

Controversies in Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies 200C
Spring 2007

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Office Hours: Mon. 9-10am, Wed. 12am-1pm

Class Meets: Wednesdays: 1pm-3:50pm, SSB 103

Purpose and Rationale

Many issues that spark public and academic debate involve the comparative study of race and ethnicity in fundamental ways. The purpose of this course is to bring knowledge of how race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, citizenship, and nation are constructed—and an understanding of comparative methodologies—to bear on controversies that have significant repercussions for academic research questions and public concerns. Of particular importance is how the larger context of discourse and praxis inside and outside the academy shapes the creation of arguments and their reception. Our specific intent is to develop modes of analysis and criticism that can be applied to understanding the complexities of ‘controversies’ and, more broadly, any matter that may be less publicly sensational, but remains fundamental to the production of social difference and inequality.

Questions I encourage you to ask as we read and discuss the materials for the course include:

What are the issues that the participants claim to be addressing in their discourse about the topic?

What are the implications of the questions being raised and the conclusions being drawn?

How do the represented voices frame and construct a “controversy” out of issues germane to the study of race and ethnicity?

Where do the various participants fall in terms of disciplinary areas, methodological strategies, and political arenas?

How do we analyze the fundamental or critical issues that are really at stake in a given “controversy” as it pertains to Ethnic Studies?

In what ways can we challenge the field of Ethnic Studies for its own framing, construction, and theoretical and methodological approaches as they may pertain to a given “controversy”?

How are we accountable and responsible for the work that we do and for the positions we take on controversial issues?

Required Texts:

George Lipsitz . 2001. *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*. University of Minnesota Press.

Donald Moore, Jake Kosek, and Anand Pandian (Eds.) 2003. *Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference*. Duke University Press.

Tiya Miles and Sharon P. Holland (Eds). 2006. *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country*. Duke University Press.

Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres. 2002. *The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy*. Harvard University Press.

Paul Gilroy. 2002. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Belknap Press.

Denise Ferreira da Silva. 2007. *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. University of Minnesota Press.

Howard Winant. 2002. *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy Since World War II*. Basic Books.

Selected readings in a course reader (see week 10).

All books are available at Groundwork bookstore (452-9625).

Evaluation: Participation	20%
Response essays (8)	40%
Final Paper	40%

Participation includes attendance at each class session and verbal engagement with your peers and the instructor on the materials under consideration for that week. Each student will be required to lead (or co-lead) a discussion session for one week, and that effort will also count significantly toward your participation grade. We will determine this schedule on the first day of class.

Response Essays are one page, single-spaced critical reactions to and analyses of the readings for that week. These are due at the beginning of each class session. I stress that these essays are to be focused on your own analysis and critique of the works (including linking the readings for that particular week with those of previous sessions), rather than descriptive summaries. You are free to make connections and references to your own work—I encourage this—but that should be brief because I want you to fully explore and focus on the readings for that week.

Final Papers are lengthier treatments of the course topic that allow you to explore and flesh out ideas, apply conceptual/theoretical and methodological insights from the class to a particular controversy (or controversies) or a topic of particular interest to you. More details to follow. These papers will be due on Wednesday of finals week (June 13, 2007).

Schedule

Week 1 (April 4): Introduction

Week 2 (April 11): **American Studies and Ethnic Studies in a Post-National Era**

Readings: Lipsitz

Week 3 (April 18): **African Diasporas, Indigenous Peoples, and a Challenge to Ethnic Studies**

Readings: Miles and Holland

Week 4 (April 25): **Race, Nature, and Power**

Readings: Moore *et al*

Week 5 (May 2): **Critical Race Theory and Colorblind Discourses and Politics**

Readings: Guinier and Torres

Week 6 (May 9): No Class: Mid-quarter break for catching up on reading and thinking through your final paper projects. You are encouraged to meet with me this week.

***Week 7** (May 16): **Beyond Race, Toward a New Humanism**

Readings: Gilroy

Week 8 (May 23): **Race as a Global Idea**

Readings: da Silva

Week 9 (May 30): **Race Theory, Comparative Geographies, and Globalization**

Readings: Winant

****Week 10** (June 6): **The Politics of Academic Freedom and Scholar Activism**

Readings:

Frank Fischer. “Democratic Prospects in an Age of Expertise” and “Professional Knowledge and Citizen Participation” (from *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge*)

Joe Feagin and Hernan Vera. “What is Liberation Sociology?”, “Improving Human Societies: Reassessing the Classical Theorists”; “Liberation Theory and Liberating Action.” (from *Liberation Sociology*)

David H. Price. “A Running Start to the Cold War”, “Examining the FBI’s Means and Methods”; and “Through a Fog Darkly: The Cold War’s Impact on Free Inquiry”

Patricia Hill Collins. “Black public intellectuals: From DuBois to the Present.” *Contexts*, Volume 4, Number 4, Fall 2005, pp. 22-27(6)

Angela Cavender Wilson. "Reclaiming our Humanity: Decolonization and the Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge." (from Devon Mihesuah and Angela Wilson's *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*).

Taiiaki Alfred. "Warrior Scholarship: Seeing the University as a Ground of Contention." (from Mihesuah and Wilson).

Ward Churchill. "'Some People Push Back': On the Justice of Roosting Chickens"

Final Paper due: June 13, 2007

*Instructor is out of town at a conference that day, so class will be rescheduled for another day that week

**Ethnic Studies Undergraduate Honors presentations are scheduled for this day, so class may be rescheduled

