

The Construction of Race and Nationality

History/Sociology 450, Spring 2006
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THEMES

In recent years, scholarship on race and nation has been revolutionized by a growing realization that racial and national identities, as well as the categories of race and nation, are not fixed, but rather are social constructions that are fluid and changeable. This team-taught honors seminar will examine the social, political, and cultural processes through which these categories and identities are forged.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Although, over the course of the semester, you will need to master a certain body of material, your mastery of this information should serve simply as a means to achieve the following goals:

1. To become conversant with certain concepts presented in class and in readings.
2. To evaluate these concepts on the basis of evidence (ie., facts).
3. To develop your own ideas concerning the subject matter and to communicate these ideas effectively.
4. To use evidence to back up your ideas.

SKILLS

To achieve the course objectives, we will concentrate on developing certain key skills, the most important of which are:

1. Analysis-- Evaluating the factors that shape racial, ethnic, and national identity.

2. Analytical Writing-- Presenting your own line of argument on paper in a clear and compelling fashion.

3. Oral Argumentation-- Presenting your own line of argument orally in a clear and compelling fashion.

COURSE COMPONENTS

I. Seminar-- This course will have a seminar format. Although each professor will present a certain amount of material in class, there will be little traditional lecturing. Instead, the professors will lead an ongoing discussion on issues of race and nationality. Questions for discussion will be provided a week in advance. Because discussion is vital to the success of a seminar, class participation will comprise a significant portion of your final grade.

II. Readings-- Unless otherwise indicated, you will be required to complete a reading assignment each week. These readings will provide the basis for each week's discussion. Three books are to be purchased at the University Bookstore:

-Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White

-Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom

Other required readings are available in PDF format on the course D2L site.

III. Thought Papers-- In conjunction with each week's reading, you will be asked to complete a 1-2 page typed "thought paper." The thought papers will be graded on a check/check minus basis. They are designed to help you work through the main issues of the week's reading and to prepare you for class discussion. The thought papers must be posted to the D2L site for the course by midnight on Sunday. A hard copy must be turned in on class on Monday.

IV. Papers-- The course is divided into two units. At the conclusion of the first unit you will complete a 5-7 page essay that discusses the major issues examined in that unit. At the end of the semester you will complete an 8-12 page essay in which you grapple with the overarching issues of the course. Papers will be graded both on content and on the effectiveness of the presentation (ie., writing). Papers must be typed.

GRADING

First Paper--25%

Final Paper--35%

Thought Papers--20%

Class Participation--20%

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance-- Because class discussion is integral to this course, regular attendance is required. One unexcused absence will be allowed. Excused absences will be granted for reasons related to family, work, illness, or religious faith. Except in cases of emergency, however, excused absences will only be granted if requested ahead of time. Students absent from class, whether excused or unexcused, are responsible for all material covered and may be asked to perform a make-up assignment.

2. Extensions-- Extensions will be granted for reasons related to family, work, and illness, or religious faith. Except in cases of emergency, extensions will only be granted if requested (either in person or by phone) prior to the date that the assignment is due. In cases of emergency, the instructor must be contacted (either in person or by phone) as soon as possible. Failure to notify the instructor promptly may result in refusal to grant an extension.

3. Accommodation of Students with Disabilities-- Individuals who have any disability, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the start of the semester. Adaptations of methods, materials or testing may be made as required to provide for equitable participation.

4. Plagiarism-- Plagiarism (the theft of someone else's words or ideas) is the most serious of all academic offenses and will not be tolerated in this class. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will receive an automatic failing grade for the course. More serious sanctions may be pursued in particularly egregious cases. See the special section at the end of this syllabus for a detailed explanation of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (January 23): Introduction-- The Construction of Identity

Unit One

Racial Identity in the United States

WEEK 2 (January 30): The Construction of Race—An Institutional Approach

Reading (D2L) -- Barbara Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America", George M. Fredrickson, Introduction to The Arrogance of Race , and Excerpts from Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi

WEEK 3 (February 6): Race and Slavery

Reading-- Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia, pp. 3-6, 44-130, 215-387.

WEEK 4 (February 13): Race and Class

Reading-- Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White, pp. 1-121

WEEK 5 (February 20): Race and the State

Reading (D2L)-- Ian F. Haney Lopez, Excerpts from White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race

WEEK 6 (February 27): Race and Schools

Reading (D2L) – James D. Anderson, “How We Learn About Race through History”; Excerpts from Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities; Excerpts from Studs Terkel, Race: How Black and Whites Think and Feel about the National Obsession

WEEK 7 (March 6): Race and Institutions

FIRST PAPER DUE!

Unit Two
State Formation and the Construction of Identity

WEEK 8 (March 13): What is a Nation?

Reading—Excerpts from E.J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1780; Harold Isaacs, Basic Group Identity: Idols of the Tribe; excerpts from Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures

WEEK 9 (March 27): How did nations begin?

Reading—Pierre Bourdieu, Rethinking the State, and From the King’s House to the Reason of State; Zhu Dongzu, Local Government in China Under the Qing

WEEK 10 (April 3): How did institutional landscape create national territory?

Reading—Excerpts from Thongchai Winichakul, Siam Mapped ; Hobsbawm, chapter 5; Newberry Library, Maps and Nations Exhibit; excerpts from Rogers Brubaker, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany; Miles Ogburn, Excise Geographies

WEEK 11 (April 10): Why Did Most Colonies Become Nation-States?

Reading – Benedict Anderson, "Map, Museum, and Census"; excerpts, Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth; excerpts from Pierre Bourdieu, Sociology of Algeria; David Prochaska, Making Algeria French

WEEK 12 (April 17): How Do Nations Get Inside Bodies?

Reading-- Excerpts from Pierre Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations and Language and Symbolic Power; excerpts from Raymond Gibbs, Embodiement and Cognitive Science; Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, "Mass Producing Traditions"; Marshall Johnson, "Making Time"

WEEK 13 (April 24): Does Neoliberal "Globalization" Make Nations Obsolete?

Reading – Excerpts from David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism; excerpts from Thomas Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree

Conclusion

Tying It All Together

WEEK 14 (May 1): Summary

-No Reading

WEEK 15 (May 8): Presenting Your Conclusions

FINAL PAPER DUE—Friday, May 19, 3:30 P.M.

PLAGIARISM AND PROPER CITATION

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when an individual, either intentionally or unintentionally, takes credit for work or ideas that are not his or her own. Copying from another student's paper is plagiarism. So is copying from a book. Taking the ideas from a book without proper citation is also plagiarism. Writing a paper in partnership with someone else and then handing it in under your name alone is also a type of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is theft. It is the academic equivalent of robbing a bank. It is a very serious offense.

It is a common misconception that you can take a passage from a book, change a few words around, and put it in your paper without being guilty of plagiarism. This is not the case. You must either quote the passage directly, paraphrase it and footnote it, or put it completely in your own words. Here is an illustration of this kind of plagiarism:

The book says-- "*As a moral document, the Emancipation Proclamation, which in fact freed no slaves, was inadequate. As a political document, it was nearly flawless.*"

You write-- *The Emancipation Proclamation was not adequate as a moral document because it freed no slaves. It was nearly flawless, however, as a political document.*

THIS IS PLAGIARISM!

How Do I Avoid Plagiarism?

The easiest way to avoid unintentional plagiarism from a book or article is to take notes in your own words. Take down the useful information that the source provides, but put it in your own words-- even during the notetaking process. If you think that you may want to quote the source, take down the quote exactly and indicate clearly in your notes that it is a direct quote.

In this course, you are allowed to discuss your ideas with other students and even show papers to each other for feedback. You must, however, come up with your own ideas and do the writing yourself. Taking the ideas from another student's paper and changing a few words around is still plagiarism-- so don't do it. Remember, if you plagiarize from a friend's paper, you will be implicating him or her in your crime.

What Is Citation?

Citation is a method used to give credit for ideas that you have borrowed and to let the reader know where you are getting your information from. A properly cited paper contains both a bibliography (also known as a works cited page) and footnotes.

What Items Should Be Included in the Bibliography?

The bibliography lists every source that you used in writing your paper. It lets the reader where your information comes from. Every book, article, or other source that you consulted in writing your paper must be included. Sources that you looked at but decided not to use do not need to be included. You do not need to list class lectures in your bibliographies for this course. Other professors, however, may have a different policy. It never hurts to ask.

What Needs to Be Footnoted?

Footnotes are used to give credit for ideas that you have borrowed. All direct quotes and paraphrases must be footnoted. You must also footnote any idea that you borrow from another author.

Footnotes are also used to let the reader know where information that is not "common knowledge" comes from. Information that is widely known ("common knowledge") does not need to be footnoted. You would not, for example, have to footnote the fact that Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. Information that is not widely known, however, must be footnoted. You would, for example, have to footnote the fact that by July 1862 Lincoln had reached the conclusion that he had no alternative but to issue an emancipation proclamation and that he told this to two close advisors.

What Footnote Form Must I Use?

Any standard form of citation (including parenthetical citation) is acceptable in this course. Footnotes do not have to be placed at the bottom of the page. They may be listed on a special footnote page at the end of the paper.

What If I Have Questions?

If you have any questions about plagiarism and proper citation, please ask the professors.