INTRODUCTION:

In the Introduction to, A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America, Pulitzer Prize Winner, David K. Shipler (1997) wrote:

. . . a line runs through the heart of America. It divides Oak Park from Chicago’s West Side along the stark frontier of Austin Boulevard, splitting the two sides of the street into two nations, separating the carefully integrated town from the black ghetto, the middle class from the poor, the swept sidewalks from the gutters glistening with broken glass, the neat boutiques and the trim houses from the check-cashing joints and iron-grilled liquor stores (3).

Reading this passage, one can’t help but to be reminded of W.E.B. DuBois’ prophetic statement written 100 years earlier: “The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line.”

How can it be that while so much has changed, so little has changed? It is an unfortunate state of affairs that at the dawn of the 21st century the problem of the color line is still with us. Not only is it still with us, but it seems to be growing and morphing into other insidious manifestations, such as in the ethnic and religious wars that are prevalent both here and abroad.

To be fair, the “color line” is not the only boundary that divides our communities. In America (and other countries as well), we can also speak of a “class line” and a “gender line.” These three primary social structures influence our everyday interactions and experiences. Depending upon the situation, one “line” may be more salient than another, but they intersect in ways that make studying ethnic and race relations challenging. In this class, we will focus on the saliency of our ethnic and racial identities and how they impact both the dominant group and the subordinate groups.

It is my hope that this course will provide you with a theoretical foundation for confronting the ethnic and race problematic, both here and abroad, in order for you to look beyond the popular (mis)conceptions perpetuated by friends, family and the mass media so that you may make better informed decisions.
COURSE PREREQUISITES:
Prerequisites for Capstone courses are junior or senior standing and completion of all General Education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8. In addition, students are required to have completed SOC 101.

CORE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

**CO10:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

*How will this be accomplished:* Ethnic and race relations is central in structuring opportunity in any modern society. Readings, lectures, discussion, videos, and assignments will focus on questions of the historical development of the social relations between various ethnic and racial groups; the role of political, economic, and social institutions; cultural differences; personal and institutional discrimination and racism. Students learn how to recognize how background characteristics, which are often outside of one's control and awareness, help shape one's life chances.

**CO13:** Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge from various disciplines including history, political science, psychology, and women’s studies enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

*How will this be accomplished:* Ethnic and race relations influence our lives ranging from early experiences in the home to interpersonal and intergroup relations in the community, schools, and work to broad national politics. Readings, lectures, discussions, videos, and assignments will focus on how ethnic and racial identities shape individuals’ and groups’ experiences in our institutions and everyday lives. Students will learn how to analyze and evaluate historical and contemporary racism based on sociological research and theory.

The course further develops (but does not satisfy) CO 1 (Effective composition and communication), CO 3 (Critical analysis and Use of information), CO 6 (Cultures, Societies, and Individuals), and CO 11 (Global Contexts). It will do so via the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

**SLO #1:** Students will examine how race and ethnicity are socially constructed categories by exploring what gives them meaning, how the categories are maintained or transformed, and how they are related to inequality (satisfies CO10; integrates CO3, CO6, CO11).

**SLO #3:** Students will recognize how race and ethnicity are both distinct from and intersect with other major axis of social identity and life, such as class, gender, and nation (satisfies CO10, integrates, CO3, CO6, CO11).
**SLO #4:** Students will explore the significance of race and ethnicity in social institutions and individual experiences and identities (satisfies CO10; integrates CO6).

**SLO #5:** Students will be able to use insights from different academic disciplines, explain how institutional arrangements maintain, enhance, or reduce levels of social mobility and equity for members of minority group status and analyze the sociological processes involved (satisfies CO13; integrates CO3, CO6).

**SLO #6:** Students will be able to identify the similarities and differences of issues confronting ethnic and racial groups in different countries, evaluate their successes and challenges, analyze the social, economic, and policy factors that shape these systems, and explain implications for creating a more equitable society (satisfies CO13; integrates CO11).

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


**ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS:**

There are a number of additional readings that will be available to you on our WebCampus website. These will be clearly marked on your syllabus.
COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

ASSESSMENT OF SLOs (development and reinforcement of CO1 and CO3):

Student learning outcomes will be assessed through weekly writing assignments and four in-class essay exams that require students to integrate, synthesize, and apply the terms, concepts, and theories they are learning to original research in the sociology of ethnic and race relations. Students will also be required to participate in weekly discussions applying the material to current events happening in our community, the larger society, and around the world.

ATTENDANCE/WEEKLY DISCUSSIONS

Students must attend lectures, keep up with the reading, actively participate, and do the required work. Please note, the course is reading and writing intensive (approximately 100 pages per week). This is to introduce you to the major paradigm shifts in the field along with reviewing current scholarship in the area. Class periods will be lecture and discussion with 20-30 minutes set aside at the beginning of class on Wednesdays in order to specifically discuss the readings. You are encouraged to ask questions and share personal observations when they are appropriate and as they relate to the topic.

Keep in mind that the goal of class discussions is not to find out the “one true answer.” Instead, class discussion is to enrich your understanding of social behavior using the concepts and theories you will be studying throughout the semester. To this end, we will work together to help you build the skills you need to effectively communicate your questions, your concerns, and your understanding of the material.

If attendance and/or participation appears to be dropping off, I reserve the right to have an unannounced pop quiz testing you on the current material.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Most weeks there will be a short writing assignment due on Wednesday requiring you to reflect on the current topic in light of your personal experiences and then integrate your ideas with the readings into a cohesive discussion that demonstrates your understanding of the material. ‘A’ papers will include terms and citations from the week’s readings/videos and connect them to your social experiences.

Weeks in which a writing assignment is due are marked with an asterisk (*) on your course outline. The papers are to be 1-2 pages single-spaced, 12-point font (no larger than this font).

You are required to complete eight (8) throughout the semester. You may only turn in one (1) assignment per week, and you will not be allowed to turn in more than one per week at the end of the semester, so keep track of your progress.

Each paper will be worth **10 points** each for a total of **80 points**.
GROUND RULES FOR PAPERS AND DISCUSSION:

In this course, we will be discussing issues that can be very controversial, such as affirmative action, immigration, and the current #BlackLivesMatter movement. Philosophically, you and I are not going to agree on everything. That is to be expected. But this is not a philosophy class, it is a sociology class. As such, I will be presenting to you the results of scientifically gathered and interpreted data within different sociological paradigms through which to view contemporary issues so that you have more than just a visceral reaction to them. At the same time, scientific research is not infallible so it is our job to critically assess the work.

In addition, respect for your peers is essential to have a class environment that is conducive to learning. As such, you are expected to come to all class sessions, arrive to class on time, have completed the assigned readings, and be an active participant in discussions. If you do not wish to pay attention in class, you should not come to the session (it will be reflected in your grade). Additionally, distractions such as cell phones, instant messaging, and newspapers will not be tolerated. We all have something to learn from each other; therefore, you need to be present to share your ideas and learn from your peers.

In order to create a safe environment for discussion, we must all:

1. Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression DO exist.
2. Acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and the like is that we are all systematically misinformed about our own group and members of other groups.
3. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. Agree not to “blame victims” for the condition of their lives.
5. Assume that people – both the groups we study and members of this class – always do the best they can with the information they have.
6. Actively pursue information about our own groups and those of others.
7. Share information about our groups with other members of the class, and never, demean, or in any way, “put down” people for their experiences.
8. Agree to actively combat the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain.

I know that some of you come to this class with some very strong opinions about ethnic and racial issues. Others come looking for direction. And others (like me) struggle and wrestle with the issues to bring about a more just society. All I ask of you
is to be honest, sincere, and to come to class with an open mind. As your instructor, I am here not only to guide you through the material and help you become a critical thinker, but also to challenge you to see other view points.

“I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer...education as the practice of freedom.... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created.” –bell hooks

EXAMS:
There will be four exams throughout the semester drawing on all the course material – readings, lectures, videos, and discussions – during that section. Exams will be made-up of five short answer questions (25 pts each), and one long essay question (25 pts). A study guide will be posted on WebCampus one week prior to each exam.

Each exam will be worth 50 points each for a total of 200 points.

GRADING SCALE:
Total points for the class will be 280 points: 80 for the writing assignments and 200 for the four (4) exams. Grades will be determined as follows:

A = 280-252  B = 251-224  C = 223-196  D = 195-168  F = 167-0

Please note that these are the general parameters: the plus/minus system will be utilized. Class participation will be taken into consideration for your final grade; therefore, it is in your best interests to come to class prepared to discuss the issues that week.

EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS
Generally, you can expect a B grade if you attend class regularly and participate by contributing thoughtful reflections and assessment papers; in addition to, illustrating an understanding of the course material in the exams. Especially insightful in-class participation and excellent written work (well-crafted and thought-out) on the weekly assessments and exams will increase your grade. Sloppy or late work, infrequent class attendance, or a noticeable lack of effort will result in a lower grade.

To receive a good grade on any of the requirements, you do NOT have to reproduce the answer that you think I may be expecting. Instead, you should demonstrate a good grasp of the readings and other materials used in the class. Most importantly, you need to think for yourself and provide evidence to support your claims and arguments. If you have any concerns about your grade, please make an appointment to discuss it sooner ☺ rather than later 😞.
POLICIES

You are responsible for meeting course requirements. Keep track of your writing assignments, attendance, assessments – in other words, be aware of all deadlines listed on the syllabus.

Late papers will be graded down 1/2 of a grade for every late day, except in cases of verifiably legitimate reasons. Such reasons include illness or other severe circumstances and must be communicated to me before the assignment is due.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the university policy below if you are uncertain about what academic dishonesty means. Depending upon the severity of the offense, the consequences may range from failing the assignment to failing the course.

It is University policy to provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in the course or meet requirements. Please contact me to discuss any individual needs. The sooner you do, the better.

The syllabus can be understood as a contract between us. I do, however, reserve the right to make minor changes in the course as I see necessary for the good of the class. I will do my best to maintain this original syllabus and will make sure everyone is made aware of any changes in a timely and appropriate manner. Be sure to check the announcements on WebCampus weekly.

WANT TO CHAT?

I do! I want to talk with you throughout the semester. Although I may be available if you drop by the office, it is best to make an appointment. Email is the best method to make an appointment. Please see me if you are having a problem with some aspect of the course, but remember that office hours are not just for problems. I am eager to address any questions you may have, explore your ideas, brainstorm topics that interest you, or discuss future academic or professional goals.

For the quickest response, please email me at:

cmaes@unr.edu
UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Statement on Academic Dishonesty: “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses” constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the UNR General Catalog.

Statement of Disability Services: Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Statement for Academic Success Services: Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-443 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and the University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/). These centers support your classroom learning, but it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording: Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week of August 24th – Introduction
WebCampus: The Tyranny of Common Sense
Rationalizing the Irrational

Week of August 31st
*Paper Due – Weds
RDRP: Ch 1: Race in the 21st Century
WebCampus: Talking Past Each Other: Black and White Languages of Race
What Kind of Card is Race?

Week of September 7th – Racial Categorization: Who Decides?
*Monday, Labor Day, No Classes
**Paper Due – Weds
RDRP: Ch 2: The Invention of Race
WebCampus: On White Pride and Other Delusions
Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?

Week of September 14th – White Identity
Colorblind: Ch 1: The Rise and Triumph of Post-Racial Liberalism
WebCampus: “Is This a White Country or What?”
(Proto)Typical White Denial

FIRST EXAM – WEDNESDAY – SEPTEMBER 16TH

Week of September 21st – Functionalism & Assimilation Models
*Paper Due – Weds
Ethnic Myth: Part 1: The Simmering Melting Pot (all)
WebCampus: Best of Friends, Worlds Apart

Week of September 28th
*Paper Due – Weds
Ethnic Myth: Part 2: Social Class and Ethnic Myths (all)
WebCampus: Importing the Third World
Harvest of Shame
**Week of October 5th** – Applying the Models  
*Paper Due – Weds*

*The Price of Poverty:*  
Part I: Introduction  
Part II: Work (all)

*WebCampus:*  
The School Context  
Education and Life Chances

**Week of October 12th**

Catch-Up

Come Hell . . .  
Begin

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**SECOND EXAM – WEDNESDAY – OCTOBER 14th**

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**Week of October 19th** – Power/Conflict Models  
*Paper Due – Weds*

*RDRP:*  
Ch 3: Politics

*EBook (KC):*  
Ch 3: Right Hand in *The Half Has Never Been Told*

*WebCampus:*  
Apples are the Color of Blood

**Week of October 26th**  
*Paper Due – Weds*

*RDRP:*  
Ch 4: Economics

*EBook (KC):*  
Ch 4: Left Hand in *The Half Has Never Been Told*

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**Week of November 2nd**  
*Paper Due – Weds*

Come Hell . . .  
Finish

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**THIRD EXAM – MONDAY – NOVEMBER 9th**

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**The Declining Significance of Race?**

**Week of November 9th** – The Importance of Place  
*Wednesday, Veteran’s Day, No Classes*

*Punished:*  
Begin

*RDRP:*  
Ch 5: Housing

*WebCampus:*  
Going Back to Compton
Week of November 16th – Education & Affirmative Action
*Paper Due – Weds
RDRP: Ch 7: Education
WebCampus: A Particularly Cheap Whine Dreams Structured for Failure

Week of November 23rd – The School to Prison Pipeline
*Thursday & Friday, Holiday, No Classes
**Paper Due – Weds
RDRP: Ch 6: Crime & Punishment

Week of November 30th – Where Do We Go From Here?
*Paper Due – Weds
Punished: Finish
Colorblind: Part 2: The Trouble with Post-Racial Liberalism

Week of December 7th – Race Matters!
*Wednesday, December 9th – Prep Day
RDRP: Ch 11: Toward Racial Justice

FINAL EXAM – MONDAY – DECEMBER 14th
10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

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Note: the course outline is a tentative schedule that I hope to stick by; however, due to the length of discussions and other factors beyond my control, this schedule will undoubtedly change. I’m comfortable with that, as you should be – the point in a course like this one (or any course, actually) should be the quality of the learning experience, not the quantity of material consumed. There is a lot of reading for this course, none of which is optional. You are expected to complete the readings on time and be prepared to discuss them in class. Should you get behind, it will be incredibly difficult to catch up. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY TO KEEP INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS.