

**EMORY UNIVERSITY**  
**SOC 389: SPECIAL TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY, SPRING 2021**  
**RACE, ETHNICITY, AND COLORISM IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**INSTRUCTOR AND CLASS CONTACT INFORMATION:**

*Course Faculty:* Dr. Angela Dixon (she/her/hers)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides a comparative study of race, ethnicity, and colorism in various societies around the world, with a particular focus on Afro-descendant populations. Although the vast majority of sociological research has focused on race within the U.S. context, a comparative lens allows us to contextualize the U.S. experience by drawing on an increasingly global literature. We will compare and contrast the ways race, ethnicity, and colorism function in different societies with a focus mostly on the Americas, although we will also engage with readings from other regions.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

No prerequisites required, but a prior course or foundation in race and ethnicity will be helpful background knowledge.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Students will:

1. Understand how race, ethnicity, and colorism are conceptualized across countries and the consequences of these conceptualizations.
2. Examine the historical origins and sociological definitions of race, ethnicity, and colorism from societies throughout the world, with a focus on the Americas and Afrodescendant populations in the United States.
3. Understand several approaches to the identification, classification, construction, and measurement of race, ethnicity, and skin color and how each approach can yield different life chances for individuals in their respective societies.
4. Identify the various theoretical perspectives and be able to apply these frameworks to analyze contemporary events in society.

**GRADING:**

- Attendance and Participation (15%)
- Perusall Weekly Responses (35%)
- Class Presentations (25%)
- Final Paper (25%)

**READINGS**

All required readings are posted on Perusall.

1. **1/26/21: Introduction and Syllabus Overview**

2. **2/2/21 Review of Definitions and Configurations**
  - Desmond, M. and M Emirbayer. 2009. "What is Racial Domination?" *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 6: 335–355.
  - Roth, W. D. 2016. "The Multiple Dimensions of Race." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39: 1310– 1338.
  
3. **2/9/21 History of Race and Ethnicity**
  - Dixon, Angela R., and Edward E. Telles. 2017. "Skin Color and Colorism: Global Research, Concepts, and Measurement." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43(1): 405–24.
  - Weiner, Melissa F. 2012. "Towards a Critical Global Race Theory: Critical Global Race Theory." *Sociology Compass* 6(4):332–50.
  
4. **2/16/21 U.S. Exceptionalism**
  - Davis, Floyd James. *Who is black?: One nation's definition*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001. Chapter 1
  - Lee, J. and F. D. Bean. 2004. "America's Changing Color Lines: Immigration, Race/Ethnicity, and Multiracial Identification." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 221–242.
  
5. **2/23/21 Latin America (Part 1)**
  - Telles, Edward E., and Christina A. Sue. 2009. "Race Mixture: Boundary Crossing in Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35(1): 129–46.
  - Edward Telles (2004) "Introduction" *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*: 1-13
  
6. **3/2/21 Latin America (Part 2)**
  - Telles, Edward, and PERLA. 2014. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. UNC Press Books., Chapter 1 & Conclusion
  - Sue, Christina A. 2013. *Land of the Cosmic Race: Race Mixture, Racism, and Blackness in Mexico*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, *Chapter 1*
  
7. **3/9/21 Europe (Part 1)**
  - Richard Alba (2005) "Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in Germany, France, and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (January): 20-49
  - Simon, Patrick. 2011. "Statistics, French Social Sciences and Ethnic and Racial Social Relations." *Revue française de sociologie* 51(5): 159–174.
  
8. **3/16/21 – NO CLASS (UNIVERSITY REST DAY)**
  
9. **3/23/21 Europe (Part 2)**
  - Small, Stephen. 2019. "Ethnicity, Race, and Black People in Europe." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Ethnicity*, ed. Steven Ratuva. Singapore: Springer Singapore, 513–533.
  - Essed, Philomena, and Isabel Hoving. 2014. "Innocence, Smug Ignorance, Resentment: An Introduction to Dutch Racism." *Thamyris/Intersecting: Place, Sex and Race* 27(1):9–29.
  
10. **3/30/21 Colorism (Part 1)**

- Hunter, Margaret L. 2011. "Buying Racial Capital: Skin-Bleaching and Cosmetic Surgery in a Globalized World." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 4(4): 142–162.
- Hordge-Freeman, Elizabeth. 2015. "What's Love Got to Do with It? Racial Stigma and Embodied Capital" in *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*. First edition. Austin, [Texas]: University of Texas Press., Chapter 1, p. 33-71

#### 11. 4/6/21 Colorism (Part 2)

- Rondilla JL, Spickard P. 2007. *Is Lighter Better? Skin-Tone Discrimination Among Asian Americans*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. p. 1-44
- Jablonski, Nina G. 2012. "Desiring Darkness" in *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color*. Berkeley: University of California Press., Chapter 14

#### 12. 4/13/21 Asia (Part 1)

- Arudou D. 2013. An introduction to Japanese society's attitudes toward race and skin color. See Hall 2013, pp. 49–69
- Jha, Meeta. 2015. "Chinese Femininity, Beauty Economy, Cosmetic Surgery" in *The Global Beauty Industry: Colorism, Racism, and the National Body*. Routledge, (Chapter 4).

#### 13. 4/20/21 Asia (Part 2)

- Jha S, Adelman M. 2009. Looking for love in all the white places: a study of skin color preferences on Indian matrimonial and mate-seeking websites. *Stud. South*
- Rondilla JL. 2009. Filipinos and the color complex: ideal Asian beauty. See Glenn 2009, pp. 63–80

#### 14. 4/27/21 Africa

- Khalfani, Akil Kokayi, and Tukufu Zuberi. 2001. "Racial Classification and the Modern Census in South Africa, 1911-1996." *Race & Society* 4(2): 161–76.
- Marx, Anthony W. 1996. "Race-Making and the Nation-State." *World Politics* 48:180-208.