Sociology 230B, spring 2015
Rogers Brubaker
Thursday, 12-2:50, Rolfe 3115
Office hours: Tuesday 2-3 or by appointment, Haines 232
website: https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/15S-SOCIOL230B-1

This is the second quarter of a two-quarter sequence, designed especially for students who are considering taking the field examination in Comparative Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism. The sequence seeks to "decenter" prevailing American perspectives on ethnicity, race, and nationhood. In the broader literature, these concepts have wider meanings, and theoretical debates have different contours, than in the US. A comparative view helps to place the US experience in a broader context.

The sequence is based on the assumption that ethnicity, race, and nation belong to a broad family of forms of cultural understanding, social organization, and political contestation, all related to perceived similarities and differences of cultural background, social belonging, and political destiny. "Ethnicity" is the broadest term, including almost all of what we mean by "race" and much (but not all) of what we mean by nationhood and nationalism. "Race" is thus conceptualized as a particular form of ethnicity that emerges when phenotype becomes an important diacritical marker of difference. "Nation" -- insofar as it overlaps with ethnicity -- is taken as a specifically modern form of ethnicity that is understood to be based on common history, culture, and political destiny and to justify claims to an autonomous polity.

In earlier versions of 230B, the first half was devoted to core literature on nationalism, the second half to cross-cutting themes pertinent to the study of race, ethnicity, and nationalism. Most of the core literature on nationalism was from the 1980s and 1990s. Subsequently, more interesting work has been done in a variety of cross-cutting research clusters than on nationalism per se. I have therefore reorganized the course to focus on a selection of such clusters.

Initiating discussion

Each week, one student will initiate discussion through a short (no more than 10-15 minute), clearly-focused presentation of key analytical issues. Initiators of discussion should not, if possible, read a written text, and should not summarize the readings; rather, they should bring into focus the key analytical issues raised in the readings and pose analytical questions about or (if they wish) analytical criticisms of the readings.

Weekly memoranda

For each week in which a student is not initiating discussion, except for one “grace week” of the student’s choosing, each student will prepare a short memorandum (about 600-800 words) developing, criticizing, or otherwise engaging an analytical issue, question, or problem raised by the readings.
This assignment is intended to inculcate the habit of analytical writing as a regular accompaniment of and counterpoint to reflective reading. The memoranda will not be graded, but their submission is a firm requirement of the course. I will provide brief comments on the memoranda.

There is no right or wrong way to write the weekly memoranda. But here are a few general guidelines.

1. The memoranda should not summarize the readings, but should develop an analytical response to them.
2. The memoranda need not engage all of the assigned readings. But as a general rule, the memoranda should engage more than a single reading; it is generally good practice to try to tie the readings together in some way or to read some of the readings in relation to or against other readings.
3. If you are so inclined, you may certainly develop a critical response to the readings. But try to read “generously” and to avoid easy or obvious criticisms; try to develop analytically constructive or productive criticisms, rather than criticisms that simply show what is wrong with an argument.

The memoranda will be posted to an Annotation Board on the class web site. The Annotation Board (which differs from the standard Discussion Board) allows students (and the instructor) not only to read but to annotate others’ memoranda by adding footnotes with comments or questions keyed to particular passages in a memorandum.

So as to allow students and instructor ample time to read the memoranda before class, the memoranda are to be posted to the web site by 8am Thursday at the latest. Students will be expected to read each other's memoranda before class, and will be encouraged to annotate them.

Final assignment and grades

For the final assignment, there are two options

1. You may choose one topic from among those addressed in the course, read some additional works on that topic (three or four additional articles is sufficient), and write an extended memorandum (about 3000 words) engaging one or more key analytical questions pertaining to that cluster of research.

You should choose which topic you wish to write on by May 8, and you should e-mail me by that date indicating the topic and arranging to meet individually with me during the week of May 11 to discuss the final project. Please keep in mind that this will require some advance planning, especially if you think you might want to write on a topic that will be discussed during the final four weeks.

2. With the permission of the instructor, you may choose to write the final extended memorandum on a topic other than those addressed in 230B, provided...
that it is related to the overarching themes of the Comparative Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism field exam (and provided that you have not written a take-home examination for 230A on this topic). If you wish to pursue this option, you should submit a one-paragraph proposal to me by May 8, and should arrange to meet individually with me the following week to discuss the final project.

In either case, the idea is to write a (small-scale) literature review that identifies key analytical questions in a cluster of research and analyzes and/or critically assesses how those questions are addressed. The final extended memorandum will be due at the end of exam week, on Friday, June 12.

Grades will be based on the weekly memoranda (30%), class participation (20%), and the final extended memorandum (50%).

Readings

Required readings are listed below by week. Readings will be available on the course website.

**Reading questions** will be posted in advance for each week’s reading on the course website.

April 2: Introduction

April 9: Indigeneity and Indigenism


April 16: Differentialism and its discontents: multiculturalism, culturalism, and diversity in European and “classical” countries of immigration.


April 23: Language


In connection with this, read **pp 11-19 of Van Parijs, Philippe. 2009. “Grab a Territory! How Equal Linguistic Dignity Can Be Reconciled with English Dominance in the European Union.” in The ties that bind:**


April 30: Religion

Brubaker, introduction to book manuscript in progress on Religion, Language, and the Politics of Difference


Jenkins, Richard. Rethinking Ethnicity, Chapter 8.


May 7: Muslims in Europe: the intertwining of religion, ethnicity, race, nationalism, and transnationalism


May 14: Violence


Brubaker, "Religious dimensions of political conflict and violence" [section on modalities and mechanisms and conclusion only, pp 14-31]. Forthcoming, Sociological Theory

May 21: Return of biology


May 28: Counting, categorizing, and classifying


June 4: Interaction, embodiment, performance, everyday life


