

University of Texas at Austin
Department of Sociology/School of Undergraduate Studies

UGS 303 (65050)
Spring, 2014
Mondays, 2:00-5:00
CLA 0.122

DIFFICULT DIALOGUES: RACE & PUBLIC POLICY IN THE U.S.

Professor:	Dr. Robert Crosnoe	TA.:	Robyn Keith
Office:	CLA 2.406F	Office:	CLA 3 rd Floor Sociology, Cubicle 16
Hours:	M: 12:00-2:00	Hours:	T: 10:00-11:00; TH: 2:00-3:00
Contact:	471-8329; crosnoe@austin.utexas.edu	Contact:	robynakeith@utexas.edu

Course Description

This course examines racial/ethnic change and inequalities in the U.S., with a focus on public policies that attempt to address inequalities in the educational system, including higher education. It is part of the Difficult Dialogues program, which was originally designed (and funded by the Ford Foundation) to help promote open scholarly inquiry, academic freedom, and respect for different cultures and beliefs on the campus. This course adapts the Difficult Dialogues approach to the Signature Course format.

Two inter-related foci form the heart of this course. The *first* revolves around racial/ethnic population change and inequality. We will analyze the demographics of the rapidly diversifying U.S. and Texas populations, explore the social, psychological, cultural, and structural implications of this diversification for young people and schools, and discuss how the legal and political landscape has evolved (or not) in response. We turn in the *second* part of the course to the policy arena. In particular, we will delve into major policy initiatives and debates that are associated with racial and ethnic inequality in higher education, especially affirmative action. Here, we will focus on major court cases and laws, including the Hopwood and Fisher decisions and the Top 10% Rule, that have greatly affected UT.

This course has two **course flags**: Writing and Cultural Diversity. See page 3 for more on these flags.

Class Home Page

<http://courses.utexas.edu>. Log into the Blackboard system with your UT EID, lick on the class link under “My Courses”. All course materials (and grades) will be posted on this web page.

Course Requirements

The requirements of the course and their weight in the overall course grading are as follows:

- Attendance: 15%
- Class Participation: 15%
- Short Papers: 30%
- Research Paper: 40%

Class attendance and participation. This course includes the regular class meeting (two hours) led by Dr. Crosnoe and a discussion section (1 hour) led by the TA. Dialogue is a main activity. Dialogue is not about winning debates or throwing out uninformed opinions, nor is it about creating a one-view-for-all group. Instead, we should strive for an **ACADEMICALLY INFORMED** dialogue regarding the issues that are being discussed, using class materials and each other as the key tools to help us discuss these issues in a civil manner. Although our personal experiences, backgrounds, and opinions are certainly important, they are also limited to our own lives and need to be grounded in a larger context. In short, students are expected to be fully prepared participants in the discussions that take place. And, of course, a significant part of a good dialogue involves listening...not just talking!

Attendance and participation also extends to three out-of-class activities. Two of these activities will occur during the normal class period on Mondays, one being the “gem” visit to the Lyndon Baines

Johnson (LBJ) Presidential Library on February 10th (see description of activity under *Short Papers below*), and the other being an information and training session in research at the Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL) on March 3rd. The third of these activities will occur outside the normal class hours, fulfilling the “Lecture Series” requirement of all signature courses. Students will attend the Difficult Dialogues Public Forum—titled “Human Trafficking, Forced Labor, and Our Consumer Choices” and included a Slavery Footprint online exercise—from 7:00-9:00 on Tuesday, February 18th.

Short papers. Each student is required to complete three relatively brief assignments during the first half of the semester.

First, as a benchmark for assessing how understanding of and stances on race-related policy issues may evolve over the course of the semester and to offer an early opportunity for students to get feedback on writing, students will turn in a two-page single spaced “thought” essay about their current awareness of the pro/con arguments on any one of a selection of such policy issues (see instruction sheet under Assignments on Blackboard). This thought paper is due on **January 27th**.

Second, signature courses capitalize on the unique resources (e.g., collections, museums) of the University that are available to students. Our “university gem” is the LBJ Library, which features, among other things, a display on Civil Rights as part of its permanent exhibit. As noted above, our February 10th class will be held at the Library, including a lecture on the resources available there and a tour of the aforementioned exhibit. Students will then write a two page (single spaced) paper on what they learned about the Civil Rights Movement and Civil Rights Act (see instruction sheet under Assignments on Blackboard). This gem paper is due on **February 17th**.

Third, as an assessment of how students have processed integrated the information covered in the first half of the course (including and especially the assigned readings), students will complete a short writing assignment in class. The assignment, which will be unknown to them until class begins, will involve choosing one of a set of possible questions about race in the U.S. to answer in a 45 minute period. This integration paper assignment will occur on **March 3rd** (prior to our PCL visit that day).

Research/policy paper. Each student will submit a paper (5 pages single-spaced) on a topic of his/her choosing (see instruction sheet under Assignments on Blackboard). This paper will involve independent research as well as critical analysis, the goal being to synthesize extant research on the selected topic and then, based on that synthesis, come up with policy recommendations and/or talking points. This paper will be written in stages throughout the semester and discussed in class at various intervals to give students *opportunities for oral presentation*. The final paper is due on **April 28th**.

Classroom and University Policies

Grade: Grades are assigned on a plus/minus scale, where A+ = 98-100, A = 93-97, A- = 90-92, B+ = 88-89, B = 83-87, B- = 80-82, C+ = 78-79, C = 73-77, C- = 70-72, D+ = 68-69, D = 63-67, D- = 60-62, F = 59 or below.

Late policies. All written assignments must be turned in, hard copy, at the start of class on the day due. Papers will be docked ½ letter grade for every day they are late. I will not accept papers by email.

Students with disabilities. The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641.

Religious holy days. A student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that he or she has properly notified each instructor. The policy of the University of Texas at Austin is that the student must notify each instructor at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates he or she will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For

religious holidays that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given on the first day of the semester. The student may not be penalized for these excused absences but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to complete satisfactorily the missed assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the excused absence.

Class web sites and student privacy. Web-based, password-protected class sites are associated with all academic courses taught at The University. Syllabi, handouts, assignments and other resources are types of information that may be available within these sites. Site activities could include exchanging e-mail, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, electronic class rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/ferpa/ferpa.qs.faculty.htm>.

Course Flag Descriptions

Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S. courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

Professor Profile

A UT alum (Plan II Class of 1994), Professor Robert Crosnoe received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Stanford University and held a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in demography (the study of populations) and developmental psychology (the study of how people develop from birth to death) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill before returning to Austin to join the faculty of the Department of Sociology in 2001. As a fellow at the Population Research Center, he conducts research on childhood and adolescence with an emphasis on education and health. Of particular interest is the phenomenon of resilience—how people succeed in life despite difficult circumstances.

Teaching Assistant Profile

Robyn Keith is a graduate student in the Ph.D. Program in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin. She currently investigates how the Internet and other communication technologies shape people's pro-social behaviors, such as their friendships, voluntary associations, and civic engagement.

Course Schedule & Readings

(All readings can be downloaded on the course Blackboard page)

PART I: RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY, POPULATION CHANGE, AND DYNAMICS

Week 1: Racial/Ethnic Diversity

(January 13)

No readings

Week 2: MLK Holiday

(January 20)

No readings and no class meeting

Week 3: Race/Ethnicity and Free Speech on Campus

(January 27)

American Association of University Professors. 1915. "Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure." *AAUP Bulletin* 1: 17-39.

Thought Paper Due (and Discussed in Class)

Week 4: Racial/Ethnic Segregation

(February 3)

Charles J. Russo, J. John Harris III, and Rosetta F. Sandidge. 1994. "Brown v. Board of Education at 40: A Legal History of Equal Educational Opportunities in American Public Education." *Journal of Negro Education* 63: 297-309.

Orfield, Gary and Chungmei Lee. 2005. *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Civil Rights Project.

Research-Policy Paper Question Due (and to Discussed in Class)

Week 5: Civil Rights

(February 10)

No Readings

Gem Event: Class will be Held at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library

Week 6: Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Education

(February 17)

Kao, Grace and Jennifer S. Thompson. 2003. "Race and Ethnic Stratification in Educational Achievement and Attainment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 417-442.

Steele, Claude. 1999. "Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students." *The Atlantic Monthly* (August 1999).

Gem Paper Due (and Discussed in Class)

Lecture Series Event: Difficult Dialogues Spring Public Forum (7:00-9:00 on Tuesday, February 18th)

Week 7: Touchy Subjects

(February 24)

Tyson, Karolyn, William Darity, and Domini R. Castellino. 2005. "It's Not 'A Black Thing': Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas of High Achievement." *American Sociological Review* 70: 582-605.

McDermott, Monica and Frank L. Sampson. 2005. "White Racial and Ethnic Identity in the United States." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31: 245-261.

Research-Policy Paper Outline Due

Week 8: Researching Race/Ethnicity and Education

(March 3)

No Readings

First Half: *Integration Writing Assignment in Class*

Second Half: Research Orientation in PCL 1.339 with Cynthia Fischer

PART II. RACE/ETHNICITY & SOCIAL/EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Week 9: College Admissions (March 17)

Gurin, Patricia, Eric L. Dey, and Gerald Gurin. 2002. "Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes." *Harvard Educational Review* 72: 330-366.

Week 10: Hopwood, Fisher, and UT (March 24)

United States District Court Western Division of Texas, Austin Division. 1998. *Hopwood v. Texas, Judgment*. tarlton.law.utexas.edu/rare/documents/hopwood_judgment.pdf.

United States District Court Western Division of Texas, Austin Division. 1994. *Hopwood v. Texas, Decision*. tarlton.law.utexas.edu/rare/.../hopwood_district_courts_decision.pdf.

Attorney General of Texas, Feb. 5, 1997. *Opinion*. tarlton.law.utexas.edu/hopwood/morales.htm.

United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. 2011. *Fisher v. Texas, Decision*. tarltonguides.law.utexas.edu/content.php?pid=357280&sid=2922040.

Week 11: Policies Targeting Inequality (March 31)

Graglia, Lino A. 1998. "The 'Affirmative Action' Fraud." *Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law* 54: 31-38.

Laycock, Douglas. 2004. "The Broader Case for Affirmative Action: Desegregation, Academic Excellence, and Future Leadership." *Tulane Law Review* 78: 1767-1842.

Research-Policy Paper Literature Review Due (and Discussed in Class)

Week 12: Immigration Reform and Education (April 7)

Hernandez, Donald J. 2004. "Demographic Change and the Life Circumstances of Immigrant Families." *Future of Children* 14 (2): 17-47.

Tienda, Marta. 2009. "Hispanicity and Educational Inequality: Risks, Opportunities, and the Nation's Future," American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Tomas Rivera Lecture (www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICRIVERA1.pdf).

Xie, Yu and Kimberly A. Goyette. 2005. "A Demographic Portrait of Asian Americans." Pp. 415-446 in *The American People: Census 2000*, edited by R. Farley and J. Haaga. New York: Russell Sage.

Week 13: Early(ier) Intervention
(April 14)

Haskins, Ron and Cecilia Rouse. 2005. "Closing Achievement Gaps." *The Future of Children* (Policy Brief for Volume 15, Number 1: School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gaps).

Ludwig, Jens and Isabel Sawhill. 2007. *Success by Ten: Intervention Early, Often, and Effectively in the Education of Young Children*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.

Research-Policy Paper Policy Response Due (and Discussed in Class)

Week 14: The Challenges and Complexities of School Reform
(April 21)

No Readings

Week 15: Rethinking Race and Policy
(April 28)

No Readings

Research-Policy Paper Due in Class