

ETHN 1010 | INTRODUCTION TO ETHNIC STUDIES
MWF | 10:30AM-11:20AM | PSYCHOLOGY 101

INSTRUCTOR | SHANE SNYDER

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OFFICE LOCATION | Shatzel Hall 347

OFFICE HOURS | Wednesdays 11:30AM-12:30PM (or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This introductory gateway course to ethnic studies investigates how ideologies of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration, and class in the United States shape particular social and cultural experiences. It analyzes the social construction of race, ethnicity, gender, and nation, especially with regard to the history of colonial conquest, slavery, immigration, the prison-industrial complex, and Civil Rights in America. It also discusses how these ideologies intersect to produce particular identities, and how those identities formed relate to legal and ethical decision-making in American culture.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

BG Fulfills the Following Perspective Social Science Learning Outcomes:

- Describe significant social/behavioral issues/questions using appropriate theories and evidence
- Articulate how the values of the social/behavioral sciences impact decision making in contemporary society
- Deconstruct social/behavioral arguments critically, refuting logical and reasoning flaws inherent in them
- Compose written or oral arguments related to issues or questions in the social/behavioral sciences
- Evaluate evidence supporting arguments and conclusions on each side of major social and behavioral issues

BG Fulfills the Following Perspective Humanities and Arts Learning Outcomes:

- Apply humanistic modes of inquiry and interpretation in the illustration of the discipline's connection to human values
- Demonstrate a fundamental critical understanding of the role of art, language, and/or media in culture and society
- Examine how the social and cultural contexts of creative endeavours (sic) arise over a variety of historical periods

- Illustrate the development of verbal and non-verbal communication in the humanities and/or the arts

BG Fulfills the Following Perspective Cultural Diversity Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize the ways in which diverse cultures or subcultures have shaped and continue to shape American life
- Explain ways in which diverse cultures or subcultures have shaped and continue to shape American life
- Examine issues and challenges in cultural diversity from the perspectives of diverse cultures
- Compare values of their own subcultures(s) with those of others

TOPICS COVERED:

- History of ethnic studies (programs in college as well as the context for their creation)
- Race and ethnicity as biological fictions
- Community, solidarity, and diaspora
- Nationalism
- Slavery
- “Yellow peril”
- Native Americans and genocide
- Civil Rights (the fight for them as well as the laws that have sought to either foster, limit, or altogether abolish them)
- Immigration and naturalization/migration (including, but not limited to, specific laws)
- The prison-industrial complex
- Social and political movements/protests
- The role of gender, age, ability and disability in identity formation

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Tim Messer-Kruse. *Ethnic Studies: Critical Fundamentals (Second Edition)*. 2018. Achromous Press.
- Additional readings (links and PDFs) will be posted on Canvas

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance:

This course depends on your close reading of the material assigned and subsequent contributions to class discussion. It is in your best interests that you show to class every day we meet, since so

much of the crucial critical thinking about these complicated subjects happens in that setting. As such, I require your attendance and I will take roll every day. I do, however, recognize that life sometimes gets in the way, so keep the following in mind:

- You are allowed to miss, without penalty, no more than **SIX (6)** of our meetings (or up to a full two weeks of class).
- Each additional absence thereafter will result in a deduction of **THREE (3)** percentage points from your final grade.
- Therefore, I highly recommend you reserve your six free absences for times when you're sick, there's an emergency, or you're feeling especially down and need a brief respite from campus life.

Participation:

You'll eventually find—if you haven't already—that participation is key to a productive and rewarding college career. Coming to class to discuss issues that affect us all is a privilege, and we would do well to remember it. Having said that, some of the material in this course is bound to offend and, as a consequence, may cause some to shut out dissenting voices. I encourage us to test opinions in an open discussion forum without fear of a backlash. As such, I ask that everybody respect their peers as we discuss occasionally divisive and galvanizing content. In other words, let's keep it productive. I will not tolerate the following: yelling, insults, constant interruptions (of either me or your peers), or bullying. In order to have meaningful discussions in class, it is absolutely vital that we learn to balance listening with speaking.

Guidelines for Writing Papers:

When writing papers, make sure they conform to the following guidelines:

- They should be in **12-point font, double-spaced, written in Times New Roman, with one-inch margins on all sides.**
- On the top of your paper on the **left-hand side, include your name, date, and course number.**
- Below that, **centered, a basic title (doesn't have to be anything super fancy unless you're feeling particularly creative).**

Late Work:

I do not accept late work except in cases of emergency. Please keep in mind that all assignments are due on their designated dates. Failure to turn an assignment in the day it is due will result in a **0 grade** for that assignment.

Laptops, Tablets, and Phones:

I get that the technologies we take for granted have turned us all (myself included) into addicts, and I know it's sometimes painful as a result to have to set them aside. But we only meet for two

and a half hours each week—no longer than the average length of a Marvel film—broken into three relatively painless and hopefully interesting sessions. So here's what I ask:

- Don't use your laptops or phones in class except in the following cases: taking notes, for in-class activities that call for you to use them (there will be a few), or looking something up either to build upon our discussion, or to verify or debunk something I've said.
- All cellphones should be turned either to **silent** or **vibrate** while in the classroom. I don't want to hear your phone go off. It's distracting both for me and for those around you.
- If you absolutely need to take a phone call, respect your fellow classmates and quietly take it outside.
- What's also unacceptable: shopping, texting, social media, and etc. If I repeatedly catch you doing any of these things, I'll ask you not to use a laptop/phone in class anymore.

Academic Honesty:

The BGSU student handbook defines plagiarism as "representing as one's own in any academic exercise the words or ideas of another including but not limited to quoting or paraphrasing *without proper citation*" (my emphasis). Note that paraphrasing and quoting is just fine so long as you put a parenthetical citation at the end of your sentence or passage. A more detailed explanation of the university's academic honesty policy can be found at the following link:

<https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/catalog/academic-honesty/official-policy.pdf>

I take plagiarism *very* seriously and have historically been able to identify and call out offenders. Please make sure your work is entirely your own, and that if you're using someone else's work you give the original author the appropriate credit. If you are unsure of whether or not you've plagiarized something in your work (it happens), don't hesitate to contact me. We will discuss and I will do my best to help.

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability that requires accommodations, please see me as soon as possible so I can arrange something.

ASSIGNMENTS (*WRITTEN WORK DUE ON CANVAS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED*):

Attendance and Participation (15%):

This is a holistic score, meaning I take into account a number of factors, including attendance (of course), how often you participate in class, evidence (or lack thereof) that you've done the reading, evidence of improvement over the course of the semester, and the quality of your input during any in-class assignments/activities. For more information on the attendance and participation policies, see above.

Weekly Journals (20%):

In order to ensure lectures, class activities, and discussions are productive and meaningful, I require you to write and turn in **TEN (10)** of **THIRTEEN (13)** once-weekly **journals on Canvas each Tuesday by midnight** (Note: Canvas tells me when you submitted, so I will know if it's late). These journals will act as responses to a reading or readings for the week. Include the following in each journal:

- Note the work(s) you are citing above your response (**title and author**, but no end-of-text or formal in-text citation is necessary). You only have to discuss one reading or documentary indicated on the syllabus for the week the journal is due, but you can do more than one (even all) for the week, if you want.
- Transcribe **one** notable passage from the reading and place either above or within your response (hopefully something that's representative of the reading's main argument/thesis/purpose).
- Finally, write two original paragraphs containing your response to the material for that week. The first paragraph should be a summary of the reading. The second paragraph should be an analysis of and personal response to that reading.
- **In case you're confused, I define a paragraph as no shorter than my attendance policy (located under the "COURSE POLICIES" section) for this class.** The length of each paragraph ensures that you thoroughly discuss the reading and offer me insight into where you stand intellectually with the material. These responses will be especially useful for me as I design course content around them depending on need.

You may have encountered annotated bibliographies in college, which consist of a one-paragraph summary of a reading and a one-paragraph analysis of that reading. Consider these journals practice at writing once-weekly annotations of the readings. Annotations, which researchers use to organize their thoughts and their writing for larger research projects, help you to understand what you have just read, and what you found notable in the process of reading. In other words, annotations are designed to be reflective mnemonic devices for your benefit. This assignment will not only make your writing more concise and focused in the long run, but it will make the midterm and final exams for this class much easier. After all, if you've summarized the reading well, it stands to reason you probably understood it and have a better chance of remembering it because you've written about it.

Creative Project OR Propose a Solution to a Social Problem (5% for proposal, 15% for project [+ possible 2% extra]):

This course is likely to generate complicated thoughts and feelings, so I want you to have the opportunity to take a short break from academic writing between midterms and finals to put those thoughts and feelings into a creative medium of your choice. This might be a short film, a short story, poems, collage, sculpture, diorama, painting, performance, or whatever else that

represents your reactions to some of this course's issues. A few weeks into the semester, I will ask that you write and turn in a **one-page proposal/project description** that describes the creative medium (e.g. short story, short film, poetry, and etc.) and what you want to do (what is it about/what is your goal?). Keep the following in mind when conceiving your project: a workable creative project will be about four to five pages of double-spaced writing, four to five poems, four to five minutes of film, and so on. If you are doing this in a different medium, describe what you aim to do as best as you can in your proposal and I will offer my insight. We can and maybe should also meet to discuss the project in advance. This discussion could (and maybe should, depending on your mindset) include any anxieties you have about the project.

There will be a day set aside during which you can **choose** (i.e. not mandatory) to share your work with the rest of the class (**for which I will offer a couple extra credit percentage points out of respect for you putting yourself out there**). If nobody chooses to present that day, class time will be devoted to something else.

I do realize that not everybody prefers to do the creative project. So alternatively, if the thought of doing a creative project fills you with anxiety, you can choose to write a **five (5) page research paper in which you identify a social injustice/problem and discuss a potential solution/method of resistance to that problem**. Since this is a research paper, look for evidence that others have attempted to solve it and include that evidence in your paper. Should you choose this option, keep the following in mind: don't try to come at this project thinking you have the answers in advance. The research process is designed to help you learn a thing or two about a topic that interests you. Also note, so far, that this project sounds a little like your current events presentation assignments, from which you may have already located a topic that interests you enough to write about it.

Like the creative project, this project would include a project proposal for a fraction of the points, plus the project itself for the rest of the grade. Also like the creative project, you can present your research to the class for some extra credit. Should you choose this option, make sure to use no fewer than **five sources (by all means, feel free to use more than five, if you need)** to make your case. The proposal for this—which is a little different than the creative project proposal—would be one page, double-spaced, describing the topic you wish to explore and some sources you may consider consulting to explore this topic.

I will upload a handout to Canvas closer to the due date providing more details for how to go about doing either project.

Short Reflection Paper (“How does identity shape one’s social experience?”) (10%):

A few weeks into the semester I will require you to **write and turn in a 500-750 word diagnostic paper** dealing with the question “how does identity shape one’s social experience?” Your answers to this question serve a couple important functions: 1.) writing is thinking, so it gives you a space to articulate and think through something that necessarily pertains to your lived experience and 2.) it allows me to take stock of your ideas and observe related themes in your thinking as a class.

I will upload a handout to Canvas closer to the date, but here’s a basic rundown of things you might consider/include while writing this short reflection:

- By the time you write this, we will already have gone over some of the social processes and histories that define a person’s identity (e.g. ethnicity, race, gender, class, and so on). Try considering how a person may fit into the bigger picture (e.g. a black man/white man/Native American woman/etc. in America).
- If you choose and are comfortable with doing so (i.e. not a requirement), you can discuss your identity/upbringing/social experience and relate that to the world around you. This might help you relate yourself to the first bullet point. What is your identity? How has it been shaped? How might you being who you are have helped or hindered you? For example, if you are a white man, how might that have shaped your experiences? Has it shaped your experiences? On the other hand, if you are, say, a black woman, how has that shaped you/your experience? Has it shaped your experience at all?

Weekly Quizzes (5%):

Starting *Week 3* every Wednesday, you will take a three question quiz that assesses basic knowledge of the reading for the week. These questions will cover foundational material in each of the readings, and as such they should only be difficult for those who have not done the reading.

Current Events Presentation (10%)

Once this semester you will identify a current event that happened *within the last six months* related to the course material and deliver a 5-10 minute presentation in which you look for and discuss the following:

- **Identify the problem/event** - What is the event? What happened/is happening? Who was/is involved? For example, if I decide to present on the Charlottesville protests (which you almost certainly will not) from last year, I might discuss how protesting neo-Nazis and other white supremacist/nationalist groups clashed with anti-fascist counter-protesters over the problem of whether or not to remove confederate monuments in the Southern states.

- **Who is talking about the event?** – What are some of the notable news outlets that have reported on the event? Look for at least two sources to discuss. How have they reported on the event (i.e. did one news outlet focus on something another one didn't)? Any notable differences? Similarities? Again taking the Charlottesville protests as an example, I might discuss how the *New York Times* covered the event, the language used, and the editorials/essays written or videos made about the event. Then I might look at how, say, *Fox News* covered the event and the editorials/essays written and videos made about the event.
- **Discuss the consequences of the event** - Finally, if this event happened a while ago (say, a month), what's been the aftermath and fallout? In the wake of Charlottesville, the debate about confederate monuments has only gained momentum, so the debate is unlikely to go away anytime soon.

This assignment is designed to teach you a couple important skills that will benefit you in the long run. On the one hand, it helps you to read the news critically so that you are mindful of each source's point of view (i.e. it makes you more information literate). On the other hand, it will help give you a sense of the various debates/points of view surrounding a single, small issue and the logic for those points of view. You'll quickly find that the world becomes much larger and more unwieldy the more we recognize that every little problem is never as simple as it seems on the surface. When looking at any piece of news or reporting, we should always ask "is this information true and accurate?" In order to answer this question, you look at how an event is reported or discussed, who is doing the reporting or discussing, the sources to which those reports and discussions link, and the current debates and reflections about that event.

Midterm (10%) and Final (10%) Exams:

There will be two exams for this course. The midterm will be in-class, short answer and short essay dealing with all the material discussed up to that point. The final exam, by contrast, will be take home, dealing with the material exclusively covered in the second half of the semester. The details about both of these exams will emerge as they inch closer, but suffice it to say you should expect me to ask you a basic question that will prompt you to show me what you've learned.

Extra Credit Opportunity (5%):

If you choose, you can receive five extra percentage points of extra credit if you attend a campus event relating to our course material and write a one-page analysis/response to that event. The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (or ICS) schedules a few events each year that almost certainly relate to this course, and this upcoming semester will be no different. I will offer more information as events draw nearer. If you come across an event you want to attend and write about, bring it to my attention first.

A Quick Note About Written Work:

I will check for the following things in all of what you write: evidence you've done the reading, evidence you've thought through the material, and grammar. While grading, I also consider evidence of improvement over the course of the semester.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation and attendance – 15%

Weekly journals – 20%

Creative project/Research project and proposal – 5+15% (+ possible 2% extra)

Short Reflection Paper – 10%

Weekly Quizzes – 5%

Current Events – 10%

Midterm Exam – 10%

Final Exam – 10%

Extra Credit Opportunity – 5%

Total Possible – 107%

A -90-100%: Exceptional work. Generally, getting this grade means you've gone to great lengths to think through the reading and consistently contribute provocative ideas to class discussion.

B 80-89%: Good work. You clearly followed instructions and did a serviceable job.

C-70-79%: Average. Pretty good, but you didn't engage thoroughly enough with the material and/or didn't follow instructions.

D-60-69%: Not good. You didn't follow or didn't understand the instructions and you didn't care to put in much effort.

F-59% and below: This grade is reserved for those who put in very little or no effort.

COURSE SCHEDULE*:

Week of 8/21 – Introduction

M 8/27 – Introduction to course (Syllabus/Concepts covered)/Origin of Ethnic Studies departments

W 8/29 – TED Talk – Lucinda Beaman – “What does it take to change a mind?"/Discussion
TED Talk – Julia Galef – “Why You Think You're Right—Even if You're Wrong"/Discussion

F 8/31 – Discussion continued

No Journals due this week

Week 2 – Key Concepts (Race and Ethnicity)

M 9/3 – Labor Day – NO CLASS

W 9/5 – What are race, racism, and ethnicity?

Reading: TMK – Chapter 1 – “Race and Ethnicity” (pp 24-41)

F 9/7 – Discuss Census Changes over time

Due: First Journal Entry

Week 3 – Key Concepts (Colorblindness, Assimilation, and Pluralism)

M 9/10 – Colorblindness

Reading (CANVAS): *The New Jim Crow*, Introduction (pgs 1-15); Adia Harvey Wingfield, “Color-Blindness is Counterproductive.”

W 9/12 – Assimilation and Pluralism

Reading (CANVAS): *Doing Race*: Chapter 2 – Models of American Ethnic Relations: Hierarchy, Assimilation, and Pluralism

F 9/14 – Discussion Continued

Due: Second Journal Entry

Week 4 – Scientific Racism

M 9/17 – **Reading:** TMK – Chapter 2 – “Human Variation” (Pp. 44-61)

W 9/19 – **Reading:** TMK – Chapter 3 – “Racial Science” (Pp. 64-87; *Optional Pp.* 88-96)

F 9/21 – Discussion Continued

Due: Third Journal Entry

Week 5 – Race and Nation

M 9/24 – **Reading:** TMK – Chapter 5 (Part I) – “An Empire for Slavery” (Pp. 132-143)

W 9/26 – **Reading:** TMK – Chapter 5 (Part II) – “An Empire for Slavery” (Pp. 144-160)

F 9/28 – Discussion Continued

Due Wed 9/26 by 12AM: Short Paper - “How does identity shape one’s social experience?”

Due: Fourth Journal Entry

Week 6 - Othering

M 10/1 – **Reading:** TMK - Chapter 6 (Part I) – “Inventing the Indian” (Pp. 162-173)

W 10/3 – **Reading:** TMK - Chapter 6 (Part II) – “Inventing the Indian” (Pp. 174-188)

F 10/5 – Discussion Continued

Due: Fifth Journal Entry

Week 7 – Othering Continued

M 10/8 – **Reading:** TMK - Chapter 7 – “Imagining Blackness” (Pp. 196-218)

W 10/10 – **Reading:** TMK – Chapter 8 (Part I) – “Making the Foreigner” (Pp. 222-234)

F 10/12 – Discussion Continued

Due: Creative project/Research paper proposals due

Due: Sixth Journal Entry

Week 8 – Othering Continued/Review Week

M 10/15 – TMK – Chapter 8 (part II) – “Making the Foreigner” (Pp. 235-251)

W 10/17 – Midterm Review Day

F 10/19 – Midterm Exam

Nothing due this week

Week 9 – Criminalization, Social Identities, and Stereotyping

M 10/22 – **Reading (CANVAS):** *Doing Race*: Chapter 16 - Enduring Racial Associations:
African Americans, Crime, and Animal Imagery

W 10/24 – **Reading:** TMK – Chapter 10 – “Race and Identity” (Pp. 278-292)

F 10/26 – Discussion Continued

Due: Seventh Journal Entry

Week 10 – Civil Rights Movement

M 10/29 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Martin Luther King Jr. – Letter from Birmingham Jail;
Malcolm X – Message to the Grassroots

W 10/31 – **Watch:** *The Sixties – A Long March to Freedom*

F 11/2 – **Watch:** *The Sixties – A Long March to Freedom*

Due: Eighth Journal Entry

Week 11 – Civil Rights Aftermath, Black Feminism, and Resistance

M 11/5 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Sojourner Truth – “Ain’t I a Woman?”;
Audre Lorde – “The Uses of Anger”

W 11/7 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Kimberle Crenshaw – “Why Intersectionality Can’t Wait”

F 11/9 – Discussion Continued

Creative Project/Research Paper Due/Presentations

Due: Ninth Journal Entry

Week 12 – Migration and Nationalism

M 11/12 – Veterans’ Day – NO CLASS

W 11/14 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Margaret Regan – *Death of Josseline*, Introduction

F 11/16 – **Reading (CANVAS):** J. Weston Phippen – “The Trials of Sheriff Joe”

Due: Tenth Journal Entry

Week 13 – Prison-Industrial Complex

M 11/19 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Angela Y. Davis – *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Introduction

Start Watching: *13th*

W 11/21-11/23 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Due: Eleventh Journal Entry

Week 14 – Re-Presenting Reality: Music, Popular Culture, and Contemporary Protest/Race and Media

M 11/26 – Finish Watching *13th*; **Reading (CANVAS):** Yuval Taylor and Jake Austen - *Darkest America: Black Minstrelsy from Slavery to Hip-Hop*, Chapter 1

W 11/28 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Vann R. Newkirk – “The Permanence of Black Lives Matter”;
“Law Professor’s Response to Student Offended by Their Shirt” (Link on CANVAS)

F 11/30 – Discussion Continued

Due: Twelfth Journal Entry

Week 15 – Looking to the Future

M 12/3 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Baz Dreisinger - Norway

W 12/5 – **Reading (CANVAS):** Southern Poverty Law Center – “Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy”

F 12/7 – Discussion Continued/Closing Remarks

Due: Final Journal Entry

Week 16 – Finals Week

Meeting time and date for class final: Monday, 12/10 from 8:00AM-10:30AM

**I reserve the right to change aspects of the weekly schedule if it becomes necessary*