

Race and Ethnicity in Latin America (JINS 338): Panama Perspectives

Spring 2010, Truman State University
VH 1400, TR 3:00-4:20
Office: KB 225A

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Description

How have Latin Americans constructed and interpreted racial and ethnic identities and ideologies? We will begin this course with a theoretical discussion of race, class, and gender, and then proceed to an evaluation of how they intersect and influence each other in a Latin American context. How do these identities help us understand Panamanian history and culture? What functions have these identities played in Panama, and how have they influenced cultural, economic, and political developments? How have the intersections of these identities contributed to the emergence of new forms of identity that contribute to the rich diversity that makes up Panama? Throughout this entire process we will constantly critique our assumptions of these categories in order to understand better the purposes they play in society.

Junior Interdisciplinary Writing Enhanced Seminar

This course focuses on intersections between disciplines, and interrogates their assumptions on race, class, and gender. We will emphasize the political and social roles that race, class and gender have played in Latin America, examine how various disciplines have interpreted these political and social changes, and then use this critique in order to reflect on the roles of race, class and gender in our own societies. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of how content from several disciplines interacts through classroom discussion, written reactions to the readings, and other assignments. Our goal is to transcend dichotomies that pit disciplines against each other and instead move toward an integrated synthesis which reflects the benefits of utilizing the tools of various disciplines to understand a problem.

Writing Enhanced

This is a writing-enhanced course, which means that writing is central to the seminar, and that we will emphasize cognition, process, and product. Cognition is not an isolated process, but rather an integral, active part of our activities. This class will emphasize writing as a process and will encourage both deep reflection on and deep revision of student writings. Written assignments in this class require students to write for a variety of audiences including private reflective essays on identity, collaborate essays to inform classmates, and analytical essays that portray higher levels of thought.

Requirements

Our goal in this class is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of human experiences, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Regular attendance and active participation are also necessary.

Please drop me a note if you are unable to attend, or if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

Readings

Following are the required books for this class. There will also be several additional articles to read. Read the assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998. ISBN: 0-85345-991-6

Wade, Peter. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. London. Chicago, Ill: Pluto Press, 1997. ISBN: 0-7453-0987-9

Assignments and grades

Course grades will be based on the following assignments. Students can check their grades on the class Blackboard web page (there is a total of 1000 possible points in the class). Assignments are due at the beginning of class, and I do not accept “drop and run” papers. Grades on late assignments will be penalized 10 percent for each day that they are late. Successful completion of all assignments is required to receive credit for this class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Home discipline handout (Jan 14)	50
Identity self-awareness study (Jan 14)	50
Review essays (3 x 100 points)	300
Panama readings	100
Excursion reports	100
Blog posts	100
Final exam	200
Participation	100

Home discipline handout. We will break the class into groups according to discipline. Discuss what holds a discipline together (subject matter, methodology, shared assumptions, theories, concepts, ideas), who do practitioners of that discipline do or study, and what topics or issues related to race, class and gender in Latin America might one study using that discipline. Write up a handout on how your discipline views these issues and present it to the class (bring enough copies of the handout for the entire class). See below for a list of suggested epistemological questions to consider in this essay, but do not write the handout simply as answers to the questions.

Identity self-awareness study. This essay asks you to reflect on the construction of identities through an examination of your own identity. See below for more information on this assignment.

Review essays. Critically evaluate the readings from weeks two through four in terms of what disciplinary assumptions and perspectives the authors bring to the subject, and how effectively they engage interactions between issues of race and ethnicity. What interpretative framework do

they employ, and what are the implications of those decisions? These essays should be typed, double-spaced, three pages long, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. Each essay is due at the beginning of class the Tuesday following our discussion of the material.

Panama readings. In small groups of three or four people, lead the discussion of one of the readings in Panama.

Excursion reports. Write a one-page report analyzing what you learned on each of our excursions.

Blog posts. Every week throughout the entire semester, post a reflection to the blog on the class website (<http://air.truman.edu/panama/>) about what you are experiencing, learning, and feeling. These should be written at a level and with a content so that your mother and friends back at Truman would want to read it.

Final exam. Some sort of weird, collaborative, experimental project in the last couple weeks back on campus to tie everything back together.

Class Schedule

Part 1: Latin America

Wk 1 (Jan 12 & 14): Introduction

Michael Seipel, *Interdisciplinarity: An Introduction*,
<http://www2.truman.edu/~mseipel/Interdisciplinarity.pdf>
Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"
<http://www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf>

Wk 2 (Jan 19 & 21): Theory

Black, Jan Knippers. "Introduction: Understanding the Persistence of Inequity." In *Latin America, its Problems and its Promise a Multidisciplinary Introduction*, 4th ed., ed. Jan Knippers Black, 1-20. Boulder Colo.: Westview Press, 2005.

Mills, C. Wright. "The Sociology of Stratification." In *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz, 305-23. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Scott, John. "Social Class and Stratification in Late Modernity." *Acta Sociologica* 45, no. 1 (2002): 23-35.

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-75.

Templeton, Alan R. "Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective." *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (September 1998): 632-50.

Wk 3 (Jan 26 & 28): Class structures (Galeano)

Wk 4 (Feb 2 & 4): Race and ethnicity (Wade)

Wk 5 (Feb 9 & 11): Wrap up

Part II: Panama (Feb 15 - April 10)

- Belli, Gioconda. *The Country Under My Skin: A memoir of love and war*. New York: Knopf, 2002, 204-212.
- Gardiner, C. Harvey. "The Latin-American Japanese and World War II." In *Japanese Americans, from relocation to redress*, ed. Roger Daniels and others, 142-45. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991.
- Guardia Boner, Elida. "Panama." In *The Greenwood encyclopedia of women's issues worldwide. Central and South America*, ed. Lynn Walter and Amy Lind, eds. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003.
- Howe, James. "The Kuna of Panama: Continuing threats to land and autonomy." In *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*, ed. David Maybury-Lewis, 81-106. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2002.
- McGuinness, Aims. "Searching for 'Latin America': Race and Sovereignty in the Americas in the 1850s." In *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, ed. Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, eds., 87-107. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- McPherson, Alan. "From 'Punks' to Geopoliticians: U. S. and Panamanian Teenagers and the 1964 Canal Zone Riots." *The Americas* 58, no. 3 (January 2002): 395-418.
- Priestley, George and Alberto Barrow. "The Black Movement in Panama: A Historical and Political Interpretation, 1994-2004." *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture & Society* 10, no. 3 (July-September 2008): 227-55.
- Salvador, Mari Lyn. "Kuna Women's Arts: Molas, meaning and markets." In *Crafting Gender: Women and folk art in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Eli Bartra. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Wickstrom, Stefanie. "The Politics of Development in Indigenous Panama." *Latin American Perspectives* 30, no. 4 (131) (July 2003): 43-68.

Part III: Reintegration

Tues, April 13 (research conference)

Thus, April 15

Tues, April 20

Thus, April 22

Tues, April 27

Thus, April 29

Epistemological questions for your discipline

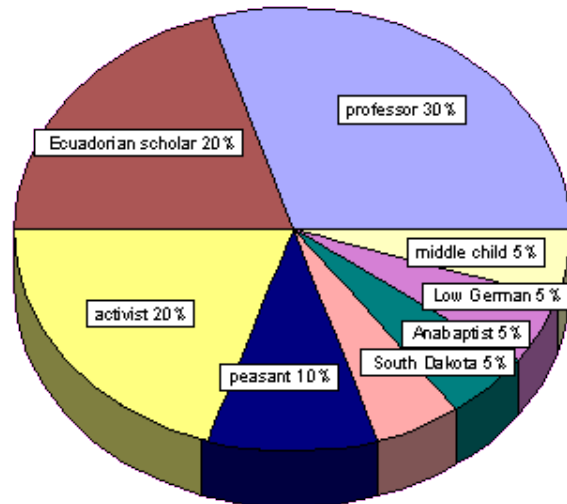
1. What kind of problems solving occurs in your discipline? What tools do practitioners of your discipline use to solve problems?
2. What is the main goal of your discipline?
3. What types of jobs/careers do people in your discipline find themselves carrying out?
4. What stereotypes do others have of people who work in your discipline?
5. What other disciplines do you draw on?
6. Does your discipline have any theories? If new theories come up, how do you test them?
7. What are some methods of research in your discipline?
8. What do people in your discipline find important in the world?
9. What conflicts do you run into in your discipline?
10. What constitutes a fact?
11. Do you think your discipline has an audience? If so, who is it?
12. What kind of events would cause your field to change over time?
13. Would you consider your epistemology more objective or subjective?
14. How does your world view differ from other disciplines' world views?
15. Do you use emotion or intuition to solve a problem?
16. Why do you do research?
17. In 50 years will your discipline be more important or less important than it is today?
18. What are the major problems in your field?
19. What separates your discipline from discipline X?

Identity self-awareness study

This assignment is designed to lead you to think more critically about race and ethnicity in Latin America through an analysis of your own identity and what that means to you. This project will be developed in two stages.

Part I: Think about your own identity as a person. It may help for you to talk with your friends or family members to think through this process. What are your values and beliefs? Items and issues you might want to think about in analyzing who you are may include:

- gender
- religion
- class or socioeconomic status
- age
- geographic location
- family heritage
- race or ethnicity
- exceptional abilities
- education
- nationality/citizenship
- occupation
- language
- sexual orientation or civil status
- political beliefs



Take the items that are appropriate for you, add others that are important to you, and draw a pie chart indicating what percentage of your identity each item comprises. For example, above is an example of how such a chart might look for me. In class, briefly present your chart to the class, and we will discuss the implications of what comprises an identity.

Part II: The second part of this assignment is to write an essay reflecting on your identity. Please feel free to utilize the assigned readings in this class as a guide to help you think about these issues. Questions you might consider in writing this essay are:

- What label would you place on your identity?
- What factors have helped form your identity?
- How do other aspects of your identity interact with each other?
- What role have race/ethnicity, class, and gender played in your family's history?
- How does your identity affect your daily life?
- How do you think your identity will affect your future? What bearing does it have on your political and economic prospects?
- How does your identity affect your values, beliefs, and purpose in life?
- Does your identity change as you are in different environments (do you think of yourself differently here at college than you might at home)?

The essay should be typed, double spaced, include citations and a bibliography as appropriate, and follow good essay form. I am not so much interested in the length of the essay as the depth of thought you exhibit, but three pages might be an appropriate length. There are no right or wrong answers for completing this assignment. I will grade the essay based on how well you think about, reflect on, and present the issues involved in this question. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or hesitations with this assignment.