

## Introduction to Ethnic Studies

Fall, 2011

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

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*The differences and borders of each of our identities connect us to each other, more than they sever. So the enterprise here is to forge informed, self-reflexive solidarities among ourselves. (Mohanty 2003: 250–251)*

*Building knowledge about the conditions that are barriers or deterrents is important, as is coming to understand alliances that are persisting. (Collier 2003:2)*

### Course Description and Objectives

This introductory Ethnic Studies class draws upon interdisciplinary approaches to understand and problematize the study of race and ethnicity in the United States. The class will discuss current disciplinary debates, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches within the diverse field of Ethnic Studies. By focusing upon diverse populations in the United States the class will index a broad range of cultural and political contexts; social problems; and histories to comprehend how racial formations and ethnic identity constructions have contradictorily served to: (1) create inequality and sustain systems of power and privilege and (2) create fissures of possibility to forge self reflective solidarities and intercultural alliances that serve to dismantle oppressive conditions. The class will discuss the social construction of race and ethnicity coupled with the intersectionality of identity and positionality across race, class, gender and sexuality.

### Learning Outcomes

1. Comprehend what is meant by the social construction of race and ethnicity and apply it to everyday social and historical circumstances
2. Interrogate general assumptions underlying concepts of race and ethnicity through critical interdisciplinary inquiry.
3. Differentiate discussions of race and ethnicity across institutional, global and individual contexts
4. Locate and discuss how one's individual social position, power and privilege operate within debates over race and ethnicity.

### Required Readings

In addition to the following required books there are a few articles on e-reserve:

Mathew Desmond & Mustafa Emirbayer (2010) *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America*. New York: McGraw Hill Publishing

Ronald Takaki (2008). *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. New York: McGraw Hill Publishing.

### Course Assignments

Please note that guidelines for each assignment will be passed out during the semester.

1. **Attendance/Participation (50 points, unexcused absence is -5 points):** It is essential to attend class regularly and remain in class for the entire period. Your active participation and

contribution towards class discussion and activities is important to your success and that of others. Come to class prepared to discuss weekly assigned readings. The material discussed in class is supplemental to the required readings and it is your responsibility to obtain this information if you miss class. There will also be group discussions and in-class activities that cannot be made up. Your grade will be reduced if you miss more than one class. On select days students will **bring a sign or symbol** that engage a week's readings.

2. **Burning Question (50 points)** Unless otherwise stated, students will bring a burning question each day. This assignment asks that you: (i.) Ask a question from the days reading that can stimulate discussion; (ii.) locate an excerpt from the text that helps contextualize your question (cite page number); and (iii.) briefly explain your question and try to connect your question to either your life, or a previous class discussion (1-2 paragraphs).
3. **Accounting for Race (25 points)** Each week, 2-3 students will identify a contemporary issue that impacts race in the United States. The group will debrief the issue, cite a source to reference the issue and pose questions to facilitate classroom conversation that references Ethnic Studies. Each member of the group will write a 1-page description of the issue that includes: a citation; questions; a connection to ethnic studies and to a previous reading.
4. **Reflecting upon/Accessing my Social Position paper, 3-5 pages (50 points)** How do I access and discuss race, ethnicity and social positions? What memories and assumptions define, compete and challenge my understanding of race, ethnicity, power and privilege? How do I grapple with shifting contradictory social positions and how does it complicate my relationships across groups? This paper narrates your experience with race and ethnicity by critically interrogating how race, class, gender and sexuality intersect: in your everyday world; influence your socialization; and emerge in your family history.
5. **Midterm Exam (50 points)** This open-book midterm exam will identify a social problem/issue that students will collectively address. The exam will also include short answers and essay questions. A study guide will be given prior to the exam.
6. **Community/ Cultural Event (25 points)** Students are responsible for attending a cultural and/or community event that deal with issues discussed in class. Students will prepare a visual map illustrating the event coupled with a legend (1 page) that describes how your map debriefs the event and connects with key themes from the course. Please consult with the instructor as to what constitutes a community/cultural event.
7. **Mediating Media, 7-10 pages (100 points) + presentation.** Media for this assignment becomes a technological tool used to represent and educate what is "race" and "ethnicity". In this sense it is a text that is observed, heard, read and analyzed as revealed in print, advertisement, film, TV, music, games or toys, curriculum, etc. Your task is to: (1.) select a form of media that focuses upon a particular social context (i.e., politics, education, economics) (2.) Analyze and discuss assumptions, representation and discourses that construct race and ethnicity within this social context. Your investigation should offer a new look at media by asking: what is missing? What is normalized or made natural? What implications exist? Utilizing course readings discuss how media offers a potential site to create and critique public perceptions underlying the context of race and ethnicity? You will also be asked to reconstruct how the text could be edited to re-inscribe new meanings that develop a deeper more profound understanding of Race and Ethnicity. In other words how might your source of media better incorporate the legacy of multicultural America into its representation. This section should also question your position as spectator and editor,

revealing how power and privilege complicate how we develop inclusive and critical understandings and readings of race and ethnicity.

**Grading:** Your final grade is based on a total of 350 points. (A = 95%; A- = 90-94%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 84-86%; B- = 80-83%; C+ = 77-79%; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; etc.)

#### Course Policies:

##### **Academic Misconduct:**

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated and students will be penalized for cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication of information. Always remember to acknowledge any words or ideas which are not your own. When in doubt how to reference your sources of information please ask. Saint Mary's College of California has an academic honor code that students are obliged to abide by. This means doing your own work, in your own words and using proper citation of work by others (both *ideas* and *direct quotes*). If you have any doubts about what constitute plagiarism or “plagiaphrasing” do not hesitate to check with me on your work. Violations of the Honor Code will be submitted to the Academic Honor Council on campus. Refamiliarize yourself with SMC’s honor code (<http://smcnet.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/ahc/>, <http://smcnet.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/ahc/students/>), <http://smcnet.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/ahc/>, <http://smcnet.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/ahc/students/>), <http://smcnet.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/ahc/students/>). The following websites might also be of assistance when thinking of plagiarism and citation:

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>,

[http://www.umuc.edu/ugp/ewp\\_writingcenter/modules/plagiarism/guidelines.html\(quiz\)](http://www.umuc.edu/ugp/ewp_writingcenter/modules/plagiarism/guidelines.html(quiz))

[http://education.indiana.edu/%7Efrick/plagiarism/item1.html\(quiz\)](http://education.indiana.edu/%7Efrick/plagiarism/item1.html(quiz)).

##### **Course Content and Conduct:**

You may disagree with the content of this class. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. This class incorporates social and political issues that intersect with race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Although class discussions, readings, films, lectures, course content and subject may disagree with your personal position and “everyday” understandings --this should not prevent yourself or the entire class from critically engaging with new ideas and from asking questions. Diverse opinions, that blend experiences with academic scholarship and research are important and will be respected. The entire class will take responsibility for discussing, listening, and respecting each other’s contributions. Please avoid personal insults when disagreeing with others and turn the ringer off on cell phones.

##### **Student Disability Services**

Student Disability Services extends reasonable and appropriate accommodations that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements, for individuals with qualifying disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Coordinator at (925) 631-4164 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint May’s website: <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html>

##### **Late/ Incomplete Assignments:**

Assignments need to be turned in on time and must be complete. Partially completed assignments will not be accepted. Only in emergency cases will late assignments be accepted and this should be discussed with the instructor prior to due dates.

Course Schedule:

The following course schedule is subject to change during the semester.

**Week 1: Self, Other and Ethnic Studies**

Monday, 8/29                    Introductions: who we are, maps, slam books, signs & symbols  
Wednesday, 8/31              Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 1  
Friday, 9/2                      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 1

**Week 2: Social Construction of Race**

Monday, 9/5                    **Labor Day, No instruction**  
Wednesday, 9/7              Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 2  
Friday, 9/9                      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 2

**Week 3: Making Multicultural America (foundations)**

Monday, 9/12                  A Different Mirror, Chapter 1  
Wednesday, 9/14              A Different Mirror, Chapter 2  
Friday, 9/16                    A Different Mirror, Chapter 3

**Week 4: Contradictions underlying Native and African American experiences**

Monday, 9/19                  \*Reflecting Upon/ Accessing My Social Position Paper due \*  
Wednesday, 9/21              A Different Mirror, Chapter 4  
Friday, 9/23                    A Different Mirror, Chapter 5

**Week 5: Mapping Racial Politics**

Monday, 9/26                  Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 3  
Wednesday, 9/28              Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 3  
Friday, 9/30                    Mapping Ethnic Studies

**Week 6: Contradictions Underlying Immigration and Immigrant Group Experiences**

Monday, 10/3                  A Different Mirror, Chapter 6  
Wednesday, 10/5              A Different Mirror, Chapter 7  
Friday, 10/7                    A Different Mirror, Chapter 8  
\* Midterm Exam distributed (due on Monday, 10/10)\*

**Week 7: Race and Economic Realities**

Monday, 10/10                Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 4  
Wednesday, 10/12            Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 4  
Friday, 10/14,                **Midterm Holiday, No instruction**

**Week 8: Ethnic Group Transitions**

Monday, 10/17                A Different Mirror, Chapter 9  
Wednesday, 10/19            A Different Mirror, Chapter 10  
Friday, 10/21                A Different Mirror, Chapter 11

**Week 9: Housing and Segregated Communities**

Monday, 10/24                Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 5  
Wednesday, 10/26            Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 5  
Friday, 10/28                Alberto Pulido, "Ethnic Studies in a Catholic Liberal Arts College"  
\*Community Cultural Event Identified\*

**Week 10: Ethnic Group Transitions (continued)**

Monday, 10/31      A Different Mirror, Chapter 12 & 13  
Wednesday, 11/2      A Different Mirror, Chapter 14  
Friday, 11/4      A Different Mirror, Chapter 15

**Week 11: Race, Crime and Punishment**

Monday, 11/7      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 6  
Wednesday, 11/9      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 6  
Friday, 11/11      A Different Mirror, Chapter 16

**Week 12: Race, Education & Aesthetics**

Monday, 11/14      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 7  
Wednesday, 11/16      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 7  
Friday, 11/18      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 8

**Week 13: Racial Aesthetics & Civil Transformation**

Monday, 11/21      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 8  
                                 \* Identify Mediating Media\*  
Wednesday, 11/23,      Thanks Giving Recess, No instruction  
Friday, 11/25,      Thanks Giving Recess, No instruction

**Week 14: Collaborations and Intercultural Alliances**

Monday, 11/28      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 10  
Wednesday, 11/30      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 10  
Friday, 12/2      A Different Mirror, Chapter 17

**Week 15: Reconstructions: Racial & Social Justice**

Monday, 12/5      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 11  
Wednesday, 12/7      Racial Domination, Racial Progress, ½ Chapter 11  
Friday, 12/9      Presentations/ Performances

**Week 16: Final Exams**

Monday, 12/12: 2:00-4:00  
Community Cultural Event will be discussed and Final paper is due