

ETHST 001: INTRODUCTION TO ETHNIC STUDIES

Catalog Description – The history, culture, and contemporary experiences of racial and ethnic groups in the United States, with attention to cultural conflict, inequality, and the social construction of racial and ethnic identities.

Course Overview – This course introduces students to central concepts and debates in Ethnic Studies through an interdisciplinary examination of race, ethnicity, identity, inequality, and social change in the United States. Students analyze how racial and ethnic categories are historically constructed and how they shape institutions, communities, and everyday life. Readings, films, and personal narratives connect broad patterns of power and inequality to the experiences of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian American, Arab and Muslim American, mixed-race, and white communities.

Student Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain core themes and theories in Ethnic Studies.
2. Describe the historical and cultural experiences of diverse racial and ethnic communities in the United States.
3. Analyze race and ethnicity as social and historical constructions.
4. Evaluate how racial inequality operates across institutions and everyday life.
5. Synthesize course materials and develop original, evidence-based arguments.
6. Apply Ethnic Studies concepts to contemporary social issues and lived experiences.

Course Materials

Gallagher, Charles A., ed. 2022. *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity*. 7th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Takaki, Ronald. 2008. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. Rev. ed. New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company.

Students also select one personal-choice book from an approved.

Additional readings and audiovisual materials are posted on Canvas, our online course platform.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

Assignment	Description	Point Value	% of Final Grade
Discussion Forums	15 forums at 10 points each (lowest 3 are dropped)	120	30
RCL Responses	3 responses at 20 points each	60	15
ADM Responses	3 papers at 40 points each	120	30
Book Review	Personal-choice book analysis	60	15
Final Reflection Paper	Course synthesis and reflection	40	10
TOTAL		400	
Extra Credit	Up to 2 assignments at 10 points each	20	5

Major Assignments

Detailed prompts, grading criteria, and submission instructions are provided on Canvas.

Discussion Forums – Students contribute original discussion threads and substantive replies based on assigned materials. Forums emphasize critical engagement, collaborative learning, and respectful dialogue.

RCL Responses – Three short responses analyze selected articles from Rethinking the Color Line and connect them to required audiovisual materials.

ADM Responses – Three papers analyze chapters from A Different Mirror, connect historical material to Ethnic Studies theory and course films, and include students’ own critical reflections.

Book Review – Students analyze a personal-choice book, focusing on racial and ethnic identity and making connections to both core course texts.

Final Reflection Paper – Students synthesize course themes, respond to readings on antiracist action, and reflect on how the course relates to their lives and communities.

Extra Credit – Optional short assignments based on approved course-related materials or activities.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The schedule is subject to change; students will be notified and Canvas will be updated. All materials are required unless otherwise noted.

RCL	Reading from <i>Rethinking the Color Line</i>
ADM	Reading from <i>A Different Mirror</i>
PCB	Personal Choice Book
AV	Audiovisual assignment

Week 1

Welcome to the Class!

- Read the syllabus and course policies
- Become familiar with the online course site
- Purchase course texts and select a personal-choice book

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- No major assignment due

Week 2

Introduction

- RCL: Introduction and Part 1
- ADM: Chapter 1

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- Discussion Forum 1

Week 3

Sociohistorical Constructions

- RCL: Articles 1–5
- ADM: Chapter 2
- AV: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Episode 1
- Begin personal-choice book

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- Discussion Forum 2
- RCL Response 1

Week 4**Contemporary Socioeconomic Trends**

- RCL: Articles 6–7
- ADM: Chapter 3
- AV: *Unnatural Causes*, Episode 1

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- Discussion Forum 3

Week 5**How Race Changes Across Time**

- RCL: Articles 8–11
- ADM: Chapter 4
- AV: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, “Sorting People”

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- Discussion Forum 4
- ADM Response 1

Week 6**How Race Changes Across Place**

- ADM: Chapters 5–6
- AV: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Episode 2

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- Discussion Forum 5

Week 7**Color-Blind America: Fact, Fantasy, or Future?**

- RCL: Articles 12–14
- ADM: Chapter 7
- AV: *White Like Me*

Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas

- Discussion Forum 6
- RCL Response 2

Week 8	Understanding Racism
• RCL: Part 2 and selected articles • ADM: Chapter 8 • AV: <i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i>, Episode 3	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 7	
Week 9	How Space Gets Raced
• RCL: Selected articles • ADM: Chapter 9 • AV: <i>Unnatural Causes</i>, “Place Matters”	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 8 • ADM Response 2	
Week 10	How Space Gets Raced (continued)
• ADM: Chapters 10–11 • AV: <i>Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity</i>	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 9	
Week 11	How Race and Gender Shape the Workplace
• Selected readings on labor and globalization • ADM: Chapter 13 • AV: <i>The Global Assembly Line</i>	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 10 • RCL Response 3	
Week 12	Race and Criminal Justice
• RCL: Part 3 and selected articles • ADM: Chapter 12 • AV: <i>13th</i>	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 11	

Week 13	Race, Representation, and the Media
• Selected readings on culture, media, and markets • RCL: Selected articles • ADM: Chapter 14 • AV: Selected media clips	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 12 • ADM Response 3	
Week 14	Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration
• RCL: Part 4 and selected articles • ADM: Chapter 15 • AV: <i>Lest We Forget</i>	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 13	
Week 15	Book Club and Review
• ADM: Chapter 16 • Finish personal-choice book	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 14: Book Club • Book Review	
Week 16 / Final Exam Week	Living with Less Racism: Strategies for Action
• RCL: Articles 49–50 • ADM: Chapter 17	
Due Sunday at 11:59pm via Canvas	
• Discussion Forum 15 • Final Reflection Paper • Optional Extra Credit	

COURSE POLICIES & GRADING

See Canvas for additional information and links

Syllabus – You are required to read this entire syllabus thoroughly and are responsible for all information in it. This includes all material on Canvas referenced in this syllabus.

Canvas – You are required to thoroughly review all policies on Canvas and are responsible for all information posted.

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions – Please see Canvas for answers to frequently asked questions including requests for extensions, late work policy, how to submit extra credit, and more.

Grading Policy - All scores will be entered into Canvas throughout the term as I complete grading for each assignment. Your grade will be calculated as a percentage of points earned out of points possible. Your final grade will be based on the following breakdown:

A	93% - 100%	A-	90% - 92.99%	B+	87% - 89.99%
B	83% - 86.99%	B-	80% - 82.99%	C+	77% - 79.99%
C	73% - 76.99%	C-	70% - 72.99%	D+	67% - 69.99%
D	63% - 66.99%	D-	60% - 62.99%	F	0% - 59.99%

Late and Missing Work Policy – All late work will be marked down by 1 full grade (10%) every day that it is late, starting the minute that it is late. Work that is more than 10 days late will receive a “0” and be considered “missing.” See Canvas for full policies.

Incompletes - Per University policies, you must complete at least 70% of the coursework with a score of at least 70% to be eligible for an Incomplete.

Grading Turnaround Time - During a regular sixteen-week semester, minor assignments are generally graded within two weeks and major assignments within three to four weeks.

Assignment Policies, Student Conduct, and Academic Honesty

Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be completed independently using only approved course materials. Students must properly cite all ideas, language, and information that are not common knowledge and may not engage in plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or other forms of academic dishonesty. Generative artificial intelligence may not be used to produce, rewrite, summarize, or substantially edit submitted work unless explicitly permitted. Students must also follow the University Student Code of Conduct and all related course and university policies.