

SOCI 308
Race and Ethnicity in a Changing World
George Mason University Korea
Spring 2024

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Office Location: G548 @ Mason Korea
Class Time/Location: Mon & Wed, 2pm - 3.15pm @ G201
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Office Hours: Mondays, 12pm - 1.30pm; Tuesdays 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Course Focus

What is race? What is ethnicity? Why and how do they matter for people in many different parts of the world? In this course, we will examine race and ethnicity using a sociological lens. We will also understand racial and ethnic relations around the world by situating them within their historical contexts. The course is divided roughly into two sections; the first section focuses on our understandings of race and key concepts in the study of race and ethnicity. In the second section, we will study how race and ethnicity powerfully intersects with important issues such as employment, criminal justice, residential segregation, and media representation.

Briefly: What is the point of taking this class?

Because people often think that race is a biological given, they might overlook the socially constructed meanings of race and their consequential effects in our society. Basically, this class will give us the opportunity to critically think and question what, at first glance, is assumed and obvious about race and examine how those assumptions have produced inequalities and injustices in our society.

Getting Specific: Course Questions & Objectives

Questions 1 - 3 serve as a starting point for engaged conversation, dialogue and reflection throughout the semester. #4 is essential for this course.

1. What are the central concepts, theories and debates that structure the field of race and ethnicity?

2. What is the relationship between race and ethnicity at the individual level and race and ethnicity at the institutional level? How is one's racial or ethnic status connected to his/her success in various social institutions such as education and employment?
3. How do our core values and beliefs shape our understanding of issues of inequality and diversity? How do our understanding of inequality and diversity influence our values and beliefs?
4. Communicate and collaborate productively with peers. Communication & Collaboration are integral to academic learning and working in the real world. We will develop and practice these skills very often in this class through group work and dialogue.

What does this course have to do with The Mason Core?

This course contributes towards The Mason Core's mission to cultivate **The Mason Graduate: an Engaged Citizen and Well-Rounded Scholar who is Prepared to Act**. The Mason Core is Mason's general education program that builds the foundation for The Mason Graduate. SOCI 308 (3 credits) fulfills requirements for Social/Behavioral Sciences in The Mason Core.

The following learning outcomes are required goals as part of The Mason Core:

1. Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors;
2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs;
3. Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

Required Texts

I will share all readings with you via Mason Blackboard.

What can we expect from each other?

What you can expect from me, the instructor:

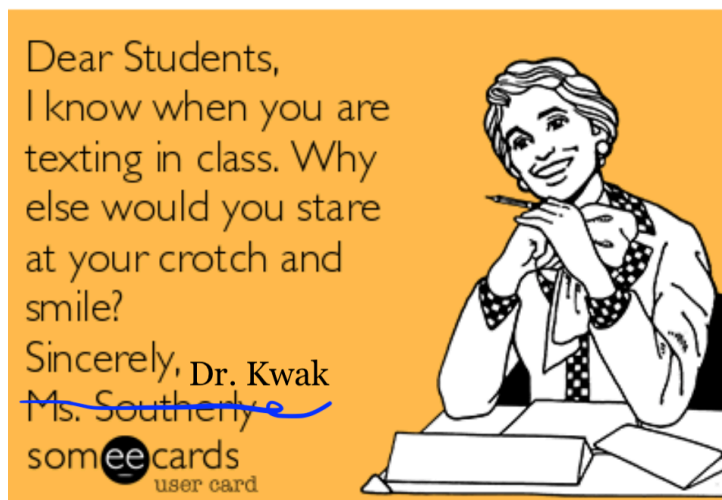
Every time I enter discussion, I will come prepared, which means that I will have read the assigned materials for the day and thought carefully about what we are trying to accomplish that day. I will be fully present during class and will treat each of you with respect and integrity. I am also available outside of our class meetings and more than willing to discuss your concerns and any aspects of this course.

What I can expect from each student:

Because you have chosen to enroll in this course, you agree to have the same expectations as the instructor. In other words, you agree to come to each class having read all assigned materials and thoughtfully prepared for class. You also agree to be fully present during class and to treat fellow students and the instructor with respect and integrity. Finally, as students in this course, you agree to thoughtfully engage in discussions and conversations in every class and make every effort to empathize with and respect the perspectives of others.

What we can expect to happen in class:

Every time we meet, this class is an opportunity for us to become a learning community. This means that each student is required to be an active participant in this class—asking questions, contributing to discussion by sharing their perspectives, and critically thinking about the issues we address in this class. Half-baked ideas and thoughts are welcome; often times, just trying to say what you're thinking allows you to further develop your ideas and arguments.



What we can expect in regards to electronic devices:

As part of cultivating a space for discussion, please silence or turn off your phones during class. Laptop use will be permitted only for note taking. Research shows that use of laptops in class for anything other than note taking distracts the student as well as those around them. Using unauthorized electronics in the classroom will negatively affect the student's participation grade and attendance.

Overview of Course Grade

Your learning will be evaluated in the following ways:

10% Class Participation (Active Listening, Large Group Discussions, Activities in Class)

15% Class Participation (Small Group Discussions)

15% Journals

18% Research Project & Presentation

12% Human Interest Story

15% Mid-Term Exam

15% Cumulative Final Exam

1. Class Participation

This course depends upon your participation. More than two absences of our class meetings during the semester will *lower* the student's final grade by two thirds of a letter grade (e.g. a B+ will become a B-), and more than four absences will result in a failing grade. If a student joins the meeting after attendance is taken or leaves the meeting early, the student may be counted absent (unless student contacts the professor prior to class to make arrangements).

You will be granted an excused absence from class only in specific, unavoidable situations such as death in the family or health emergency.

In order to get a full participation grade, actively listen, ask questions, share your perspectives, and engage in critical thinking about the material during *Large Group Discussions* and *Small Group Discussions*. Equally important, participate enthusiastically in class activities and writing assignments.

“When everyone in the classroom, teacher and students, recognizes that they are responsible for creating a learning community together, learning is at its most meaningful and useful.”

– Bell Hooks, Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom

Note: If a student engages in actions which distract others and detract from the classroom's overall experience as a learning community, then his/her/their participation grade will be significantly reduced.

2. Small Group Discussions

We are a learning community and the success of this class depends on our active engagement with the class materials and with one another. Through the process of dialogue and discussion, we will gain a deeper and richer understanding of the issues discussed in this course. Difference in opinions, feelings and values are welcome and respected in this classroom.

I will remind you via email the reading schedule for the upcoming week every Friday. You should come prepared to discuss what you have read for every class. A specific type of discussion that we will have in every class is: *Small Group Discussions* (please see “Reading Roles & Journal Guidelines” which I will make available on our first day of class).

I will ask everyone to evaluate their fellow group members during the semester regarding their participation and contributions to group discussions and project. However, if you have a problem with a group member who is not keeping up with the reading or not participating please notify me early in the semester so that I may discuss the issue with that individual.

3. Journals

Good writers are most often interested readers. For this class, please write a reflective journal responding to the day's readings prior to class. See the “Reading Roles & Journal Guidelines”

handout for the requirements for journals. Students should post their journal entry on Blackboard by 12pm the day of class. Please have your journals with you for small group discussions.

I usually upload grades and comments on your journals in Blackboard every Monday afternoon. Only grades (no comments on journals) will be submitted during the week of midterm exams and the final week of the semester.

4. Research Project & Presentation

Students will form groups for this project. Each group (consisting of 3 to 4 students) will choose a research topic, conduct collaborative research at the library, and prepare a presentation for the whole class. See “Group Presentations” handout for additional details.

5. Human Interest Story Project

“Human Interest Story” has been defined as a story that discusses a person in an interactive, sometimes emotional way. It presents people and their problems, concerns, or achievements in a manner that brings about interest or sympathy in the reader. That is, Human Interest Stories are presented with a view toward entertaining the reader while informing him/her. It might help to think of Human Interest Story as *the story behind the story*.

6. Mid-Term and Final Exam

The final exam in this course is cumulative.

Grading Scale

As instructor, I reserve the right to round up or down any course grade calculations at the end of the semester.

A	94-100	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	0-59



Students should keep in mind that “A” level work should be outstanding and consistently exceed minimum requirements.

Answers to Other Important Questions

Course Modality

This course has been designed for in person instruction and learning. Course sessions will not be recorded to fully engage in an interactive learning environment. This course will follow all policies and guidance set by Mason Korea. Should any class sessions need to be adjusted or canceled due to health and safety concerns, students will be notified by email and can continue to check Blackboard for course materials and updates.

Turning in Late Work

All course work should be submitted by the assignment deadlines. There is no exception for journals and group presentation. Regarding individual papers, if you know that you will be unable to complete an assignment by the due date, you should make this clear to me by e-mail at least 24 hours before the deadline. A short extension without penalty is possible only if you notify me 24 hours in advance.



If not, papers submitted *after* the deadline will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late: a B+ becomes a B, a B becomes a B-, and so on. This rule does not apply to weekly journals because late submission for journals is not available.

Academic Integrity

All of the work that you submit for this course must be your own. The university has a strict policy concerning academic integrity.

The George Mason University

Honor Code reads as follows: "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this Honor Code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found on the Committee of Academic Integrity's website at <https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/cai/overview>.

Academic integrity is an essential part of personal integrity, and I expect you to demonstrate honorable behavior in all of your classes including mine. You should pledge to observe Mason's Honor Code in all written and oral work including journals, papers, presentations and exams. Student who committed plagiarism in an assignment will at a minimum receive a failing grade for the assignment. As the instructor for this course, I will also report the student and instance of plagiarism to the Dean.

Use of Generative AI Tools

Academic integrity is a core principle at George Mason University and it's vital that all students uphold this principle. In accordance with this principle, you may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material. As many recent studies have shown, material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise

problematic (for example, the quality of its references are very poor). Also beware that the use of AI tools may stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is NOT permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Writing a draft of a writing assignment (e.g. your weekly journal, the argument for your group's presentation, a draft of your portion of the presentation, research paper, discussion prompts in class or online).
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for ONLY the following activities:

- Brainstorming your ideas;
- Refining and narrowing down your research questions;
- Finding information on your topic;
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and
- Checking grammar and style.

Rules for citing generative AI tools:

1. Clearly identify the use of generative AI tools in your work. Any work that utilizes AI tools must be clearly marked as such, including the specific tool(s) used. For example, if you use ChatGPT-3, you must cite "ChatGPT-3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). "Text of your query." Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>"
2. Be transparent in how you used the generative AI tool, including what work is your original contribution. An AI detector such as GPTZero (<https://gptzero.me/>) may be used to detect AI-driven work.
3. Do not use AI tools to plagiarize without citation.

Violations of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with George Mason University's academic integrity policy. If you are found in violation of this policy, you may face penalties such as a reduction in grade, failure of the assignment or assessment, or even failure of the course. Finally, please note that it's your responsibility to be aware of the academic integrity policy and take the necessary steps to ensure that your use of generative AI tools is in compliance with this policy. If you have questions, please speak with me first, as we navigate together how best to responsibly use these tools.

Diversity, Inclusivity and Ethical Discourse

George Mason University is committed to social justice. I share that commitment and strive to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. In this class we will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, age, economic class, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. According to George Mason's Diversity Statement, "Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected" (See more at: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/general-teaching-resources/>)

[mason-diversity-statement/](#)). In this classroom, we will strive to achieve diversity, inclusivity and ethical discourse together. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a physical, learning, and/or psychological disability, I will gladly work with you to arrange academic accommodations for this class.

Please note that reducing assignments or reducing the class participation requirement are not permitted as accommodations for a disability at the college level.

Meeting with the Professor about Your Grades

I won't discuss grades over email. This is to protect your privacy, so please do not make such requests. Instead, set up a meeting with me.

Essay Formatting

I expect you to show that you take pride in every piece of written work that you submit. Always re-read your journals and essays (even if they are in draft form) for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. You should also read your essay aloud to yourself or to a friend. In addition, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Essays must be in 12-point Times New Roman or similar font with 1.0 in/2.54 cm spacing around the margins.
- Essays must have page numbers and a header that includes your name, the assignment name, and date.
- All assignments must be submitted electronically via Blackboard.

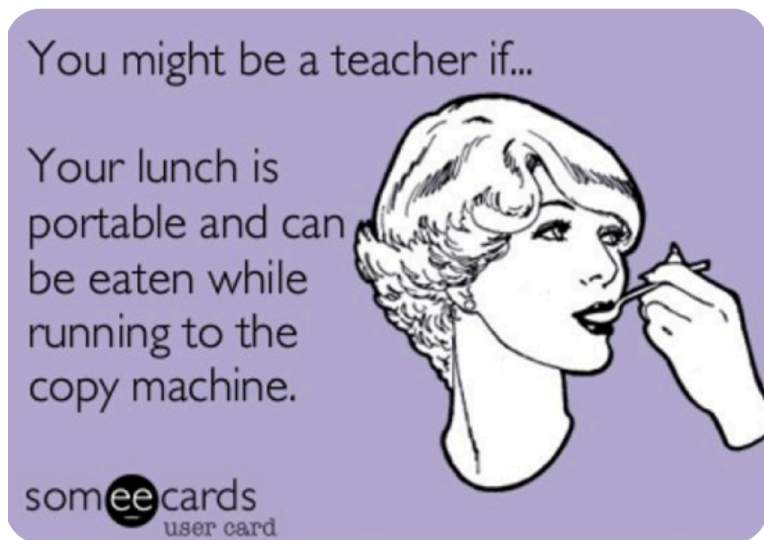
Rules for Citation

You can use this useful online resource for rules on citation. The *American Sociological Association Style Guide*:

for in-text citation: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/in_text_citation_references.html

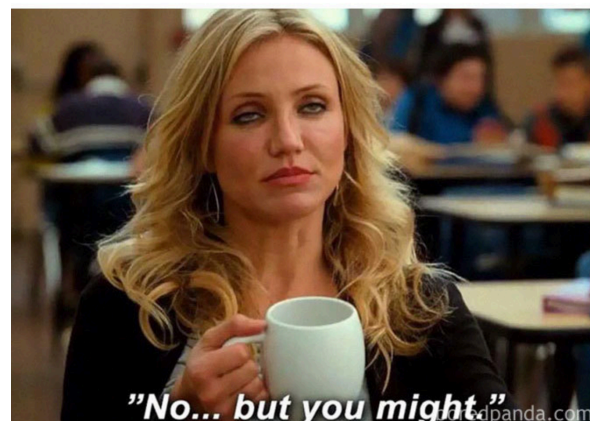
for references: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/references_page_formatting.html

What it's like to be a professor sometimes...



Student: Why do you have coffee every day? Will you die without it?

Me:



Teachers be like "don't pack up yet, there is still 24 seconds left of class left"



Teacher: Anyone have any questions?

Students: No

Teacher: Alright, go ahead and get started.

*Students one minute later:



https://www.boredpanda.com/funny-teachers-memes/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic