



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 4488F-001
Special Topics: Racial/Ethnic Inequality
Fall 2018

Wednesday, 9:30am–12:30pm, SSC 5235

Instructor: Patrick Denice

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00–4:00pm

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Course Description:

This course provides an in-depth overview of sociological understandings of race and ethnicity, with a particular focus on the institutional underpinnings of racial and ethnic inequality in the United States and Canada. The core question we seek to address is: What are the sociological origins of racial and ethnic inequality in our cities? To answer this, we begin by investigating how sociologists understand racial and ethnic distinctions. What comprises a racial or ethnic group? We then shift our attention to patterns of racial and ethnic inequality, focusing on the major institutions through which racial inequality is generated: the housing market, the labor market, schools, and prisons.

Prerequisites: Enrollment in fourth year of one of the Honors Specializations or Honors Double Major in Sociology.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisites: None.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Gain a general understanding of how race/ethnicity is studied by sociologists.
2. Critically examine some of the theoretical and empirical approaches applied to the study of race and ethnicity.
3. Analyze how institutions contribute to the creation and maintenance of racial/ethnic stratification.
4. Develop your intellectual and sociological voice as you critically engage with the course material, participate in and lead discussions with your colleagues, and write a policy or research proposal.

Required Texts:

All readings will be made available through our OWL course site.

Evaluation methods:

The requirements for this course include: class participation, short reaction papers, and a final paper. Students will also be responsible for facilitating at least two discussions over the course of the term.

1. *Class participation:* Your active participation in class discussions is crucial to your success in this class. Active participation means that you consistently ask and answer questions, reflect thoughtfully on the readings, and engage respectfully with your colleagues. Additionally, throughout the term, we will complete short, low-stakes writing exercises—some of which will be collected. These will be completed either individually or in small groups, and they are intended to help you complete the final paper assignment as well as engage more deeply with the material.
2. *Short reaction memos:* Throughout the term, you are required to submit 2 short reaction papers. Each paper should be approximately 1-2 pages in length (12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced). These are not meant to be summaries of the readings. Rather, they are your opportunity to critically engage with a particular reading or topic. You can, for example, connect a reading to a current event, draw out a common thread (i.e., argument) across a few papers related to a topic, or propose a counter-argument to a particular author by incorporating insights from other readings. The timing of these papers is largely up to the student; however, students must have turned in at least one memo by October 17th, and they must have turned in both by November 7th.
3. *Facilitating discussions:* All students will lead at least 2 discussions over the course of the quarter. More information will be given on the first day of class, but in general discussion leaders have the following 3 responsibilities:
 - a. Provide a clear and concise summary and critical analysis of the assigned reading(s). Identify the authors' argument and the evidence used to support that argument, evaluate the effectiveness of the argument, and discuss what you learned from the reading(s).
 - b. Highlight the ways in which the day's reading material fits (or doesn't fit) with material we've already covered.
 - c. Guide discussion among your colleagues through questions. I will provide an initial bank of discussion questions that will be relevant to almost all readings we cover throughout the term. You are welcome to draw on these as a starting point, and you should also develop additional questions specific to the day's readings.
4. *Final paper:* Students' final papers will take the form of either a research proposal or a policy proposal. Both options must do the following: identify a specific area of racial/ethnic inequality as well as its implications, and suggest possible explanations (mechanisms) for this inequality. For those writing a research proposal, students will then develop a strategy for analyzing the inequality identified. For those writing a policy proposal, students will suggest and critically evaluate 1 or 2 policies that might alleviate the problem. The paper should be approximately 10-12 pages in length (12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced). More detailed information will be provided early in the term.

A note about attendance: Because you cannot participate and actively engage with the materials and your colleagues if you are not here, in order to receive a passing grade students are expected to attend at least 80% of the class meetings for this course. This requirement will only be waived in exceptional circumstances with documentation. While attendance is not an explicit part of the evaluation breakdown (see below), your will see your final grade lowered if you miss an excessive number of class sessions. Please inform me as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a class for medial or personal reasons.

Evaluation Breakdown:

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|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Class participation | 10% |
| 2. Short reaction memos | 20% |
| 3. Facilitating discussions | 30% |
| 4. Final paper | 40% |

How to Contact Me:

I can be reached via email at pdenice@uwo.ca. Students are also encouraged to come to office hours, to set up an appointment, or to approach me before or after class.

How to Get Important Information:

You will find course content and announcements posted to our OWL course website. I will also announce any upcoming deadlines or changes to the course schedule in class.

Important Policies

Assignment Deadlines:

Students must submit their assignments by the date and time stated in the course outline and on the OWL website. Late work will not be accepted, except in the event of a documented medical or family emergency. If a student anticipates an issue with an assignment, they are recommended to speak to the professor as early as possible to make alternative arrangements.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

I encourage you to take notes without a computer if you are able. If you need a laptop to take notes during class, please refrain from browsing the internet, texting, or going on social

networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Students who disrupt their colleagues' learning through the use of their laptop or tablet will be told to put away their device, and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are silenced and put away at the beginning of class.

Recording Devices:

Recording devices may not be used in this class. Some of the topics we discuss may be of a sensitive nature. In order to cultivate an atmosphere in the classroom where we all feel comfortable sharing our ideas, questions, and personal stories or experiences, we need to be free from worry about being recorded. If you require a recording device for medical, accessibility, or other reasons, please see me.

Lectures and Other Course Materials:

Any materials created by the instructor (e.g., notes, handouts, summaries, slide decks, etc.) are protected by copyright law and may not be copied or distributed in any form without the explicit permission of the instructor. Any non-authorized uses of these materials constitute an academic offence.

Scholastic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Accommodation for Medical Illness:

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html.

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2111, x82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html.

Mental Health:

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help. Here are some resources:

On-campus resources:

Psychological Services
WSSB Room 4100
519-661-3031
Mon-Fri, 8:30am-4:00pm

Wellness Education Centre
UCC Room 76
519-661-2111, x87127
Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm

Peer Support Centre
UCC Room 256
Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm

Student Health Services (SHS)
UCC Room 11
Mon-Thu, 9am-7pm; Fri 9am-4:30pm

Off-campus resources:

Good2Talk, 24/7 phone support	1-866-925-5454
First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line	1-855-242-3310
MentalHealthHelpLine.ca	1-866-531-2600
DrugandAlcoholHelpline.ca	1-800-565-8603
ProblemGamblingHelpine.ca	1-888-230-3505
LGBT Youthline	1-800-268-9688
ReachOut247.ca	519-433-2023; 866-933-2023

Course Schedule and Readings

Please note: Readings should be completed prior to class on the date listed. This outline is subject to change over the course of the term in order to meet the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced in class and/or through our OWL course website.

Part I: Sociological Understandings of Race and Ethnicity

Sept. 12 – Getting started

- No readings due

Sept. 19 – What is race? What is ethnicity?

- Yetman, *Majority and Minority*, ch. 1 (pp. 1-20)
- Satzewich and Liodakis, “Race” and Ethnicity in Canada, ch. 1 (pp. 1-29)
- Underhill, “Parenting During Ferguson: Making Sense of White Parents’ Silence”

Sept. 26 – Prejudice, racism, and racial attitudes

- Satzewich and Liodakis, “Race” and Ethnicity in Canada, ch. 2 (pp. 30-60)
- Fox and Guglielmo, “Defining America’s Racial Boundaries”
- Gannon, “Race Is a Social Construct, Scientists Argue”

Oct. 3 – Introducing institutions of racial and ethnic inequality

- Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-52)
- Howard-Hassmann, “‘Canadian’ as an Ethnic Category”

Oct. 8 – Reading Week – Enjoy the break!

Part II: Institutions of Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Oct. 17 – Housing, part 1

- Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, chs. 1, 3-4 (pp. 3-14, 39-75)
- ⇒ **First short reaction memo must be submitted no later than this date via OWL**

Oct. 24 – Housing, part 2

- Fong and Wilkes, “Racial and Ethnic Residential Patterns in Canada”
- Khazan, “Being Black in America Can Be Hazardous to Your Health”

Oct. 31 – Labor market, part 1

- Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, ch. 3 (pp. 53-79)
- Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, ch. 5 (pp. 158-210)

Nov. 7 – Labor market, part 2

- Bertrand and Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?”
- Banerjee, “An Examination of Factors Affecting Perception of Workplace Discrimination”

⇒ **Second short reaction memo must be submitted no later than this date via OWL**

Nov. 14 – Schools, part 1

- Listen: *This American Life*, “The Problem We All Live With”
- Galabuzzi, “Race and the Streaming of Ontario’s Children and Youth”

Nov. 21 – Schools, part 2

- Cottom, *Lower Ed*, ch. 2 (pp. 41-68)
- Chen and Stulberg, “Racial Inequality and Race-Conscious Affirmative Action in College Admissions”

Nov. 28 – Mass incarceration

- Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, ch. 3 (pp. 97-139)
- Pager, *Marked*, ch. 5 (pp. 86-99)
- Tierney, “Prison and the Poverty Trap”

Dec. 5 – Eviction, and Wrapping up

- Desmond, “Forced Out”
 - Lacy, “Race, Privilege, and the Growing Class Divide”
 - Coates, “The Case for Reparations”
- ⇒ ***Final paper due via OWL***

Recommended Reading

This is a collection of books, articles, and films that (at least for now) just missed inclusion in our class. If you are interested in delving further into a given topic, these are good places to start. I am happy to suggest others!

Part I: Sociological Understandings of Race and Ethnicity

- Goodman, Philip. 2014. "Race in California's Prison Fire Camps for Men." *American Journal of Sociology* 120: 352–394.
- Saperstein, Aliya, and Andrew Penner. 2012. "Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 676–727.
- Frederickson, George M. 2002. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gould, Stephen Jay. 1996. *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Telles, Edward E. 2004. *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Part II: Institutions of Racial and Ethnic Inequality

- Billigham, Chase M., and Matthew O. Hung. 2016. "School Racial Composition and Parental Choice: New Evidence on the Preferences of White Parents in the United States." *Sociology of Education* 89: 99–117.
- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted*. Crown.
- Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy Denton. 1998. *American Apartheid*. Harvard University Press.
- Rosenfeld, Jake, and Meredith Kleykamp. 2012. "Organized Labor and Racial Wage Inequality in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 117: 1460–1512.
- Sharkey, Patrick. 2013. *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress toward Racial Equality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. 2014. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton University Press.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1997. *When Work Disappears*. Vintage Books.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel and Grau.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2017. "My President Was Black." *The Atlantic*, January/February issue.
- *Fruitvale Station* (film). 2013. Directed by Ryan Coogler. Starring Michael B. Jordan, Melonie Diaz, and Octavia Spencer.
- *13th* (documentary). 2016. Directed by Ava DuVernay. Starring Melina Abdullah, Michelle Alexander, and Cory Booker.