

Course Guide

Independent
Study | in Idaho

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SOC 360

Race and Ethnicity

Lewis-Clark State College

3 Semester-Hour Credits

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2-SOC 360

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SOC 360 Race and Ethnicity

3 Semester-Hour Credits: LCSC

Welcome!

Whether you are a new or returning student, welcome to the Independent Study in Idaho (ISI) program. Below, you will find information pertinent to your course including the course description, course materials, course objectives, as well as information about assignments, exams, and grading. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ISI office for clarification before beginning your course.

Policies and Procedures

Refer to the ISI website at www.uidaho.edu/isi and select *Students* for the most current policies and procedures, including information on setting up accounts, student confidentiality, exams, proctors, transcripts, course exchanges, refunds, academic integrity, library resources, and disability support and other services.

Course Description

An introduction to the theoretical and substantive issues in the study of race and ethnicity. Students learn about the historical development of race and ethnicity as social categories and examine contemporary race and ethnic relations in the United States and other societies.

Prerequisites: None

*15 graded assignments, 3 proctored exams
Available online only.*

Students may submit 2 assignments per week; however, assignments and exams must be submitted consecutively, in the order outlined in the course. Before taking exams, students MUST wait for grades and feedback on assignments, which may take up to three weeks after date of receipt by the instructor.

ALL assignments and exams must be submitted to receive a final grade for the course.

Course Materials

Required Course Materials

- Gallagher, Charles, editor. *Rethinking the Color Line*. 6th ed., Sage, 2018. ISBN 1506394132
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau, 2015. ISBN 0812993543
- Other readings will be provided on Blackboard as needed

Supplementary Required Materials (I have listed one possible outlet to watch each film, there may be cheaper alternatives. Some libraries may have some or all of these materials available for free).

Estimated additional cost \$20.00.

- "The Target." *The Wire: Season One*, written by David Simon, directed by Clark Johnson, HBO, 2002. (Available on Amazon)
- "The Detail." *The Wire: Season One*, written by David Simon, directed by Clark Johnson, HBO, 2002. (Available on Amazon)
- *The Loving Story*. Directed by Nancy Buirski, Augusta Films, 2011. (available to rent on Amazon)
- *Get Out*, Directed by Jordan Peele, Universal Pictures, 2017. (available for purchase on Amazon)

Lesson 1

Introduction and Historical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the connection between melanin and the environment.
- Identify how ideas about race developed and shifted over time.
- Examine the link between our personal narratives and the broader “story” of race.
- Explain master statuses.
- Understand the theory of racial formation.
- Identify the outcomes of having a racialized society.

Reading Assignment

- *Rethinking the Color Line*, Reading 1, “How Our Skins Got Their Color”
- *Rethinking the Color Line*, Reading 2, “Drawing the Color Line”
- *Rethinking the Color Line*, Reading 3, “Racial Formations”
- *Rethinking the Color Line*, Reading 5, “Racialized Social System Approach to Racism” also “Seeing the Big Picture: The Social Construction of Race, 1790-2000”
- *The Meaning of Difference*, Section 1, “Framework Essay” (on Blackboard)

Important Terms

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Class Consciousness | Cultural Selection | Feudalism |
| Indentured Servant | Melanin | Natural Selection |
| Phenotype | Racial Formation | Racialization |
| Racialized Social Systems | Racism | Stereotype |

Introductory Lecture

The Classification of Living Things before the 1700s

Great Chain of Being – a classification system developed by Aristotle that grouped living and non-living things into groups based on similarity.

Each group had a “primate” or best example for the group. (for humans it was the King, for animals it was the lion or sometimes elephant)

The groups were organized in a hierarchy, from inferior to superior.

The History of Human Classification

European scholars of the 18th through early 20th centuries classified humans into a series of subspecies based on geography and features such as skin color, body size, head shape, and hair texture (phenotypic differences)

Some scholars went a step further and placed these types into a hierarchical framework in which the “white” race was considered superior to other races.

Think of the great chain of being – but this was a ranking of people – of course white got put on top that was who was making the scale.

Race as a Biological Concept

Race – in biology is defined as a subspecies, or a population of a species differing geographically, morphologically, or genetically from other populations of the same species.

This does not exist in humans because

- This is arbitrary – there is no agreement on how many differences it takes to make a race
- Differences among individuals and within a population are generally greater than the differences among populations.
- No one race has an exclusive claim to any particular form of gene or trait
- Populations are genetically “open,” meaning that genes flow between them and no fixed racial groups exist.

Human Biological Diversity

If race is not biological for humans, why do we look different from each other?

The physical characteristics of populations and individuals are a product of the interaction between genes and environments.

Genes predispose people to a particular skin color, but an individual’s skin color is also influenced by cultural and environmental factors.

Skin color is subject to great variation and is attributed to several key factors:

- the transparency or thickness of the skin
- a copper-colored pigment called carotene
- reflected color from the blood vessels
- the amount of melanin, a dark pigment, in the skin’s outer layer – primary reason

Before the mass global migrations of people during the last 500 years, dark skin color was mostly concentrated in the southern hemisphere near the equator and light color progressively increased further away.

But what about the Inuit?

I always get students who ask this question, so let’s look at the Inuit.

Live very far north, low UV radiation

Have a disadvantage for vitamin d production but make up for this by eating fish and sea mammal blubber that is very high in vitamin D

In other words, environment is important but we since we are human culture plays a role as well and in this case the cultural component is diet.

What cultural components play a role in skin color today?

Websites

- "Race Timeline." *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, PBS, http://www.pbs.org/race/003_RaceTimeline/003_00-home.htm

Films

- "The Difference Between Us." *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. California Newsreel, 2003. <https://uidaho.kanopy.com/video/race-power-illusion-0>

Written Assignment

Journal Assignment

*Please note that these instructions cover the journal for the whole semester. What you are submitting for this week is the first journal entry, the racial and/or ethnic autobiography. *

You will need to keep a journal to keep track of your thoughts/ideas/opinions about race and analysis of interactions you observe. These should be based on the readings that you are doing in class, news articles, media, interactions with peers/family, etc.

Think about the following:

- Are there recurring themes in your conversations about race?
- What do you overhear people saying about race?
- What do you see portrayed on television and/or film?
- How does this fit into or go against what you are reading in class?

You will need to write 1-2 pages per week throughout the semester (for a total of 14 entries).

The first journal entry needs to be a racial and/or ethnic autobiography.

This should include:

- What is race?
- What were the messages you heard growing up about your race? Other races?
- Do you think these messages about race are based on physical characteristics and differences assigned at birth or are filtered through cultural beliefs and learned? Explain.
- How do ideas of race impact your life?

You will need to turn in your journal once at the beginning of the semester (for the autobiography) and again at the midpoint of the semester so that the entries can be checked for appropriate progress.

This is a journal and the entries will not be graded for grammar or writing style. I will be looking for content. Do not skimp on the journal entries, the more you observe and record, the more information you will have for the final paper.

Your journal will be used to complete a five page paper at the end of the semester where you reflect upon and discuss your thoughts, observations, and conversations about race throughout the semester and how these may have changed based on information learned in the class.

In other words, go back to your original autobiography –

- How have your ideas changed? Stayed the same?
- What did you learn during the semester that you did not know before the class?

Also,

- Describe some of the highlights from the journal throughout the semester.
- Are there reoccurring themes throughout your journal?

This final paper is an academic paper and should be typed, with 12 point font. Please turn the journal entries in with the final paper.