

Sociology 47: An Introduction to Race in the US

Winter 2025
Dartmouth College

Professor:	Emily Walton	Place:	Thornton 105
Office:	Blunt Hall 306B	Time:	MWF, 10:10-11:15am
Office Hours:	Tues 2-3pm and by appt	X-hour:	Thurs, 12:15-1:05pm
email:	Emily.C.Walton@Dartmouth.edu		

Race is a way of “making up people”.

-- Michael Omi and Howard Winant, 2015

Description of the course

This course is a survey of sociological perspectives on race in the United States. It begins by examining the social construction of race, theories of racial inequality, and historical and contemporary issues among specific racialized groups. The second part of the course analyzes major systemic inequalities, such as in policing, incarceration, residential segregation, education, and work. The course ends with an examination of specific policies and mechanisms intended to ameliorate racial inequality, such as affirmative action, systemic policy change, activism, and antiracism.

Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete Socy 47 will be able to:

- Analyze the social factors shaping individual and group experiences of racialization.
- Perform critical readings of assigned works, participate effectively in class discussion, and offer compelling written and oral arguments.
- Utilize their sociological imaginations to understand race and racism within a larger structural context.

Required reading

All required readings are posted as PDFs on the course Canvas site. The reading load in this course is reasonable. I expect you to read all course material before class on the day that we are discussing it.

Course requirements

1. Participation (40 points) There are two ways to earn your participation grade.

First, facilitate a seminar discussion (20 points). You will be able to sign up for a slot in the first week of class. Facilitating discussion requires some preparation before class. I would suggest reading the material carefully, considering the (personal/societal/policy) implications, and preparing some thought-provoking questions to guide the class discussion. Your questions should help us 1) come to a common understanding of the readings' main arguments, and 2) reflect on the greater implications of the findings.

Second, actively participate in class discussions (20 points). You must be able to demonstrate verbally that you have read the material critically and are engaged in understanding it more deeply with your peers. I will keep track of your participation in our discussions and communicate at midterm and at the end of term about your performance.

2. Critical writing (200 points)

We will have daily reading quizzes (10 points each). You will have ten minutes (after the mini-lecture and before the seminar discussion) to respond to two straightforward, but critical questions about the reading. These quizzes are closed book, and your responses will be hand-written. All you need to do to prepare is carefully read the piece(s) for the day. There are 23 reading days and therefore 23 quizzes. I will drop your 3 lowest grades or, if you are absent, you will drop that day's quiz.

3. Exams (200 points)

We will have two exams in the course – a midterm at the end of Week 5 and a final at the end of Week 9. Each in-class, closed book, hand-written, exam will consist of 2 to 3 short essay questions in which you are asked to analyze and apply the material we have learned together.

Grading

I follow the [grading conventions as defined by the Organization, Regulations, and Courses \(ORC\)](#) at Dartmouth. I will determine your final letter grade according to the following percentage breakdown:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A	95-100%	C+	77-79.9%
A-	92-94.9%	C	73-76.9%
B+	89-91.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B	83-88.9%	D	60-69.9%
B-	80-82.9%	E	< 60%

Important Notes

Attendance

It is my expectation that you will attend each class meeting—and that you will arrive on time and stay for the duration. There are no opportunities to make up missed in-class work. In the event that you miss a class for any reason, please plan to get notes from another student. If you anticipate missing class because of athletic team participation, religious observances, or some other reason, please arrange a meeting with me at the start of the term and bring documentation of the expected conflicts.

Late work

Unexpected things will come up over the course of the term. To ensure you don't wind up in a difficult position, plan ahead: start your assignments early and finish them in advance of the deadline. Please speak with me at the beginning of the term if you anticipate any circumstances that might affect your ability to get your work in on time.

Extensions will only be given if a deadline was missed because of circumstances beyond your control. For example: severe illness requiring a doctor's visit or hospitalization, or death in the family. Generally not feeling well, having computer problems, scheduling conflicts with interviews, appointments, or exams in other classes, etc. are not extreme circumstances. If you believe you are eligible for an extension, it is your responsibility to notify me before missing the deadline and explain in writing why your circumstances warrant an exception.

Accommodations

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are encouraged to schedule a meeting with me as early in the term as possible. This conversation will help to establish what supports are built into my course. In order for accommodations to be authorized, students are required to consult with [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) and to request an accommodation email be sent to me. We will work together with SAS if accommodations need to be modified based on the learning environment. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.
(student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 603-646-9900)

Wellness

The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to support your wellness:

- [Undergraduate deans](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Student Wellness Center](#)
- [Dartmouth Mental Health Union](#) and their [Peer Support Program](#)
- [Sexual Assault Peer Alliance](#) (SAPA)

Academic Honor

I assume you will follow intellectual honor and integrity in this class. For more guidance on the Honor Principle, see: <https://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-honor-principle>
Students must do their own work—they will write their own papers and exams, prepare their own presentations, and cite the original sources of any material they draw on for their papers. Any student who submits work which is not their own or commits other acts of academic dishonesty is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or separation. For a broad overview on the practice of citing sources, see <http://dartmouth.edu/writing-speech/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>.

Communication

My office hours are for you. You are welcome to come in and talk with me about anything during my posted hours. I am also available by appointment if my office hours do not coincide with your schedule. I regularly check e-mail during the school day (9am-4pm) and will make every effort to reply to messages as soon as possible. I expect students to regularly check their Dartmouth e-mail and Canvas accounts for class announcements and updates.

Classroom Responsibility and Courtesy

All students are expected to have a voice in our class dialogue. Class participation involves thinking carefully, listening, and posing questions to others as much as it is about sharing your ideas. This requires us to be present, set aside distractions, and focus our attention on engaging with one another. Please put your cell phones on vibrate, do not text, and do not use your laptop during class.

The tone with which we engage one another is also extremely important and should come from a place of mutual respect and understanding. You are free to disagree with the views raised in the material or by others in the class but must do so with a reasoned critique based on a complete consideration of their argument. Your own argument should be supported by sociological evidence rather than personal opinion or anecdotes. Disrespectful behavior such as talking while others are talking, dominating the floor, or engaging in personal attacks will not be tolerated. You are expected to treat one another and me with respect at all times.

Additional Support for Learning

The Writing Center: At the Writing Center, you can meet one-on-one with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multimedia assignment.
<https://students.dartmouth.edu/writing-center/>

Academic Skills Center (ASC): The mission of the ASC is to assist students in achieving academic success through a wide variety of services and programs. The ASC is available to all students who wish to improve their academic skills and ability to learn, thereby maximizing their academic experience and allowing them to achieve greater academic performance and personal fulfillment. <https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/>

Course Plan and Readings

Week One (Jan 6-10)

Monday **Introduction to the course**

Wednesday **What is race?**

- Hirschman (2004), “On the Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race”

Friday **Race as a performance**

- Patel (2005), “Performative Aspects of Race”

Week Two (Jan 13-17)

Monday **Racial formation**

- Omi and Winant (2015), “The Theory of Racial Formation”

Wednesday **Settler Colonialism**

- Nakano Glenn (2015), “Settler Colonialism as Structure”

Friday **Colorblind racism**

- Bonilla-Silva (2018), *Racism Without Racists* (Ch. 3)

Week Three (Jan 20-24)

Monday **MLK Jr. Day – NO CLASS**

Wednesday **US Imperialism**

- King (2019), “Recentring U.S. Empire”

Friday **Latino/a/x Americanness**

- Sáenz and Douglas (2015), “A Call for Racialization”
- Cadena Jr. (2023), “Paradoxical Politics?”

Week Four (Jan 27-31)

Monday **Asian Americanness**

- Kim (1999), “Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans”

Wednesday **Nativeness and Indigeneity**

- McKay (2021), “Real Indians”
- Hobson (1999), “I Don’t Think People Should Have to Prove Themselves”
- Powers (2020), “On Native Land”

- Friday Blackness**
- Baldwin (1998 [1963]), “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew”
 - Coates (2015), *Between the World and Me* (Selection from Ch.1, pp.5-33)

Week Five (Feb 3-7)

- Monday Multiraciality**
- Waring (2023), “Appearance, Parentage, and Paradox”

- Wednesday Whiteness**
- McIntosh (1990), “White Privilege”
 - Bhopal (2023), “Critical Race Theory”

- Friday Midterm exam**

Week Six (Feb 10-14)

- Monday Structural violence**
- Smångs (2016), “Doing Violence, Making Race”

- Wednesday Fear and order**
- Hayes (2017), *A Colony in a Nation*, Chapters I and IV

- Friday Policing**
- Jones et al. (2023), “Other than the Projects, You Stay Professional”

Week Seven (Feb 17-21)

- Monday Incarceration**
- Walker (2016), “Race Making in a Penal Institution”

- Wednesday Urban issues**
- Herbert and Brown (2023), “Race, Property, and Erasure”

- Friday Neighborhood segregation**
- Coates (2014), “The Case for Reparations”

Week Eight (Feb 24-28)

- Monday Educational inequality**
- Diamond and Lewis (2022), “Opportunity Hoarding and White Space”

Wednesday Affirmative Action

- Moore and Bell (2011), “Maneuvers of Whiteness”

Friday Diversity on campus

- Jack and Black (2024), “Belonging and Boundaries at an Elite University”
- Gonzalez (2022), “Why Do Rich People Love Quiet?”

Week Nine (Mar 3-7)

Monday Systemic change

- Reskin (2012), “The Race Discrimination System”

Wednesday Social activism and antiracism

- Bonilla-Silva (2018), *Racism Without Racists* (Ch. 11)
- Brunsma, Brown and Placier (2012), “Dismantling the Walls of Whiteness”

Friday Final exam

References

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