

Sociology 139A: Race and Racism in America¹

Spring 2025

Tuesdays and Thursdays in RWAC 0121

Class Hours: 11:00am-12:20pm

Professor: Michel Estefan

Email: mestefan@ucsd.edu

Office: 487 Social Sciences Building

Student Hours via Zoom:

Fridays from 11am-1 pm

Sign up for student hours here:

<https://calendly.com/mestefan/studenthours>

Teaching Assistant

Fenghua Chen

f2chen@ucsd.edu

Student Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Race and Racism in America! How do various forms of forced labor imposed on Native Americans relate to the broader institution of slavery in colonial America? How do our views of American history change when we read it through the lens of race? How have Mexican Americans navigated the color line in the United States?? Is the model minority myth about Asian Americans entirely a myth? How do college campuses shape the identity of Latinx students? How did the Vietnam War contribute to the emergence of the contemporary White power movement?

These are some of the key questions we'll be exploring in this course. By studying the history of the United States through the lens of race and racism, we will critically explore the many myths, betrayals, tragedies, victories and hopes that define this country, its people, its past, and the future that may lie ahead.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

¹ This syllabus outlines the planned structure for our course. However, to ensure the most responsive and effective learning environment, I may adjust the schedule or content as necessary. Any changes will be communicated promptly, with the aim of supporting your academic success.

1. Define race and racism using historical and sociological frameworks.
2. Analyze how different racial groups have experienced, shaped, and challenged American democracy.
3. Describe the shifting boundaries of racial identity for various groups in the United States across time.
4. Apply the insights you learn in this course to critically reflect on your own racial position in American society.

Land Acknowledgement

“UCSD was built on the unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego community. We are honored to share this space with them and thank them for their stewardship of Mat Kulaaxuuy (statement borrowed with thanks from the Association of Native American Medical Students at UCSD). [Please note land acknowledgements do not absolve settlers of the responsibility of decolonization and returning stolen land to indigenous people.]”²

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grade Distribution	Due Date	Percentage
Weekly Collective Quizzes	Every Thursday starting April 10	25%
Midterm Exam	Thursday, May 8 (in class)	25%
Participation		25%
Extra Credit Assignment #1	Sunday, May 18 by 11:59pm	2.5 points
Extra Credit Assignment #2	Sunday, June 1 by 11:59pm	2.5 points
Final exam	Tuesday, June 10 from 11:30am-2:30pm	25%

Grading Scale

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-69
A	94-96	B	84-86	C	74-76	F	0-59
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73		

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Collective Quizzes (25%)

This assignment is designed to promote a sense of community by having you work together to answer questions about the reading material. The assignment makes it so that you depend on

² I’d like to credit Dr. Saiba Varma for writing this land acknowledgement and kindly sharing it with me.

each other for this portion of your grade. It is also intended to help you remember the material better and understand it with more depth.

There will be short collective quizzes **at the beginning of class every Thursday starting week 2**. Each quiz covers the readings assigned for that day and the previous lecture.

Each quiz consists of questions that you will have to answer by consensus with your small group. This means you **cannot select an answer on your own**. The only question you must answer individually is the last question, which will ask you to grade yourself on your contributions to completing the quiz.

All digital devices must be put away during the quiz, but you are allowed to bring printed copies of the readings.

I will provide further, detailed instructions about the quiz mechanics in class just before you take your first quiz.

The collective nature of the quizzes requires your attendance and participation in the quiz. As a result, no make-up quizzes will be available. But if you happen to miss a quiz for any reason, you can do one of the extra-credit assignments described below to make up the lost points.

Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm will be held on **Thursday, May 8 in person during our class time**. This is a collective exam that will be taken in small groups.

Participation (25%)

Your participation will be graded based on the following criteria:

1. Posting to the "Introduce Yourself" discussion board. (4pts)
2. Filling out the SET for this course. (6pts)
3. Attending class lectures (15pts)

***When you fill-out the SET, please take a screenshot of your submission confirmation and post it on the corresponding Canvas tab.** This will allow me to give you credit for this portion of your participation grade while preserving your anonymity in the survey.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will be held on Tuesday, June 10 from 11:30am-2:30pm in person. This is a hybrid exam. You will first take the exam individually. Then, you will take the same exam in small groups. Your individual final grade for the exam will be the average of these two exams.

Extra Credit Assignment #1 (2.5 points)

The first extra credit assignment is due on **Sunday, May 18 by 11:59pm.**

Watch the film “The Black Power Mixtape.” You can access the film through the link below. Please note that for the link to work, you must either be on campus connected to UCSD Wi-Fi or logged in to the UCSD VPN if you are off-campus. If the link below doesn’t work, go to the UCSD Library website and search for the documentary by its title. You should see a result with a viewing link you can use.

<https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/ucasandiego371665/play/e09c34f4d12fa34a?referrer=marc>

After watching the film, write a commentary (500-word limit) answering the following questions:

1. Start with a summary of the film. What is it about? What are the general themes it portrays?
2. What was your favorite scene or segment and why?
3. Describe one important insight or lesson about race and racism that you took away from this film.
4. Do you have any criticisms of the film? These could include issues you believe are important but that the film didn’t cover or didn’t cover sufficiently, arguments the film presents that you found ambiguous, mistaken, or biased, or any other aspect of the film you found problematic. If you don’t have any criticisms of the film, are there any questions the film inspired for you or any issues you’d like to know more about?

Please post your answers directly on the corresponding Canvas tab.

Extra Credit Assignment #2 (2.5 points)

The second extra credit assignment is due on **Sunday, June 1 by 11:59pm.**

Watch the film “Ruby Ridge.” You can access the film through the link below. Please note that for the link to work, you must either be on campus connected to UCSD Wi-Fi or logged in to the UCSD VPN if you are off-campus. If the link below doesn’t work, go to the UCSD Library website and search for the documentary by its title. You should see a result with a viewing link you can use.

https://fod.infobase.com/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=151143

After watching the film, answer the following questions:

1. The documentary begins by discussing the broader economic circumstances for farmers in the Midwest and religion. How are the two connected?
2. What are some of the views promoted by Christian identity theology?

3. What role did the media play in pressuring federal authorities to follow through and attempt arrest Randy Weaver?
4. The documentary expressed many criticisms of federal law enforcement authorities. Which ones stood out to you?
5. The documentary ends with Randy Weaver's daughter, Sara, stating that when people operate on the basis of fear and misinformation, tragedy ensues. One might be led to believe that this applies to the White supremacists in this story, but who else in the story of Ruby Ridge was taking action based on fear and misinformation? Explain your answer.

Please post your answers directly on the corresponding Canvas tab.

Care and Support Notice: During the siege at Ruby Ridge, Randy Weaver's 14-year-old son, Samuel, and his wife, Vicki were killed by reckless law enforcement agents. While the documentary presents no graphic depictions of these incidents, they are discussed at length from several perspectives, including the direct and often gruesome testimony of Randy's daughter, Sara. Please be aware of the sensitive nature of this content and prioritize your well-being. I can provide an alternative documentary if you prefer to avoid this one.

COURSE MATERIALS

All readings for this course are available electronically on Canvas. Each reading will be linked under the day they are due.

COURSE VALUES AND POLICIES

Care and Support

Many of us are facing or may face unexpected challenges during this quarter. Please know that I and your TA are here to support you. I sincerely hope you reach out to us should you need any type of support to succeed in this class.

Food Support for Students

If you are skipping and stretching meals, or having difficulties affording or accessing food, you may be eligible for CalFresh, California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, that can provide up to \$292 a month in free money on a debit card to buy food. Students can apply at benefitscal.com/r/ucsandiegocalfresh

The [Hub Basic Needs Center](#) empowers all students by connecting them to resources for food, stable housing and financial literacy. Visit their site at basicneeds.ucsd.edu. Most importantly, please know that you are not alone in dealing with these issues.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in this Classroom

I am personally committed to making sure this classroom supports diversity of thought, experiences, and identities such that everyone feels welcome and comfortable expressing their views. Many of you may have deeply personal experiences regarding the topics we are covering in this class. While I expect us to have rigorous discussions and even disagreements, I ask that you engage each other with care and empathy and that we support each other as we make our way through conversations about difficult topics. In exchange for your efforts in this regard, I will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports you and the intellectual and emotional risks your participation may entail. Should you ever feel excluded in our classroom or unable to fully participate, please let me know so that I can take steps to correct the situation.

This is a Child-Friendly Class³

All student-parents are welcome to bring their children to class. You do not have to decide between coming to class or taking care of your child. I would suggest bringing something—perhaps a toy—for your child to do during class, but if you can't, rest assured we'll work together to keep them entertained while making our class a productive learning experience for everyone.

Digital Device Policy

To foster a focused and engaging learning environment, the use of laptops during lectures is not permitted. Research shows that laptops tend to distract both users and those around them, negatively impacting your academic performance. I will make an exception if you require a laptop as part of a documented accommodation. And everyone is welcome to use tablets with digital pens for note-taking. By minimizing digital distractions, I hope to enhance comprehension, participation, and your overall educational experience.

Privacy Statement

To maintain a respectful and trusting learning environment, and in accordance with UC San Diego's policies, unauthorized recording of class lectures, discussions, or activities is strictly prohibited. This includes audio, video, and photographic recordings. Such recordings may infringe upon the intellectual property rights of the instructor and compromise the privacy of all participants. Students requiring recordings as an approved accommodation should present documentation from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) to arrange appropriate provisions. By adhering to this policy, we ensure a safe space where everyone feels comfortable engaging in open and honest discussions.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. It consists in representing the work of others or work produced by artificial intelligence as your own. This includes using Internet resources or copying the ideas, sentences, paragraphs of another without proper acknowledgement. For more information on plagiarism and the steps you can take to avoid it, consult this site:

<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

³ I'd like to credit Dr. Kristen Barber from Southern Illinois University for introducing me to the meaningful potential of including a syllabi policy statement geared toward making my courses welcoming for student-parents.

The following guidelines are useful for avoiding plagiarism in your written work:⁴

- Try to use your own words most of the time.
- When you do use another person's words, use quotation marks, and give credit to the source.
- Don't make slight variations in the language and then fail to give credit to the source. If the expression is essentially the same, the author still deserves credit.
- Even if you aren't directly quoting the material, you should still document information and ideas that you use in your work whenever they are new to you (e.g., something that you discovered in your research).
- If you're unsure, add the citation. It is better to be extra cautious than fail to give credit when you should.

AI Technology

While AI can be useful in certain contexts, its use in this class undermines the learning process and can disproportionately disadvantage historically marginalized students. Developing critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills without relying on AI is essential to your academic and career success. Using AI also compromises fairness in evaluations. As a result, I'd like you to complete the assignments for this course without using AI.

Please respect this policy to ensure a level playing field and to build the skills necessary for long-term growth and equity in your education.

Asking Questions and Email Policy

Please send me all messages concerning this class through Canvas rather than regular email. This helps me keep better track of your messages and allows me to respond faster.

Student Hours

I encourage you to visit me during my student hours as often as you want or need to. This is a time for us to discuss your interests or concerns with the course content in more depth. If you cannot make it to the scheduled student hours, send me an email and we will arrange to meet at an alternative date and time. You can schedule a student hours appointment here:

<https://calendly.com/mestefan/studenthours>

Extensions and Late Work

If you experience an emergency or situation that prohibits you from attending class or completing an assignment, please let me know as soon as you can. Remember that you can make-up the points for any assignment you miss by doing the extra credit assignments.

Students with Disabilities

⁴ Adapted with slight variations in language from Hendrickson, Raymond, *The Research Paper* (New York: Henry Holt and Company), xiii.

If you anticipate requiring academic accommodations for a disability, please contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#). In an effort to make all learning experiences in this course accessible, you are also welcome to privately discuss options with me and the TA as soon as possible to establish any necessary accommodations in a timely fashion. I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive and equitable.

Religious Accommodations

University policy grants students justified absences from class or other organized activities in observance of religious holydays unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship. Please notify me by the end of the second week of classes if you have any religious commitments that may require you to be absent from class.

Title IX / Gender Violence

Gender violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, class, age, appearance, gender identity, or sexual orientation. UCSD is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination based on sex or gender, including sexual misconduct, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center ([https://care.ucsd.edu/Links to an external site.](https://care.ucsd.edu/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.%29)) provides programs and resources to help promote healthy relationships, teach non-violence and equality, and foster a respectful and safe environment for all members of the UCSD community. All services are confidential and free of charge. For assistance during business hours, call (858) 534-5793. After hours, please call the On-Call Help Line at 858-534-5793.

Additional Well-Being Resources

UCSD provides numerous resources to support your health and well-being. Below are some options available to you if needed. Please don't hesitate to use them and feel free to reach out if you would like me to help you access any of them. 😊

[Togetherall](#) is a safe, free, online mental health support community where students may anonymously connect with others who understand what they're going through – 24/7.

[Triton2Triton](#) is a supportive, online connection space where students may connect via chat with trained peers who understand what they're going through and can help navigate resources.

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) provides no-cost, integrative, student-centered services that are designed to support UC San Diego students' academic success, personal development, and holistic well-being.

[The Hub Basic Needs Center](#) provides resource referrals and services concerning food, stable housing, and financial wellness resources.

[Student Health Services](#) provides on-campus, holistic, preventive care, as well as treatment for illness, injuries, and medical conditions.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Introduction to the Course

Tuesday, April 1: Introduction to the Course

No Reading

Conceptualizing Race Historically and Sociologically

Thursday, April 3: Race and Racism in Historical Perspective

Fredrickson, George M. 2015. *Racism: A Short History*. Revised edition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. (We're only reading the introduction)

Native Americans in Colonial America

Tuesday, April 8: Native American Slavery in Colonial America

Gallay, Alan. 2003. *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717*. Edition Unstated. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. (Introduction)

Thursday, April 10: The Many Shapes of Forced Native American Labor in Colonial America

Shefveland, Kristalyn Marie. 2014. "The Many Faces of Native Bonded Labor in Colonial Virginia." *Native South* 7:68-84.

Reframing American History Through the Lens of Race

Tuesday, April 15: The Color of Democracy in America is Black

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. 2019. "America Wasn't a Democracy, Until Black Americans Made It One." *The New York Times*, August 14.

Thursday, April 17: Fact-Checking the 1619 Project

Harris, Leslie M. 2020. "I Helped Fact-Check the 1619 Project. The Times Ignored Me." *Politico*, March 6.

Tuesday, April 22: Civil War and Black Reconstruction I

Du Bois, W. E. B. 2007. "Chapter I: The Black Worker." Pp. 1–12 in *Black Reconstruction in America. An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thursday, April 24: Civil War and Black Reconstruction II

Du Bois, W. E. B. 2007. "Chapter II: The White Worker." Pp. 13–24 in *Black Reconstruction in America. An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tuesday, April 29: Civil War and Black Reconstruction III

Du Bois, W. E. B. 2007. "Chapter III: The Planter." Pp. 25–43 in *Black Reconstruction in America. An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thursday, May 1: Civil War and Black Reconstruction IV

Du Bois, W. E. B. 2007. "Chapter IV: The General Strike." Pp. 44–67 in *Black Reconstruction in America. An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tuesday, May 6: Tensions, Critiques, and Limits of Du Bois's Narrative

DeLong, J. Bradford. 2023. "Introduction." Pp. 1-25 in *Slouching Towards Utopia: An Economic History of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Basic Books.

Thursday, May 8: In-class Midterm Exam

No reading

The Shifting Boundaries of Racial Divides

Tuesday, May 13: Blacks, Mexicans, and European Immigrants, 1890-1945 I

Fox, Cybelle, and Thomas A. Guglielmo. 2012. "Defining America's Racial Boundaries: Blacks, Mexicans, and European Immigrants, 1890–1945." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(2):327–79. (We're reading p.327-351 for this session.)

Thursday, May 15: Blacks, Mexicans, and European Immigrants, 1890-1945 II

Fox, Cybelle, and Thomas A. Guglielmo. 2012. "Defining America's Racial Boundaries: Blacks, Mexicans, and European Immigrants, 1890–1945." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(2):327–79. (We're reading p.352-370 for this session.)

First Extra Credit Assignment is Due Sunday, May 18 by 11:59pm

Panethnicity

Tuesday, May 20: The Model Minority Myth

Park, Lisa Sun-Hee. 2008. "Continuing Significance of the Model Minority Myth: The Second Generation." *Social Justice* 35(2 (112)):134–44.

Rojas, Fabio. 2023. "The Cultural and Economic Inequalities of Asian-Americans." *Temple of Sociology*.

Thursday, May 22: Identity-Formation Among Latino Students

Verduzco Reyes, Daisy. 2017. "Disparate Lessons: Racial Climates and Identity-Formation Processes Among Latino Students." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 14(2):447–70.

The Origins of the Contemporary White Power Movement

Tuesday, May 27: International War and White Power

Belew, Kathleen. 2018. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press. (We're reading "Note to the Reader" and the "Introduction" for this session.)

Thursday, May 29: White Power Violence I

Belew, Kathleen. 2018. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press. (We're reading chapter one and p.209-219 from chapter nine for this session.)

Second Extra Credit Assignment is Due Sunday, June 1 by 11:59pm

Tuesday, June 3: White Power Violence II

Belew, Kathleen. 2018. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press. (We're reading p.219-234 from chapter nine and the Epilogue for this session.)

Thursday, June 5: Review of the Course

No Reading

Final Exam is on Tuesday, June 10 from 11:30am-2:30pm in person in RWAC 0121
