

SOP77011: Theories of Race & Ethnicity

Duration: Michaelmas Term

ECTS: 10 credits

Lecturer: Dr Brenda Mondragón-Toledo (mondragb@tcd.ie)

Module Description

This module explores the construction of 'race', ethnicity and identity, and the impact of these concepts on the modern world. Students will gain an overview of various approaches to 'race' and learn how 'race', ethnicity and identity are conceptualised, constituted and interpreted within social, political and economic processes, as well as examining how they intersect with culture, gender, state, and nation. We will look at how 'race' is represented and how it is experienced at an individual, national, institutional, and global level, asking the question that W.E.B. du Bois posed, 'How does it feel to be a problem'? The module discusses the continuing and interlocking aspect of colonial discourse in racialisation, group identification and categorisation, in addition to the logic and practices of racial systems, and how modern states deal with migration and difference. We will examine issues such as: the concept of 'race'; the prevalence of anti-Blackness, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia; the possibility of multiculturalism, and post—'race'; as well as current debates in Ireland and Europe surrounding minority groups and multiculturalism.

While we deal with theoretical issues, students are encouraged to apply their learning to contemporary representations of 'race' and their own experiences to tease out an understanding of the issues surrounding 'race' and ethnicity, as well as opening up more questions about identity in general. Some guiding questions will animate our tutorials together, viz:

- Are 'race' and ethnicity socially constructed concepts that divide the overall human population into subgroups based on aspects such as physical appearance, place of ancestral origin, historical and cultural experiences, language, and customs?
- Are the larger social, historical, and political forces in which an individual forms and experiences identity in constant flux or relatively stable?

Learning objectives

Students will:

- critically theorise and contextualise 'race', ethnicity and identity by applying a critical sociological lens;
- engage in critical thinking about the intersection(s) (if any) between 'race', ethnicity and identity; and
- understand the foundational and contemporary debates in relation to the

framing of racialised and ethnicised identities.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- distinguish between key concepts of 'race', ethnicity and identity;
- theorise the links between 'race', nation and state;
- understand the intersection between 'race', gender and class;
- discuss and critically evaluate notions of post racism and anti-racism; and
- evaluate policies of multiculturalism, interculturalism and integration.

Delivery and syllabus:

The module is delivered in 11 seminar slots consisting of a lecturing input, student participation and presentations. Students are expected to read before each session to facilitate discussion.

Assessment

Students are expected to attend lectures and to actively contribute to the discussions. Students are expected to follow the style guidelines in the student handbook.

- 1) The midterm essay will be **1,000 words** on a topic of your own choice. The topic must be related to the course content. Submission date by **5pm, Friday 24 October 2025 (30%)**
- 2) End of module, essay will be 2500 words - prompts will be provided. Submission date by **5pm, Friday 28 November 2025 (70%)**

Recommended Texts: There is no set text, but the following texts will prove useful:

- Anthias, F., Yuval-Davis, N. & Cain, H. (1992) *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour And Class And The Anti-Racist Struggle*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Bhattacharya G. et al. 2021. *Empire's Endgame: Racism and the British State*. London, Pluto Press.
- Davis, A. (1981) *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Random House.
- Fanning, B. Michael, L. (2019). *Immigrants as outsiders in the two Irelands*. Manchester University Press.
- Fitzgerald, K. J. (2018). *Recognizing 'race' and Ethnicity: Power, Privilege, and Inequality*, Routledge (First published 2017 by Westview Press).
- Hill Collins, P. and Solomos, J. (eds). (2010). *The SAGE handbook of 'race' and ethnic studies*. Los Angeles; London: SAGE.
- Lentin, A. (2020). *Why 'race' Still Matters*. Cambridge: Polity Press

- Morsi, Y. (2017). *Radical Skin, Moderate Masks: De-radicalising the Muslim & racism in post-racial societies* London, Rowman and Littlefield
- Parfitt, T. (2020). *Hybrid Hate: Conflations of Antisemitism and Anti-Black Racism from the Renaissance to the Third Reich*. Oxford University Press.
- Solomos, J. (2022). 'race', Ethnicity and Social Theory: Theorizing the Other, Abingdon, Routledge.
- Solomos, J. (ed). (2020). *Routledge international handbook of contemporary racisms*. Abingdon, Routledge.