

ETHNIC STUDIES 305

TOPICS IN ETHNIC STUDIES

Race and Ethnic Relations in the Republic of South Africa
and the United States of America

Spring, 2016

Instructor:

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(By appointment. Sign up in advance)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines, in a comparative fashion, the nature of race and ethnic relations among groups in South Africa and in the United States. It is designed to promote the understanding of the changing dynamics occurring in both societies as they move from systems of formalized racial oppression to open, racially inclusive nations.

We will study social forces and institutions affecting race relations in the two nations. We will examine the notions of “race” and “ethnicity” and explore how they are actualized in both countries. Similarities and differences between the two countries in the construction of race and ethnicity, the development and implementation of social policies, ideologies and sociopolitical systems will be identified.

This course also provides background information and an orientation for students traveling to South Africa as part of the Spring Break study tour. It will give students insights into practical matters for visiting and studying in South Africa, especially at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), in Nelson Mandela Metropole (formerly Port Elizabeth), South Africa.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Compare United States and South African race and ethnic relations in a contemporary and historic perspective.
2. Provide students an opportunity to observe directly the societal transformation of a country formerly based on racial oppression.
3. Familiarize students with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University -St. Cloud State Study Abroad and Exchange Program

COURSE OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - A. Brief introduction to the African Continent
 - B. Overview of South Africa's history
 - C. Race and Ethnicity as social constructs
 - D. Race relations in the U.S. – Past conditions
- II. Contemporary Matters
 - A. Understanding Modern South Africa
 - B. Contemporary U.S. Race Relations
 - C. Changing notions of “race” and “ethnicity”
 - D. Comparative Analysis of U.S. and South Africa in terms of race and ethnic relations
- III. Education and Travel in South Africa
 - A. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University -SCSU Study Abroad and Exchange Program
 - B. Practicalities of Studying and Visiting in South Africa
- IV. Toward the Future: What Direction for Race Relations in South Africa and the United States?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are urged to attend classes regularly. Students missing more than three class periods are likely to have their grade reduced by a letter grade or more. Every missed class reduces the grade.
2. All reading and written assignments should be completed on time. Students are expected to be prepared when called upon in class.
3. Class participation is strongly encouraged.
4. Grades will be based on papers, reports, and other assignments.

There will be a critical book review, a field research project, and a final paper due for this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Anthony Butler, *Contemporary South Africa*

Nelson Mandela, *A Long Walk to Freedom*

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (available on the internet, free)

Additional readings will be assigned during the course of the semester.

COURSE FORMAT

This course utilizes a lecture - discussion format. Speakers and activities sponsored by campus and community groups, as well as media materials will be used as resources for the course. Guest lecturers may be invited to the class. Students contribute to the learning process by giving oral presentations, and by participating actively.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Book Review, *A Long Walk to Freedom*, **DUE: February 24, 2016**

2. Field Work Assignment, **March 30, 2016**

Over a two-week period observe and record interactions among people in a variety of settings (e.g., school, religious, social, recreational, business) in terms of race and ethnicity

3. Final Paper Topic Areas, **May 2, 2016**: (Select only one area.) This work must use Butler's *Contemporary South Africa*

- A. Do a comparison/contrast of aspects of race relations in South Africa and the USA:
 - 1. The legalized system of racial domination used in each society – the policies, institutions, laws, social practices and customs used to subjugate racial/ethnic minorities and how they were established
 - 2. The responses of different groups to these conditions – What type of movements occurred? What organizations were formed? Under what conditions?
 - a. What were the responses of the racial minority group(s)?
 - b. What were the reactions, positions or responses of the dominant white groups?
 - 3. What were the impacts on the people? The society? Psychological, economic, social?
- B. Analyze Developments in the Post –Legal (*de jure*) Oppression Era
 - 1. What attempts are being made or have been made to address the past inequities in each society (e.g., the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa)
- C. Examine aspects of institutional and societal life in both societies
 - 1. Culture (e.g., music, dance, film, theater, language)
 - 2. Employment (opportunities, affirmative action)
 - 3. Media (broadcast, print, radio, electronic)
 - 4. Education
 - 5. Health Care
- D. Examine connections between African Americans in the USA and Black South Africans
 - 1. Schools, Churches, political organizations, music/culture, social justice movements
- E. Analysis of research on racial/ethnic interactions in the two societies

For written assignments students are warned NOT TO PLAGIARIZE! Penalties include a failing grade on the assignment, possible failure in the course, AND referral to University officials for disciplinary action.