

# Syllabus

## GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND TO CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS: Race, Racism, and Ethnic Conflict

01:450:262:01 Index 65406  
Livingston Campus  
Where: Lucy Stone Hall B269  
When: Tuesday Thursday 1:40 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
SPRING 2008

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Instructor: Dr. Peter Kabachnik

### Office Hours:

Tuesday 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
B248 Lucy Stone Hall

Thursday 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
B248 Lucy Stone Hall

Or by appointment.

Telephone: 732-445-4018 (I only answer this when I am in the office)

Email: [petkab@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:petkab@rci.rutgers.edu) (the best way to reach me)

Mailbox: Located in LSH B252 (please place any assignments in my mailbox)

### Course Website

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> (Login and choose this course listing)

Check this site often, as all readings, assignments, and announcements will be posted there.

### Course Description

We will begin this course with an exploration of how race is socially constructed. Then we will ask how place has played into the construction of racial and ethnic identities. We often think of identity as something that belongs to groups and individuals, not the non-human world. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to talk about identity without also talking about a central concept of human geography: Place. From the formation of racialized places such as ghettos and Chinatowns

to media coverage of so-called “ethnic conflict,” we will examine the how, why, and where of racism and discrimination.

We will spend much of our time discussing topics such as segregation, ghettoization, and racialization in the contemporary United States. We will also look at examples of ethnic and racial conflict from other parts of the world, including the break-up of Yugoslavia and anti-Roma (Gypsy) violence in Europe. In addition to lectures, readings, and discussions, we may examine a variety of recent films and television shows.

## Readings

There are no books or readers to purchase for this course. All of the readings will either be available online or posted on the course website. Therefore, make sure you have access to a computer to complete your readings and/or print them out beforehand.

## Evaluation

- 35% Attendance and Participation.
  - 5% Assignment #1.
  - 5% Assignment #2.
  - 5% Assignment #3.
- 20% Research Project.
- 15% In-Class Final Exam.
- 15% Take Home Final Exam.

### Attendance and Participation.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you just show up to every class, even if you have done the reading, but don't speak, that will equate to a grade of 70, or a C. Most class meetings will have time reserved for discussion. It is important for everyone to offer their own perspectives and experiences, as well as ask any questions that they have. Lively discussion helps facilitate learning, and I aim to provide a place of mutual respect and support. I expect the same of you. Reading the assigned articles prior to the class meeting is the single most important element of this class.

### In-Class Final Exam.

This will take place on our final class meeting, Thursday May 1<sup>st</sup>. It will consist of short answer/identifications and essays.

### Take Home Final.

This will be due on Thursday, May 8th, in my mailbox LSH B252, by 4pm. The questions will be posted online one week before. More details will be given when the questions are posted.

### Research Project: Identifying and Deconstructing Stereotypes.

This project will have several steps. Your choice of topic will be graded as a separate assignment (see Assignment #1 below). During the semester you are to provide me with several progress reports/drafts to ensure that your research is ongoing. You will need to discuss your research with me during office hours at least once as well. The project is due on Thursday March 27<sup>th</sup>.

You have a choice as to what type of research you want to undertake.

- A) Examination of current or recent person/place/event where a racial/ethnic dimension plays a significant role. I will provide some suggestions, or you can come up with a topic of your own choice. All topics must be approved by me first. All students will do a different topic. You are to provide a brief synopsis of the person/place/event and elaborate on how racial/ethnic stereotypes played a role. You then must deconstruct the stereotypes involved in order to better understand the conflict.
  
- B) Close Analysis of Racial/Ethnic Conflict. I will provide some suggestions, or you can come up with a topic of your own choice. All topics must be approved by me first. All students will do a different topic. Choose a current/contemporary conflict and illustrate how ethnic/racial elements are utilized to worsen the conflict. Examine accounts of the conflict and show how both sides are being represented.

You can also, on your own, come up with a different topic than listed above. I will provide more details in class.

Regardless of which option you select, make sure you connect your analysis to the readings or lecture material.

Please use spelling and grammar checks AND please proofread your work. And I welcome everyone to come discuss their project with me during office hours.

### Assignment #1 – Topic selection for your project and summary.

This will be due at the beginning of class on Tuesday February 5th.  
1-2 pages, 12 point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced.

### Assignment #2 & Assignment #3.

These will be announced during the semester and will consist of 1-2 page papers answering questions that I will assign. Due dates will be posted on the website.

### Expectations

We will be critically examining many issues that may be very important to you. If you feel uncomfortable or unsure of what is being discussed in class and why, please let me know as soon as possible.

This course requires a significant amount of reading. You are expected to complete all of the assigned articles before the class meeting. You should be prepared, punctual, and respectful of others.

Please make an appointment to speak with me before the end of the first two weeks of class to discuss any learning related challenges.

There are only two excuses that warrant missing an exam or quiz:

1. A Dean's Excuse (or like-signed Rutgers Administrative waiver)
2. A Signed and Dated Medical Practitioner's Excuse (Doctor, Dentist, etc.)

Statement on Classroom Etiquette

[http://geography.rutgers.edu/academics/classroom\\_etiquette.html](http://geography.rutgers.edu/academics/classroom_etiquette.html)

# Schedule

## GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND TO CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS: Race, Racism, and Ethnic Conflict

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T	January 22	Course Introduction
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TH	January 24	Key Terminology: Identity, Place, and Stereotypes
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- Bauman, Zygmunt. "Identity." 2004
- stereotypes: <http://www.theonion.com/content/node/33210>

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T	January 29	History of Race, Part 1
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- Gladwell, Malcolm. "Troublemakers." 2006  
[http://www.gladwell.com/2006/2006\\_02\\_06\\_a\\_pitbull.html](http://www.gladwell.com/2006/2006_02_06_a_pitbull.html)
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TH January 31 No Class: Choose Research Topic, Start Research!

- Wills, Christopher. "The Skin We're In." <http://discover.com/issues/nov-94/features/theskinwerein443/>
  - Work on Assignment #1, Due February 5 (next class)
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T February 5 History of Race, Part 2  
Assignment #1 Due.

- Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Sports Taboo." *The New Yorker*. May 19, 1997. [http://www.gladwell.com/1997/1997\\_05\\_19\\_a\\_sports.htm](http://www.gladwell.com/1997/1997_05_19_a_sports.htm)
  - white basketball players: <http://www.theonion.com/content/node/46398>
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TH February 7 Constructing Race  
Film: *A Class Divided* (1986)

- Brodtkin-Sacks, Karen. "How Did Jews Become White Folks?" 1994
  - Take the Race Implicit Association Test (Race IAT): <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
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T February 12 Race, Continued  
Priming

- Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Warren Harding Error." 2005
  - TBA
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TH February 14 Whiteness/Blackness

- McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." 1990 <http://www.cwru.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf>
  - Gladwell, Malcolm. "Black Like Them." 1996 [http://www.gladwell.com/1996/1996\\_04\\_29\\_a\\_black.htm](http://www.gladwell.com/1996/1996_04_29_a_black.htm)
  - blackdar: <http://www.theonion.com/content/node/34052>
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T February 19 Film: *La Haine (Hate)* (1995), Part One.

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TH February 21 Film: *La Haine (Hate)* (1995), Part Two, Conclusion.  
Discussion of *La Haine (Hate)*

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T February 26 The Places of Races

- Wacquant, Loic. "The New Urban Color Line: The State and Fate of the Ghetto" 1997
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TH February 28 Film: *Do the Right Thing* (1989), Spike Lee. Part One

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T March 4 Film: *Do the Right Thing* (1989), Spike Lee. Part Two, Conclusion

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TH March 6 Discussion of *Do the Right Thing*

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T March 11 The Places of Races

- Aitken, Stuart C. "Schoolyard Shootings: Racism, Sexism, and the Moral Panics over Teen Violence." 2001
  - Anderson, Kay J. "The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category" 1987
  - Reality TV unfair to blacks:  
<http://www.theonion.com/content/node/30934>
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TH March 13 Racism and Power

- Thomas, Mary E. "I think it's just natural': The Spatiality of Racial Segregation at a US High School." 2005
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SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

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T March 25 Environmental Racism

- Pulido, Laura. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California" 2000
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TH March 27 Identity Politics

- Harvey, David. "Class Relations, Social Justice and the Politics of Difference." 1993

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T April 1 Cultural Racism  
Framing Ethnic Conflict  
Research Project Due!

- Discussion of Arab-Jew relations  
<http://www.juancole.com/2004/12/have-arabs-or-muslims-always-hated.html>
- Short encyclopedia-type entry on the Bosnian genocide.  
<http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/bosnia.htm>

Please read both these pieces with attention to how they differ in the ways they each frame the conflict.

- TBA

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TH April 3 Anti-Roma (Gypsy) Violence

- Ladányi, János and Iván Szelényi. "Historical Variations in Inter-Ethnic Relations: Toward a Social History of Roma in Csenyété, 1857-2000." 2003

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T April 8 IDPs and the Territorial Trap

- TBA

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T April 10 Summary of Research Projects and Discussion

- TBA

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T April 15 Into Afghanistan. Guest Lecture by Michael Mohammed, Department of Geography, Rutgers University

- TBA

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TH April 17 Film: *No Man's Land* (2001), Denis Tanovic

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T April 22 Film: *No Man's Land* (2001), Denis Tanovic  
CONTINUED. Discussion.

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TH April 24 Invisibility

- Yamada, Mitsuye. "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster: Reflections of an Asian American Woman." 1981
  - TBA
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T April 29 Ways Forward: Combating Discrimination

- Ignatiev, Noel. "The Point is Not to Interpret Whiteness But to Abolish It." 1997 <http://racetraitor.org/abolishthepoint.html>
  - TBA
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TH May 1 Final Exam

- Take Home Final Due Thursday, May 8th, in my mailbox LSH B252, by 4pm
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Schedule is subject to change

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