SYLLABUS

Subject Matter
Interracial Interpersonal Dynamics is a special course. In this course we combine aspects of sociology, psychology, and ethnic studies to examine the ways in which social history, social structure, and cultural difference influence person to person interaction between persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. The course emphasizes contemporary interpersonal interracial dynamics in the United States.

We use two types of literature in this course. We study traditional research analyses wherein theories about interpersonal interracial relationships are proposed and analyzed. From this material we learn generalizations which usually hold true. Additionally, we read case study material. This material does not allow us to generalize about human behavior. It does provide us with concrete examples of what is sometimes true. From these readings we expand our sense of what is possible. Both forms of literature are useful. It is important to understand what rules of behavior probably hold in particular circumstances. It is important to gain a sense of the potential range of likely behaviors.

I have three major instructional goals for this class. One is for you to learn concrete information and specific understandings about interracial interpersonal dynamics. The second is for you to increase our capacity to observe, categorize and analyze the interracial interpersonal interactions you encounter or read about long after you have completed this course. A third is for you to develop the capacity to integrate sociological, psychological and ethnic studies perspectives in analyzing material. In order to achieve these goals we will have to share our observations, reflections, critiques and hypotheses in reading logs and class discussion.

The primary subjects we will be covering in this course are:

- Cultural differences and interracial interaction.
- Effect of racial status on White personality and perspective
- Effects of racial status on personality and perspective amongst people of color
- Effects of racial status on interracial interaction
- Bi and multi-racial identity and status (identity and status among recently racially re-mixed people)
- Interracial relationships in friendship, love, and marriage
Learning
In this class we learn from reading and writing, about the readings in logs, listening to and participating in class discussion, watching, analyzing and critiquing videos, participating in classroom exercises and listening to and responding to lectures. I will lecture at most for one hour in any class session. Classes are scheduled for two hours rather than an hour and a half because effective classroom activities and class discussion require time. Since a substantial portion of class time will be spent in discussion, your willingness to contribute to discussion and the quality of student discussion are a prime determinant of the quality of each class session. I will provide guidelines and coaching on developing and maintaining quality student participation.

Requirements and Grading
This course requires three written logs and class attendance. The reader contains a handout on guidelines for logs. Grading is 80% logs and 20% attendance. Logs may be rewritten and resubmitted if you are dissatisfied with your grade.

A relatively high proportion of the class grade is allotted to attendance because I believe that you will learn a substantial amount if you attend class. In this course classes missed are an educational issue, not a moral issue. Therefore while classes missed can be made up by completing extra assignments, absences will not be excused for illness or any other reason.

READINGS
Every year there are a few students who do not do as well as they should in this course because they do not write clearly. A very brief article on writing is included in this reader. Read it. Follow its advice.

Course Handouts
The reader contains a copy of all handouts used in the course. The handouts are listed below. Skim all handouts and read the ones marked with an asterisk.

• *Comments on Thomas Kochman: Black and White, Styles in Conflict
• Communicating Across Culture: Common Differences
• Different Forms of Intelligence According to Incomplete Understanding of Selected Writers
• *Fifteen or More Differing Meanings of the word, “Racism”
• *Guidelines for Logs
• Interracial Marriage: Rates and Attitudes
• List of Multiracial Associations
• Partial Chronology of Interracial Marriage Laws
• Poussaint: African-American Psyche
• *Questions from Previous Finals
• Stages of “Negro to Black” Conversion
• *Things to Remember in Using Cultural Differences to Understand Interpersonal Interaction
Reading Readings
When you read a reading that focuses on a specific ethnicity, be sure to consider whether the hypotheses in the reading apply to a subgroup of that ethnicity or to the ethnic group as a whole. Additionally, be sure to consider whether the hypotheses in the reading apply to any other ethnic groups, beginning with your own. Consider whether the hypotheses applies to categories other than ethnicity. For example, Mitsuye Yamada writes about her invisibility as an Asian-American, but she is building upon the conception of invisibility developed in Ralph Ellison’s novel of African-American experience, The Invisible Man, and many students of ethnicities other than Japanese-American and African-American find her conception of invisibility to be a useful tool of analysis. In addition, Yamada talks about her invisibility with respect to an additional social characteristic - gender. So in reading Yamada, you should think of whether or not Yamada’s hypotheses about how invisibility applies to ethnicity also apply to gender. One can take this concept of invisibility further. Are there situations in which students become invisible in ways similar to ethnic invisibility, or children, or parents? Further, do any other authors write about a concept similar to Yamada’s sense of invisibility? For example, popular writer M. Scott Peck surveyed the main tenents of the major world religions in his book, The Road Less Traveled. In this book, he argues that a major sin in all these religions conceptions is that of living a lie. Is this concept of misrepresentation of who one is to God, oneself and others similar to or distinct from Yamada’s concept of invisibility?

I am sure this appears complex, but let me make it simple. When you read an article, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the implicit and explicit hypotheses in the reading?
- To what portion of the ethnicity under question do the hypotheses apply?
- In what situations do the hypotheses apply?
- Has the applicability of the hypotheses changed since the article was written?
- Do the hypotheses apply to other ethnicities?
- Do the hypotheses apply to other social categories, in particular class, gender, and gender orientation?
- Are the concepts and hypotheses similar to concepts or hypotheses you have encountered in other contexts, such as other reading in this course, outside reading, other academic courses, movies and television, news or “real life?”
- Does this reading help you to understand your life? Does your life help you to understand, analyze and evaluate this reading? For example, do some of your experience or the experiences of others you know support or contradict the hypotheses? Does the reading help you to explain what you have experienced or observed? Do your experiences and observations allow you to expand upon or lead you to want to reframe some of the hypotheses?

You may write the logs in a way that is relatively impersonal - emphasizing analysis of the internal logic of the readings and comparing and contrasting different authors, or you may write the logs in a way that is relatively personal - emphasizing the degree to which he readings help you to understand, analyze and evaluate your experience and the degree to which your experience allows...
you to understand, analyze and evaluate the readings. You may change focus from one commentary to the other. All are legitimate strategies.

**Reading List**

**Week 1:** Tu Apr 1, Th Apr 3  
Tu: Introduction: “Race”  
Th: The Nature of “Race” in the U. S.  
*Exercise: Interracial Bingo Game*  
*Video: Field experiment in social discrimination on eye color: The Eye of the Storm**

**Week 2:** Tu Apr 8, Th Apr 10  
**Cultural Issues in Communication and Values**  
Tu: Verbal Communication and Cultural Differences.  
*Video: Cultural differences in communication: Valuing diversity #3 - Communicating Across Cultures (Complan-Driggs Productions, 1987)*  
Th: Verbal Communication and Cultural Differences.  
"Non-Verbal Communication and Cultural Difference"  
"The Limits of Cultural Relativism"  

**Week 3:** Tu Apr 15, Th Apr 17  
Tu: Understanding Communication: Dimensions of Interpersonal Communication  
*Exercise: I see, I imagine, I feel*  
Th: Understanding Communication: Male-Female Differences
Week 4: Tu Apr 22, Th Apr 24

Racial Status: Effects on Whites And Interracial Interaction

Tu: Racism and White Values.

Note: first logs due

Th: Racism and White Values

Video: Field experiment in racial discrimination using Black/White matched male pairs, True Colors (MTI Film and Video)

Week 5: Tu Apr 29, Th May 1

Tu: The Effect of Class and International Stratification on Cultural and Personal Aesthetics

Racial Status: Effects on People of Color and Interracial Interaction

Th: Changing Minority Identity and Orientation in the Shift from Accommodation to Protest

Week 6: Tu May 6, Th May 8

Tu: Cultural and Status Conflict between Blacks and Jews in Crown Heights, New York.

Th: Ethnic and Gender Invisibility

Activity: sharing ideas from logs
Bi-racial and Multi-racial Peoples: Managing Multiple Public and Personal Identities

Tu: The Ignoring of Bi-Raciality in Hollywood and Real Life


Th: Multiple Identities - Black and White, Black and Gay

Note: 2nd logs due

Week 8: Tu May 20, Th May 22
Tu: Multiple Identities - Native American and White, Chicano and White

Friendship, Love, Sex and Marriage

Th: Friendship.

Week 9: Tu May 27, Th May 29
Tu: Intimacy in Colonial and Contemporary America

Th: Responding to Black Power. Status Awareness or Color Blindness?
Charles Vert Willie, "Oreo -- Marginal Man and Woman." Chapter 9 in Blumberg and Roye,
Interracial Bonds.

Week 10 : Tu Jun 3, Th Jun 5
Tu: Interracial Friendship and Romance

Interracial Adoption
Th: Interracial Adoption and Multi-racial Identity.

Note: Third logs due