

SOC 227

Race and Ethnic Relations

General Description

Introduction

This course is designed to introduce you to the topic of race and ethnic relations from a sociological point of view. The issues discussed in this course will affect you differently depending on your own race or ethnic background, your age, your socioeconomic status, and other demographic variables. At the same time, as the author of this course manual, my own background has implications for the way I approach this course. No matter how objective your textbook author (Farley) or I try to be, we both have different life experiences that affect what we choose as a text or the material to include in a text, the supplemental readings we choose, what we choose to emphasize in the course, and what we expect from you as a student.

I am a married, white female, mother of three children, who comes from a small rural Southern town in Georgia. I attended high school and college in the 1970s near the end of the 1960s protests, attended graduate school in the North (Cornell), and transferred to the South (UNC-Chapel Hill) to finish my doctorate in sociology. Having been raised in a lower middle-class, two-parent family until my father was killed in an automobile accident when I was sixteen, I have done my share of working while going to school, holding down two or more jobs at the same time, and generally worrying a lot about money and finances. I mention this only because these experiences, too, affect my position on topics related to majority-minority relations in our country.

Many of my former students considered me very liberal in my views toward minorities, but I have never been convinced that label fits. Instead, I often find myself on different sides of several fences, depending on the issue. For instance, I am not at all convinced that busing did anything for anyone's education, but I am just as convinced that neighborhood schools would not have achieved racial integration, since

neighborhoods themselves are so racially segregated in our country. The point of all this, though, is that what I am or what I believe as the author of this course does not mean that I have an agenda for you in this course. As an educator, I will try to provide you with the information that you need to make decisions for yourself about racial and ethnic relations. At no point in the course are you required to agree with me, but at all points of the course you are encouraged to think about your own beliefs and values, sort through them as you become more knowledgeable about topics in race/ethnic relations, and then have the courage of your convictions afterwards. Many issues will come up in a course such as this that you may feel very strongly about. If so, let your instructor know, and if you have questions, your instructor will try to answer them, or point you in the direction you need to go to find answers for yourself.

Course Plan

The primary structure of the course is organized around your main textbook, Farley's *Majority-Minority Relations*, but I have assigned supplemental readings as well. I tend to emphasize application of material in all of my teaching, so the assignments for each unit are heavily weighted toward application. More general short-answer and short-essay questions are also included. These should be very useful in studying for your exam, which will follow a similar format. A section entitled "Confronting Issues" is also included at the end of each unit. This section will allow you to express some of your opinions and ideas about the issues we discuss in the units.

I hope you enjoy the course, but more importantly, I hope you gain some insight into the behavior and social position of people who differ from you, regardless of your background. It is much easier to believe in the American dream if you are living it, for instance, than if you are not, or worse yet, feel as if you *cannot*. And many, many people in this country are not living that dream. Proportionate to their numbers in the population (and thus their percentages of the total population), those who are less likely to be living the dream are more likely to be a member of a minority group. That simple fact is the basis of much of the sociological perspective on majority-minority relations that we will discuss throughout the course—the overrepresentation of poverty and powerlessness among minorities.

The course is not designed to enrage those of you who are minorities, nor to provoke guilt, anger, or resentment in those

of you in the majority, but it is designed to give you a different view of what United States majority-minority relations look like, how they evolved from genocide to paternalism, competition, tolerance, and in some cases, genuine acceptance—and what they can be.

Required Texts

The texts required for this course are:

- Farley, John E. *Majority-Minority Relations* (4th edition, 2000)
- Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me* (1960)
- Jacobs, Bruce A. *Race Manners* (1999)
- Anson, Robert Sam. *Best Intentions* (1987)
- Able, Deborah. *Hate Groups* (2000), ISBN 076601245X (See note below.)

With the exception of *Hate Groups*, the books for this course can be ordered from the Higher Grounds bookstore at the Friday Center using the book order form located after this section. *Hate Groups* (ISBN 076601245X) is not available from Higher Grounds, so you will need to locate the book elsewhere; two possible sources are bookfinder.com and studentshopper.com.

Suggestions for Study

One of the most challenging aspects of taking a self-paced correspondence course is managing your time and completing the course. I have divided the course into ten distinct units, which you should be able to complete on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. I know that many of you have other responsibilities such as families, jobs, and other courses, but if you will set aside a certain time each day or week, as if you had to go to the class, you will soon get into the routine, and the “getting down to do an assignment” won’t seem so overwhelming. Your instructor will try to grade your assignments as quickly as possible so that you can get feedback on what you have done. Because the question of “help” has come up with former students, I do want to mention that this is an **independent** course. That means that you do the work yourself. For those of you on campus who may have heard of the course through friends of yours, it is **not** okay to use their graded and returned assignments to do your own. I want to know what **you** know, not what your friend knew. I feel very strongly that using graded assignments is a violation of the honor code, so please use your own knowledge and insight when completing your assignment.

**Grading and
Final Exam**

Your final exam, which counts for 50 percent of your course grade, covers the same types of questions as your assignments. There will be a combination of multiple choice or matching, short answer, and short essay. You must pass the final exam in order to receive credit for the course. I have included study charts in some units, which will be helpful summary reviews for your final. On individual assignments, it is okay to answer with short answers unless I have indicated otherwise.

You will be required to bring a short article (from a newspaper, magazine, or similar publication) with you to the final exam. The article, which should be dated during the time you are taking this course, should discuss, report, or explain some aspect of majority-minority relations. You must include the article with your completed final exam when it is returned to your instructor for grading. In your own mind, you can begin to think about what you would write about the article. That will be one of your final exam questions: to discuss any three concepts from the course as they relate to your article.

Good luck with the course!