

Politics 377: Sophomore Seminar in Comparative Politics
The Politics of Race in Comparative Perspective

Wednesdays 1:30-4:20pm
 Location: 008 Robertson Hall

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Overview

Living in America today, it is relatively easy to observe that “race matters,” but to adequately understand the nature of race and race chauvinism, it is necessary to situate contemporary racial politics in historical and comparative perspective.

This sophomore inquiry seminar will explore the different ways in which racial identities have become salient in polities around the world. To what extent does the color of one’s skin or other “racial” markers determine one’s social, economic, and political status? We will investigate the making and un-making of white supremacy, “racial democracy,” and other racial orders in this seminar.

A central goal of the course is to expose students to the advantages of sustained comparative analysis. For example, how did legacies of slavery and miscegenation get addressed differently in the societies of the U.S., Brazil, and South Africa? Such comparisons will reveal the politically contested nature of identity politics by emphasizing alternative pathways of political development. We will consider race in relation to other social categories such as “nation” and “ethnicity,” and we will discuss how these terms capture different social realities. Each week we will try to assess the most important dimensions of comparison: how are countries similar? Different? Are we comparing apples and oranges?

As we compare various countries across time periods, we will want to ask three questions:

- How do we characterize the set of racial and/or ethnic relations within a given society or polity?
- What are the origins of this set of relations?
- What are the consequences of such relations in terms of stability, violence, distribution of material and other resources?

In addition to introducing various questions, the course will focus on the actual process of conducting research on ethnic and racial relations. How can we describe and measure patterns of racial relations? What are the limits of those measures? What do surveys tell us? Historical records? Policy records? Newspaper reports? Most weeks we will spend

part of the seminar critically examining some of the source material used to conduct the analyses we read about.

It will be important for you to select a research topic early in the semester in order to use the discussions each week as a way of thinking about your own independent work.

This small seminar format provides a unique opportunity for an intensive and rewarding intellectual environment. It requires that you each take responsibility for “active learning,” – that is, thinking ahead of time what you want to get out of each seminar, what questions puzzle you from the readings, and what topics we ought to explore.

Course requirements:

I) PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to prepare carefully for seminar each week. This means you will not only have done the readings, but *thought* about the issues raised, and identified interesting contributions and/or puzzles left unanswered. PLEASE stay on top of the readings – otherwise, our seminars will be very quiet.

For several of our seminars, a guest scholar will join us. Each time, several of you will be able to join this scholar for a dinner/discussion. Such dinners will provide a nice opportunity for you to share your own research with guests.

II) PAPERS:

All papers should be double-spaced, in Times 12-point with one-inch margins and page #'s. They should contain your name, the course title, and a title for the paper.

Bibliographies should be attached (and should not be included as part of the word/page count.) Please send papers to me *via electronic mail*.

Short papers:

You will each write four short (500-750 word ~ 2-3pp) papers. The specific assignments are described below during the weeks they are due.

Research papers: The central project of the course will be a research paper (approximately 4000 words ~ 15-17pp) which is due **May 11**. Your paper may either:

- Describe a racial order in one or more countries, using other countries studied in the course as a comparative reference point.
- Identify the *causes* of a particular racial order in one or more countries.
- Identify the *consequences* of a particular racial order in one or more countries.

**You should arrange to meet with me before Spring Break to discuss your topic. Your third short paper (due March 24th) assignment asks that you specify your paper plans in some detail.

III) PRESENTATIONS:

During the last three weeks of the seminar, students will make 15-minute presentations on their work-in-progress.

Course grade:

Seminar participation: 30%

In-class presentation: 10%

Short papers: 20% (5% each)

Long paper: 40%

Readings and seminar plans:

- Because we are a small seminar, we have the ability to be rather flexible when it comes to what we read and what we discuss. In particular, we may be somewhat flexible about what we read and discuss during the final four weeks of the seminar, and I welcome your suggestions for modifications.
- In order to accommodate this flexibility, I have not ordered a reader for the class. All readings will be available either in one of the required books, on electronic reserves (**ECR**) via our blackboard website, or they will be handed out in seminar.

Books for Purchase (also available on reserve at Firestone):

- Kertzer DI, Arel D, eds. 2002. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Marx A. 1998. *Making Race and Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cornell, Stephen E., and Douglass Hartmann. 1997. *Ethnicity and race : making identities in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press.
- Winant, H. 2001. *The world is a ghetto : race and democracy since World War II*. New York, Basic Books.

SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS

1. Introduction (Feb. 4)

Please read brief articles available under “course documents” on our blackboard website.

2. Concepts, terms for analysis; Theories of ethnic/racial mobilization (Feb. 11)

Banton M. 1979. “Analytical and Folk Concepts of Race and Ethnicity.” *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 2: 127-38. **ECR**

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, edited by C. Geertz. New York: Basic Books, 255-269. **ECR**

Cornell, Stephen E., and Douglass Hartmann. 1997. *Ethnicity and race : making identities in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, chapters 1-4, pp.1-101.

Winant, H. 2001. *The world is a ghetto : race and democracy since World War II*. New York, Basic Books, 19-36.

SHORT PAPER #1: Please write a definition of race that is no more than 750 words in length. While drawing on the issues raised by the various readings, explain what you think race is, and what it is not, offering examples when possible. While you should cite the respective authors, please do not merely quote some passage from one of the readings or string together a set of quotes.

The Making of Racial Orders

3. The forging of white supremacist orders: South Africa and the United States (Feb. 18)

Marx A. 1998. *Making Race and Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Overview and sections on South Africa, United States: 1-46, 81-157, 191-249)

-- Historical documents (to be handed out during seminar #2)

4. The “racial democracy”: Brazil (Feb. 25)

Cornell, Stephen E., and Douglass Hartmann. 1997. *Ethnicity and race : making identities in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, chapter 6, 153-173, 190 (pp 173-194 *optional*).

Marx A. 1998. *Making Race and Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Sections on Brazil: 47-77, 158-190, 250-278)

Hanchard, Michael (ed). *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil* (chapters by Lovell and Hasenbalg and Silva) **ECR**

SHORT PAPER #2: What are the central characteristics of the Brazilian and South African racial orders? To what extent are they different? Similar? You might try constructing a table. **You may write this paper individually, or in a group of 2 or 3.

5. Race and the census – March 3

Kertzer DI, Arel D, eds. 2002. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7.

- Discussion about possible paper topics today.
- Please consult several census websites

6. Race-based violence and “large-N” comparisons of ethnic/racial categories and conflict – March 10 (Christian Davenport, University of Maryland)

****DINNER @ MASALA GRILL – 6:15PM (ELAN, MIKE, NALINI)**

Peter Uvin, “On Counting, categorizing, and violence in Burundi and Rwanda,” in Kertzer DI, Arel D, eds. 2002. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, chapter 6: 148-175.

Gurr, Ted Robert, and United States Institute of Peace. 1993. *Minorities at risk : a global view of ethnopolitical conflicts*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute for Peace, 3-88. **(to be handed out)**

Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, selections, pp.3-54. **ECR**

**** SPRING BREAK ****

7. Mestizaje and Race in Latin America and the Caribbean – March 24

****DINNER WITH SUJATHA FERNANDES – EVERYONE @ PROSPECT HOUSE, 6pm**

Safa, Helen I. 1998. Introduction (to special issue on Race and National Identity in the Americas). *Latin American Perspectives* 25 (3):3-20. **ECR**

Foner, Nancy. 1998. West Indian Identity in the Diaspora: Comparative and Historical Perspectives. *Latin American Perspectives* 25 (3):173-188. **ECR**

De la Fuente, Alejandro. 1998. Race, National Discourse, and Politics in Cuba: An Overview. *Latin American Perspectives*. Issue 100, vol. 25: 3: 43-69. **ECR**

Fernandes, S. (2003). "Fear of a Black Nation: Local Rappers, Transnational Crossings, and State Power in Contemporary Cuba." *Anthropological Quarterly* 76(4): 575-609. **ECR**

Torres-Saillant, Silvio. 1998. The Tribulations of Blackness: Stages in Dominican Racial Identity. *Latin American Perspectives* 25 (3):126-146. **ECR**

Optional:

Martinez-Echazabal, Lourdes. 1998. Mestizaje and the Discourse of National/Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845-1959. *Latin American Perspectives* 25 (3):21-42. **ECR**

SHORT PAPER #3: What is the central question of your research paper? What case or cases will you investigate? How will you go about doing this? This short paper should include a bibliography of at least seven sources that you have consulted.

Themes for the Comparative Analysis of Race Politics

8. The politics of “anti-discrimination” (Guest: Robert Lieberman, Columbia University) – March 31

****DINNER @ AJIHEI (11 CHAMBERS STREET/ OFF OF NASSAU STREET)**

Bleich, Erik. "Integrating Ideas into Policymaking Analysis: Frames and Race Policies in Britain and France," *Comparative Political Studies*, 35, 9, November, 2002: 1054-76. **ECR**

Lieberman, Robert. 2002. “Weak State, Strong Policy: Paradoxes of Race Policy in the United States, Great Britain, and France.” *Studies in American Political Development* 16 (Fall):138-161. **ECR**

Winant, H. (2001). *The world is a ghetto : race and democracy since World War II*. New York, Basic Books, chapter 10 on Europe, 249-88.

Blum, Alain, “Resistance to Identity Categorization in France,” in Kertzer DI, Arel D, eds. 2002. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, chapter 5: 121-147.

9. The undoing of racial orders? -- April 7 (Guest: Howard Winant, University of California, Santa Barbara; NB: Professor Winant will also give a public lecture at 4:30pm) – DINNER @ TERESA’S CAFÉ – 6:15PM

Solomos, John, and Les Back. 1996. *Racism and society, Sociology for a changing world*. London: Macmillan Press, 102-120. **ECR**

Winant, H. (2001). *The world is a ghetto : race and democracy since World War II*. New York, Basic Books, 133-217; 289-316.

Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press; chapter 16, pp. 653-680. **ECR**

OPTIONAL:

Thomas, B. and U. Nair-Reichert (2003). "Affirmative Action: Perspectives from the United States, India, Brazil." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 27(1): 3-14. **ECR**

10. Individual calculations about racial identity: Joining and changing groups - April 14 (student presentations)

Hardin, Russell. 1995. *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, pp.46-71. **ECR**

Jung, C. (2000). *Then I Was Black*. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 168-235.
To be distributed

Cornell, Stephen E., and Douglass Hartmann. 1997. *Ethnicity and race : making identities in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, chapter 7: 195-232.

11. The relationship between race politics and public policies (Taxation and AIDS) - April 21 (student presentations)

Cohen, Cathy J. 1999. *The boundaries of blackness : AIDS and the breakdown of Black politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapters 3, 5: 78-118, 149-185.
To be distributed

Lieberman, Evan. 2001. "National Political Community and the Politics of Income Taxation in Brazil and South Africa in the 20th Century." *Politics and Society* 29 (4):515-555. **ECR**

12. Wrap-up and remaining student presentations – April 28

SHORT PAPER #4: Interview 2 or 3 students (not from our seminar) about their own racial identities and write up an analysis of your findings. Explain how the interview either illuminates and/or discredits a particular argument discussed in one or more of the readings from the course.