RACIAL & ETHNIC RELATIONS (SOCI 6361-01)
FALL 2017

Instructor: Dr. Salvatore Restifo
Email: salvatore.restifo@utrgv.edu
Office: ELABN 333

Class Day/Time: W 7:20PM–9:50PM
Classroom: ELABN 106
Office Hours: MW 3:00PM – 4:30PM
(And By Appointment)

Course Overview
The primary purpose of this course is to provide graduate students with broad exposure to and a broad understanding of sociological research and scholarly work centered on U.S. racial/ethnic relations. Students will consider diverse theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to the study of race/ethnicity and examine key patterns, processes, and dynamics linked to racial/ethnic stratification. Specific topics to be addressed include: poverty, prejudice, segregation, assimilation, phenotype, identity construction, and intersectionality—among others. This course should stimulate students’ critical thinking and encourage healthy academic debate. Moreover, students should walk away from this course with sharper discussion and writing skills beneficial for both academic and professional career development.

Course Learning Objectives
1. Identify, apply, and critically evaluate how key concepts, theories, and research methods lend insight into understanding race/ethnic relations and stratification in U.S. society.
2. Understand and critique scholarly research investigating race/ethnic inequalities linked to poverty, prejudice, segregation, assimilation, the color line, and various other dynamics.
3. Identify, describe, and evaluate contexts and processes (local-, state-, and federal-level) that reduce, encourage, and/or reinforce race/ethnic identities, antagonisms, and stratification.
4. Develop critical thinking, discussion, and writing skills to interpret and effectively convey an in-depth understanding of topics and materials covered in this course.

Readings
• Each week students are assigned 4-5 scholarly works to read. These readings are required. Importantly, the vast majority of these works are accessible via JSTOR and the UTRGV library electronic journals catalog. A few readings, however, are not available in JSTOR or through UTRGV library resources. These works are noted in the course schedule and will be posted on Blackboard.

(Note: I occasionally provide a suggested reading here & there. Suggested readings are not required)

Degree Requirements Filled
This course serves as an elective for students pursuing a Master of Science in Sociology and can be substituted to fulfill the Social Demography core requirement for students pursuing a Master of Arts in Disaster Studies.
Course Evaluation/Requirements
In this course students are evaluated on their comprehension of the course material and their ability to convey that knowledge to me in the format outlined below. While I understand that students may desire or need a certain grade in this course, students must realize that the grade earned is a product of their own cumulative effort and understanding of course material. Grades are not given by instructors, they are earned by students.

Course evaluation will be based on the following components:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Essays (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading Class Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empirical Research Paper</td>
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<td>Or Research Proposal</td>
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<td>&amp; Book Review</td>
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Final Letter Grade

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Class Participation: This course is a graduate-level seminar. In-depth class discussion is central to developing a deeper understanding of course material and is dependent upon the active engagement of every student. As such, carefully reading the assigned materials prior to class is crucial. This will allow us to more fully engage the readings, providing a forum for both asking questions and participating in valuable intellectual exchanges.

Additionally, class attendance is mandatory. **3 (or more) absences will result in a “D” for the course.** Should you miss class, you should obtain any missed notes from a classmate. I do not provide copies of my lecture notes—no exceptions. Lastly, I expect respectful class discussion and behavior. Disrespectful or threatening behavior towards others in this class will not be tolerated.

Response Essays: Over the course of the semester students are required to complete four 1.5 - 2 page response essays that engage all the required readings for a given week. Each essay should briefly highlight the main points and core findings of each article and evaluate its strengths and potential limitations (conceptual, theoretical, and/or methodological). Students must approach this
assignment as social scientists, so the writing style should remain *objective* in tone. Response essays are due by 5:00pm the day before class.

*Response essay formatting guidelines: single-spaced; 1-inch margins; 12 point font; Times New Roman.*

**Leading Class Discussion:** Students will be paired together with a classmate and lead 2 **class sessions** together. Designated class leaders will provide a 2-2.5 page (*single-spaced*) detailed summary of the required readings for the class. Summaries must be circulated to the class via email by 5:00pm the day before class. During class time, designated leaders are responsible for posing questions (**conceptual, theoretical, and/or methodological**) and guiding basic discussion.

*Summary formatting guidelines: single-spaced; 1-inch margins; 12 point font; Times New Roman.*

**Research Presentation:** Each student will give a 15-20 minute formal PowerPoint presentation addressing their particular empirical research project or research proposal. Each presentation will be followed by a 10 minute question and answer period wherein audience members (i.e., the other students and I) will ask questions pertaining to the project/proposal and provide feedback.

Presentations must include: 1) an introduction that identifies the particular research question the project/proposal seeks to address; 2) a discussion of pertinent literature; 3) an explanation of specific hypotheses; 4) a description of the study design (i.e., data and methods); and 5) for those conducting an empirical research paper, a discussion of preliminary findings and conclusions.

**Empirical Research Paper or Research Proposal & Book Review:** The final course component offers students two possible options. Students may either: 1) write an empirical research paper; or 2) write a research proposal and complete a book review.

**Empirical Research Paper**

For the empirical research paper, students may use any research methodology with which they are comfortable. Given that this is not a course that provides extensive training in various research methodologies, you should have a strong grasp in your chosen research methodology if selecting this option. This project should be 20-25 pages in length and include a minimum of 20 references to scholarly/academic research. This paper should also follow the basic organizational structure of the scholarly works we read and discuss in class: (Introduction, Literature Review, Study Design (i.e., data & methods), Findings/Results, and Discussion/Conclusion).

The focus of your research paper must relate in some way to course material, and the particular topic of the paper should be selected in consultation with the instructor and according to your personal research interests. Paper topics must be approved by Monday, September 25 (5:00pm). Research papers are due Wednesday, December 13 by 5:00pm. **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Research Proposal & Book Review

Research proposal: Students will write the “frontend” of an empirical research paper and provide a proposed study design. In other words, research proposals will include an Introduction, detailed Literature Review, and tentative Study Design (i.e., data & methods), but exclude data collection, data analysis, and reporting of findings/results. Research proposals should be 15-20 pages in length and include a minimum of 20 references to scholarly/academic research.

The focus of your research proposal must relate in some way to course content, and the particular topic of the proposal should be selected in consultation with the instructor and according to your personal research interests. Proposal topics must be approved by Monday, September 25 (5:00pm). Research proposals are due Wednesday, December 13 by 5:00pm. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Book Review: Students will complete a 5 page review of a relatively recent scholarly book that investigates U.S. racial/ethnic dynamics and stratification. The review will examine, consider, and critique (in detail) the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological contributions and limitations of the work selected. The instructor will provide students with a list of recent books from which to select. Book reviews are due Monday, November 13 by 5:00pm. LATE REVIEWS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Proposal/Review formatting guidelines: double-spaced; 1-inch margins; 12 point font; Times New Roman.
**Additional Course Information**

*Extra credit*: NO extra credit option will be given for this course.

*Records*: You are expected to retain all graded assignments that are returned to you for your records. I will retain all other graded assignments for one year. If you have concerns about your grade, please make them known to me before that time so that they can be resolved.

**Classroom Civility**: Please be on time to class and refrain from packing up or leaving early. Both behaviors are distracting to me and to the rest of the class. If you arrive late, please come in as quietly as possible and sit near the door. And if you *must* leave early, please inform me in advance and sit next to the door to minimize distraction. In addition, make sure to turn off all cell phones when you enter the classroom and put them away. Any student text messaging during class will be asked to leave. Lastly, use of laptops to take notes is permitted. However, should it become a distraction I will not allow the continued use of laptops for anyone during class time.

**University Policies and Student Services**

*Disability Statement*: Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. **Brownsville Campus**: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. **Edinburg Campus**: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**Mandatory Course Evaluation Period**: Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available: Nov. 15 – Dec. 6 for full fall semester courses.

**Academic/Scholastic Dishonesty**: As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in academic/scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Academic/scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Given that academic/scholastic dishonesty harms the individual as well as the integrity of the University, policies on academic/scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). Ignorance of these rules, regulations, and guidelines is never considered an “excuse” for engaging in academic/scholastic dishonesty. **All academic/scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.**
Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence: In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

Sources for Additional Student Assistance

Learning Center
Main Office: Learning Assistance Center (ELCTR), 100
Web site: http://www.utrgv.edu/tutoring/
Phone: 956-665-2585

Writing Center
Main Office: Student Academic Center (ESTAC), 3.119
Phone: 956-665-2538
**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

Note: I may occasionally change the syllabus as circumstances warrant.

**Week 1 (Aug 30)**
Course Overview & Organization

**Week 2 (Sep 6)**
**Topic: Racial/Ethnic Boundaries & Formation**


**Week 3 (Sep 13)**
**Topic: Adaptation & Incorporation**


**Week 4 (Sep 20)**
**Topic: Race, Class & Discrimination**


**Week 5 (Sep 27)**

**Topic: Identity, the Color Line & Racial Fluidity**


**Week 6 (Oct 4)**

**Topic: Labor & Labor Markets**


**Week 7 (Oct 11)**
**Topic: Housing & Residential/Spatial Segregation**


**Week 8 (Oct 18)**
**Topic: Diversity & Intersectionalities**


Week 9 (Oct 25)
Topic: Attitudes, Perceptions & Prejudice (Part I)


Week 10 (Nov 1)
Topic: Attitudes, Perceptions & Prejudice (Part II)


Week 11 (Nov 8)
Topic: Law, Politics & Crime


**Week 12 (Nov 15)**
**Topic: Data, Measurement, & Approaches to Inquiry**


**Week 13 (Nov 22)**
No Class: *Work Day*

**Week 14 (Nov 29)**
Research Presentations

**Week 15 (Dec 6)**
Research Presentations

**Week 16 (Dec 13)**
Wednesday, December 13: *Empirical Research Papers and Research Proposals due by 5:00pm.*