

FCS 3290: Race, Ethnicity, and Family Diversity
University of Utah, Spring 2025| Online Course

Instructor:

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

By the year 2045, the United States will experience a dramatic demographic shift, becoming a “minority white” country. White people will comprise 49.7% of the country’s population, in contrast to 50.3% of the population composed of Latinx (24.6%), Black (13.1%), Asian (7.9%), and multiracial (3.8%) individuals. To grasp the historical significance and societal consequences of this key demographic transformation for individuals and families, an understanding of the significance of race and ethnicity to family life and family diversity is essential.

As such, this course’s central aim is to examine how race, ethnicity and other diverse groups – and accompanying societal and institutional processes of racism and discrimination – shape, structure, and stratify family life in the U.S. Utilizing a multidisciplinary lens and drawing on diverse scholars’ theoretical and empirical research from across the social sciences and humanities, the course examines how families’ lived experiences, cultural practices, and strategies for resilience are impacted by racialized and racist beliefs, institutions, and structures. Throughout the course, the dynamics of race and ethnicity are located in relationship to class, gender, sexuality, disability, and nationality, and are discussed using an intersectional approach. A central focus is on examining and developing a nuanced understanding of the diverse and intersecting experiences of families across racial and ethnic groups, including Latinx, Black, Asian American, Indigenous, White and multiracial families.

This course seeks to provide an inclusive and engaging space for people from all backgrounds and with a diverse range of life experiences. Some people in the class may have some background knowledge on the course material, while this may be completely new to others. I seek to provide a space where everyone can learn from myself and one another.

This class should challenge you in different ways, but I believe everyone can succeed with some effort.

Fulfillment of Academic Requirements

This class fulfills a) the Diversity Requirement (DV), b) the Humanities Exploration Requirement (HF), c) the requirements for the major and minor in Ethnic Studies, d) the requirement for the certificate in Sustainability Studies, and e) the requirement for the major in the Human Development area.

Classroom Conduct:

I understand that discussing topics like race, ethnicity, and systems of racial and ethnic oppression can be difficult and uncomfortable. I will discuss hard truths in this class, and my job as your instructor is to help you to meaningfully grapple with and navigate new, challenging concepts and perspectives. In that vein, to ensure the well-being and learning of all students in our class, it is also essential that the viewpoints I express during the course are grounded in critical reasoning that demonstrate compassion and respect for each other. I will stick to this rule under all circumstances. To ensure an inclusive and equitable learning environment, I will address offensive or hurtful language immediately.

Respect for Diversity Statement

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and situations be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, which may include but is not limited to: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, political affiliation, culture, and so on. I acknowledge that

there is likely to be a diversity of access to resources among students and plan to support all of you as best as we can. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify pronouns with which we would like to be addressed.

Course Objectives

1. Students will acquire the tools of critical thinking to examine and challenge the assumptions, stereotypes, misconceptions, and methodologies that recreate the mechanisms of subordination and segregation by race, ethnicity, and nationality across families.
2. Students will reevaluate their understanding of American history in a way that centers and foregrounds race, ethnicity, racism, and discrimination.
3. Students will learn how families’ experiences with societal institutions and processes – including neighborhoods, housing, education, and the labor market – are shaped by societal treatment based on race and ethnicity.
4. Students will gain a deep and nuanced appreciation of the lasting and varied struggles and obstacles that families of color have and continue to endure in the United States.
5. Students will gain analytical skills to interpret and evaluate scientific evidence about the role of race, ethnicity, and institutional and structural racism in family life.
6. Students will learn how to formulate compelling arguments that are well supported by empirical evidence, as well as develop the skills to confidently and compassionately engage in intellectual discussion with peers bringing diverse perspectives.

Course Outline

The following is a mostly complete schedule of class topics and readings. Changes may be made throughout the semester.

Week	Topic
1	What We Mean When We Talk About Race, Ethnicity, and Family Diversity
2	Understanding the Breadth of Diversity, Including Folx with Disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+ and Indigenous Peoples
3	The Historical and Contemporary Debates in Race, Ethnicity and Family Diversity
4	Health Disparities and Paradoxes
5	Immigration and Assimilation: From Civil Rights to “High Skilled” Immigration to Refugee and Asylum Seekers
6	Marriage, Partnerships, and the Evolving Family
7	Parenthood and the Complexities of Childrearing
8	Spring Break
9	Neighborhoods and Housing: Segregation and Eviction
10	Class, Income, and the Labor Market
11	Film Reviews
12	Schooling and Education
13	Wealth Accumulation and Social Mobility
14	Criminal Justice System: Incarceration, Deportation, and Policing
15	Late Work Makeup/Prep for Capstone Projects
16	Capstone Projects

Course Requirements

Upon completion, you’ll earn 4 credits for this course, which according to university policy shakes out to be 12~hours of your time and effort per week.

Grades will be assigned on the following basis, out of ~294 points

1. Weekly Quizzes (12 quizzes @ 8 points each): **96 points**
2. Student Presentation & Discussions (1 presentation @ 15 points + 9 discussions @ 6 points each): **69 points**
3. Interview 3-2-1 Assignments (8 interviews @ 6 points each): **48 points**
4. Film Reviews (2 reviews @ 15 points each): **15 points**
5. Check-in Assignments (6 check-ins @ 7 points each): **42 points**
6. Capstone Project: **20 points**
7. Week 1 Assignment-Sign Ups & Final Questionnaire: **4 points**

Weekly Quizzes: Weekly quizzes are due each week before midnight each Sunday. Quizzes are intended to serve not only as a reminder of the importance of engaging with the course content; they are also an aid to critical and analytical thinking. Quiz questions are meant to foster critical engagement with all the materials, including weekly lectures, interviews, and discussions. Responses not showing sufficient evidence of critical engagement with the material will receive fewer points, and quiz responses that demonstrate exceptional work may receive extra credit.

Student Presentations & Discussions: Students will be responsible for leading a discussion/activity through the creation of a short video presentation. You will sign up the first week of class for your session and will be responsible for facilitating a discussion and/or activity with the class. I encourage you to be creative and interactive in your pedagogical approach, and to offer opportunities for your peers to think critically and analytically about the concepts, theories, and findings from the readings.

Interview 3-2-1 Assignments: Students will have the opportunity to hear from members of the community about their experiences with race, ethnicity, and family diversity. Students will summarize the main take-aways and share their own perspectives about the interview.

Film Review: Students will review one film, allowing for a deeper exploration of the topics covered in class. Film review options:

Film Review Options:

1. Loving (2016) by Focus Features
2. Seahorse (2019) by Jeanie Finlay (seahorsefilm.com)
3. Hidden Figures (2016) by 20th Century Studios
4. When They See Us (2019) by Harpo Films
5. Not in My Neighbourhood (2018) by Kurt Otabenga Orderson
6. Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools (2016) by PBS
7. Saint Judy (2018) by Blue Fox Entertainment
8. Under the Same Moon (2007) by Searchlight Pictures
9. Joe Bell (2021) by Roadside Attractions
10. Under the Bridge: The Criminalization of Homelessness (2017) by Indie Rights Movies for Free

Small Discussion Group Check-ins: Because of the size of the class, I am breaking students up into smaller groups. Over the course of the semester, students will have the opportunity to engage in dialogues, deepening conversations, and connections.

Final Capstone Project: At the end of the semester, students will have an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge by writing a 2,000-word capstone project.

Required Texts

Except for a film that students will need to rent for an assignment, all course materials will be available on Canvas.

My Commitment to You:

Rigor: I will do my best to create an informative and engaging online course.

Support: I encourage you to contact me if you are struggling with any particular component, or if you feel I could be doing something to improve learning.

Safe Learning Environment: I will do my best to direct class discussion so that it does not cause distress to students. Please connect with me if you are uncomfortable with or feel threatened by your classmates or the course material.

Timely Responses: I will respond to all email requests within 48 hours during the week, but those sent after 5pm on Friday may not receive a response until Monday morning. Assignments will be returned within two weeks of receipt.

Accommodations: I am willing to make reasonable accommodations to support your learning.

Expectations of You:

Late assignments: A 10% grade reduction will be applied to assignments for each day the assignment is late, including weekend days.

Sensitive material: Some of the assignments or topics in this course might include material that some students may find offensive. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if this is a class you are committed to taking.

Rapport: Please treat your peers with respect. Discriminatory or unprofessional submissions and interactions will not be accepted.

- Be open-minded to all viewpoints, even with you do not agree.
- Profanity or off-color language and photos are never appropriate.
- Using abusive language is not acceptable and will be dealt with according to the Student Code (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).
- Course e-mails, e-journals, and other online course communications are part of the classroom and as such, are University property and subject to GRAMA (<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title63G/Chapter2/63G-2.html>) regulations and the Student Code (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).
- **Tech Skills:** Students taking this course will need to possess basic computer literacy skills, at minimum. This means you can successfully download and operate various file types, including but not limited to: .mp3; .mp4; docx; .mov; .PDF. You should also be able to troubleshoot technical issues and attempt to solve them on your own (a web search of your issue can reveal a lot). Please be sure all software and plug-ins are up to date.

If you are not familiar with Canvas, you are responsible for your own mastery.

Email policy: I will use email to correspond with students throughout the quarter. You are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. On weekdays, I will respond to you within 48 hours. Please do not expect a response between Friday at 5pm and Monday at 9am. Please plan ahead and contact me on weekdays with questions.

Grading Policy

A/A+ range: Work in the A/A+ range exhibits strikingly thoughtful, logical, and coherent engagement, expressed in a clear, cogent, and error-free way. Only work that makes excellent use of evidence and offers insightful and accurate analysis will be considered for an A grade.

A- range: Work in the A- range exhibits mastery of the material and offers a good analysis expressed in a clear, cogent, and error-free way.

B/B+/B- range: Work in the B range exhibits solid effort, with some minor errors of logic or argumentation, or some minor stylistic weaknesses. Such work indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement.

C/C+/C- range: Work in the C range exhibits minimal understanding of the material and minimal analysis, or mediocre writing.

D/D+/D- range: Work in the D range exhibits inadequate understanding of the material and inadequate analysis, or poor, error-plagued writing.

Incomplete Grades: The prospect of a poor course grade does *not* justify a request to receive an "incomplete." An incomplete is reserved for extraordinary circumstances and only when a student has no more than an exam or a paper to complete in a course. The rule of thumb is that a student must have already completed 80% of all course work and be in good standing (i.e., have earned at least a C on all completed work) to be considered for an incomplete. University policy gives students one year to complete the remaining work, after which the grade will automatically become an "E."

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

A	100 % to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0% to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 % to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 % to 0.0%