

ISS2937: Social Science Honors Seminar – Race in the U.S.
Section 01: Tuesday 2:15 – 5:00 p.m., Bellamy 0517

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Harker Tillman
Office: Bellamy 612
Office Hours: 9:30-10:30 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday, and by appointment

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*All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people like Us, are We
And everyone else is They.
... if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by looking on We
As only a sort of They.
-- Rudyard Kipling, 1926*

This honors seminar is intended to introduce students to the sociology of race relations. Sociologists argue that discrimination, prejudice and inter-group interaction are all heavily influenced by social factors. In this seminar we will explore the issue of contemporary racial inequality and the social factors that influence relations between and among different ethnic and racial groups in our country. Because this is an honors seminar, I will **not** routinely lecture. Instead, the seminar will consist of class discussions, which includes **your** reactions to the readings and other course material. The success of the seminar depends on your active participation; with your involvement, this class will be a great learning experience for you and fun for us all.

Course Objectives:

The course has been designed to achieve several specific objectives:

- (1) to provide you with information about trends and patterns of racial inequality in the U.S. today;
- (2) to explore explanations for continuing racial inequality;
- (3) to develop analytical and communication skills that will enable you to examine and assess divergent ideas and perspectives on racial issues.

Contacting Me:

The quickest way to contact me is through email at, ktillman@fsu.edu. Also, feel free to come to my office hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30-10:30 a.m. If these times conflict with your schedule, I am more than willing to arrange another time during which to meet. You may come to ask specific questions or to just discuss issues. I will also be briefly available to you before and after class meetings. I try to be in the classroom approximately 10 minutes before class, and will also have a few minutes to talk after class.

Blackboard Support:

This course is supported by Blackboard, which allows for faster communication between course members. Please check Blackboard daily for course updates and announcements. Please remember that all email sent using the Blackboard course site will be received by all students in the class, as

well as myself. Therefore, *please refrain from sending emails through the course Blackboard site unless they are directly related to the class.*

You will also be able to download many of the required readings, the syllabus and assignment instructions from the course Blackboard site.

Required Texts and Readings:

The reading assignments are taken from three books that you will need to purchase (see below), as well as a variety of articles and book chapters to which I will provide you access. The books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore and Bill's Bookstore. You may also be able to find used copies online at vendors such as Amazon.com (just make sure you get the correct editions, and order them soon!). You will be able to find the articles and book chapters on the BlackBoard course website, located in the "Readings" folder.

Required Books:

1. Cose, Ellis (2003). *The Envy of the World: On Being A Black Man in America*. New York: Washington Square Press.
2. Pattillo-McCoy, Mary (2000). *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
3. Steinberg, Stephen (2001). *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Optional Book: We'll be reading a substantial chunk (but not the majority) of this book. It will be available on Blackboard if you don't wish to purchase it. You can, however, obtain a used copy off of Amazon.com (or similar sites) for around \$5-\$6 and save the trouble of reading it on-line or printing off 100 pages of pdf file. I also think the whole book is worth the read!

1. Kozol, Jonathan (2005). *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Course Rules:

1. Treat everyone in the class with respect, regardless of their opinions or beliefs.
2. We start and end class on time. ***Do not interrupt class by coming in late.*** Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class.
3. Attend regularly and ***be prepared.*** Read all assignments for the class period assigned.
4. Turn off (or mute) pagers and cell phones during class.
5. ***Hand in assignments in class at the beginning of the class*** for which they were assigned.
6. Check your official FSU email account and the course Black Board page regularly. ***I will not send any email messages to accounts that are not official FSU email accounts.***

Course Requirements:

1. Reading Questions.....10%
2. 6 Short Summary/Reaction Papers (max. of 3 pages each).....60%
3. Final Research Paper (max.7 pages).....25%
4. Class Participation and Professionalism.....5%

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned.

Any assignment handed in more than 5 minutes past the start of the class period will be considered late and will incur a penalty. If you know that you will not make a class during which there is an assignment due, please let me know ahead of time. You may contact me in person, by phone, or by email. This course has *no “extra credit”* assignments.

Missing work is not sufficient reason for grade of Incomplete (I). I’s will not be given except under extreme circumstances, at the instructor’s discretion. College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course at the time the incomplete is given.

Readings and Reading Questions: You are required to **read all of the assigned book chapters or articles before coming to class** since they are the basis of both our class discussions and your short summary/reaction papers. Although the summary/reaction papers are not due every week, I expect that you will do the reading assigned for each class period, even when a paper is not due. Be aware that I will ask questions about the readings in class.

You will also be required to submit **thoughtful questions** that you had about the assigned readings. Your question may be about anything pertaining to the reading, including some aspect of the author’s argument that you found confusing, terms or concepts that you did not understand, some aspect of the research that you are uncertain about, or additional issues you feel the author left unanswered. I will collect your **typed** questions at the **beginning of each class** and we will try as a group to answer them. These questions are an important thinking exercise and will be the basis of our discussions. Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to **submit at least 10 questions (one of which MUST be for readings on Tuesday, November 25th)**. You may choose which days to submit a question, but may receive credit for only one submission per class meeting. Reading questions account for 10% of your final course grade (1% each).

Short Summary/Reaction Papers: Over the semester, you will write **6 double-spaced, typed papers** (11 or 12 point font!) on the course readings. **Do not exceed 3 pages** for each of these papers. These short papers will consist of a 1-2 page **summary** of the main concepts and arguments that have been discussed in each identified set of readings (include definitions of key concepts and a brief discussion of the main arguments and/or findings), as well as a 1-2 page **reaction** to the readings (include a brief discussion of what you think are the strengths and limitations of the works we have read).

I will collect the papers at the beginning of the class and return them with detailed comments the following week. I will evaluate these papers with letter grades ranging from an A to an F.

- A = the paper is particularly thoughtful, insightful, articulate, and well-written.
- B = a solid essay, but has some writing errors or is a bit more difficult to follow.
- C = a satisfactory, but somewhat weak paper (logically or stylistically).
- D = a paper lacking in preparation, focus, development or an overly short or long paper.
- F = a paper that clearly indicates you did not do the reading.

I strongly advise that you ***reread your papers*** several times before submitting them and ***use spell-check and grammar check***. While the paper's content is the most important criteria for grading, college level writing is also expected. ***Poorly written papers or papers with multiple spelling and grammar errors will receive grade reductions***. Be sure to carefully read over my comments on these papers because they are intended to help you improve your writing, organization, and thinking. ***I will look for improvement on these papers over the semester***. The papers count towards 60% of your final grade (10% each).

Some questions to think about when writing your summary/reaction papers:

1. What are the main issues/themes discussed in the readings throughout this section? Clearly identify these issues/themes. Do you think these are important issues for furthering our understanding of racial inequality in the U.S.? Explain why.
2. What are each of the authors' main arguments and/or findings? What methods are used to arrive at these arguments/findings (use of historical records, Census data, interviews, personal experiences, etc.)?
3. Do you "buy" the authors' arguments? Why or why not? If there are readings with competing arguments, which do you agree with more? Why? What are the strengths and limitations of the readings?
4. What existing questions remain unanswered? What new questions have been raised?

For each reaction paper, you will ***turn in both a hard copy and an electronic copy*** (through the appropriate turnitin icon found on the BlackBoard website). The electronic version is due BEFORE class.

Final Research Project: You will also write a final research paper, which should be ***no longer than 7 pages***. This paper should be double-spaced, typed in 11 or 12 point font. You should include a separate title page with your name and the course information (this page does not count towards the 7 pages). The purpose of this project is for you to get first-hand experience conducting sociological research. Throughout the semester we will read research that uses a variety of different methods to study race relations, including surveys, interviews, participant observation, analysis of Census (or other quantitative) data, and archival research. You will choose one of these methods to study a topic of your choice that is related to race relations, but I require that you speak with me about your intended topic first. ***You MUST see me about your paper topic on or before Tuesday, Oct. 28th***. Additionally, you will all ***present a no longer than 5 minute discussion*** of your research during the last 2 days of class.

The paper is ***due on Tuesday, December 2nd*** and counts towards 25% of your final course grade. You will ***turn in both a hard copy and an electronic copy*** (through the appropriate turnitin icon found on the BlackBoard website). The electronic version is due BEFORE class.

Your research papers should include the following elements:

1. A clear introduction to your paper, consisting of a discussion of what topic you studied and why you think this is an important topic for sociological research.
2. A clearly stated research question or hypothesis. Also include a discussion of the method of data collection you have used to examine your question or hypothesis.
3. A discussion of the main findings of your research as they relate to your original question or hypothesis. Also indicate whether or not your expectations were supported by the data.
4. A conclusion to the paper, including a brief discussion of what you learned in the process of conducting the research and where you think research on this topic needs to go next.

Class Attendance: The success of small seminar-format classes rests largely on the participation of the students. I will take attendance during *every* class session. Students who have **more than 3 unexcused absences during the semester will be downgraded**; students who have **more than 5 unexcused absences during the semester will receive a failing grade for the course**.

Only the following absences are eligible to be excused:

- 1) **Religious holidays** as specified in FSU policy. *Students who miss class due to observance of religious holidays must speak with me in advance*;
- 2) **Representing FSU at official functions**, including intercollegiate club or varsity sports events;
- 3) **Verified emergencies and/or medical illness**. Medical illnesses are serious in nature and require continued treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. *Colds and fatigue do not qualify as medical illnesses. If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, it is imperative that you alert me to this at the beginning of class.*

Documentation is required for an absence to be excused. Please provide a copy of the documentation to me and keep a copy for your own records. While I will not penalize you for excused absences, you remain responsible for all content missed, including assignments, knowledge, or skills that were covered in the missed class(es).

Classroom Behavior: **Professional classroom behavior is necessary** to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means no cell phones, talking out of turn, reading newspapers, etc. during class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls, keep it on vibrate. Entering and leaving is distracting to your instructor and other students. Therefore, you need to be on time for class and stay until the end. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and be as quiet as possible. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade (see below).

Class discussions of the issues we study can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions must be scholarly and respectful of all members of the class (including me). Students who are repeatedly disrespectful may be removed from class and may receive an F for the course.

(1) **Scholarly comments are:** Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; related to the class and course material; advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than only personal beliefs; and are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

(2) **Unacceptable behaviors in the classroom are:** (a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (d) Using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students, and being physically aggressive. (e) Ignoring your instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the classroom. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to cease and desist and may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.

Academic Honor Code:

The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. [<http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>].

All work (reading questions, reaction papers, final research papers) must be in accordance with the University Honor Code. Please read the provisions of the Honor Code and make sure that you understand them.

Plagiarism caution: Any uses of others' copyrighted materials without proper acknowledgement is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution. To this end, please be scrupulous in using the work of others by giving full and appropriate credit to the sources and materials that you use. Please use care when taking words and phrases from others. As a general rule, if you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, you should place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number. If you are paraphrasing or broadly referring to someone else's ideas, be sure to provide me with the author's name and the year of the publication from which you obtained the information. Be a stickler about citing; cite more rather than less; cite early rather than late.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any confirmed instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in an F grade for this course and will also be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication. If you have any questions regarding the Code and how it specifically pertains to your work, please ask me.

Americans With Disabilities Act Statement:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. *This should be done during the first week of class.*

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center,
Dean of Students, 08 Kellum Hall, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4400,
(850) 644-9566 (voice), (850) 644-8504 (TDD),
SDRC@admin.fsu.edu,
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

Other On-Campus Resources:

Please be aware that the following resources are available to you on campus to help you improve your learning and writing skills.

1. The Reading and Writing Center, provides tutoring and editing services of students at all levels of study - located in 222C Williams Building, 644-6495 <http://writing.fsu.edu/rwc/>
2. Adult Learning Evaluation Center (ALEC), Provides evaluation and support for students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders - located 214 Stone Building, 644-3611. <http://www.epls.fsu.edu/alec/>

Syllabus Change Policy:

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Course Outline and Schedule of Reading and Written Assignments:

You are expected to complete the reading assignments in advance of the class for which they are assigned. You are responsible for the material covered in the reading assignments, whether it is discussed in class or not. [BB = Reading found on Blackboard course webpage]

I. INTRODUCTION:

Tuesday August 26 Introduction to the Course

What is Sociology? Why is studying race relations from a sociological perspective important? What is race? What is ethnicity?

II. THE MEANING OF RACE AND RACIAL IDENTITY:

Tuesday Sept 2

What is “Race”? Is Race “Real”?

Is race socially determined, biologically determined, or both? Has the concept of “race” changed over time in the U.S.? How are our notions of race different than those found in other cultures?

1. BB, Morning, “Race” (pp. 44-46)

Articles Found at <http://raceandgenomics.ssrc.org>

2. Leroi, “A Family Tree in Every Gene” (pp. 1-4)

3. Lewontin, “Confusion About Human Races” (pp. 1-3)

4. Morning, “On Distinction” (pp. 1-5)

***feel free to read the other articles found on this website too!*

5. BB, Omi & Winant, “Racial Formations” (pp. 9-17)

6. BB, Zinn “Drawing the Color Line” (pp. 47-59)

7. BB, Rodriguez & Cordero-Guzman, “Placing Race in Context” (pp. 59-65)

Tuesday Sept 9

Where Do People of Mixed Race Fit? Can Whites Be “Ethnic”?

How is the experience of “race” different for mixed-race individuals? How has the rise of mixed-race children and families challenged our notions of race and ethnicity? How is the experience of “race” different for Whites and people of color? What is “symbolic ethnicity”? What is “white privilege”?

1. BB, Gaskins, “What Are You?: Voices of Mixed-Race Young People”, (pp. 4-10, 46-77)
2. BB, da Costa, “Mixing it up” (pp. 15-16)
3. BB, Waters “Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?” (pp. 96-108)
4. BB, McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (pp. 119-126)

****First Summary/Reaction Paper Due**** (discuss the meaning of “race”)

Tuesday Sept 16

Defining Racism in a “Color Blind” Nation

What is racism? How is it different from prejudice or discrimination? Can only Whites be racist? Are we becoming a “color blind” society? What functions might the notion of “color blindness” serve for the dominant group? What is the state of racial attitudes at the beginning of the 21st century?

1. BB, Tatum, Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And other conversations about race. (pp. 3-17)
2. BB, Gallagher, “Color Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line” (pp. 575-588)
3. BB, Bobo, “Racial Attitudes and Relations at the Close of the 20th Century” (pp. 264-295)

****Second Summary/Reaction Paper Due**** (Discuss Waters, McIntosh & Gallagher)

III. RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY:

Background Information:

Tuesday Sept 23

Current Social/Economic Status of Majority and Minority Groups in U.S.

What are the major racial/ethnic groups found in the United States today?
What are the relative social and economic positions of these different groups?

1. BB, Blank, “An Overview of Trends in Social and Economic Wellbeing, by Race” (p. 34-47)
2. BB, Carr, “Black death, white death” (p. 43)
3. BB, Native American Statistics (pp. 53-55)
4. “The Model Minority Image,” found at <http://www.asian-nation.org/model-minority.shtml>
5. TBA

Explanations: The Significance of Social Class:

Tuesday Sept 30

The Origins of Ethnic “Diversity” in the U.S. & American Ethnic Myths

How did the initial experiences of Blacks, Native Americans and Hispanics differ from those of European immigrants? How has “New Darwinism” been used to explain why some minority groups have become successful in the US while others have not? What does Steinberg see as the main reason for their success?

1. Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth* (pp. 3-43 & pp. 77-105)

Tuesday Oct 7

Social Class and Ethnic Myths

What is the “Culture of Poverty” thesis and how has it been used to explain the continuing disadvantage of some minority groups? How have cultural explanations been carried into today’s discussions of racial inequality? How have class explanations (e.g. Wilson) been used in recent discussions of racial inequality? Fundamentally, what does Steinberg see as the reasons for continuing racial/ethnic inequality?

1. Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth* (pp. 106-127 & pp. 263-302)

****Third Summary/Reaction Paper Due** (discuss Steinberg book)**

Explanations: The “Emerging” Significance of Minority Culture (above and beyond class):

Tuesday Oct 14

Black Men and “Black” Culture

Why does Cose talk about Black men as “a group apart?” According to Cose, how have prejudice and discrimination in American society led to the development of a destructive culture among black men? How has this “black male” culture led to lower academic performance?

1. Cose, *The Envy of the World: On Being a Black Man in America*, (pp. 1-16 & pp. 38-98)

Tuesday Oct 21

Black Men and “Black” Culture Continued

According to Cose, how has this “black male” culture led to higher criminal activity? What has happened to male-female relationships in the Black community? What suggestions does he offer to help counter the effects of this “black male” culture?

1. Cose, *The Envy of the World: On Being a Black Man in America*, (pp. 99-163)

****Fourth Summary/Reaction Paper Due** (discuss Cose book)**

Explanations: The Continuing Significance of Discrimination (selected issues)?:

Tuesday Oct 28

Individual vs. Institutional Discrimination

How prevalent is discrimination today? How does discrimination affect the employment and housing opportunities of minorities in the U.S.? What is the difference between individual and institutional discrimination?

1. BB, Feagin, “The Continuing Significance of Racism” (p. 214-223)
2. BB, Herring, “is job discrimination dead?” (p. 13-19)
3. BB, Massey, “Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Conditions in U.S. Metropolitan Areas” (p. 224-246)
4. BB, Kozol, “The Shame of the Nation” (pp. 1-37)

****Final paper topic must be approved by today****

Tuesday Nov 4

Segregation and the System of Education

How does the structure of the American educational system affect the educational opportunities and outcomes of minority students? How might these opportunities/outcomes influence later socio-economic success?

1. BB, Kozol, “The Shame of the Nation” (pp. 39-62, 161-186, 237-263, 310-317 & Tables on pp. 321-325)

****Fifth Summary/Reaction Paper Due** (discuss discrimination)**

Explanations: The Intersection of Social Class, Race, and Place?:

Tuesday Nov 11

The Growing Minority Middle Class

How did Patillo-McCoy gather the information for her book? Why does she focus on the black middle class? Where, historically (and today) has the black middle class lived? When was Groveland first developed? By whom was it originally settled? How has Groveland changed over time? Why?

1. Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences* (Intro through Ch. 3, pp. 1-68)

****NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY!!****

Tuesday Nov 18

The Importance of Place and Challenges for the Black Middle Class

In what ways do the experiences of the Black middle class citizens of Groveland differ from the experiences of most White middle class citizens? What conclusions does Patillo-McCoy draw from her interviews? Could these findings be extended to other minority groups in the U.S.?

1. Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences* (pp.68-145 & pp. 201-218)

****Sixth Summary/Reaction Paper Due** (discuss Pattillo-McCoy)**

Explanations: The Significance of (Post-Civil Rights Era) “Cultural Liberalism”?:

Tuesday Nov 25

Liberal Bias and “Collective Entitlement” (and Presentations)

According to Steele, in what ways is liberal bias in favor of minorities often based on assumptions of their inferiority? How has a movement towards “collective entitlement” been detrimental to the advancement of racial/ethnic minorities?

1. **BB, Steele, A Dream Deferred: The Second Betrayal of Black Freedom in America, (pp. 155-185)**

****Required Reading question due****
****PRESENTATIONS****

Tuesday Dec 2

Course Wrap-Up (and Presentations)

Where will the future take us? What are some ways that we can help to open up cross-racial discourse?

2. **BB, Tatum, pp 193-220**

****FINAL PROJECTS DUE!!!****
****PRESENTATIONS****