

Race & Ethnicity Syllabus

SOCI 270 – Fall 2024

Prejudice is not intrinsic to a particular skin color or racial type, and, indeed, many immigrants never experienced it in their native lands. It is by virtue of moving into a new social environment, marked by different values and prejudices, that physical features become redefined as a handicap.

- Portes and Zhou (1993: 83)

Professor: Dr. Erick Axxe (he/they)

Office: Mills 220

Class time: MWF 12:10-1PM

Email: axxe@hendrix.edu

Student hours: MWF 10-11AM or by [appointment](#)

Class location: Mills B

Course Description

This course examines race and ethnicity through a sociological lens. Sociology offers a unique perspective on these topics because it views race and ethnicity as *socially constructed and maintained*. These constructs stratify society and serve as cornerstones of individual identity, shaping our daily interactions. The course explores the origins of racial and ethnic relations, their historical trends, and their manifestations in modern society. Through readings, discussions, and other assignments, we aim to answer several key questions: Why do race and ethnicity remain salient in the United States? How are racial and ethnic categories defined, and how have their definitions changed? What patterns exist in racial systems, and how can these patterns illuminate contemporary trends?

We are investigating these questions at a pivotal moment in U.S. racial history. As the course will demonstrate, the U.S. racial system has periodically undergone significant shifts. Our society today may be experiencing such a transformation. In these moments, proponents of a racially stratified society often become more vocal in their defense, while opponents find new opportunities to advocate for meaningful social change. Unlike our colleagues at public colleges and universities, we have the unique privilege of engaging with discussions about racial stratification without fear of censorship. Let us take full advantage of this freedom throughout the semester to become well-informed advocates for a more just society.

This course meets in person three times a week (see above for specific details). Throughout the semester, students are expected to maintain journal entries, participate in daily polls and occasional quizzes, submit an end-of-semester essay, and complete a cumulative exam. Course materials will be available via Microsoft Teams.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- **Differentiate** between race, ethnicity, and nation, and explore how various definitions of these concepts shape society, particularly in fields such as science, philanthropy, medicine, education, and the criminal justice system.
- **Analyze** patterns within racial systems and apply social theory and historical evidence to understand contemporary racial and ethnic trends.
- **Identify** one's own position within the United States' racial and ethnic system.

Classroom Etiquette

Please do your best to support each other and the instructor by giving your full attention and participation during class. Avoid engaging in distracting behaviors. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions. For productive discussions, it is essential that both students and the professor come prepared by having completed the assigned readings. Differing points of view should be treated with respect. Disagreements are expected, and expressing different viewpoints is encouraged, provided it is done respectfully. Hostile or derogatory comments or behaviors will not be tolerated.

Why is Attendance so Important?

Right now, being a full-time student is your full-time job. The most important part of this job is showing up. Our class meets for exactly 150 minutes a week; your engagement during that limited time is crucial to your success in this course.

Just like your future employers, I expect you to come to work consistently and on time by attending class consistently and on time, even on days when you're not at your best, you don't feel like you're at 100%, and you don't feel excited about coming to work. You don't have to be a rockstar every day, but you do have to show up and do the work on all or most of the days. If you cannot attend class, I expect you to let me know before class starts. I do not require a reason for missing class. Without prior notification (a.k.a. no call, no show), your absence will be unexcused.

As is stated in the Hendrix catalog [here](#), regular student attendance in class is necessary and central component of the Hendrix experience and your learning. Failing to attend class can negatively impact your own learning and the experience of other students and your professor.

I recognize that all of us can face mental and/or physical health challenges that can impact our ability to attend class and do work. If you're feeling less than 100%, it is up to you to determine if your health status is so poor that it will prevent you from learning in class or put others at risk. It is also up to you to determine if the benefits of missing class outweigh the costs of missing class for yourself, your colleagues, and your instructor. Please consider the likelihood of spreading illness when making these decisions.

If you feel like your health status will impact attendance or assignments, please communicate with me as soon as possible. For further information about the class attendance policy, see “class attendance” below.

Required Materials and/or Technologies

- Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria. 2017. *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
 - Do not purchase the “brief edition”
 - Contact Dr. Axxe if you have trouble accessing the textbook.
- Please bring a laptop, tablet, or cell phone to class.
- All other materials (readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) will be posted on Teams.

[Course Schedule](#) [click link to see]

Grading and Faculty Response

How Your Grade is Calculated

Assignment Category	Weight
Reading polls	10%
Quizzes	30%
Journal responses	30%
Final paper	15%
Final exam	15%
** Three unexcused absences will lead to a 10 percentage-point reduction in your final grade.	

Descriptions of Major Course Assignments

Reading polls

Description: On days when a reading is assigned, students will complete a short poll (1-2 questions) on major topics covered in the reading. These questions are designed to prepare students for the quizzes.

Academic Integrity and Collaboration: You must complete quizzes and assignments independently, without collaborating with your peers, unless the instructions explicitly allow it. However, you may use your notes to complete the polls.

Quizzes

Description: There will be four quizzes throughout the semester, covering main concepts from the course and readings. Quizzes will be completed in class using an electronic device and a writing utensil. Please refer to the course schedule for quiz dates.

Academic Integrity and Collaboration: You must complete quizzes and assignments independently, without collaborating with your peers. You may use your notes during the quizzes.

Journal

Description: You will respond to journal prompts on Teams. Journal responses will be graded on whether they address the week's prompt, engage with the readings, and use appropriate

grammar (this includes citation formatting). Responses are (typically) due *Fridays at 11 am (before class)*.

Academic integrity and collaboration: Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow ASA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. I develop journal responses to elicit your thoughts on the week's topic or to incrementally complete the course's final assignment. Using a large language model (e.g., ChatGPT, Google's Bard) to produce your answers is unnecessary and is a disservice to your future self, who will benefit from the skills you gain and ideas you engage with throughout the course.

Final Exam

Description: A final exam will be administered on *December 16th, 2023 at 2 pm*. It will consist of 60 questions. The exam is cumulative, and questions will revolve around major concepts in the course (as opposed to specific details from select readings).

Academic integrity and collaboration: You must complete exams yourself, without collaborating with your peers.

Final Paper

Description: A final paper will be due *December 16th, 2023 at 2 p.m.* For this paper, you will respond to three prompts out of four available options. Each response must be between two to four pages double-spaced with 1" margins using 12 point Times New Roman font. Prompts and grading criteria will be made available on December 2nd at noon. Essays will be graded on whether they:

1. Answer the prompt and show a strong understanding of course concepts.
2. Reference course materials to answer the prompt.
3. Correctly cite references.
4. Follow formatting instructions (page length, font, and grammar).

Academic integrity and collaboration: Your written assignments should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow ASA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in but no one else should revise or rewrite your work. In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it.

Late Assignments

Please refer to Teams for due dates. Due dates are set to help you stay on pace and to allow timely feedback that will help you complete subsequent assignments.

Unexcused, late assignments will receive a maximum of 85% of the original grade. *Assignments will not be accepted a week after the original deadline.*

Instructor Feedback and Response Time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course.

- **Preferred contact method:** If you have a question, please contact me first through our course's [discussion board Q & A on Teams](#). If your question is specific to you, please email my Hendrix email address (axxe@hendrix.edu). I will reply to emails within **48 hours on days when class is in session at the university**.
- **Class announcements:** I will send all important class-wide messages through the [General](#) tab on Teams.
- **Journal responses:** I will check journal responses once per week. Depending on the information I request, I will either incorporate your responses into that week's lecture or read through them to check for comprehension of the material.
- **Grading and feedback:** For assignments submitted before the due date, you can expect feedback and grades within **seven days**. Assignments submitted after the due date may have reduced feedback, and grades may take longer to be posted.

Grading Scale

89.5–100: A

79.5–89.49: B

69.5–79.49: C

59.5–69.49: D

Below 59.49: F

Academic integrity: Hendrix College is committed to high standards of honesty and fairness in academic pursuits. Such standards are central to the process of intellectual inquiry, the development of character, and the preservation of the integrity of the community.

Please familiarize yourself with the statement of Academic Integrity, which can be found at:

https://www.hendrix.edu/Catalog/2023-2024/Academic_Policies_and_Regulations/Policies_and_Appeals/D_6_c_Academic_Integrity/

Statement on diversity: Hendrix College values a diverse learning environment as outlined in the College's Statement on Diversity. All members of this community are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the community. If you believe you have been the subject of discrimination, please contact the Title IX Coordinator (Jennifer Fulbright titleix@hendrix.edu, 501-505-2901). If you have ideas for improving the inclusivity of the classroom experience please feel free to contact Dr. Axxe. For more information on Hendrix non-discrimination policies visit Hendrix.edu/nondiscrimination.

Title IX Reports of Discrimination Based on Sex, including Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, or Gender-Based Harassment:

All faculty and staff at Hendrix College are designated as a "Responsible Employee" and are mandated reporters required to report Sexual Misconduct. Hendrix College requires all faculty and staff to report sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking against a student or employee to the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Fulbright at fulbright@hendrix.edu or 501-505-2901. Hendrix College cares about the safety of our employees and students and has created this notice because interpersonal violence and sex discrimination in all forms are unacceptable. Hendrix College is committed to holding perpetrators accountable and keeping reporting parties safe. Student's privacy is of utmost importance and Hendrix College will strive to protect your privacy to the extent possible while complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations as well as Hendrix College policy. Students who desire that details of the incident be kept confidential have two options.

1. Request to speak with a licensed counselor (service available free to students and employees can utilize the Employee Assistance Program), or
2. contact an off-campus rape crisis center.

Pregnant and Parenting Students: Title IX prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions; and for parenting a child under one year of age. To learn more about how to request support. For pregnant and parenting students, contact Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Fulbright at fulbright@hendrix.edu or 501-505-2901.

Health and wellbeing: Hendrix recognizes that many students face mental and/or physical health challenges. If your health status will impact attendance or assignments, please communicate with me as soon as possible. If you would like to implement academic accommodations, contact Julie Brown in the office of Academic Success (brownj@hendrix.edu). To maintain optimal health, please utilize campus resources like Hendrix Medical Clinic or Counseling Services (501.450.1448). Your health and wellbeing are important.

Class attendance: At Hendrix, we believe that regular student attendance in class is necessary for student learning, constitutive of student professional development, and a central component of the Hendrix experience. Therefore, students who do not attend classes have failed to meet an important standard of achievement by not living up to their responsibilities as a member of the campus community. This is particularly true given the emphasis on student discussion and participation in many Hendrix courses. Classroom teachers often consider attendance a significant factor in the evaluation of student

performance. Thus, students are expected to attend all class meetings, even in cases when the classroom teacher chooses not to take attendance.

If students must be absent from class, they are expected to email Dr. Axxe before class. Without prior notification, absences are unexcused (barring true emergencies). Three unexcused absences will lead to a 10 percentage point reduction in your final grade. Students will be excused for absences resulting from observance of religious holidays, cases of illness, and athletic competition, as well as any additional reasons as determined by the classroom teacher (e.g., conference travel, Model UN). Students do not need to present third-party documentation for absences related to physical or mental illness. Misrepresenting reasons for an absence to a classroom teacher is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Students are expected to review the materials they miss during class. In-class assignments can be submitted for excused absences but not for unexcused absences. Because repeated absences impair academic performance regardless of the reason for the absences, **classroom teachers shall contact the student and report repeated absences to their advisor.** If attendance does not improve, the classroom teacher shall inform the Office of Academic Success.

After following this procedure, classroom teachers may, at their professional discretion, remove from their courses any student whose unexcused absences over any three-week period reach or exceed 50% by notifying the Registrar prior to the deadline for withdrawing from a course. A student removed from a course under these circumstances will be notified by the Office of the Registrar through the student's Hendrix email account. A student may appeal this action by contacting the Registrar within three business days of the drop notice date. The Registrar will forward the appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee for review and action.

Technology: I ask that you please bring a laptop, tablet, or cell phone to class for handouts and quizzes. All readings will be distributed digitally, so this will also allow you to have the materials in class. Much of the technology we interact with is made to be addictive. I suggest you find and use resources that will help you resist distractions. [Here's](#) a website with a list of website blockers. Similar software exists for apps on phones and tablets.

Other Useful Resources

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.

- **Local housing shelters and women's shelters:** [Research](#) indicates that a number of low-income college students face homelessness or transient/insecure housing accommodations. [Affordable Colleges Online's website](#) provides statistics about college homelessness as well a way to locate local services.
- **Food Pantries:** [Here's](#) a list of local food pantries.
- **Zotero:** [Zotero](#) is a free citation management software.
- **Grammarly:** [Grammarly](#) is a free software that checks and suggests fixes to grammatical errors.
- **The Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a community of peers ready to assist you with your writing projects, in all genres and fields, and at any stage of development. We work with you in one-on-one meetings that you can book in advance or request during our office hours. In-person appointments will follow all pertinent COVID safety protocols. Virtual appointments are available for medical reasons or by special arrangement. To book appointments, and for more

information, visit www.hendrix.edu/writingcenter/ or contact pruneda@hendrix.edu. We look forward to working with you!

- **Hendrix Bailey Library:** Bailey Library's mission is to collaborate and empower all members of our community so that they become their best selves, cherish the scope of human knowledge, and positively contribute to the librarians are happy to help locate quality resources supporting research and classroom work and to assist with the critical evaluation of academic information. Librarians and Library Associates provide individual research assistance by appointment. The library building is open seven days a week, and access to the library's online resources is available 24/7. You can visit the library's website at <https://www.hendrix.edu/baileylibrary/> for more information, to book an appointment, and to access the library's Discovery search, Class Guides, and full-text article databases.
- **ADA accommodations:** As your instructor, it is my legal obligation to ensure that all students have equal access to course materials and equal opportunity to perform well in the course. In addition, "It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Students should contact Julie Brown in the Office of Academic Success (505.2954; brownj@hendrix.edu) to begin the accommodation process. Any student seeking accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course.