

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

- 1 Housekeeping
 - a. Send around piece of paper; each of you should include:
 - i. Name
 - ii. e-mail
 - iii. year
 - iv. major
 - v. previous anthropology or sociology courses?
 - vi. why taking the course?
 - b. All readings (except for books) will be posted
 - i. Supplemental readings (related resources) are usually from the mass media
 - ii. If newspaper articles are posted for a particular class, they are *optional* reading—only the scholarly pieces are required
 - iii. Keep the supplemental readings (related resources) in mind as a resource when you're deciding on a paper topic
- 2 Nature of the course
 - a. CI-H and HASS-D course
 - b. HASS-Ds are being phased out
 - c. CI-H: improve communication skills, especially writing
 - d. The syllabus contains the specifics of the CI-H component of the course
- 3 Course requirements
 - a. No prerequisites
 - b. Strong discussion component
 - c. Basic format is 1 hour lecture, ½ hour discussion
 - d. Lectures themselves are very interactive
 - e. Study questions for the readings, designed to help guide class discussions, are on the [course webpage](#)
 - f. You'll be asked to answer these in class at random
 - g. You'll be asked to bring discussion questions
 - h. You'll be asked to work in groups and present your findings
 - i. Written assignments are fairly easy
- 4 Reading
 - a. As it says on the syllabus, you *must* do the reading
- 5 Reader responses
 - a. Consisting of a few sentences, a paragraph, nothing you can't do in 5 minutes, after doing the readings
 - b. I've found these to be quite useful: students come much more prepared to discuss the reading
 - c. They must be reactions to the reading—not about the lectures, not your random thoughts about ethnicity not a synopsis of the reading
 - d. Reader Responses can be about any of the reading for that week
 - e. They're not graded
 - f. They *are* required

- 6 We will see five video/DVDs
- 7 Intellectual Thrust of Course
 - a. Ethnic identity: we'll begin with a short overview (Eriksen) on ethnicity and begin Gladney—an easy book—as well as begin Nagel
 - b. Note that some reading of a more theoretical, introductory nature will come later
 - c. The syllabus may look like too much reading; it isn't
 - d. Vast majority of readings are ethnography-based rather than theoretical
 - e. Introduce you to the wide range of societies out there
 - f. We then begin to explore the anthropological perspective on national identity
 - g. Have to first ask what nationalism is
 - i. For example, is *nation* the same as *country*?
 - h. What is national identity? How does it differ from ethnic identity?
 - i. Note: throughout the course, the purpose of questions like this is not to discover the BEST definition of ethnic identity or nationalism
 - ii. In this respect, this course is not like your chemistry class, or other science and engineering courses
 - iii. The purpose of these questions is to get you to think about these concepts systematically and comprehensively
 - iv. To explore the various meanings of the terms we use (all of them have several meanings)
 - v. To better understand the political, historical, social context of the meanings
 - vi. And become familiar with the idea that various meanings can co-exist, each one making a contribution to an analysis
 - vii. The several meanings of a term are useful for different kinds of scholarly and political goals
 - i. **DISCUSS:** how can you have a discussion in a course if all the words have several meanings and there's no "best" meaning?
 - i. By everyone agreeing that there are several meanings
 - ii. And understanding these several meanings to some extent
 - iii. And everyone agreeing on a particular meaning for purposes of discussion that day
 - iv. We then move to some concepts related to ethnic and national identity
 - v. Colonialism, empire, state, culture
 - vi. For example, is "state" the same as "nation"?
 - vii. And discuss how to define culture
 - j. **DISCUSS:** your definition of culture?
 - i. Then we'll look at ethnic conflict
 - ii. There are two main kinds:
 - 1. Conflict between ethnic groups
 - 2. And conflict between a state and an ethnic group within its borders
 - iii. Gladney and Nagel address ethnic/state conflict
 - iv. In some ways ethnic conflict permeates the course
 - v. Because it constantly calls attention to itself in our lives

- vi. In the newspapers, TV and because a fundamental premise in the social sciences holds:
 1. That you learn more about a subject
 2. By examining examples of malfunction, breakdown, too-rapid change
 - vii. You'll learn less when studying cases where things are going well
 1. For example: do you want to know about marriage in the 17th century New England?
 2. Then study divorce in 17th century New England
 - viii. We then look at the concept of race
 1. Which, like culture, informs ethnic and national identity
 - ix. We look at notions about biology
 1. Note that "biology" is a Western concept
 2. If we're looking at societies cross-culturally
 3. Trying to understand their notions of "race"
 4. We have to first work to understand *their* notions about the materiality of the body
 5. What *they* understand to be inheritance from one person to another
 6. How *they* see physical relatedness between persons
 - k. **DISCUSS:** Think about "folk biology" concepts you know about
 - i. For example, "blood." "Race" is one of those concepts that has many meanings which have changed over time
- 8 We will work to understand their history
- 9 "Nation," "race" had very different meanings earlier in the West
- 10 Gender
- 11 An important lesson in this course is that one identity component (class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 12 Is always linked to the others—it never stands in isolation in the real world
- 13 These identity components always co-occur in individuals' identity
- 14 Some pairs are seen by members of a given culture to always or usually co-occur
- 15 Concepts about race are gendered, etc.

- 16 An example: Kath Weston found that for many people, in the U.S. Asian lesbians could not be butch¹
- 17 **DISCUSS:** what does “butch” mean?
- 18 Weston says that the construction of Asian women at present is such that an Asian lesbian trying to act working class, for example, by becoming a mechanic, look as masculine as possible, will encounter more problems than will an African-American woman
- 19 An Asian lesbian who wants to be “butch” will have to work harder to overcome the stereotype of “petite, docile, oriental blossom,” a femininity that’s seen to inhere in Asian females
- 20 We will read about another example: de la Cadena’s essay titled “Women are more Indian,” about Andean Indians in Peru
- 21 While it is useful to separate out these identity components during analysis
- 22 After all, this is what analysis is
- 23 Keep in mind that we can only isolate them during examination; no one is ever only a man, only an African-American, only an Italian
- 24 G. Sexuality
- 25 Same thing: we will read about how sexuality is raced, ethnicized, classed
- 26 H. Religion
- 27 We will pay particular attention to connections between religion and ethnic/national identity—actual connections, or connections made in people’s minds
- 28 Islam: the Gladney book
- 29 **DISCUSS:** Jewishness: religion, ethnicity, race—stereotypes about Jewish bodies?
- 30 “He doesn’t *look* Jewish”
- 31 Jokes were made about African-American movie actor Sammy Davis converting to Judaism not “looking Jewish”

¹ Weston, Kath, 1996. *Render Me, Gender Me: Lesbians Talk Sex, Class, Color, Nation, Studmuffins...* New York: Columbia University Press.

- 32 Ethiopian Jews who moved to Israel: Falashi: “black Jews”
- 33 They experienced racism, people had difficulty accepting them as truly Jewish
- 34 Children of black/Jewish parents will say they felt they had to choose an identity—they weren’t allowed to be both
- 35 Like the Asian lesbian butch, these difficulties reveal stereotypes; what combinations of identity components are permitted and which ones are not
- 36 By the way, it’s OK to speculate in this class, you just have to make sure you tell us that you’re speculating
- 37 It’s OK to talk about stereotypes, if you make it clear that this is what you’re doing
- 38 Then we move to language, culture and ethnicity
- 39 We next look at current trends in scholarship on ethnic and national identity
- 40 Transnationalism, globalization are stressed more
- 41 Culture recovery movements—“heritage” initiatives
- 42 An example is the “Celtic revival” in England, Scotland, Ireland, even in Brittany
- 43 **DISCUSS:** other examples you can think of?
- 44 We consider culture as commodity: issues surrounding “appropriating” culture, fears about “losing” culture, “enriching” culture, “recovering” culture, “selling” culture
- 45 We move on to “rights” movements, which are concerned with ensuring rights of all kinds
- 46 Both the foundational assumptions of human rights, civil rights
- 47 Out of the liberal philosophical tradition
- 48 And the notion of collective and culture-specific rights
- 49 Then we move to identity politics, New Social Movements
- 50 Mobilizing around identity components

51 Examples: gender, indigeneity

52 Religious mobilizing has been going on for a long time

53 And transnationalism—diasporas, migration, refugees, globalization's effects

54 Students will present their third papers at the end of the course

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

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