

Urban Studies 324: Seminar on Reducing Intergroup Tension in Multi-Cultural Settings: West Philadelphia and Penn as Test Cases

Faculty:

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Subject/Discipline: [African-American Studies](#)

School: [University of Pennsylvania](#)

Project Area:

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Office Hours: TBD

Course Description: This academically-based service-learning course examines intergroup tension in various Philadelphia settings, including neighborhoods, schools, college campuses, as well as the national political arena as it impacts urban and social policy. The major focus of the course is to study the discourse of racial and cultural relations as it influences intergroup tensions in urban settings. This approach is used both to diagnose sources of tension and to identify possible solutions. In the process, we explore contending theories of intergroup tension and use insights gained from these approaches to enrich our analysis of discourse.

The course also has a strong research component. Students will carry out a research project using either existing survey data or their own observations gathered in a local setting to diagnose the tensions found there and to propose potential solutions for those tensions. When appropriate, students may try an intervention to see if it reduces tension and increases intergroup cooperation. In previous terms, students have conducted research in various sites near and on campus. Reports from these projects will be available so that students can build on the findings of previous work.

Course Administration: The course is divided into three parts. In Part I (Weeks 1-8), we examine the major discursive practices that have shaped intergroup relations in the US. We use both current and past examples of this discourse as a basis for discussion and analysis. Students also form research teams to study tensions in the sites of their choice. At the end of this part, students will submit a mid-term paper that reviews the readings and any other literature relevant to their

research project and that outlines the project's goals, methods and expected results.

In Part II (Weeks 9-13), student teams conduct their research while the class continues to explore sources of tension in various urban settings. We will also consider issues and questions that arise from student experiences in their research sites. In Part III (Weeks 14-15), research teams present their findings to the class.

Throughout the term, students will be asked to come prepared to discuss study questions based on the readings for the week. The final exam will be a paper written by each team that summarizes the findings of the research project and relates the findings to other material discussed in class.

Books Recommended for Purchase

Bulk pack of various selected readings, available at Campus Copy, 3907 Walnut St.

Course Topics

January 11	<u>Part I: Organizational Discussion and Overview</u>
January 18	<u>Role of Discourse in Intergroup Tension</u>
	Orlando Patterson: <i>The Ordeal of Integration</i> , 1997, pp. 15-82.
	Recent <i>NY Times</i> articles on race in America.
January 25	<u>Ethnic Blame Discourse</u>
	Teun van Dijk: <i>Elite Discourse and Racism</i> , 1993, Chapters 1 & 2.
	Dan Romer: <i>Philadelphia Campaign to Promote Intergroup Cooperation</i> , 1996.
February 1	<u>Contrary Views About Current Tensions</u>
	Lawrence Bobo: "Group conflict, prejudice, and the paradox of contemporary racial attitudes," in <i>Eliminating Racism</i> , 1988, pp. 85-109.
	Donald R. Kinder & Lynn M. Sanders: <i>Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals</i> , pp. 92-127.
February 8	<u>Discourse and Progressive Racial Policy</u>
	Gunnar Myrdal: <i>An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and</i>

	<i>Modern Democracy</i> , 1944, pp. 50-80.
	Melvin L. Oliver & Thomas M. Shapiro: <i>Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality</i> , 1995, pp. 171-194.
February 15	<u>Discursive Changes since Myrdal</u>
	Howard Schuman et al.: <i>Racial Attitudes in America</i> , 1997, pp. 99-195.
February 22	<u>Current Sources of Tension and Conflict</u>
	Abigail & Stephan Thernstrom: <i>America in Black and White</i> , 1997, pp. 493-545
	David Shipler: <i>A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America</i> , 1997, pp. 447-488.
March 1	<u>Discursive Issues in Schools and Midterm Paper</u>
	Peter Figueroa: <i>Education and the Social Construction of Race</i> , 1991, pp. 26-88.
	Amy Stuart Wells & Robert L. Crain: "The Upwardly Mobile: Black Students who Succeed in the Suburban Schools" and "White Families in Flux: Intergenerational Lessons on School Desegregation" in <i>Stepping over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools</i> , 1997.
March 8	<u>Spring Break: No Class</u>
March 15	<u>Part II: Discursive Issues in Cities</u>
	Juliet Saltman: Maintaining racially diverse neighborhoods. <i>Urban Affairs Quarterly</i> , 1991.
March 22	<u>Discursive Issues in Higher Education</u>
	Claude Steele: A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance, in <i>Confronting Racism</i> , 1998, pp. 202-233.
	Dinesh D'Souza: <i>Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus</i> , 1991, pp. 229-257.
March 29	<u>Discursive Issues in Local Media</u>
	Dan Romer et al.: The Treatment of Persons of Color in Local Television News: Ethnic Blame Discourse or Realistic Group Conflict, <i>Communication Research</i> . 1998.
	Frank Gilliam et al.: Crime in black and white: The violent, scary world of local news. <i>Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics</i> , 1996.
April 5	<u>Discursive Issues in Politics</u>
	Donald R. Kinder & Lynn M. Sanders: <i>Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals</i> , 1996, pp. 229-258.

April 12 and 19	<u>Part III: Group Research Reports</u>
Finals Week	<u>Final Written Report</u>