PSYC336: Psychology of Race and Ethnicity
http://www.psych.uiuc.edu/~lyubansk/race/race.htm
Fall, 2006: T, Th 3:00 - 4:15PM
Room 23, Psychology

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Office hours: T, Th: 10:00-11:00am
Office hours: Mon: 3:30-4:30, Wed: 12-1pm

Required Texts:

Coursepack of articles (available on Electronic Reserves: http://www.library.uiuc.edu)

Required Films:
A Class Divided
The Color of Fear
Crash
Do the Right Thing
First Person Plural
In Whose Honor?
True Colors

“It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder”


“In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently.”


“They claim that I'm violent, just cause I refuse to be silent
These hypocrites are havin fits, cause I'm not buyin it
Defyin it, envious because I will rebel against
any oppressor, and this is known as self defense
I show no mercy, they claim that I'm the lunatic
But when the shit gets thick, I'm the one you go and get
Don't look confused, the truth is so plain to see
Cause I'm the nigga that you sell-outs are ashamed to be.”


“For the white person who wants to know how to be my friend...the first thing you do is to forget that I'm Black. Second, you must never forget that I'm Black.”

Pat Parker, 1990.
Course Description

This course explores theoretical, empirical, and experiential writings concerning the issues of race and ethnicity as they relate to human behavior from the perspective of the individual in various social contexts. To address the different learning styles of students, a variety of formats, including readings, films, in-class activities and discussions, and out-of-class assignments will be used to investigate the impact of race and ethnicity on various aspects of living.

Course Objectives

Unlike most psychology courses which generally focus on building knowledge and skills, this course is designed to also increase self-awareness and facilitate system-level change in regard to racial and ethnic group relations. To that end, this course will ideally provide you with a greater:

- appreciation of the multiple and complex definitions of race, ethnicity, and related constructs and how these definitions are shaped by racial ideology
- understanding of the historical and contemporary racial disparities in a variety of outcomes, including education, income, criminal justice, mental and physical health, and life expectancy
- understanding of what racial and ethnic identity are, how they are developed, and the meaning they have in people’s lives
- awareness of your own racial and ethnic identities and an opportunity to critically examine their origin and meaning
- understanding of what stereotypes are, how they are formed, and how they impact people’s lives
- personal insight into your own biases and how they may affect your behavior
- understanding for how prejudice and discrimination are formed and how they can be reduced
- understanding of the nature of IQ tests, the implications of the race-group differences in IQ scores, and the factors that contribute to these differences
- opportunity to examine how race (or racial minority groups) are depicted by mainstream media or popular culture (e.g., television, film)
- opportunity to engage in honest and meaningful dialogue with classmates across and within racial and ethnic groups
- sense of how to work toward a racially just society

Place in the Curriculum

Psyc 336: Topics in Clinical/Community Psychology is a category used for a variety of “special topics” courses taught by the Clinical/Community division of the Psychology department. As such, this course is not a requirement for the psychology major but can contribute to the major’s required “12 advanced hours.” Since a variety of different courses, covering a wide range of subdisciplines, are taught under the “Psyc 336” label, students may enroll (pending approval) in multiple sections of Psyc 336 up to a maximum of 6 undergraduate hours in same term, or to a maximum of 9 undergraduate hours in subsequent terms. Please note that although the course catalog lists Psyc 238 (Abnormal Psychology) or Psych 239 (Community Psychology) as prerequisites, neither of these prerequisites is actually required for this particular course.
Course Expectations

Classroom environment. It is essential that our classroom be a place where everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of unduly critical or judgmental responses. I expect all of my students to be respectful of the widely varied experiences and backgrounds presented by classroom members. You may expect the same level of respect from both the teaching assistant and me. Disrespect or discrimination on any basis, including but not limited to ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, physical ability, class, religion, or value system, will not be tolerated. Similarly, disruptive behavior (including lateness) is also not acceptable.

My second expectation is that all of us do our best to engage with the course material. Among other things, this means that I very much hope that none of us will not silence ourselves (in class or on assignments), because we are afraid of offending someone or otherwise saying something “wrong.” While this may be a reasonable strategy elsewhere, in this class being “politically correct” rather than authentic deprives us and others of a potential learning opportunity (either from our comments directly or from the responses of others). Similarly, if someone (including me) says something that you find offensive, try your best to find a way to express how you feel, even if you think that you shouldn’t feel that way. Both sensitivity and insensitivity can be occasions for insight, and, in a class like this, they’re sometimes a necessary part of the learning process.

Discussion guidelines. There are several good guidelines that have been developed for talking about sensitive and controversial topics, such as race. However, it is my intention to have each discussion section develop its own guidelines for discussion. Once this is done (on the first “discussion” day), the guidelines will be distributed in class and, for everyone’s convenience, pasted into the syllabus (in the box below) that is on the course website (see “class participation” section for more details).
Additional Information

**Availability.** I encourage you to take advantage of office hours to either discuss the course material or share your reactions to something related to the class (a movie, for example). I am also often in my office at other times and will almost always be happy to talk with you. While there is no substitute for face-to-face contact, you should also feel free to contact me via email. In fact, this is often the best way to get a quick answer to a question, usually within 24 hours. Please note that if I am not in the office, I would much rather return emails than phone calls.

**Academic honesty.** This course adheres to UIUC guidelines on academic integrity. Academic dishonesty during exams or on class assignments will not be tolerated. *If you are having problems in class, please talk with me so that we can develop a plan for you to improve your performance in the course without cheating.* Cheating and plagiarism will be penalized in accord with the penalties and procedures indicated in the University Student Code (found at: [http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/](http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/)). All students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with how the Code defines an infraction of academic integrity. For example, “every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited,” and “Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part.” This is true even if the student’s words differ substantially from those of the source.

In addition to the University Code, the Department of Psychology also has the following guidelines regarding academic integrity. If academic dishonesty of any sort is evident, be assured that both the instructor and the teaching assistant will take appropriate action.

- A student “suspected” by an instructor or a proctor of cheating in an examination is considered to have cheated. Students have a responsibility to avoid any behavior that, however innocent, may look suspicious to a reasonable observer.
- Cheating and all other forms of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarizing a paper, are considered by the Department of Psychology as grounds for expulsion from the University.

**Learning disabilities.** If you have a diagnosed condition or disability that causes difficulty with learning in the classroom, completing assignments as described, or taking examinations, please see me as soon as possible and provide documentation if it is available. I will do whatever I can to accommodate your legitimate needs, which should be documented by the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES, [http://www.disability.uiuc.edu/](http://www.disability.uiuc.edu/)). According to University policy, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor of any special needs. All information and documentation of disability will be kept strictly confidential.
Course Requirements

**Class participation** (50 points)

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class. All or part of selected Thursdays will be devoted to class discussion of the readings and the ideas and issues raised by the different authors. The teaching assistant and I will decide on the structure of the discussion on any given day and we will use a variety of different methods to help everyone engage with the material. In addition, I have tried to select readings and films that are engaging, stimulating, and, when possible, relevant to your own life experience (one way that this course has evolved over the past few years is that I have gradually shifted away from empirical readings to those that are either theoretical or experiential). In fact, I would be surprised if there wasn’t at least one reading each week that either engaged you intellectually or touched you emotionally. However, the quality of the discussions and, to some extent, the quality of this course, will depend in large part on your reading and processing the assigned material prior to class and your willingness to engage with the course material in class (see section on course expectations). In fact, although it is my responsibility, as the instructor, to introduce you to the scholarship of race and ethnicity, each of you has your own unique experiences and perspectives that the rest of us can learn from.

To facilitate your preparation for the discussions, there will be six (6) mini-essays at the beginning of randomly-selected discussion days. These essays (limited to 5 minutes of writing time) will address broad themes from the readings, such that anyone who has completed the relevant reading will easily be able to earn full credit (10 points). Partial credit (5 points) will be given if there is negligible connection to the week’s assigned readings but the student is able to connect other relevant information from the course (e.g., lecture material, previous readings). Responses that fail to include any lecture or reading material will earn two (2) points for attendance, while an absence will result in no credit (0 points). All mini-essays will be graded by the discussion leader (i.e., either the course instructor or the T.A.). Since there is no way to “make-up” participation in a class discussion, there will be no opportunity to make-up a mini-essay, even if the absence is excused. However, because I am aware that students sometimes have legitimate reasons to not be in class, the lowest mini-essay will be dropped at the end of the semester, creating a total of 50 possible points for participation. Students who anticipate needing to miss more than one discussion should see me at the earliest possible opportunity.

Please note that the “class participation” grade is structured in a way that rewards attendance and preparation, not actual participation. Thus, students who actually say very little may, in some cases, earn better participation grades than students who contribute to discussions on a regular basis. This structure is deliberate. It is designed to create a discussion environment in which students talk because they want to, not because they feel they have to, as well as to minimize personality factors (e.g., shyness) in the grading process.
**Journals** (50 points)

The topics of race and ethnicity are very personal. The readings, films, and class discussions may, at times, trigger deep emotional reactions, including anger, joy, guilt, shame, and connectedness. However, by their nature, readings and films and sometimes even class discussions are about “others” and may not allow us to examine our own experiences and attitudes. Thus, the goal of the journal is to connect you to the issues discussed in this course on a more personal level.

You should make an entry in your journal (which you will upload to the Compass website) on a weekly basis for 10 weeks. You will have 11 weeks to make 10 entries (no credit will be given for the 11th entry). **All entries are due Sunday at midnight.** Please note that Compass will not accept late entries, and I will not accept journals that are not posted on compass (unless there is a system-wide problem).

Each entry should begin with an observation (a description of an event, situation, or interaction) that pertains to some aspect of the course. After the observation, provide a brief interpretation or analysis of what you observed (i.e., What did you think about it? How did it make you feel? How does it relate to something you’ve learned in the course?). As many entries as possible should come from your own experiences in class, at work, with family or friends, or somewhere else. However, you may also draw on what you read, hear on the radio, or see on television. You may also choose to occasionally reflect on class discussions or assignments, but try to use materials from outside of class as much as possible.

Both the teaching assistant and I will consider everything in the journals as confidential and will not share any of the content with anyone. Moreover, the content of your journal (that is, the specifics of what you say) will not be evaluated at any point. Instead, our “grading” of the journal entries will consist of how they are written, with an emphasis on whether or not they are consistent with the spirit of the assignment. Thus, each entry will be “graded” using the following 5-point rubric:

- **5 points:** Clearly described and relevant observation, followed by a clearly articulated analysis that includes either a cognitive (“I think…””) or an affective (“I feel…””) component.
- **4 points:** Clearly described and relevant observation, followed by an analysis that is not clearly and sufficiently articulated.
- **3 points:** Clearly described and relevant observation, followed by an analysis that does not appear to follow the spirit of the assignment
- **2 points:** Neither the observation nor the analysis follows the spirit of the assignment, but the entry is relevant to the course.
- **0 points:** Journal entry is missing

Please note that, unless the T.A. or I feel that you are not following the spirit of the assignment, we will not necessarily provide you with any kind of formal feedback, other than points – which will be posted on compass. However, (although it is not part of the evaluation) time-permitting, we will sometimes comment on the content of your entries. If you would like us to comment (or not comment!) on something in particular, please insert a parenthetical note into the entry, or if you prefer, come talk with us informally about what you’re journaling about. We don’t mind. To the contrary, we consider such conversations to be important.

For 8 of the 10 weeks, your journal topic is entirely up to you. On weeks 7 and 8, everyone’s journal entry will consist of a racial identity autobiography (week 7) and an ethnic identity autobiography (week 8). The guidelines for these two journal entries are provided on the next page.
It has been my experience that students often express ideas, thoughts, and feelings in the journals that, for one reason or another, they do not express in class. This is expected. Indeed, it is one of the reasons that I have you do them. On the other hand, many entries I read are powerful, thought-provoking reactions and interpretations that I often wish the rest of the class could also read or hear. Thus, although doing so is completely voluntary, I’d like to encourage you to make an occasional post to the compass bulletin board, especially if you’d like to get some feedback from peers.

**Racial identity autobiography (journal, week 7).** The goal of this journal entry is to explore your own racial identity. Although racial and ethnic identity are sometimes intertwined, for the purpose of this assignment, please limit your discussion to racial identity (you will have a chance to discuss ethnic identity in week 8). I am aware that this assignment may be difficult for some of you. Please feel free to discuss it with either the T.A. or me, if you get stuck or just feel like you could use some guidance. To help you get started, several suggestions are listed below. These are intended solely as suggestions. You are neither required to discuss these elements, not are you limited to them.

- When, why, and how you first became aware of your race
- Influence of skin color or other physical characteristic attributed to race on your life
- Others’ response to your skin color or other physical characteristic attributed to race
- Messages from family members about skin color or other physical characteristic...
- Family stories about your race, people of other races, or race in general
- Media and cultural messages about race
- Friendships and other relationships within and apart from your own racial group
- Participation in groups or activities centered on race or racial issues
- Experiences with racism (as victim, as perpetrator, or as both)
- What it means to you (if anything) to identify with your racial group
- What you like and don’t like about being a member of your racial group

**Ethnic identity autobiography (journal, week 8).** The goal of this journal entry is to explore your own ethnic identity. Just as you focused exclusively on racial identity in week 7, this week please limit your discussion to ethnic identity. As with the racial identity entry, I know that this assignment may be difficult for some of you. To help you get started, several suggestions are listed below, and, of course, the T.A. and I are both available for consultation. Remember, the items below are intended solely as suggestions. You are neither required to discuss these elements, not are you limited to them.

- Cultural environment in which you grew up and its effect on your ethnic identity
- Family’s primary or secondary language
- Family’s preferences for food, music, clothes, or activity
- Description of family members’ relationships with one another
- Description of values, attitudes, and rules shared by family members
- Description of the role of religion
- Description of stereotypes associated with your ethnic group
- Family stories about your ethnic group
- What it means to you (if anything) to identify with your ethnic group
- What you like and don’t like about being a member of your ethnic group
**Controversial Issues Paper** (50 points)

As in the larger community, there are many issues pertaining to race/ethnicity about which contemporary race/ethnicity scholars do not always agree. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to explore one of these topics from multiple perspectives. This project is intended for two-person teams, with each person taking the responsibility of researching one or more different perspectives (team members will then have to work out which position they ultimately want to take as a team). Team projects will receive one grade, which will be given to both students on the team. I will help you partner up (based on your interest) but you are also welcome to choose your own partners. I hope that you will take this opportunity to work with a classmate on something that is of mutual interest. However, if you have a strong preference for working alone, you may do so, with the understanding that the same criteria will be used to evaluate all papers.

Select an issue from one of the two lists below (please check with me, if you would like to write about a topic that is not listed). Then write a position paper that first fairly describes at least two contrasting perspectives, *supporting each perspective with relevant empirical studies and theoretical papers from legitimate academic or journalistic sources*. Once you have examined the issue from multiple perspectives, you should, as a team, evaluate the evidence supporting each perspective and determine which perspective has the most merit (you may also decide on a “middle” position, as long as such a position is clearly defined and supported).

You will be evaluated on both content (80%) and writing (20%), so please take care to submit work that is as error-free as possible. **The paper is due (at the beginning of class) Thursday, September 28th.** A 2-point penalty will be imposed for each school day thereafter. Papers that are more than 5 school days (a week) late will not be accepted unless arrangements are made prior to the deadline. All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced with a standard 12-pt. font and 1-inch margins. You should have a cover sheet with the course name, date, my name, and the title of the paper (please do not put your names on the cover page). You should also have a reference page, properly citing any sources that you use, including assigned readings. Finally, you should include a final page that has only the names of students who wrote the assignment. There is an 8-page length limit (papers that are shorter than 5 pages typically do not receive a good grade), which will be strictly enforced. The cover sheet, the reference page(s), and the name page are not part of the 8-page length limit.

**Methodological issues**

- Should social scientists stop using racial categories (i.e., should they stop studying race-group differences?)
- Should research of a particular culture only be conducted by individuals associated with that culture?

**Social issues**

- Is racism (or out-group prejudice) an inevitable part of multicultural society?
- Can people of color (in the U.S.) be racist?
- Should inter-racial adoption be promoted?
- Are intelligence tests racially biased?
- Should the University of Illinois use race as a consideration for admission?
- Should the University of Illinois institute a race-blind system of housing assignment?
- Should immigrants and/or minority groups strive to assimilate into the mainstream?
- Should we (as individuals and as a society) strive to be “color blind?”
**Final Project** (50 points)

Choose one of the following. All projects are due at the beginning of class Nov. 30th. Please refer to the controversial issue assignment section of the syllabus for guidelines on format, late penalties, etc. The only change is that the final project has a 10-page length limit.

**Biography.** Interview someone who is more than 30 years old (older is better) and who is of a different race or ethnicity than you. You will need to conduct research on this person’s racial/ethnic group (at least 5 sources are expected beyond assigned readings). Based on your research, the material covered in class, and your own experiences, generate 7-10 open-ended interview questions to ask the person. **Feel free to stop by to discuss your interview questions, as well as to talk about interviewing techniques in general.** Conduct the interview and write a biographical piece about the person that describes what you learned from the interview and integrates it with your research and class readings. Have the interviewee read and sign your paper (email or phone verification is also ok) before you hand it in.

**Media analysis.** Examine and analyze how television, music, movies, or print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines) represent EITHER a specific course topic (e.g., color-blindness, racial identity) or a specific non-dominant ethnic or racial group (e.g., Asian Americans) or subgroup (e.g., Asian American women). **Make sure that your analysis doesn’t just describe the media content but also integrates the content with concepts and materials covered in the course.** Finally, your analysis should also discuss the implications of what you find. Please follow the following guidelines, which differ according to the source.

1. **Television.** You should select one television program and analyze at least 7 different episodes of that program. This means that if you choose to analyze Star Trek TNG, your analysis should refer to at least 7 different Star Trek TNG episodes. Although the omission of ethnic and racial minority individuals from television is itself a problem, for the purposes of this assignment, episodes that don’t portray the group you chose (e.g., Romulans) should not be included.

2. **Music.** You should select a single performer (either individual or group) and analyze at least 7 different songs, taken from at least 2 different albums. As with television, songs that do not refer to the topic or group you chose may not be included (implicit references are fine, of course).

3. **Movies.** You should pick either a specific director (e.g., Spike Lee, John Singleton), a specific writer (original screenplays only), or a specific franchise (e.g., Star Trek, Harry Potter) and watch at least three films. Again, films that do not have prominent characters (i.e., on screen for at least 15 minutes) from the group you selected should not be included. If you select films that do not meet the above criteria, your assignment will be returned without a grade (there can be nothing learned by comparing apples and oranges).

4. **Print Media.** You should pick a narrowly-defined media source (e.g., New York Times business section, rather than the New York Times) and analyze at least 7 different articles from at least 3 different editions of that source. If you like, you may focus on advertisements rather than articles. If you do, you will need at least 10 advertisements. As with articles, they should come from at least 3 different editions of a single narrowly-defined source. Please note that the book store and library (as well as the internet) are good sources of archives.
**Exams** (50 points each for 100 total points)

The purpose of exams in this course is **not** to prove to me that you have the ability and motivation to memorize some specific set of facts. Rather, they are designed to provide you with the opportunity to think deeply and critically about the course materials, integrate ideas, concepts, and theories from readings and lectures, and weigh the research evidence supporting different theories. To that end, both exams will be open book/notes. That is, you will be able to use your hand-written notes from class and all assigned readings during the exam (you may **not** use photo-copied notes). The exams are cumulative in the sense that material from an earlier exam may be incorporated into a question on a later exam, but the emphasis on the second exam will be on the readings since the previous examination.

If you cannot be in class on the scheduled exam day, you must obtain permission to take a make-up exam **PRIOR** to the regularly scheduled exam date. Make-up exams without prior approval will only be given (without penalty) under extenuating circumstances, such as a death or illness, and will require documentation from the Dean’s office (a note simply stating that you were at McKinley is not sufficient). If you miss an exam for other reasons (e.g., your alarm clock broke, you could not find the room), you may be allowed to take the make-up exam within 5 days of the original exam date. However, 10 points will be automatically deducted from your score.

**Extra Credit** (TBA)

At various times during the semester, various University units may bring speakers to campus whose expertise clearly relates to this course. I will keep a lookout for such events and pass the information on to you. I also encourage all of you to let me know if you hear about something on campus that fits the above description. If I decide that a speaker (or event) is of sufficient relevance to the course, I will provide extra credit to encourage you to attend. To earn the extra credit, you will need to make an “extra” journal entry on compass (I will create these specific journal categories for each event) following the usual journal structure (e.g., an observation about what happened, followed by an analysis). Please note that although the journal entry structure is the same, each extra credit entry will be worth just one or two points. There will not be any other ways to earn extra credit in this course.
Grading

The final grade for this course will be based on the total number of points you earn on class participation, two take-home examinations, journal entries, two papers, and the final project. The assignments total to 300 points, and your grade will be calculated using the 300-point scale at the bottom of this page.

Here is the point break-down for all the course examinations and assignments. Detailed descriptions of each one are found later in the syllabus.

- Participation/Reading evaluation: 50 points
- Journals: 50 points (5 pts/ per 10 weekly entries)
- Exam 1: 50 points
- Exam 2: 50 points
- Controversial Issue paper: 50 points
- Final project: 50 points

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale – unless the optional assignment is submitted, in which case the same

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Tentative Semester Schedule

This is a tentative schedule. Modifications to the schedule may occur at any time in the semester, sometimes to accommodate guest speakers, but sometimes for other reasons. Such modifications will always be announced in class, with at least a full week’s notice. However, you are responsible for knowing about changes announced during your absence.

Week 1:
Aug. 24

Introduction

Week 2:
Aug. 29, 31

Definitions and ideologies


**Homework:** Take the test and look at the analysis on http://www.politicalcompass.org **

Week 3:
Sept. 5, 7

Research: Methodologies and ethics


Week 4:
Sept 12, 14

The past and present significance of race (film: “True Colors”)


Week 5:
Sept. 19, 21

Black racial identity


**Week 6:**

**Sept. 26, 28**

**White racial identity**


**Controversial Issue assignment due Thurs., Sept. 28**

**Week 7:**

**Oct. 3, 5**

**Biracial identity**


**Week 8:**

**Oct. 10, 12**

**Ethnic awareness, identity development, and acculturation** (film: “First Person Plural”)


**1st EXAM Thursday, October 12**

**Week 9:**

**Oct. 17, 19**

**Stereotypes and prejudice** (film: “A class Divided”)


Week 10:  
Oct. 24, 26

**The role of groups**


Week 11:  
Oct. 31, Nov. 2

**Unintentional racism** (film: “The Color of Fear”)


**LAST WEEK OF JOURNALS**

Week 12:  
Nov. 7, 9

**Intelligence and education**


Week 13:  
Nov. 14, 16

**Relationships and sexuality**


**2nd Exam, Thurs. Nov. 16th**

Week 14:  
Nov. 21, 23

THANKSGIVING VACATION
**Week 15:**

**Popular culture and sports** (film: “In Whose Honor?”).


**FINAL PROJECTS DUE Nov. 30th**

**Week 16:**

**Working for social justice**


**There is no final examination for this class!**