

## **SOC 214: Introduction to Race and Ethnic Relations**

Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:45 Room TBD

Professor: Sun-Ki Chai

### **Required Textbooks**

Stephen E. Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, 2nd Edition (Pine Forge Press, 2006). ISBN 978-1412941105.

Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Responses* (Wiley, 2010), ISBN: 978-0745639314.

### **Purpose of Course**

One of sociology's main concerns is the great puzzle we call **ethnicity**. OK, we all take it for granted that people belong to one ethnicity or another, but it's much harder to explain why ethnicity has such a hold on the way that people and groups think and act. Our world is becoming increasingly borderless, and as long as you have an internet connection, there is no limit to the types of people you can meet and get to know. We're also changing, becoming more individualistic, cool and calculating, rational, and generally "me"-oriented. So why do so many of us still care about our ethnicity, whether it is defined by race, religion, language, or original place of origin? Part of the solution to this question, as we will learn, is that ethnicity is not quite as "natural" as it might seem. Ethnic groups don't last forever; they get created, grow, join forces with other groups, split off from other groups, and eventually die out. Not necessarily because people die out, but because they no longer feel any emotional attachment to their ethnicity. We will cover theoretical approaches to ethnic identity, organization, mobilization, and conflict - thinking about how each matches some pieces of the puzzle but not others. Our approach will be international, rather than just on the United States. We will also focus heavily on the growing role of the internet, and its increasingly important role in how ethnicity affects today's world. As we move more to systematic electronic access, nearly all of the main assignments and supplementary materials will be posted online on the course website on [UH Lulima](#) site. Anyone enrolled in this course should be able to access the site through their UH user id.

### **Main Assignments**

#### **Attendance and Class Participation**

Attendance will be taken and will account for 30% of your grade. Because much of the knowledge required for this class will be covered only in lecture, it will not be possible to keep up without class attendance. In addition, constructive contributions to class discussions may add a few bonus percentage points to your grade.

## **Readings**

Readings will be assigned from the two required textbooks on a weekly schedule to be posted online, roughly at the rate of one chapter per week. You may expect that will complete most of both assigned textbooks. Additional outside readings of your own selection will be necessary for your short writing assignments and final exam paper.

## **Short Research Assignments**

By the second week of the course, you will each be assigned a different ethnic group from somewhere around the world that you will be expected to cover for the rest of the semester. Some may be large, and others may be smaller, but each will be large enough so that information can be found in books and online about your group. Furthermore, your grade will take into account the amount of effort you have made to uncover new information about your group. Over the course of the semester, we will assemble a class portfolio of information about ethnic groups, looking at their differences and similarities, why they formed, and why they cooperate or are in conflict with other groups. In order to accomplish this, there will be 3 short assignments interspersed through the semester, that will ask you to research some aspect of your assigned ethnic group using a particular piece of theoretical knowledge that we have covered from class and/or the readings *and* lecture. For each essay, you will be expected to collect will asked to collect information about your group relating to the assigned topic. Advice will be given on how to use online and/or library materials to accomplish this task. This will count for 30% of your grade.

## **Final Writing Assignment**

You will be given a take-home final examination that will ask you to develop a fuller picture of the your ethnic group based upon a larger set of theoretical concepts from the lecture and readings. You may draw upon your earlier research assignments, but the assignment will force you to do considerable additional research and analysis, as well as to consolidate the analysis you have already done. This will count for 30% of your grade.

## **Ethnicity Survey and Data creation**

As part of the requirements for this course, we will conduct a data-collection study involving members of the course, focusing on the issue of ethnicity and how it affects attitudes and behavior of the group that you are covering. This study will be designed to demonstrate how knowledge of a particular ethnic group gained over the course of reading can be systematically placed into organized an organized dataset. Participation in this study will count for 10% to your grade.

## **Plagiarism**

It goes without saying that plagiarism will be dealt with in a very strict manner in this course, and can result in failure of the course and/or penalties beyond the course depending on the nature of the wrongdoing. It is the student's responsibility to understand the rules for plagiarism.

The following definition of plagiarism comes from the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992, p. 6): Plagiarism includes but is not limited to 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; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.

## **Excused Abscences**

All excused absences require some form of relevant written documentation. In general, the list below provides the only reasons that I will accept for an excused absence.

- **Illness or Injury.** In this case, you should bring a note from your doctor or from the Student Health Center attesting to your illness/injury and its duration.
  - **Serious Personal Emergencies.** This includes serious illness or death in your family that requires you to leave town. Although it may seem somewhat harsh, I do usually require some kind of documentation (such as a doctor's note), as there unfortunately have been a few cases where claimed family emergencies turned out not to be the case.
  - **Weddings and births** are a fine line, but in general these are considered to be excusable only if it involves a member of your immediately family. Birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions, etc. are not considered legitimate excuses - you are supposed to attend class when you are able. You may choose not to one such occasions, but they will be counted as absences.
  - **University-Related Trips.** This would include varsity sports road trips, in which case you should bring a note from Nagatani Center or your coach describing the length and reason for the trip. It can also include trips by music, dance, and other performing arts majors for which out-of-town performance may be part of the curriculum, in which case you should bring a note from your instructor. Finally, although it is fairly rare, excused absences can be made for high-quality academic meetings.
  - **Others:** These could include jury duty or mandatory court hearings, as well as road accidents on way to school. In either case, legal record will be provided to you, which you produce as evidence for your absence. The timing should be such so you really could not make it to school on time. Job-related emergencies will be considered on a case to case basis, but again there has to be so document from your boss showing that it was not possible to excuse your from work at that time.
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- Except for the first two causes listed, excused absences do not mean that you get extensions on your assignments. It's up to you to either finish them ahead of time, or turn them in while you are on the road. Since all assignments are turned in electronically, there is nothing to prevent you from finishing up your work even when you are out of town.

## **Accomodations**

We work with the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to provide appropriate accommodations in this course for student with special learning requirements. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.