

College of Liberal Studies
Institute for Ethnic and Racial Studies
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Fall, 2009

Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States

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Office Hours: M/W/F/11:00-12:00 a.m.
Other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an interdisciplinary examination of minority experience in the United States. Parallels, similarities, and differences of experience between and among various minority groups will be critically analyzed. Significant contributions by minority individuals or groups to American society and culture will be highlighted.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals:

1. To know and appreciate the multiracial and multicultural reality of the United States society.
2. To become familiar with the life, history and culture of the following minority groups: African-Americans, Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders, Hispanic-Americans and American Indians.

Objectives:

1. To examine past and present social and economic problems facing each minority group.
2. To identify the most significant legislative acts and judicial decisions that have affected minority quests for equality and justice.
3. To become familiar with the differences and similarities of experience between and among various minority groups.
4. To highlight significant contributions by minority individuals or groups to U.S. society and culture.

COURSE OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
- II. Definition of terms
- III. The nature of American society today
- IV. The experience of four microcultures in the United States:
 - A. The African-American experience
 - B. The Asian American experience
 - C. The Hispanic-American experience
 - D. The American Indian experience
- V. Patterns of discrimination against minorities
- VI. Minority aspects of U.S. society and culture

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Required Reading
Textbooks:
 - Schaefer, *Richard Racial and Ethnic Groups* 10th edition
 - Articles as assigned. Most of these will be listed under "articles" on D2L
 - Other material as announced in class
2. Each student is required to attend 2 multi-cultural events during the semester and write a 2 page reaction paper. The paper must relate the event to some aspect of the readings, lecture, videos or in class discussion. Papers will be accepted until the due date however students will find it most beneficial to turn in their reaction papers within a week after attending the event. Because this class centers on ethnic and racial issues in the United States no international or gender events are suitable for this assignment. The first paper **must** be completed by Wednesday, October 21, 2009 and the second **must** be completed by Monday December 14, 2009. One event is to be attended in the first half of the semester and the second one in the second half. (Note: Each student is responsible for finding and attending these events.) Please turn in a hard copy—not an electronic one—
3. Class Participation is expected.
4. Two multiple choice/true false exams will be given as well as a final exam. There will also be unannounced quizzes and various assignments, as specified in the unit calendars. As a general rule there will be no make up of either quizzes or examinations.
5. Each student is permitted four (4) unexcused absences during the semester. To obtain an excused absence please send an e-mail to me at shilling.sara@uwlax.edu within one week of the absence. Absences will not be marked as excused after this time. Any unexcused absence in excess of four will result in the reduction of a half of a grade from the final grade. Sign In Attendance forms will be circulated during each class period. It is the students' responsibility to sign in.

SPECIAL FLU POLICY - This semester we face a new and unusual challenge - the H1N1 flu virus. Authorities believe it will be a question of how many cases of flu occur on college campuses, not whether there will be flu cases. The best medical advice is to stay home to avoid contagion for at least 24 hours after the fever subsides. If UWL adopts a different policy, you will be informed. If you get the flu, you must notify me IMMEDIATELY so I can make arrangements for you to keep up with the class. Don't just disappear. If you don't contact me, you will be held responsible for the course requirements as they appear in this syllabus. But please be considerate of your classmates and teachers and STAY HOME if you get the flu!

SOURCES OF EVALUATION

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| Exam I | 20 Percent |
| Exam II | 30 Percent |
| Final exam | 30 Percent |
| Reaction papers. | 10 Percent |
| Class participation, assignments and quizzes. | 10 Percent |

GRADING PROCEDURES

The exams will be 50 true-false/multiple choice questions. The top score in each section will be used to set a curve. All other grades on the exam will proceed from the top score using the following guidelines:

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|------------|----|
| 100% - 95% | A |
| 94% - 90% | AB |
| 89% - 83% | B |
| 82% - 80% | BC |
| 79% - 70% | C |
| 69% - 60% | D |
| 59% - 0% | F |

In addition to the graded assignment there will be some course assessment. Your participants in these activities are extremely important. They are one way of evaluating the effectiveness of the course. Therefore, although these activities will not graded, failure to participant will result in the lowering of your course grade by one half of a letter grade.

Notes:

This syllabus is subject to change, with notification, at the instructor's discretion.

Please for everyone's comfort, turn off all cell phones, mp3 players, laptops and other electronic equipment during class time.

This class assumes that all students have internet access to their student email accounts and to D2L. If you do not have such access please talk to the instructor as soon as possible. All assignments and course calendars will be posted on D2L. There will be only a vary limited supply of hard copies available.