

Race, Nation, and American Food Culture

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-4PM and By Appointment

Course Description: This course explores systems of ethnoracial and national hierarchy through the lens of American food culture. The first part of the class guides students to an understanding of the major theories and debates in the sociology of race, ethnicity, nationality, and migration to establish a language for analyzing and understanding the role and meaning of food in American life. We will focus our conversations and analyses on questions of boundaries, categories, and distinctions and how these borders and categories are complicated, blurred, and institutionalized. In the second part of the course, we apply the theoretical texts to the empirical case of American food culture to understand how cultural products, practices, and discourses are informed by systems of racial/ethnic/national hierarchy. We explore various facets of American food culture, including the history of food and culinary culture in the United States, restaurant work, the meaning of “ethnic” food, fine dining, food media, and culinary tourism. Throughout our theoretical exploration, we will also discuss the research process, and students will engage the substantive and theoretical texts we read in class in conversation with a research topic of their choosing.

Course Framework: In this course, we ask questions about boundaries, categories, and distinctions. What is race? How is race distinct from ethnicity? What does nation and national identity have to do with race and ethnicity? How are race, ethnicity, and national identity shaped by patterns of migration? How do processes like multiculturalism, panethnicity, and blending change the meanings and salience of these terms? How do symbols and systems of authenticity shape meaning-making around ethnoracial and national inequality? What does food have to do with race/ethnicity/nation? How are cultural products, like cuisine, markers of broader systems of inequality? How do these systems of inequality affect access to food, what we eat, the workplace, and racialized bodies? How does food serve as a marker of distinction in terms of race, ethnicity, nation, class, and gender?

This course is not a comprehensive study of the race and ethnicity or nation and migration literatures. Instead, this course challenges students to read broadly in these literatures and engage theories and ideas in conversation and debate across literatures to develop analytical strategies for understanding the complex landscape of ethnoracial and national inequality in the United States. By focusing this analysis on cultural themes, and specifically the case of American food culture, students are encouraged to question the utility and applicability of the abstract theories we encounter as well as the contributions and complications of each theory in relation to the others we discuss through a common language of cultural products, most specifically, the accessible discourse of food in American life.

Course Objectives:

By the conclusion of this course, students will:

1. Be able to articulate and explain some of the major theories of race, ethnicity, and migration in sociology in both written and oral forms.
2. Be able to apply these theories to various cases within American food culture, both those that we encounter within class and those that speak to students' individual interests and experiences.
3. Outline and explain the relationship between theory, data, and argument in a final research paper (both in terms of abstract formulation and individual empirical study).
4. Challenge existing scholarship and frame their own research-based arguments in relation to other major texts in sociology pertaining to race, ethnicity, nation, and American food culture.
5. Respectfully engage in dialogue around race, nation and American food culture in class.

What You Can Expect of Me

1. I am dedicated to creating a safe learning environment for every student in my classroom. While we engage and encounter difficult and challenging material and different viewpoints, it is my responsibility to ensure that every student feels empowered to share their opinion and maintains that safety for themselves and others in the classroom.
2. I have learning objectives for every component for the course as well as the overall structure and shape class. However, the most important thing for me is that students learn. I take facilitating learning seriously, and I understand that students learn in different ways. Therefore, I am committed to making learning objectives clear for students and helping students meet those learning objectives in their own way over the course of the class. This involves my position in the classroom and availability outside of the classroom.
3. Respect is paramount to me. I respect and value every student in my classroom and on this campus. It is my responsibility to ensure that students understand and feel that respect.
4. I am available in office hours regularly. Additionally, I am available to schedule individual appointments and to respond regularly to emails (please review my email policy later in this document).
5. Communication is key to facilitating learning. Therefore, students can expect regular communication from me via email and within the classroom. If the schedule or plan changes, it is my responsibility to communicate that change in a timely and respectful manner to students in both the classroom and via email and the class Moodle page.

What I Expect From Students

1. Respect: I expect respect for your classmates, for the class, and for me. We will discuss some sensitive issues in this course, and I expect students to be mindful that everyone in our class comes from a variety of backgrounds and will likely possess different perspectives. It is precisely this diversity that will enhance all our learning.
2. Effort and Commitment to the Course: I am demanding, and I expect a lot from students. There is a lot of reading and a lot of writing for this course. However, none of it is randomly or superfluously assigned. I expect students to come to class with the reading completed and critically processed. This means that I expect students to have not only consumed the assigned material but thought about that material and developed ideas, arguments, and questions that they wish to tackle in seminar. I detail more about how to prepare for class later in this document.
3. Communication: If you are having trouble in the classroom or out of the classroom or

something is affecting your experience of this course (including illness, personal struggles, academic struggles, confusion, and enthusiasm) I expect you to communicate regularly with me, either in office hours or via email (please review my email policy below).

Major Texts

Gabaccia, Donna R. 1998. *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*.

Jayaraman, Saru. 2013. *Behind the Kitchen Door*.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2015 (1986). *Racial Formation in the United States*.

Ray, Krishnendu. 2015. *The Ethnic Restaurateur*.

Tipton-Martin, Toni. 2015. *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks*.

Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*.

Assignments

Participation: 15%

2 Hypothesis Papers: 10% (5% each)

Paper Proposal: 10%

Media Analysis Paper: 10%

Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Longer Thinkpiece: 10%

Research Presentation: 15%

Final Paper: 20%

Participation is essential to success in this class. This means regularly attending class, contributing to course discussion, and thoughtfully responding to your peers' comments and questions. I expect you to come to class prepared, with the reading done, your notes organized, and your questions and thoughts ready to be shared. You may have one unexcused absence for the entire semester without penalty to your grade, but I expect you to attend all class meetings. If you are ill, please email me and let me know that you will miss class. Only those absences labeled as excused by the Dean of Academic Advising's Office will be accepted and recorded as excused.

Preparing for Class: For students to actively and fully participate in seminar discussion, I have some guidelines for class preparation. Students should complete all of the assigned reading before class. While reading, I suggest students maintain notes about major themes, arguments, the logic of the argument presented by the author, the theories and other literature the author draws on, the methods used (if relevant), major findings, and students' own theoretical and personal reactions to these components. Students should be prepared to discuss the following for each reading assigned:

1. Who is the author(s)? When was the reading (or podcast/movie/etc.) published?
2. What is the research question or orienting theoretical puzzle guiding the piece?
3. What are the major themes throughout the author's analysis?
4. What is the overarching argument of the piece (for books, it might be useful to break this

down by chapter)?

5. What theoretical framework does the author(s) use? Why? Which major literatures are they drawing on? What debates are they speaking to?

6. What methods does the author use? What is their data? Is this satisfactory to you as a reader?

7. What does the author find? Do they provide sufficient evidence?

8. Are you convinced by the author's claims? Why?

9. Does this reading speak to other readings in the course or in your personal research project?

10. How might you remedy the problems with the reading you identify? How would you rethink the argument/research process/etc?

11. What confuses you about the reading?

12. What is the most compelling argument or piece of the reading that you want to discuss with your classmates?

If you take the time to think through these questions as you read and as you reflect on your reading, our discussion will be much richer and more interesting.

The written assignments throughout the course are organized to guide students through the research paper writing process. Students will be given more detailed assignment guides two weeks prior to the due date for each assignment.

The first two assignments—hypothesis papers—require students to use the theoretical texts assigned in class to identify one single research question that interests them and present their expected answer/findings for that research question using the applied logic of the texts from class. These papers should be no longer than 2 double-spaced pages.

The media analysis paper asks students to use the texts we read in class to analyze and develop a logical, coherent argument about a piece of media—a television show, movie, magazine, novel, radio show—that speaks to the themes of the course. These papers should be no longer than 2 double-spaced pages.

The paper proposal asks students to provide a research topic, explanation of the research topic's relevance to the course, course readings they intend to use for the final paper, and hypothesized findings for the final research proposal. This paper should be no longer than 5 double spaced pages.

The annotated bibliography asks students to identify, cite, and explain the relevance and application of a minimum of fifteen secondary sources that the student will use for the final research paper. Students will be evaluated on the relevance of sources and the articulation of the relationship between the cited sources and course materials.

The longer thinkpiece will be turned in approximately one month before the final paper is due. This thinkpiece reflects a sort of rough draft or longer explanation and exploration of the research topic to be expounded in the final research paper. This will look different for different students depending on where they are in the research process, the accessibility of sources and data related to the chosen topic, and the format that the final paper will take for

each student. This assignment should be no fewer than 7 and no more than 10 pages.

Students will prepare a 10 minute presentation of the findings, analysis, and theoretical contribution of their final research paper. These presentations will be executed during the last class meeting, and students will be evaluated both on their own presentation and their participation and contribution to their peers' presentations (all students will provide peer review feedback orally and in the written form in response to peers' feedback). Final papers will be partially evaluated on students' response to and inclusion of peer feedback based on these presentations.

Finally, students will submit either an extended literature review or detailed research proposal of 15-20 pages for their final paper. These papers will include a specific research question, extensive case history, theoretical framework (as applied to the case), summary of the relevant literature, methods section (or summary of methods primarily used to study this topic), expected findings (or themes within the literature), and theoretical contributions of the work.

Course Policies

Office Hours: Come to office hours! I will have 3 hours of office hours each week, but I am very open to meeting at other times as you need. I will hold additional hours before larger written assignments are due. It is better that you come earlier in the semester than later. If you are unavailable during my office hours and would like to talk with me in person, please send me an email with ample notice (the night before the assignment is due is not a good idea, so try for 3-4 days before) and I will try to schedule another appointment for us to meet. If need be, we may also schedule a Skype or phone conversation.

Academic Honesty: I expect students to follow the standards of academic integrity as set forth by the College. As a general rule, you should attribute all words and ideas written by published sources and websites. Plagiarism—the act of reproducing in your written work someone else's thoughts, writing or research without explicit acknowledgement or citation—is strictly forbidden, and I will follow the College's guidelines with regard to these issues. At Kenyon College we expect all students, at all times, to submit work that represents our highest standards of academic integrity. It is the responsibility of each student to learn and practice the proper ways of documenting and acknowledging those whose ideas and words they have drawn upon (see Academic Honesty and Questions of Plagiarism in the Course Catalog). Ignorance and carelessness are not excuses for academic dishonesty. Additional information can be found in the Student Handbook (<http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/registrar/course-catalog-2/administrative-matters/academic-integrity-and-questions-of-plagiarism/>).

Accommodations: If you have special learning needs, please see me as soon as possible. Special needs are defined broadly—this can include a learning disability, levels of anxiety, or a difficulty stomaching the way I lead class. While you are not required to inform me about personal matters, if you are struggling with the course it is crucial that you let me know as soon as possible so I can help you succeed.

If you have a disability or feel that you may need for some type of academic accommodation(s) in order to participate fully in this class, please feel free to discuss your concerns with me in private and also identify yourself to Erin Salva, Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services at salvae@kenyon.edu.

Additional Resources: If you are struggling or require assistance—academically or personally—please feel free to contact me so I can help you succeed. College is a stressful and difficult time, and you may find yourself in new and overwhelming situations. You are not alone. I am happy to be available to provide you support and guidance. You may find the following resources of use:

Kenyon College Health and Counseling Center (<http://www.kenyon.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>)

Kenyon College Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (<http://www.kenyon.edu/about-kenyon/diversity-at-kenyon/odei/>)

Kenyon College Office of Academic Advising (<http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/academic-advising/>)

Student Accessibility and Support Services (<http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/student-accessibility-support-services/>)

Kenyon College Writing Center (<http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/the-writing-center-2/>)

Title IX and My Responsibilities: As a faculty member, I am deeply invested in the well-being of each student I teach. I am here to assist you with your work in this course. If you come to me with other non-course-related concerns, I will do my best to help. It is important for you to know that all faculty members are mandated reporters of any incidents of sexual misconduct. That means that I cannot keep information about sexual misconduct confidential if you share that information with me. The Health and Counseling Center, Sexual Misconduct Advisors (SMAs), and the College chaplain are confidential resources.

Late Assignments: I must have all papers by the deadline listed on this syllabus. I do not accept late assignments unless we have discussed your circumstances before the due date. If you miss class, you are still expected to get the paper to me by the deadline unless we have discussed your circumstances prior to the due date.

Missing Assignments: You may not elect to “skip” an assignment. If you do not submit an assignment by the due date, you must still submit the assignment in some form within one week of the due date; this late assignment will still earn a zero. Part of your evaluation for subsequent assignments is based on your response to and incorporation of feedback that you receive on previous assignments. If you are missing an assignment that is part of this building block, all subsequent grades will suffer because of this absence. Therefore, it is best to turn in something by the deadline and second best to submit some version of the missing assignment within one week of the due date.

Email Policy: If you have any questions or concerns about the course, my availability to meet, or special accommodations concerns, please feel free to email me

(gualtieri1@kenyon.edu). Please be conscientious when you email me. If you have questions about assignments or content covered in class, please check the course webpage and this syllabus to see if your question can be answered in these locations. Before emailing me, please contact your classmates first (there is space at the bottom of this document for you to take down the name and contact information of at least three classmates; this will be your “network” for the class) to see if they can help you with the information (perhaps I answered the question in class). If you cannot answer your question in these ways, then please feel free to email me or come to Office Hours, and I will be happy to help! Emails about questions that can be answered by reviewing the course syllabus or website and/or by contacting classmates will be answered after emails about other concerns, so please try to use your resources wisely, as I may not be available via email until class meets!

Technology: Laptops and tablets are allowed in class for academic purposes only. If you are checking email, Facebook, Instagram, etc. I reserve the right to ban laptops for an individual student or the whole class (excluding those students with special accommodations). Cell phones are never permitted in class.