2. 24 hours after a grade has been posted, submit to me (not your TA) a one-page paper with the following:
 - a. Clearly and specifically describe your question or complaint.
 - b. Justify any complaints with a description of *how* you believe you met the requirements.
 - c. Request a meeting.
3. I will reply to you within 48 hours (except on holidays or weekends) to confirm the meeting time.
4. In exceptional cases, when I agree that the original grade is in question, I may re-grade your paper. Note, again, that grades may go up or down.

WEEKLY QUIZZES

Each week you will take a quiz on Canvas that is based on a combination of lecture materials and reading concepts. The point of these quizzes is to make sure you're doing the readings and keeping up with your work. Each quiz is worth 3% of your final grade. There will be 12 quizzes throughout the semester; I will drop your two lowest quiz scores at the end of the semester.

There will be no quiz retakes, so if you miss a quiz it will be counted as a 0 and will be one of the scores that I drop at the end of the semester.

APPLIED ANALYSIS ESSAY

You will write one medium-length essay (**1,000-1,500 words**) on course-related topics of your choice at the end of the semester. Using at least four course concepts/readings, you will choose one prompt from the following three options:

- Prompt 1: Your Own Family Status
 - Research your family's racial, ethnic, and/or national history to find out your lineage. Once you know your own lineage, research the group or groups that your family is a part of and explain how that/those group(s) was/were treated throughout US history. If you're White, was your family's lineage always considered white? Where did that/those group(s) usually settle within the United States? Historically, how did they engage with other immigrant groups when they settled here? Which groups?
- Prompt 2: Choose an Artifact
 - For the essay, you will need to select a real-world artifact – e.g., a news report, blog post, video, book, article, movie, or episode of a TV/streaming series – to analyze using a sociology of race/ethnicity framework and concepts from class. The artifact you choose to analyze **must: (1) be about the United States and either explicitly about race/ethnicity or analyzable in terms of the sociology of race/ethnicity; and (2) not be about extreme acts of violence.**
- Prompt 3: Phenotypic Difference in a Different Country
 - Choose any other country on Earth (except Canada and the United Kingdom) and research how phenotypic differences are handled in that country. How many different racial, ethnic, or national groups live in this country? Which group is situated at the "top" of the phenotypic hierarchy? Which is at the bottom? How does the government treat these groups differently along the lines of politics, education, criminal justice, etc.? If you're from this country, what is your experience with this hierarchy? Are you part of the dominant phenotypic group? How did this hierarchy influence your life growing up?

Essay guidelines will be provided later in the semester. If you choose to write about **prompts 1 or 2**, your essay will be due at 11:59pm on **Sunday, November 19**. If you

choose to write about **prompt 3**, your essay will be due at 11:59pm on **Sunday, December 17**. The essay will be worth 15% of your final grade in the course.

EXAMS

Exams will be administered during lecture on **Thursday, October 5th**; **Thursday, November 16th**, and **Tuesday, December 12th**. The exams are each worth 15% of your final grade. Contrary to what you see online, **there will NOT be an exam on Tuesday, December 19th**.

Prior to each exam, if students would like, I might hold one review session to go over the material that will be on the upcoming exam. This is a time to ask clarifying questions, logistical questions, etc., but these sessions will not be mandatory and will only occur if a majority of students want to attend and are actively engaged.

COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Accommodations

McBurney Disability Resource Center: Students with disabilities, visible and invisible, should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center located at 702 W Johnson St #2104. Their office number is (608) 263-2741 and website is www.mcburney.wisc.edu.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university's web page for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will be detected and detested. It is truly not worth it. Ignorance of the rules is NOT an excuse.

All work that you submit must be your own and must have been done for this class. This means no recycling of old papers or projects (yours or anyone else's) and absolutely no plagiarism. This means no buying papers online, no cutting and pasting chunks of text from other sources and presenting it as your own writing, and no paraphrasing and presenting it as your own ideas. All work will be submitted in electronic form and checked against plagiarism detection software.

All incidences of plagiarism and academic dishonesty will be reported to the Chair of the Sociology Department as well as the Office of the Dean of Students, and you will receive a failing grade for the course. I expect you to acquaint yourself with the University's policy on academic misconduct, found here: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/>

If you have questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, the Writing Center has numerous resources and tutorials online on their website

<https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quoting/sources/>

Student Resources

University Health Services (UHS) Mental Health Services: To obtain assistance for personal, social, career, and/or study skills problems, please contact the counseling center at University Health Services: 333 East Campus Mall, 7th Floor. (608) 265-5600 (option 2). For 24/7 crisis support, call (608) 265-5600 and select option 9.

Website: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health>

UHS Medical Services: For health issues ranging from the flu to sexual health testing, UHS offers health services for many student needs. They are located on the 5th and 6th floors of 333 East Campus Mall. You can contact them by calling (608) 265-5600 (select option 1).

Website: www.uhs.wisc.edu/medical

UHS Violence Prevention: Violence can affect university students before they reach campus and throughout their time at college. UHS Violence Prevention services exists to prevent violence as well as to support survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. Please contact them to learn more about their services or to make an appointment.

Location: 8th Floor of 333 East Campus Mall

Website: www.uhs.wisc.edu/prevention/violence-prevention/about-us/

The Writing Center: It is always useful to develop your academic writing skills as early as possible. The UW Writing Center provides you with a diverse range of resources to help you write as a scholar and with style.

Location: 6171 Helen C. White Hall

Website: writing.wisc.edu

Sociology Department Learning Objectives

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

- **Communicate Skillfully:** Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- **Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:** Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.

PLAGIARISM THROUGH THE USE OF AI

If you wish, you may use ChatGPT on your final essay. However, if you do use it, you must include an extra paragraph at the end of your essay (not counted in the original

1,000-1,500 words) describing how you used it, whether or not you thought it was helpful, and if you would use it again. **If you use ChatGPT or any other AI to write your essay and don't include this paragraph, you will be in violation of university plagiarism rules and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students under the university's academic misconduct policy.**

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Unit	Date	Readings
Introduction	R: September 7	• Mills 1959 • Omi & Winant 1994 • https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/undergradresearch/chapter/1-2-a-note-on-reflexivity-and-positionality/ (ONLY Reflexivity and Positionality)
Sociology (& History) of Race in America	T: September 12 R: September 14	• Remembering Jim Crow • Desmond & Emirbayer, <i>Ch. 2: The Invention of Race</i>, (ONLY p.47-55 — STOP AT “THE INVENTION OF WHITENESS AND BLACKNESS”)
Historical Construction of Race	T: September 19 R: September 21	• Desmond & Emirbayer, <i>Ch 2: The Invention of Race</i>, (ONLY p.18-37) • Reich 2018 https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/23/opinion/sunday/genetics-race.html • BuzzFeed News 2018 https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/bfopinion/race-genetics-david-reich
Privilege, Prejudice, & Discrimination	T: September 26 R: September 28	• Bonilla-Silva, 2014, Ch 1&3 (ONLY p.1-16 & 53-76) • McIntosh, 1989 • Crosley Corcoran 2014 • Waters 1996
Intersectionality	T: October 3	• [Watch] National Association of Independent Schools. 2018. “Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?” • Lorde 1984 • Garza 2019. (https://belonging.berkeley.edu/identity-politics-friend-or-foe) • (Optional) Crenshaw 1991

Exam 1	R: October 5	No readings for today
Race & Economy	T: October 10	- Desmond & Emirbayer, Ch. 4: Economics (<u>ONLY p.130-145</u>) [<i>Watch</i>] “The Racial Wealth Gap.” <i>Explained</i> (also available on Netflix)
Race & Politics	R: October 12 T: October 17	- Bentele & O’Brien 2013 (Optional) Desmond & Emirbayer, Ch 3: Politics
Housing & Residential Space	R: October 19 T: October 24	- Massey & Denton 1998 - Farley & Squires 2005 (Optional) Zenk et al 2005
Education	R: October 26 T: October 31	[<i>Listen</i>] <i>The Problem We All Live With</i>, part 1 https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one - Cobb 2014 - Poon 2014 - Harvard Magazine 2023 https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2023/06/harvard-affirmative-action-analysis (Optional) Toldson 2013 (Optional) Desmond & Emirbayer, Chapter 7: Education
Criminal Justice	R: November 2 T: November 7	- Alexander 2010 - Lewis 2016 [<i>Watch</i>] “Thirteenth.” Also available on <i>Netflix</i> and YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8 (Optional) Desmond & Emirbayer, Ch 6: Crime & Punishment (Optional) [<i>Listen</i>] <i>Object Anyways</i> podcast
Immigration	R: November 9 T: November 14	- Golash-Boza 2018 (Optional) [<i>Listen</i>] <i>Our Town, Parts 1 & 2</i> podcast
Exam 2	R: November 16	No readings for today
Applied Analysis Essay Prompts #1 & 2	Su: November 19	
Health, the Body, & Sports	T: November 21	No readings for today

Thanksgiving	R: November 23	• No readings for today
Health, the Body, & Sports	T: November 28	• Cerdena et al. 2020 • Cheah et al. 2020 • Serwer 2016 • Associated Press 2021
Associations	R: November 30	• McPherson et. al 2001 (STOP READING ON p.422) • Stearns et. al 2009 • Desmond & Emirbayer, Ch.10: Intimate Life (ONLY p.355-368) • (Optional) Desmond & Emirbayer, Ch.10: Intimate Life (all) • (Optional) Srinivasan 2018 https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n06/amia-srinivasan/does-anyone-have-the-right-to-sex
Art, Media, and Pop Culture	T: December 5	• Harwood 2022 • Digital Blackface
Race/Phenotype in Other Countries	R: December 7	• King 2022
Final Exam	T: December 12	• No readings for today
Applied Analysis Essay Prompt #3	Su: December 17	