URPL-GP 2620
Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in American Cities

REVISED – Fall 2021

Instructor Information

Professor Calvin T. Brown, PhD
- Email: calvintbrown@nyu.edu
- Office:
  - Office hours via phone (scheduled by email)
    - Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30pm

Class Information

- Time: Thursday, 6:45pm – 8:25pm
- Location: 45 West 4th Street, room B02

Course Description

This course examines historic and contemporary patterns of racial and ethnic stratification often found at the center of disputes concerning urban development, the allocation of city resources and unequal distributions of power. Also embedded throughout the course are ongoing analyses of the ways in which structural inequalities often function in class and gender-specific ways. Using New York City as a laboratory, an interdisciplinary approach is implored - within and outside of the classroom - to make explicit the impacts of this complex legacy of racial formation on planning processes, decisions and outcomes for historically disenfranchised people and communities. The racialized experiences of select immigrant populations, which includes
patterns of incorporation into American society as well as enduring transnational links to countries of origin, are also explored within this context.

**Course and Learning Objectives**

- Establish a theoretical framework and vocabulary to discuss race, ethnicity, class, and gender in order to examine how these paradigms have and continue to shape public discourse in American cities.
- Encourage students to explore the role of their personal narratives and societal observations within larger sociohistorical and present-day constructs through reflection and critical analysis.

**Required Readings and Materials**

There is one required textbook for this course that can be borrowed online through Bobst Library for up to a 365-day loan of the entire book using the hyperlink provided below. Note that individual chapters can be read online directly from those links as well or be downloaded (and print if desired from the NYU library) though with page limitation restrictions. Hardcopies can also be purchase through the NYU Bookstore or through other outlets of your choosing.


All additional required readings are available on the course website for download or a hyperlink has been provided.

Note that the readings vary in quality and complexity, and the connections among some of them may not always seem obvious. We will attempt to synthesize the material in class though it is strongly advised that you read each week’s readings in the order that they are listed in the syllabus. Also note that I may add or remove readings from time to time to further encourage student learning. If so, I will communicate this electronically and in advance.

Select chapters from these recommended texts appear in required readings throughout the course:


**Assessment and Grading Policy**

Note that all written assignments are to be submitted in a single-spaced word document (12-point font, 1-inch margins) and uploaded to NYU Classes under the appropriate ‘Assignments’ heading by the due date.

- **Contribution to discussion and learning; professionalism (20%)**

  Mutual respect for the professor, your peers and for yourself include showing up to class on time and prepared to be fully present and ready to engage in classroom discussions and activities. Professionalism therefore is calculated based on attendance and lateness. If you will be absent or delayed (i.e., train delays, family emergencies, etc.), please email the professor at least 30 minutes before class. If you miss a class, you are expected to take full responsibility for the material that was covered during your absence.

- **Reflective Analysis (25%) – due 5p on October 8th**

  This four to five-page paper is intended to serve as a personal reflection of your own racial, ethnic, class, and/or gendered position(s) using the theoretical frameworks and concepts developed in Part I of the course, the questions that occupy you currently, and any other pertinent perspectives or quandaries that you bring into the class.

  Using a minimum of four course materials in your analysis, consider the following questions to guide the development of your analysis:
  - When and how did you first become aware of your racial, ethnic, class, and/or gendered identities? Has your understanding evolved over time and if so, how?
  - Has this awareness impacted your lived experiences and if so, to what extent has this awareness shaped your personal development as well as how you interact in various settings?
In reflecting on historical and theoretical frameworks and concepts discussed thus far, what themes from the course most influence your understanding of intergroup relations given your experiences?

Discussion Leads (15%)

Be aware that there is a significant amount of reading required for this course; plan your time accordingly. Additionally, each student will take the lead in facilitating a 15-20 minute in-class discussion.

The student discussion lead is required to submit a two-page document to the professor with their summary analysis of the readings along with three questions they will pose to the class by 9pm the Friday before the class session you signed up for. A sign-up sheet will be available on NYU Brightspace after the first class and class sessions will be on a first come, first serve basis with no more than two people able to sign up per class.

Below are some suggested questions to guide your responses:

- What do you see as the most valuable contribution, thesis, or idea from this material?
- What aspects of the authors findings or argument do you find especially useful, well-argued, confusing, or unconvincing?
- How do the findings/argument connect to the other assigned readings?

The goal of these responses is not simply to demonstrate that you have carefully read and considered the readings with a critical eye; that is assumed. Nor is the goal to provide summaries. Rather, these responses will form the raw materials for our class discussions, and you should use them as an opportunity to share candid impressions, questions, and things that you find puzzling or contradictory, as well as well as to more thoroughly engage with course materials in order to push your own thinking further.

Virtual/in-person Field trip (15%) – any time before 5p, December 9th, NO EXCEPTIONS

New York City is full of distinct neighborhoods, cultural landmarks, museums, community-based organizations, events, and more that touch upon the themes covered throughout this course. This assignment is an experiential learning opportunity to explore a new neighborhood or facet of history that brings this course to ‘life’ (so to speak). However, social distancing has impacted how we engage with these sites and settings.

Therefore, opportunities to virtually complete this assignment will be acceptable. Several museums have virtual options to view their exhibits and engage with their collections. These include (but are not limited to):

- Museum of the City of New York
- Brooklyn Historical Society
The Tenement Museum

Note that I will need to verify that the activity, site and/or event is eligible before you engage. You will write a two-page paper relating the event and/or experience to the subject matters covered in class.

Critical analysis and presentation (25%)

There is no shortage of pressing issues and phenomena in U.S. society today from immigration and national security, resurgences in white supremacist activities, #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements, the prison industrial complex and more.

For the final paper therefore, you will write a four to five-page single-spaced critical analysis (excluding reference list, charts, images, etc.) that expounds upon a topic or phenomena directly related to the overarching themes of race, ethnicity, class and gender in American cities. The topic may come from one of your course sessions or another topic of your choosing.

Your paper should be presented accordingly:

- Introduction with a strong thesis statement that states the central argument/claim being made (not more than a page)
- At least two clear support points for your paper’s argument (minimum of three pages)
- Conclusion (not more than a half a page)

Include a minimum of four scholarly references (journal articles, reports, primary sources, books, etc.), in addition to course material provided in this syllabus, to support your analysis. Proper APA citations throughout the text and a reference list are expected.

Lastly, there are several deadlines for this assignment:

- Topic selection, by 5p on Friday, October 8th
- Outline (ungraded), 5p on Friday, November 19th
- Ten-minute in-class presentation on Thursday, December 2nd or Thursday, December 9th
- Paper submission, by 5p on Friday, December 10th

Late Submission Policy for Assignments

Extensions on assignments will be granted only in case of emergency or special circumstances by prior arrangement. This policy is adopted out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally demanding (and unpredictable) schedules. In the case that an extension is granted, confirmation of the extension will be provided along with a modified due date and time. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 20% per 24-hour period.
Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- **(A) Excellent**: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

- **(A-) Very good**: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

- **(B+) Good**: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

- (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

- (C/-/+ ) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

- (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

**NYU Brightspace**

All announcements and resources will be delivered through

I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

It is therefore important that you actively use your NYU email account or have appropriate forwarding set up on NYU Home (home.nyu.edu/).

**Statement of Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.
Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

Wagner Writing Center

The Wagner Writing Center provides invaluable support including tutors to help students with their writing skills. Please check out the full range of services available to strengthen this critical communication skill – https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center.

NYU’s Wellness Exchange

NYU’s Wellness Exchange has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

Class Policies

Safe Space Policy

Please note that people come to this class with different kinds of academic expertise, different life experiences, and different customs (both individual and cultural). These differences can, and hopefully will, contribute positively to the substance and quality of class discussion. However, because these differences are often related to social inequalities, they can also be a source of misunderstanding and frustration. It is thus important to keep in mind that active, respectful class participation is as much about listening to and engaging the ideas of others as it is about
speaking one’s own mind. It also means that debate is encouraged, but only when civil and open-minded in tone.

**Electronic Devices**
The use of electronic devices such as cell phones and other portable devices including but not limited to tablets or mp3 players are not permitted in class unless documentation is provided to the professor to substantiate their use for class participation.

**Email and Communication Policy**
When contacting Professor Brown, as a reminder, please use formal etiquette observing the following guidelines:
- Include a meaningful subject line [e.g., URPL-GP2620: questions about text]
- Format the message as if it were a letter (with a salutation [Dear Professor Brown]
- Detailed body [I am contacting you because I have a question regarding/I would like to discuss, etc.]
- Closing [Sincerely,].

Additionally, do note that faculty may not always be available for immediate responses. Therefore, allow up to 48 hours for a response from Monday through Friday and up to 72 hours for emails sent over the weekend.

**Grade Change Policy**

Students wanting clarification on a particular grade must submit a request in writing explaining their question and, if they are disputing an answer marked wrong, documentation of the grading error with evidence from the text. These requests should be submitted directly to me. You must type and print out any grade appeals, attaching supplemental information as appropriate, and present them to me in hardcopy.

In initiating a re-grading process, please be advised that the entire assignment will be re-evaluated, meaning errors that were not previously identified the first time around may be noted in the second. A re-grade could therefore potentially lead to a lower, rather than a higher, grade.

**Overview of the Semester**

*Part I: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives of Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in the United States*

- **Week 1**
  - Date: September 9th
- **Week 2**
  - Date: September 16th
  - Topic: Race as Social Construct

- **Week 3**
  - Date: September 23rd
  - Topic: Historical Intersections of Gender, Race and Class

- **Week 4**
  - Date: September 30th
  - Topic: Ethnic Theory and Early European Immigration

**PART II: Opportunities, Disparities, and Urbanization in the 20th Century**

- **Week 5**
  - Date: October 7th
  - Topic: Industrialization, Urbanization and Race

- **Week 6**
  - Date: October 14th
  - Topic: From Civil Rights to Black Power – An Urban Perspective

- **Week 7**
  - Date: October 21st
  - Topic: The Changing Face of Immigration in American Cities

- **Week 8**
  - Date: October 28th
  - Topic: Inequality, Urban Decline, and Poverty

**PART III: Contemporary Issues and Challenges – Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in the 21st Century**

- **Week 9**
  - Date: November 4th
  - Topic: Gender, Labor, and Migration

- **Week 10**
  - Date: November 11th
  - Topic: Planning, LGBTQ Communities, and Cities

- **Week 11**
  - Date: November 18th
  - Topic: Old and/or New Wounds – White Nationalism, the American Presidency and U.S. Cities
Detailed Course Overview

PART I: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives of Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in the United States

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION – SLAVERY, COLONIALISM, AND RACE IN THE EARLY AMERICAS (September 9th)

Required Readings:


In class film:

- Race: The Power of an Illusion (episode 2)
WEEK 2: RACE AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT (September 16th)

Required Readings:


WEEK 3: HISTORICAL INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS (September 23rd)

Required Readings:

- Davis, Angela Y. Chapter 4, “Racism in the Women Suffrage Movement” in *Women, Race and Class*.
- Sojourner Truth’s, “Ain’t I A Woman?” (https://www.nps.gov/articles/sojourner-truth.htm)

Recommended:


WEEK 4: ETHNIC THEORY AND EARLY EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION (September 30th)

Required Readings:

PART II: Opportunities, Disparities, and Urbanization in the 20th Century

WEEK 5: INDUSTRIALIZATION, URBANIZATION AND RACE
(October 7th)

Required Readings:

Recommended:

Reminder:
- Reflective analysis due 5p on Friday, October 8th.

WEEK 6: FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO BLACK POWER – AN URBAN PERSPEPCTIVE (October 14th)

Required Readings:

*** The first 7:36 minutes are mandatory. Take good notes and be ready to discuss. Watching the rest is optional but encouraged. 

WEEK 7: THE CHANGING FACE OF IMMIGRATION IN AMERICAN CITIES (October 21st)

Required Readings:

Recommended:

WEEK 8: INEQUALITY, URBAN DECLINE AND POVERTY (October 28th)

Required Readings:

Recommended:

**PART III: Contemporary Issues and Challenges – Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in the 21st Century**

**WEEK 9: GENDER, LABOR, AND MIGRATION (November 4th)**

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended:**

**WEEK 10: PLANNING, LGBTQ COMMUNITIES AND CITIES (November 11th)**

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended:**
- “LGBTQ Pride Month Ends, LGBTQ Streetscapes Just Beginning.” *American Planning Association*. (https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/9130461/)
WEEK 11: OLD AND/OR NEW WOUNDS – WHITE NATIONALISM, THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY AND U.S. CITIES (November 18th)

Required Readings:


Recommended:


Reminder:

- Paper outline due by 5p on Friday, November 19th.

WEEK 12: REFLECTIONS – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? (December 2nd)

Required Readings:


Recommended:


FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS (December 2nd)

WEEK 13: FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS (December 9th)

** Remember that final papers are due via NYU Classes by 5p on Friday, December 10th**