

Ethnic Studies 301 (W, E): Racial and Ethnic Identity in London

Prerequisites: One social sciences core course or consent of the instructor.

This course is concerned with the continuing construction, expression and persistence of racial and ethnic identity in various cultural forms and social contexts in London. The objective of the course is for students to develop a critical understanding of why and how racial and ethnic groups in London engage in social and cultural processes of identity formation

The course is organized into two parts. The first part provides an overview of basic concepts in the study of racial/ethnic identity, such as races, ethnic groups, and ethnicity. We also will review various theoretical approaches to racial/ethnic identity, such as circumstantialism and constructionism. The second part of the course is concerned with racial/ethnic identity in London, including Afro-Caribbean and Asian identity. For the course we will follow the constructionist approach to racial/ethnic identity that contends racial and ethnic groups construct or create a particular identity for themselves under given historical circumstances to advance their political or economic interests.

In more personal terms, the objective of the course is for the individual student to gain an understanding of the significance of racial/ethnic identity in his/her daily life, for example, in interpersonal relationships and in relations with institutions of the larger society.

London provides an excellent site for our course since it is very racially and ethnically diverse with numerous ethnic and racial communities and their distinct identities dispersed throughout the city. We will visit a few of these communities for guided tours, such as Brick Lane in the East End working class area, the setting of a novel we will be reading on the Bangladeshi immigrant community. Muslim South Asians have found themselves racialized as possible terrorists since the suicide subway and bus bombings in London on July 7, 2005. We will discuss changes in the racial/ethnic identity of various groups in London, including White Britons, in the larger context of the political and economic circumstances in which they are situated, including global terrorism and European and other labor migration. As a course with Writing and Contemporary Ethical Issues focus designations, students will be required to research and write a paper on the identity of a racial or ethnic group in London and on some of the ethical issues that confront that group.

Concerning contemporary ethical issues, we will discuss colonialism, racism, discrimination, stereotyping, (in)justice, (in)equality, and other topics as major ethical issues related to the expression of racial and ethnic identity in London. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the course material and comprise at least 30 percent of the course content. We will devote at least eight hours of class time to discussing ethical issues. Through lectures, discussions, and paper assignments, students will develop basic competency in identifying and deliberating on ethical issues so that they can make ethically determined judgments.

Required Readings:

- M. Ali. 2003. *Brick Lane*. New York: Scribner.
- S. Cornell and D. Hartmann. 2007. *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

- K. Fox. 2004. *Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Part I: Concepts and Theories in the Study of Racial/Ethnic Identity

Week 1

Outline of course, requirements and grading
Ethnic groups and races
Readings: Cornell and Hartmann, ch. 1

Week 2

Race and ethnicity
Assimilationism: Acculturation and integration
Readings: Cornell and Hartmann, ch. 2

Week 3

Racial/ethnic identity theories: Primordialism and circumstantialism
Racial/ethnic identity theories: Constructionism
Readings: Cornell and Hartmann, ch. 3-4

Week 4

Case studies of identity construction
Paper consultation (no class)
Readings: Cornell and Hartmann, ch. 5-7

Part II: Racial and Ethnic Identity in London

Week 5

Post-World War II immigration to London and U.K.
European Union immigration to London and U.K.
Readings: J. Solomos, "The Politics of Race and Immigration since 1945" (handout)

Week 6

Overview of racial and ethnic groups in London
Discussion with Roehampton students on racial/ethnic identity
Readings: G. Bauman, "Communities of Color" (handout)

Week 7

English identity
Discussion of *Watching the English*
Readings: *Watching the English*

Week 8

Review for midterm exam
Midterm exam

Week 9

Irish identity

Asian identity

Readings: J. Nagle, “‘Everybody is Irish on St. Paddy’s’: Ambivalence and Alterity on London’s St. Patrick’s Day 2002.” (handout)

A. Siddiqui, “Muslim Youth in Britain: Cultural and Religious Conflict” (handout)

Week 10

Chinese identity

Multiracial identity

Readings: D. Parker, “Emerging British Chinese Identities” (handout)

Week 11

Black/Afro-Caribbean identity

Film on Black/Afro-Caribbean identity

Readings: N. Britton, “Examining Police/Black Relations: What’s in a Story?” (handout)

Week 12

Racialization of Muslim Asian identity

Discussion of *Brick Lane*

Readings: *Brick Lane*

Week 13

Globalization of racial/ethnic identity

Student presentations

Readings: Cornell and Hartmann, ch. 8

Week 14

Student presentations

Student presentations

Week 15

Review and summary of course

Final exam

Exams: There will be two course examinations, i.e., a midterm and a final, both of which will consist only of essay questions. You will be provided with a study guide consisting of sample questions to focus your review for the exam. Each exam will count for 25 percent of your final course grade. You must notify me before the start of the class period if you are unable to take an examination.

Ethnic Identity Papers: The remaining 50 percent of your final grade will be based on two papers you submit. A 5-page paper and a 10 to 12-page paper are required for the course. The first paper will represent 16.7 percent of your final course grade, while the second paper counts for 33.3 percent of your final grade. In writing these papers you should progress from primarily descriptive to more analytic writing in which you contribute your own insights and analysis.

The topic of the first paper is the significance and meaning to you of your own racial or ethnic

identity. Issues you can discuss include what meaning does this identity have for you, how and when did you acquire that meaning, how has that meaning changed over the course of your life, how do you express your identity (cultural values or practices, social activities, social relationships), how significant is your identity to you in defining who you are as a person, and how does your identity affect your relationships with others and your social status in society. This assignment also serves as a means for you to discuss ethical issues related to your racial or ethnic identity, such as under what circumstances should you express your identity, how do you assert your identity ethically, or should everyone claim a common national identity and not express racial or ethnic identities?

A 3-page draft of the first paper is due during the fourth week of the term. I will review this draft with you and offer suggestions for improvement when we have individual consultations during the week. The final version of this paper is due during the fifth week of the term.

The second paper needs to be concerned with the racial or ethnic identity or an aspect of that identity of a contemporary group of people in London. The paper can be based on your own field research (e.g., interviews) and/or on written sources. In conducting research for your paper, do not use Internet sources based on unpublished material unless you receive permission from the instructor.

The paper should include a description of the racial/ethnic identity of your selected group by discussing such topics as its distinctive social characteristics and the cultural and social features used to construct and express its identity (values, beliefs, social organizations, practices), how its identity has changed over time (e.g., names of the group), and how the group is perceived or portrayed by other groups (stereotypes or representations). You can also describe the “boundary and meaning” of your group as discussed on page 84 of the Cornell and Hartmann book. Much of this descriptive information can be obtained from a literature review.

In researching and writing this paper, you must go beyond providing only a description of the racial/ethnic identity of the group and present an analytic argument of your own concerning that identity. You can do this by focusing on a particular research question or issue regarding the group’s identity. For example, you might discuss *why* the group constructs and expresses its identity in a particular way, or *why and how* did its identity change over time. These explanatory or analytic arguments represent your own contribution to the paper (as opposed to information you obtain from written sources) and therefore the more important part. You must also apply concepts or theories discussed in class, particularly the constructionist approach, or from the assigned readings in your paper.

You must consult me regarding your paper topic. I can provide you with references, research advice, and possible topics if you are having difficulty developing one. During the eleventh week of the term you need to submit a brief progress report (half-page) that describes the work you have been doing and will be doing to complete your paper on schedule.

Students will each make a ten minute presentation on their research paper toward the end of the term. This will enable you to receive suggestions for revision before you finalize it. The paper is due the week after the final exam that will be held on the last day of class. Papers turned in late

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will have their grade lowered.

Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. The UH Manoa *Student Conduct Code* (1992: 6) defines plagiarism as “submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual’s work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another’s idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student’s language and style, or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved.” Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade for the course.

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9 to 10 a.m. or by appointment. I encourage all of you to come and see me during the term.

Instructor Information: I was born and raised on Maui and attended high school and college in California. My training is in social anthropology (PhD, University of London), and I have conducted fieldwork in Hawai‘i and the Philippines where I taught at a Catholic university in Manila for three years in the mid 1980s. I am the author of *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai‘i* (2008) and *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities and Communities* (1998). I have researched and written on ethnicity and ethnic relations in Hawai‘i, the global Filipino diaspora, and minority access to higher education. Besides this course, I teach the Ethnic Studies courses on Race and Ethnicity in Hawai‘i, Asian Americans, Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, and Filipinos in Hawai‘i.