

**Racial and Cultural Minorities -- Sociology 331**  
**Spring 2008**

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**Text:** Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity. Edited by Charles Gallagher. 2007 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). McGraw Hill  
& other assigned readings available via class web site

**I. Course Description** — The U.S. population is becoming increasingly diverse. By mid-century, racial and ethnic minority groups cumulatively will become the majority of the nation's population, as has already occurred in several states, most notably California and Texas, and will fairly soon in Maryland. Although racism and discrimination have abated when viewed from an historical perspective, they persist in often more subtle forms in the contemporary U.S., a society that is rife with ethnic and racial divisions. This course will examine these topics by surveying sociological work on the major U.S. racial and ethnic minority groups as well as a range of pressing current issues in intergroup relations, such as prejudice and discrimination, criminal justice, immigration, work, residential segregation, the media, group identity and boundary changes, and building a non-racist world.

In terms of format, the class will be a mix of lectures combined with student-led discussion as well as larger class discussion to create a structured but also interactive learning experience. An important ideal in this course is to facilitate the emergence of a diversity of views as well as spirited, respectful exchanges among class members on given topics, informed by sociological concepts and research. I will bring in news reports on contemporary issues for examples and discussion, and I encourage you to do the same. Become an informed citizen!

**II. Objectives** – The University's "highest purpose is to empower our students with the knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to life-long learning, gainful employment, and *active citizenship in a democratic society and interdependent world*" (*SU Catalogue, 2007-2008*, pg. 6). Moreover, the university's values include "diversity" (global, society, and individual differences and equal opportunity) and "civic engagement," (seeking to improve the quality of life for area residents). Diversity is a core focus of this class and civic engagement is reinforced by developing your ability to understand and discuss some of the key facets of racial and ethnic relations, a topic of central importance to our society and throughout the world. Further, you will be encouraged to consider not only how the topic affects your life, but also how you can make a positive contribution to racial and ethnic relations. This will involve utilizing a *sociological perspective* to look beyond surface appearances and "common sense" explanations to gain a deeper understanding and expand your critical thinking skills. All of this is useful in employment settings, particularly as diversity grows.

**III. Coursework Requirements (read carefully!)**

**A. 3 Readings Discussion Papers (RDP's)** --- Write on the readings for 3 topics, each from a different test-unit. The papers are generally due the second day we are scheduled to discuss the topic, unless I announce otherwise.

**Format (Length 6-7 pages):** I prefer typed and double-spaced, but legibly hand-written is OK.

**1. Main Ideas** – Length should be 5-6 pages. Elaborate on several details or a key idea or two from each assigned reading for a given topic (from at least 4 readings, when more than 4 are assigned). Be selective and focus on specific information & ideas you found interesting in each reading; do not provide a general overview of it. Do not use quotes extensively; use your own words. You must provide at least 1 citation of an assigned rdg. per paragraph i.e., list author and page #(s) in parentheses -- must if using a quote – e.g., (Mills, 27-28) ]. You do not have to devote equal space to each reading; you can be brief on some and longer on others-- but you must get into a good bit of detail on at least 2 of the readings.

**Also, you must:**

**a. Draw (& briefly explain) at least 1 connection or link between 2 or more readings** (e.g., by comparison or contrast); preferably draw more than 1 connection. [Integration of materials]

**b. Provide 1 example (not in the assigned readings)** of some idea or issue from rdgs.; the example can be hypothetical, or real world'ish. [Application of ideas]

**2. Reaction and Critique** – Length should be 1 or more. Use a heading "Reactions & Critique" to indicate where you are starting this section, which should be a brief reaction to and evaluation of the readings and issues raised in them. You do not have to address each reading or issue, but rather only those you would most like to comment upon. What thoughts or feelings do they provoke in you? Did you agree/disagree, and why? I want some thoughtful reflection and critique of the readings and the issues they raise.

**B. Application Paper (Due May 7 or turn in any time before, Length 4-6 pages):** The basic idea is to apply something from class to the real world, based on a topic (or part of one) from any of those covered in class. Find two articles on the same issue(s) – at least one article must be from a scholarly publication (research journal) and one may be from popular press.

**Format:**

**First, start the paper by listing your topic, and then briefly summarize each article AND discuss some specific information from each article and also. (3-4 pages)**

**Second, reflect on how this topic has affected you and/or may affect you in the future. In each of the first two sections (on articles and autobiography) tie-in / incorporate a couple things from class materials & readings (compare/contrast, react to, etc.). (1-2pages)**

**Third, briefly speculate on what you might do to make a positive contribution to racial and ethnic relations on this topic during your life in the future. (1/2 -1 page)**

**Provide a copy of your articles with your paper. [Note: I will help you with suggestions of research journals later in the term.]**

**C. Group Discussion Leading & Class Participation.** You will lead a small group discussion twice, for part of 2 classes, on 2 different topics, which should be on the same topics for which you write an RDP. When not leading I expect you to participate in group discussions, as well as be generally involved in the class. This presumes your attendance and familiarity with the readings. Basically, evidence of a good attendance and an honest effort at participation will suffice. This category will be crucial in the case of borderline grades (e.g., C+/B-).

**D. Assignments, Exercises, & Quizzes (at least 6 total).** Assignments will be brief, often based on in-class videos. I will also give a few unannounced quizzes and in-class writing exercises on the readings. They will not be difficult, but will serve to check if you are doing the readings and to stimulate discussion.

**E. Attend & briefly write about 1 African American History Cultural Event. (Length 1½-2 pages)** Briefly describe and summarize the content of the event, and then briefly relate it to something specific from class materials. You must turn it in within 3 weeks after the event.

**F. Three Tests.** There will be three exams, each covering roughly a third of the material for the term. The last exam will not be cumulative. The tests will include multiple-choice and short answer or short essay questions.

**IV. Grade Calculation & Scale:**

3 RDP's @ 25 points each	75 points (27% of total pts.)
Application Paper	25 points (9% of total pts.)
Cultural event write-up	10 points (4% of total pts.)
Group Disc. Leading & Class Participation	30 points (11% of total pts.)
Quizzes & In-Class Writing Assgmts.	30 points (11% of total pts.)
2 tests @ 35 pts. @ last test @ 40 =	110 points (39% of total pts.)
<b>Total</b>	<b>280 points</b>

**Grade Scale:**

A	90-100%	252-280 pts.
B	80-89%	224-251 pts.
C	70-79%	196-223 pts.
D	60-69%	168-195 pts.
F	59.9% & below	167 pts. & below

**Note:** You may calculate your grade at any time during the term by adding up the number of points you have earned and dividing them by the total number possible up to that point. Please see me if you have questions or concerns.

**V. Miscellaneous...**

**Extra Credit:** Up to 10 points –You do a brief write up of up to 1 extra cultural event anytime during the term related to racial and cultural minorities or inter-group relations in addition to the 1 already assigned (same format and within 3 – weeks-deadline apply).

**Make-up Policy:** I will not grant make-ups or extensions for exams and papers unless you face extraordinary circumstances (illness, family problems, etc.) or a university-scheduled activity. No make-ups for in-class assignments and quizzes.

**Active Class Participation is expected.** Small group discussion as well as class exercises/assignments are tools for facilitating student participation. These are premised on your having read or at least perused the readings. Also, during lectures please occasionally ask questions and speak up.

**Writing Help –** The Writing Center is located at Guerrieri University Center 206 (410-677-3154) directly above the Fireside Lounge.

**Tentative Schedule (subject to change, esp. web rdgs.)**

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Jan. 30, Feb 4 & 6	Background Concepts & Theories	Gallagher Rdg # 1, 3, 4, 6, 9 Web Rdg.: Dechter
Feb. 11 & 13	African Americans	Gallagher Rdg. #2 Web: Schaefer – parts of Chapters 7 & 8
Feb. 18 & 20	Hispanic or Latino/a Americans	Web: Schaefer – Chapters 9 & 10
Feb. 25 & 27	Asian Americans	Gallagher Rdg. #11 Web: Schaefer – Chapters 11 & 12
<b><u>March 3</u></b>	<b><u>Test 1</u></b>	
March 5, 10	Native Americans (American Indians)	Gallagher Rdg. #10 Web: Schaefer – Chapter 6; Alexie; Nieves
March 12	White Ethnics & others	Gallagher Rdgs. # 42 Web: Parrillo; Waters, & Dumas
<b>March 17-21</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>	
March 24 & 26	Prejudice & Discrimination	Gallagher Rdgs. #14, 17, 18, 19, 20 Web: McIntosh
March 31, April 2	Race & Residence	Gallagher Rdgs. #21 (only pp 236-248), 23, 24, 25 Web: De Sena
<b><u>April 7</u></b>	<b><u>Test 2</u></b>	
April 9, 14	Criminal Justice	Gallagher Rdgs. #22, 26, 28, 29 Web: Wilson, Saenz et al.
April 16, 21	Media	Gallagher Rdgs. # 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 Web: Uriarte(s)
April 23, 28	Work	Gallagher Rdgs. # 30, 31, 33, 34 Web: Schlosser
Note: I will add something on <u>Affirmative Action</u> , probably in this section...		
April 30	Immigration	Gallagher Rdgs. #40(?), 41, 43 Web: Massey, et al.; Meyerson, Massey
May 5, 7	Blurring boundaries & a non-racist future ?	Gallagher Rdgs. #44, 45, 46, 48 Web: Manges Douglas, Hernanedz-Leon & Zuniga
<b><u>May 7</u></b>	<b><u>Application Paper DUE, but you can turn in any time before this</u></b>	
<b><u>Final Exam (Test 3) Date &amp; Time To Be Announced (will be week of May 12-16)</u></b>		