EMORY UNIVERSITY
SOC 389: SPECIAL TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY, SPRING 2021
RACE, ETHNICITY, AND COLORISM IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

INSTRUCTOR AND CLASS CONTACT INFORMATION:

Course Faculty: Dr. Angela Dixon (she/her/hers)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a comparative study of race, ethnicity, and colorism in various societies around the world, with a particular focus on Afro-descendant populations. Although the vast majority of sociological research has focused on race within the U.S. context, a comparative lens allows us to contextualize the U.S. experience by drawing on an increasingly global literature. We will compare and contrast the ways race, ethnicity, and colorism function in different societies with a focus mostly on the Americas, although we will also engage with readings from other regions.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

No prerequisites required, but a prior course or foundation in race and ethnicity will be helpful background knowledge.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

1. Understand how race, ethnicity, and colorism are conceptualized across countries and the consequences of these conceptualizations.
2. Examine the historical origins and sociological definitions of race, ethnicity, and colorism from societies throughout the world, with a focus on the Americas and Afrodescendant populations in the United States.
3. Understand several approaches to the identification, classification, construction, and measurement of race, ethnicity, and skin color and how each approach can yield different life chances for individuals in their respective societies.
4. Identify the various theoretical perspectives and be able to apply these frameworks to analyze contemporary events in society.

GRADING:

- Attendance and Participation (15%)
- Perusall Weekly Responses (35%)
- Class Presentations (25%)
- Final Paper (25%)

READINGS

All required readings are posted on Perusall.

1. 1/26/21: Introduction and Syllabus Overview
2. 2/2/21 Review of Definitions and Configurations

3. 2/9/21 History of Race and Ethnicity

4. 2/16/21 U.S. Exceptionalism

5. 2/23/21 Latin America (Part 1)

6. 3/2/21 Latin America (Part 2)
   ○ Telles, Edward, and PERLA. 2014. Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America. UNC Press Books., Chapter 1 & Conclusion

7. 3/9/21 Europe (Part 1)

8. 3/16/21 – NO CLASS (UNIVERSITY REST DAY)

9. 3/23/21 Europe (Part 2)

10. 3/30/21 Colorism (Part 1)

11. 4/6/21 Colorism (Part 2)

12. 4/13/21 Asia (Part 1)
   ○ Arudou D. 2013. An introduction to Japanese society's attitudes toward race and skin color. See Hall 2013, pp. 49–69

13. 4/20/21 Asia (Part 2)

14. 4/27/21 Africa