

Political Science 3739  
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### Politics of Race, Class and Ethnicity

#### Required Books:

The following may be purchased from West Bank Bookstore:

George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (Oxford)

Paula Rothenberg, *Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S.: An Integrated Study* [5<sup>th</sup> Edition](St. Martin's Press)

Michael Goldfield, *The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New Press)

Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro, *How Far We Slaves Have Come* (Pathfinder)

#### Course Objectives:

What similarities are there, if any, between the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, South Africa, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and Palestine/Israel? Why does racial and ethnic conflict persist in so many regions of the world? To what extent does racial conflict in the U.S. reflect underlying class conflict? How is ethnic/racial oppression similar and different from sexual oppression?

These are some of the questions that this course will address and attempt to answer. It is an introductory examination of the role of ethnicity and/or race in the political process with particular emphasis on political strife. Throughout the course an effort will be made to formulate hypotheses to explain the whys and hows of ethnic conflict. To this end the course has a comparative perspective, drawing on the experiences of very diverse settings in order to make generalizations. However, the primary focus will be the Black experience in the U.S., South Africa and Cuba. Data from other group experiences will be employed to make contrasts. An important aspect of the analysis will focus on the relative importance of ethnicity/race and class in explaining political conflict. Gender or sex will also be addressed to some degree in order to see how it intersects with ethnicity and class. Finally, the relationship between revolutionary change and the resolution of ethnic strife will be looked at.

#### Course Requirements:

Participants may fulfill these by selecting one of two options:

1) By taking the midquarter and final exam, and writing a short paper of about 5 to 10 typewritten pages depending on whether you are registered for **3 or 4 credits** (See Short Paper Assignment)

OR

2) By taking the final exam and doing a research paper on a subject relevant to the

course. The details of the project will be discussed with each individual who pursues this option. The decision to write a research paper must be made by at least **February 6**. For those registered for **3 credits** the paper length is expected to be between 12 to 15 pages; for those registered for **4 credits** the length should be between 17 to 20 pages.

For both options, the final exam will be worth 50% of the final grade; the short paper and midquarter will be worth 25% each. The research paper will be worth 50%. Both exams will be based on the readings, lectures and class discussion. Study questions will be provided well in advance of both exams.

The mid-session exam will be on **March 15** and the final on **May 16**. All papers are due on **May 10** (last day of class).

Course Outline:

**I. Introduction to the Study of the Politics of Race, Class and Ethnicity**

**Jan. 23-28**

**Required Readings:** (An asterisk [\*] means the readings are included in the course packet available at Paradigm Course Resources, 1501 University Av. S.E.)

Mirta Ojito, "Best of Friends, Worlds Apart,,," *New York Times*, June 5, 2000\*  
Rothenberg, 11-20, 86-93  
Joe Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations*, "Theoretical Perspectives,,," 30-64\*  
Fredrickson, "Introduction" xi-xxv.  
Goldfield, 5-34

**II. Race, Class, Ethnicity and Political Stratification**

**Jan. 30-Feb. 8**

*Origins and Evolution of Racial Stratification: The United States Case*

**Required readings:**

Fredrickson, 3-93  
Rothenberg, 324-362  
Rothenberg, Part IV: Economics of Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S., 253-320.  
Rothenberg, Part VI: How it Happened, 427-506

Film: "Africans in America,,," Part I

**Feb. 11-18**

*The South African Case*

**Required readings:**

Fredrickson, 3-93  
Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation*, 84-119\*

Film: The Tribal Mind: South Africa

**Feb. 20-27**

*The Cuban Case*

**Required readings:**

*Afro-Cuban History: A Time Line\**

Cannon, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 9-43\*

Bethel, *Cuba*, 1-55\*

Alarcon, *Cuba's First War of Independence\**

Arandia, *A Panorama of Afro-Cuban Culture and History\**

**III. The Social Construction of Identity and Group Consciousness**

**March 1-15**

Rothenberg, "Part I: 21- 86; Part III, 183-252; Part VII, 507-582

Fredrickson, 94-135

Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and difference".\*

Barbara Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States."\*

UNESCO Race Statement\*

Hirsch and Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans and Americanization*, 189-200\*

Film: Girls Apart (See Short Paper Assignment question #2 re this film)

**March 15 - MID-SEMESTER EXAM**

**March 25-April 12**

**A. Class versus Race**

Rothenberg, 95-182

Goldfield, 36-173

Rebecca Scott, from *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 255-93\*

Franklin Knight, "Cuban Slavery and Race Relations,, 179-94\*

Lawrence Glasco, "Race in Three Cuban Cities,, 67-71\*

Darien Davis, "Nationalism and Civil Rights in Cuba,, 35-51\*

A. Nimtz, "Race and Democracy in America: Marx vs. Tocqueville,,"\*

David Johnston, "Gap Between Rich and Poor Found Substantially Wider,, *New York Times* 9/7/99\*

Alexander Stille, "Grounded by an Income Gap,, *New York Times*, 12/15/01\*

Charlie LeDuff, "At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die,, *New York Times* 6/16/00\*

Terry Kandal, "Gender, Race & Ethnicity: Let's Not Forget Class,,"\*

#### **IV. Race, Class and Ethnic Group Conflict**

**April 15-29**

Fredrickson, 136-282

Fredrickson, "Understanding Racism,," *The Comparative Imagination*, 77-97\*

Goldfield, 176-261,

A. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, 189-234\*

Rebecca Scott, "Fault Lines, Color Lines, and Party Lines,,"\*

Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912*, 142-226\*

Film: Matewan

Film: Eyes on the Prize: The Battle of Birmingham

#### **V. Race, Class, Ethnicity and Socio-Political Change and Revolutions**

**May 1-10**

Rothenberg, 583-661

Goldfield, 262-363

A. Marx, *Making Race*, 217-49\*

Castro and Mandela, *How For We Slaves Have Come*

Castro, "The battle to end racial discrimination"\*

Che Guevara, "The University Should Color Itself Black, Mulatto, Worker and Peasant,,"\*

Castro, "Speech Delivered at the South African Parliament,,"\*

T. Figueroa, "Fidel Castro Gets Hero's Welcome in South Africa,,"\*

UNEA, "Culture and Society,,"

Film: Gay Cuba

Film: Cuba in Africa (excerpts)

**May 10 (All papers due)**

**May 16 Final Examination (4-6pm)**

#### **Short Paper Assignment**

(You may select **either one** of the following topics if you are registered for **3** credits; you must do

**both** questions if you are registered for **4** credits.)

1. John Sayles's film "Matewan," is a dramatic portrayal of a famous U.S. labor battle in the 1920's, mine workers in the coal fields of Mingo County, West Virginia. One of the central themes of the film is the challenge for the striking miners of overcoming racial and ethnic divisions in order to present a united front against the company. The film illustrates, in other words, the long-standing tension between race and class identity in U.S. political history. Your task is to discuss how in fact the film illustrates this tension in terms of the course readings, specifically, Goldfield's *The Color of Politics*, and lectures.

Firstly, to what extent does the film illustrate some of the claims that Goldfield makes in the last section of Chapter Five, "Early Twentieth-Century Labor and Radicalism,,"? Secondly, does the film in any way either validate or challenge any of the seven hypotheses that Goldfield puts forward in the "Introduction,," to explain "the inability of U.S. workers to develop sustained forms of class organization and consciousness,,"? Lastly, employing both readings and lectures, does the film suggest in any way how the race-class tension might be resolved in the future?

2. The video film "Girls Apart" compares and contrasts the lives and thoughts of two young South African women -- one African and the other white. The film covers a wide range of subjects but focuses on their views and relationship to the apartheid system and the struggle against that system. In Chapter Five from her book *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, "Gender and Race,," (see course packet) Elizabeth Spelman makes an argument about how gender and race should be treated by feminists. Your assignment essentially is to assess the validity of Spelman's argument by drawing on the film and other data from the readings and lectures about South Africa.

More specifically, you should address the following questions: To what extent, if any, does the film validate Spelman's views about the disadvantage of viewing women as women only, i.e. "we are all women"? How does it do that? What are the specifics about the South African situation as illustrated in the film and other course material that validate or contradict Spelman's views regarding the relative importance of racism and sexism? Finally, what does the South African case suggest about the relationship between the liberation of Blacks and that of women?

**Please keep your essays to no more than 5 typewritten pages. Due date May 10.**