Ethnic Studies 301 Ethnic Identity
Summer 2011

Instructor: Noel Jacob Kent
Office: George Hall 338; Hours: Monday 10-11; Tuesday/Thursday 1030-11:15, 1-2;
and by appointment
Phone 956-6963/e-mail: noelk@Hawaii.edu

This is a course exploring the nature and importance of ethnic (and other) identities. In
the first part of this class we review both the basic concepts in ethnic identity and
theoretical ideas. In the second, we will engage a book, articles and films casting some
light on ethnic identity and general American identities and the what consequences those
identities may have both on individuals and the larger society. We will also be looking
at the possibilities of transforming notions of identity to build a more peaceful, just
world. Throughout the course we will be connecting issues of identity to broader
political-social-economic concerns.

This is a writing intensive course and writing is abundant. This course fulfills the
general education ethics and writing intensive focus mandates; so writing and ethical
concerns will have a continuing emphasis throughout the semester. Students are
required to do seventeen hours of community service at a site designated by the
instructor, keep a journal of their experiences and write a small capstone summary
of what they have learned. Students are expected to attend class regularly,
participate actively in the life of the course and do quality written work. Papers will
not be accepted after the day they are due. Evaluations will be on the basis of the
quality of

Personal Paper-10%
The mid-term exam-25%
Arana paper on Obama-10%
How I feel as a Muslim-10%
The Color of Water paper-15%
The Chasing Red, White and Blue paper-15%
Service learning journal-15%

Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, will not be
tolerated. The UH Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992: 6) defines plagiarism as
“submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been
copied in whole or in part from another individual’s work without attributing that
borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another’s
idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student’s language
and style, or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source;
submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course
without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved.” Plagiarism and
cheating will result in a failing grade for the course.
The instructor reserves the right to reduce grades for excessive absences (four absences-half a grade; five—a full grade; six- two grades; seven-fail).

The required texts are Cornell and Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World; James McBride, The Color of Water; David Cohen, Chasing the Red White and Blue.

Course Outline
May 23 Course expectations and conceptual framework: Theories of ethnic/race relations; Ethnic groups, racism and discrimination:
May 24 Video Skin Deep; Reading: Cornell/Hartmann, chapter 1
May 25 Discussion of chapter 2 Reading: Cornell and Hartmann, chapter 2
May 26 Due*** Personal Papers on Identity
May 27 Assimilation, acculturation and integration: How do we view our personal identities and why? Reading: Cornell, ch. 3

May 30 Memorial Day
May 31 Primordialism, circumstantialism and constructionism: How and why do ethnic groups construct their identities? Reading Cornell ch. 4.
June 1 Racial formation theory, racialization, racial projects: How did the Civil Rights Revolution challenge meanings of race and create new meanings? Video Eyes on the Prize. Read: Handout
June 2 Contemporary identities Reading: Cornell, ch. 5
***Review of Arana article on Obama is due
June 3 Sites in identity construction Video: The Color of Fear Reading: Cornell, ch. 6 discussion

June 6 Discussion of Cornell, ch. 7
June 7 Discussion of Chapter 8 and Exam Review
June 8 ***Mid Term Exam
June 9 Identity and Cinema: Eight Mile
June 10 Holiday

June 13 Identity and Cinema: Dances With Wolves
June 14 Identity and Cinema: Kumar and Harry
June 15 ***Review of The Color of Water due
June 16 Transforming Identities: The Invisible empire
June 17 Discussion of Lexington Ky. Prosecutor’s statement

June 20 Transforming Identities: *** Due About Being a Muslim:
June 21  Transforming Identities: *Class Divided*
June 22  Various case studies of transformation
June 23  Various case studies of transformation
June 24  *** Due: Review of Chasing The Red, White and Blue

**Mon. June 27**  Discussion of Service Learning experiences
**Tues June 28**  Perspectives on Social Justice and Charity
**Wed. June 29**  Summing up the Class: ***All papers and service learning journal, capstone and signed off time sheet due.***