

ETN 010: Introduction to Ethnic Studies
Westmont College, Spring 2021
Wednesdays 3:30-6:45pm ADM219/Remote

Instructors

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Course Description

This interdisciplinary course is designed to introduce students to the theoretical perspectives and research methods of Ethnic Studies. We will examine the ways in which U.S. and global systems of power are rooted in racial, ethnic, and gender constructs, in ways that reflect both historical variation and durability. We will also consider the ways in which these constructs intersect with other variables, such as class, nationality, (dis)ability, sexuality, culture, and religion. This course uses an interdisciplinary approach that includes literature, history, politics, sociology, visual culture studies, media studies, and theology. Throughout the course, we will consider the historical and contemporary relationships of Christianity and the Christian church to both national and global systems, including how issues of racial and ethnic identity, racism, and equity are situated within the context of Christian understandings of human flourishing. This class not only introduces you to key concepts in Ethnic Studies, it also equips you with conceptual skills that will help you to engage faithfully in the pluralistic environment that is our contemporary world, and to work for social change that promotes justice and equity.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to do the following:

1. State and explain key concepts and methodologies in Ethnic Studies (*Assessed through Journal Entries, Participation, Unit Papers, and Final Exam*)
2. Explain the ways that U.S. & global systems of power are rooted in racial, ethnic, and gender constructs (*Aligns with Diversity ILO; assessed through Unit Papers and Final Exam*)

Commented [MW1]: Aligns with Certification Criterion #1

Commented [MW2]: Aligns with Certification Criterion #1

3. Apply an interdisciplinary set of concepts and questions to pressing social and cultural issues related to race and ethnicity (*Assessed through Participation, Unit Papers, and Final Exam*)
4. Articulate and embody intersections of Christian faith with Ethnic Studies (*Aligns with Christian Understandings & Practices ILO; assessed through Journal Entries, Participation, Unit Papers, and Final Exam*)
5. Demonstrate skills in both oral and written communication regarding race and ethnicity (*Assessed through Participation, Unit Papers, and Final Exam*)

Commented [MW3]: Aligns with Certification Criterion #2

Commented [MW4]: Aligns with Certification Criterion #3

General Education:

This course satisfies the **Understanding Society** requirement. It invites you to recognize the dynamic interplay among individuals, groups, institutions, cultural norms, and public policy. We will explore questions of “what is?” and “why is it so?” to better inform our vision of “what ought to be.” As we identify key theories about race and ethnicity, apply them to contemporary issues, and engage in personal and social reflection about their implications within the context of Christian faith, this course is designed for students to be able to *apply appropriate foundational theories to analyze social phenomena* (GE Learning Outcome).

Required Texts:

TBD in terms of required purchases.
Materials will be available in Canvas or in a Course Reader.

Expectations & Evaluation

Journal Entries on Readings (150 points total). Students will submit journal entry assignments that will require engagement with the readings ahead of class, and will enhance their ability to use readings to both reflect on key course themes and make strong arguments. Submit 10 out of 13 possible options. Each journal entry will be worth 15 points each.

Commented [MW5]: Fulfills Certification Criterion #1: These journal entries will include prompts that students engage with that help them to identify key theories that offer explanations of social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena.

Students will also be encouraged to reflect personally on how readings inform their understanding race/ethnicity from a Christian perspective, so these journal entries will also contribute to Certification Criterion #3.

Participation (250 points total). Active and constructive participation is essential in this discussion-based course. Participation may take a variety of forms, but each student is expected to participate regularly in the class. This may mean asking a clarifying question, offering examples, critiquing an idea, actively engaging other students in a small group, or otherwise contributing to the discussion. Participation will be graded on a full-credit, half-credit, zero-credit basis.

Commented [MW6]: Fulfills Certification Criteria #1 & 2: discussions will center around (a) identifying key theories and concepts related to race & ethnicity and (b) applying them to contemporary issues.

Unit Papers (300 points total). For each of the three units of the course, you will submit a 3 to 4-page essay. These papers will require you to consider how your own racial and ethnic identity intersects with themes of the course, including your sense of self, your involvement in communities and structures, and your vocational aspirations. Detailed prompts will be distributed in class. Essays will be evaluated for their clarity, thoughtfulness, quality of writing, and

Commented [MW7]: Each unit paper will fulfill both Certification Criteria #2 & #3. Students will focus on applying key concepts and theories to contemporary problems, and will reflect on how Christian faith intersects with that application.

engagement with assigned readings and course material. Each essay will be submitted via Canvas on the due date listed in the syllabus. Each paper will be 100 points (300 points total).

Final Exam (300 points). The final exam will be cumulative, and will be a combination of short answer and essay questions. It will cover the major themes of the course, requiring you to synthesize the course material. We will provide more information about the exam as we approach it. The final exam will be on Tuesday, May 4 from 3-5pm.

Final Grades:

Your final grade will be the total points you have earned out of 1000 total possible points:

Journal Entries	150
Participation	250
Unit Papers	300
Final Exam	300
Total	1000

These scores will be converted to letter grades according to the following scale:

A: 940-1000	B+: 870-899	C+: 770-799	D: 600-699
A-: 900-939	B: 830-869	C: 730-769	F: below 600
	B-: 800-829	C-: 700-729	

Course Policies

Etiquette: We will discuss topics in this class that can be sensitive, and it is important that we create a culture of respect and empathy. Our hope is that together we will cultivate an environment of active engagement, where we ask good questions, ponder complex and difficult topics, and appreciate the different places from which we may each be approaching a given issue. We will engage with one another and the course material with civility and openness, even when we disagree or do not understand.

Deadlines and Late Work: No late work will be accepted in this course unless an unforeseen and unavoidable crisis occurs. You must provide written documentation of the crisis to be granted an extension. You must notify us as soon as possible if an emergency occurs that prevents your submission of your work, and we will work with you to establish a reasonable deadline.

Grade Appeals: Any grade appeal must be submitted *in writing* within *one week* from the time an assignment is returned in class. Giving specific examples from your assignment and my comments, you must explain why you believe you received the wrong grade. We will then re-grade the assignment. However, this may result in a lower, higher, or exactly the same grade.

Commented [MW8]: Fulfills Certification Criteria #2 and #3 (but requires knowledge established through #1 in order to successfully complete #2— i.e., they cannot apply racial formation theory if they cannot identify it)
#2: Students will be asked to apply key theories that explain race & ethnicity to a variety of contemporary problems (short answer questions)
#3: Students will be asked to consider how personal and social application of various theories intersect with Christian faith (essay question).

Course Communication: Please put “ETN 010” in the subject line of emails. You are expected to check your email and Canvas every day. Generally, we respond to emails within 24 hours. We do not respond to emails in the evenings and over weekends. You are welcome to email us or post to the general FAQ Discussion Board on Canvas with any brief questions about the course (e.g., clarifying a reading assignment). Please arrange to talk with us if you have specific questions about the material, are confused about concepts, want to talk about how a paper is progressing, etc. We are very happy to discuss these issues with you.

Office Hours and Meetings: Please feel free to make an appointment with us during office hours (via Google Calendar). We encourage you to be proactive. Please do not leave questions, challenges, or issues to the last minute. We are very happy to meet with you!

Academic Integrity: Policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Any student who violates the principles of academic integrity will fail the assignment, and possibly the course. It is your responsibility to read and be familiar with Westmont’s Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.westmont.edu/office-provost/academic-program/academic-integrity-policy>

To be clear: **Any written work you submit in this class must be your own, and any use of another person’s ideas must be properly cited.** Collegiality is encouraged. You are welcome to discuss ideas with one another, provide feedback on paper drafts, etc. But you may not use anyone else’s ideas (written or verbal) without citing him or her, you must properly cite texts that you are drawing from (both when directly quoting and when referencing without a quote), and of course you may not turn in any work that someone else has completed (fully or partially) for you. You also may not submit the same work for any two courses without prior permission from your professors. If you have any questions about what counts as academic dishonesty, please ask us.

Accessibility and Accommodations: Students who choose to disclose a disability are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible in the semester to discuss possible accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the ODS. Accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of a disability and ensure equal access to programs for all students with disabilities. Please contact ods@westmont.edu or visit the website for more information: <http://www.westmont.edu/offices/disability>. ODS is located upstairs in Voskuyl Library, Rooms 310, 311A.

Wellness: If you become ill, experience stress or anxiety, have family issues that need to be addressed, have difficulty navigating your classes, or any other issue comes up in the term, we encourage you to seek assistance and to take good care of yourself. This could, for instance, mean contacting CAPS: <https://www.westmont.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>.

Writing Assistance: Students are encouraged to make use of Writers’ Corner, the writing center on campus. Tutors support peers as they mature into more skillful and confident writers. Tutorials are free of charge. Make an appointment using WOnline at <https://westmont.mywconline.com/>. Please ask us for help if you find you do not understand the concepts and arguments we are working through in the course.

Topics and Reading Schedule

Unit 1: Introducing Ethnic Studies

Week 1: What are race and ethnicity? What is racism?

Excerpts from Omi & Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*
Sollers, “Ethnicity and Race” in *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*
Excerpts from Kendi, Excerpts from *Stamped from the Beginning*
“Race the Power of an Illusion” (Part 1)

Week 2: How do we study race and ethnicity?

“Race the Power of an Illusion” (Part 2)
“Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color” by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw
Excerpts from Angela Davis by *Women, Race, and Class*
Excerpts from bell hooks *All About Love*
The Combahee River Collective Statement

Week 3: How do we study race and ethnicity in the context of Christian faith?

“Race the Power of an Illusion” (Part 3)
Excerpts from *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* by Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah
Excerpts from *The Baptism of Early Virginia* by Rebecca Anne Goetz
Excerpts from *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* by Willie James Jennings
Introduction to Layla Saad *Me and White Supremacy* (will lead into Paper 2)

Unit Paper 1 due by 5pm Friday

Unit 2: Groupness in Historical & Contemporary Context

Week 4: Native America

Commented [MW9]: This Unit focuses on establishing the theoretical “building blocks” of the course, hence is primarily focused on fulfilling Certification Criteria #1 (defining key terms; introducing racial formation theory, intersectionality, and key methodological approaches to studying race and ethnicity).

This Unit also fulfills Certification Criterion #3 – students will (through journal entries, discussion, and their first paper) consider how these definitions & concepts intersect with Christian faith in both personal and social ways.

Commented [MW10]: This Unit builds on Unit 1’s focus on Certification Criterion #1 to move to Certification Criterion #2. Having ensured students can identify key terms & theories, we move to applying those key terms and theories to the formation of groups in both historical and contemporary contexts. We will identify contemporary problems or controversies that emerge in these group formation processes, and apply key concepts introduced in Unit 1 to these issues.

Here, too, Criterion #3 will be fulfilled – through readings and discussions about how Christian identity intersects with racial and ethnic formation processes, students will be asked to make personal and social application of the key ideas, in the context of faith.

Excerpts from *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
Short Stories by Zitkala-Sa (Yankton Dakota)
Excerpts from *Bad Indian* by Deborah Miranda (Chumash)
Poems by Joy Harjo (Muscogee)

Week 5: African America

Paul Ortiz--*An African American and Latinx History of the United States*
Excerpts from *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman
The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. DuBois
Excerpts from *Wayward Lives* by Saidiya Hartman
Excerpts from *The Undercommons* by Fred Moten
"A Small Needful Fact" by Ross Gay

Week 6: Latinx America

Paul Ortiz--*An African American and Latinx History of the United States*
Excerpts from *Brown Church: Five Centuries of Latina/o Social Justice, Theology, and Identity* by Robert Chao Romero
Ian Haney Lopez, "Race and Colorblindness after *Hernandez* and *Brown*"
Excerpts from Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
Poems by Juan Felipe Herrera, Carmen Tafolla, and Richard Blanco

Week 7: Asian America

Erika Lee--*The Making of Asian America: A History*
Excerpts from Evelyn Nakanno Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*
Excerpts from *Nothing Ever Dies* by Viet Thanh Nguyen
American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs by Grace Lee
Excerpts from *From a Liminal Place: An Asian-American Theology* by Sang-Hyun Lee

Week 8: White America

Joe Feigan excerpts from *White Racial Frame*
Excerpt from *The Invention of the White Race* by Theodore Allen
Essay by Nell Irving Painter
Excerpts from *Trouble I've Seen* by Drew G.I. Hart
Excerpts from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* by James Agee and Walker Evans
"Recitatif" by Toni Morrison

Week 9: Wrap-Up; Christian engagement

Excerpts from *White Awake* by Daniel Hill
Excerpts from *Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience* by Sheila Wise Rowe

Unit 2 Paper due by 5pm Friday

Unit 3: Engaging with Race and Ethnicity Interdisciplinarily

Readings TBD, in consultation with guest speakers

Week 10: Culture

Week 11: History

Week 12: Politics

Week 13: Religion

Week 14: Science

Week 15: Course Wrapup

Excerpts from *The Death of Race: Building a New Christianity in a Racial World* by
Brian Bantum

Unit 3 Paper due by 5pm Friday

Final Exam from 3-5pm on Tuesday, May 4.

Commented [MW11]: This Unit introduces more disciplinary complexity to the theories that can be used to analyze contemporary problems of controversies. It thus fulfills Certification Criterion #1 by introducing other theories from the ones developed in Units 1 & 2 that offer explanations of social, political, and cultural phenomena related to race and ethnicity.

It also fulfills Certification Criterion #2 as students will apply those theories to particular issues that are raised in the given topic.

And this Unit also fulfills Certification Criterion #3: as we talk about a range of issues regarding race and ethnicity in the context of these different disciplinary perspectives, we will also make personal and social application of those theories, particularly considering how they are informed by and intersect with Christian faith.