

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
INTRODUCTION TO RACE RELATIONS
ANTHROPOLOGY 2910

Winter 1993
Time: MWF 1000-1100
Location:
Office Hours:

Instructor: Laurie Nook, PhD
Phone: 539-2830 (office)
539-7348 (home)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is being developed in response to a perceived need to alert students of a new generation to the continued vitality of racism, although many Canadians would like to emphasize our historical or geographical distance from it.

We will discuss the biological basis of race, and the relationship between genetic differences and social or cultural characteristics. We will seek to understand the ideological foundations of racism, which are inherent in the need of all peoples to see themselves as the most truly human, if not as "the best". This ethnocentrism need not be a negative force, as differences (be they physical or cultural) need not be measured against each other. It becomes a negative force when correlated with differentials in power, be it economic, political or military domination. The combination of ethnocentrism with power makes it possible for those of one culture to exploit others for profit; to define them as inferior, in need of change and improvement (by force if necessary); to legislate their incapacity to manage their own destinies; to deny them access to education, employment and esteem (and thus fulfill the prophecy of inferiority); and, ultimately, to declare them inhuman, unworthy of life, resulting in intentional and unintentional genocide. A mythology of racism emerges to justify and to rationalize inequality, replete with intellectual, sexual and moral caricatures and stereotypes. We will study the complex interplay between inheritance, culture, language, territory and religious and political ideologies. Within a society, racism interacts with other dimensions of inequality (e.g. economic, political and gender), to define privileged social sectors with more clarity. Between nations, racism is both a result and cause of colonialism, migration and under-development. The consequences of oppression and the denial of rights based on racial and ethnic origin have often been political mobilization, inter-group violence, warfare and atrocities.

In this anthropology course, the topic of race relations will be studied cross-culturally, but with frequent reference to our own nation. Students will understand more clearly why, even if we no longer "believe" in it, racism continues to thrive.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

There will be four take-home tests during the course of the term, consisting of a three to five page (i.e. up to 1250 words) response to a question set by the instructor. Students need only submit three of these, or may submit all four and omit the lowest mark from the calculation of their course grade. In a half-hour presentation near the end of term, each student will provide an account of race relations in a society outside of North America, using concepts and perspectives presented during the course. The final examination in the course will also consist of a response to a take-home question drawn from class presentations.

Assignments must be handed in to the instructor in class on the day they are due. Excessive grammatical or spelling errors will result in the loss of 2 out of 9 points.

Assignment	%	Due Date
Test #1	20*	End of Week 3
Test #2	20*	End of Week 6
Test #3	20*	End of Week 9
Test #4	20*	End of Week 12
Test #5	20	One week after last class
Presentation	20	Weeks 13 and 14

* The best three of these four marks will be used in the calculation of the course mark.

Grading System

Grade	Interpretation
9	
8	Excellent
7	
6	Good
5	
4	Pass
3	
2	
1	Fail

Required texts

Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia H. Collins, compilers 1992 RACE, CLASS AND GENDER: AN ANTHOLOGY. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, Inc.

McKague, Ormond, ed.
1991 RACISM IN CANADA. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Fifth House Publishers.