

COURSE SYLLABUS

HIST 150: Multicultural America

Fall 2020

Class Meetings

Wednesdays, 3:30pm-6:10pm, Holton 190

Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

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Course Description

This introductory course in Ethnic Studies explores some of the historical origins and developments of racial and ethnic identities in the Americas. We will be looking at some of the different ways that Europeans, Indian Nations, and Africans—initially enslaved and eventually free—struggled and interacted, shaping what we now know as “American culture.” We will especially consider how these interactions grew in and shaped Milwaukee and Wisconsin’s history and culture. In particular, we’ll begin and expand our exploration by looking to food and foodways as a cultural formation rooted in racial ideologies. Food and foodways offers us an entry to critically analyzing identity, memory, location, resistance, and reclamation – all elements central to an Ethnic Studies classroom.

This course will draw heavily from Feminist Theory and Women’s and Gender Studies, academic areas of study focused

on the ways that sex, gender, race, and other categories of identity manifest themselves in social, cultural, and political contexts. In addition, we will study interconnections among systems of oppression (sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, etc.). We will also learn to 'read' and analyze categories of identity, exploring how they impact one's understanding of and experiences in the world. Together and with our course texts and resources, we will analyze competing perspectives and integrate various bodies of knowledge across traditional academic boundaries. In addition, we will apply critical thinking skills to identify and assess identity-based assumptions and biases in order to recognize their consequences on an individual, social, and cultural level.

The project of this class is to start seeing our own families, communities, and other social relationships a little differently—to understand them in a different context than we did previously.

Course Objectives

Among the objectives of the course are the following:

1. To gain an understanding of the meanings of race and ethnicity in contemporary and historical perspectives;
2. To become familiar with the different histories of ethnic and racialized groups in local and national contexts;
3. Discuss theories of oppression and privilege and the feminist principle that 'the personal is political' and identify the ways in which the concepts from the course affect our own lives.
4. To develop a critical framework for understanding and interpreting food and foodways as cultural formations, co-constituted with social identities that change over time.

Required Materials

1. Course Readings on Canvas, the Learning Management System (LMS) used by UWM
2. Access to your UWM email address (I expect that you will check your email at least once daily)
3. Internet connection and a computer with a word processing program (Microsoft Word, Apple Pages)

All course readings are available on the course Canvas website. You are **not required** to purchase textbooks for this course; however, if you wish to print out assigned readings to read a hard copy (as opposed to on a screen), then you are responsible for the cost to print. *Completion of course readings is an essential component of this class.* Students should bring readings to section in print form or easily accessible on a laptop, tablet, or other mobile device.

Credit Hour Policy: This 3-credit course meets for roughly 3 hours per week during the semester. Students are expected to put in 7 additional hours per week studying and working on assignments to achieve the learning goals of this course.

Preparing for this Course

A college course is typically made up of *lectures and discussions* along with *course readings, written work, and exams*. In some courses, you are assigned a textbook, which pretty much covers the material you are responsible for in the semester. Students read the textbook, listen to the professor explain it, and take exams that come out of the material covered by lectures and the textbook.

This course does not work this way.

Our course is arranged so that readings, papers, lectures, and discussions *complement* rather than directly echo each other. That means that students must engage with this class on several different fronts: *by reading, discussing, writing, and actively listening during class*. Active listening means that you think critically about what you are hearing and how it fits into your understanding of what is going on. I encourage students to ask questions or contribute to lectures with pertinent discussion.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance is a required component of this class. Students are not only expected to attend class, but also participate in class discussions and activities. Active engagement is the best way to get the most out of this class and do well on course assignments.

Students with more than **four** unexcused absences will be dropped a **full letter grade from the final grade** for each missed class succeeding four absences. Being present for a class means being there for the entire class period. For extreme circumstances, and on a case-by-case basis, I allow for excused absences (per UWM policy). The following are examples of excused absences: death in the immediate family, serious personal illness or injury, call to active military duty, and religious observance. Excused absences must be documented. This means that if you have a nasty case of the flu you should see a doctor or a nurse and get a note stating same, or if you must miss class to attend a funeral, you must submit an obituary.

You are responsible for finding out what work you missed when you are absent, including any announcements that were made, changes to the schedule, in-class assignments, and assigned homework. You are also responsible for submitting copies of any written assignments that are due when you are absent, and you may pick up homework assignments and in-class activities on our Canvas site. Barring extenuating circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted and you will not receive points for assignments that are not turned in on time.

Religious Observances

Students will be allowed to complete assignments that are missed because of a religious observance. Please notify the instructor if you will miss a class because of a religious observance (this counts as an excused absence).

Canvas and Email

This class makes use of UWM's Canvas website. All assignments and grades will be posted on Canvas, along with many of the course readings (aside from the required texts)

We will also use Canvas and UWM email to contact you at various times during the semester. That means you need to pay close attention to both. If you do not routinely read your UWM email account, you need to have email from that account forwarded to the account that you do routinely read. If you do not already read your email routinely, make a new habit of checking in every weekday.

- For general assistance with Canvas, visit: <https://uwm.edu/canvas/students/>
- Or call the UWM Help Desk: (414) 229-4040

Contacting Me

Please don't hesitate to contact me either by email (grensav2@uwm.edu) or during student drop-in hours (M/W 1:00-2:30pm). I'm also happy to schedule a meeting outside those hours, depending on my availability. My job is to help you with the work of this course, and I am always happy to meet with students to discuss ideas about our class readings, your projects, and more.

I check my UWM email and Canvas COUNTLESS times a day during the week day. You can expect that I will return emails within 24 hours (often, much more quickly) during regular hours (9a-5p) on weekdays. However, I do try to preserve weekends and vacations as my own time and I will respond to you as soon as I can – for example, if you email me late on a Friday evening, expect that I will respond to you sometime on Monday. I make it a priority to respond to your questions and needs in a timely manner and I ask for the same treatment, in return!

Community Agreements

Further classroom policies will be determined by the group when we create our Community Agreements during the first several weeks of the course. You are also expected to abide by these policies.

Grading Rubric

A	100-95	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-94	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	59-0

Late Work Policy I do not accept late work. If you have an excused absence, please be in contact with me to arrange for an adjusted due date – most often, the due date will be the class period following your excused absence, but we will work together to determine a revised due date. However, I recognize that life and circumstances sometimes prohibit your ability to complete assignments as you intend, so I will drop the lowest Critical Response grade and the lowest Engagement Activity grade, meaning you are allowed two 'oopses.' All other assignments (including the Midterm and Final Projects) not submitted by the indicated due date will receive a zero.

Summary of Assignments

You will receive assignment sheets and/or prompts that contain details, expectations, and rubrics for several of the assignments listed below.

1. Attendance & Participation – 20% [10% at Midterm and 10% at Final]

Engaging in and contributing to meaningful class discussion is essential for this course. It is vital for you to attend all class meetings. Participation need not require speaking in every class discussion, but does require being ready and able to participate in discussion. If you do not participate verbally the entire term, it will be noticed and considered in your final

grade. If you are concerned about this portion of your grade, please speak to me personally. The reason I count participation and attendance as such a large percentage of your grade is, in part, because learning is very much a social process: we learn from our interactions with others, the questions we ask, the responses we hear, the conversations we have. For this reason, discussions in the course will be student-generated. By that, I mean you will be responsible for a large part of determining where discussions will go and what you find important, and why. I will certainly be part of discussions, but I expect you to be prepared to take part in the meaning-making process. You are required to bring a virtual or hard copy of the day's assigned reading with you to class (articles posted online, etc.) so you can reference them during discussions.

2. Critical Responses – 20%

Over the course of the semester, you will be given five Critical Responses (CRs) to complete. Aside from the 'Sharing Information' Survey and CR 1, your lowest CR will be dropped. Unless otherwise indicated, **you will submit this recurring assignment to Canvas no later than 11:59 PM CST on the Monday** night before our Tuesday class meeting. You will receive a prompt for each CR and prompts will be available on our Canvas site.

This assignment comprises a large portion of your final grade because it is imperative that you keep up with the assigned readings and that you begin thinking critically about the ideas they contain. Our discussions and activities rely on an understanding and working vocabulary of key texts and terms in WGS.

3. Engagement Activities – 15%

Throughout the course, you will be given opportunities for further engagement with the course material through five activities. You will receive separate prompts for each Engagement Activity, found in the associated Canvas module. **Unless otherwise indicated, you will submit this recurring assignment to Canvas no later than 11:59 PM CST on the Wednesday night** before our Thursday class meeting. Your lowest EA score will be dropped.

4. Discussion Leader Group – 10%

For each chapter we read and discuss, several of you will be assigned to a Discussion Leader Group (DLG) and will lead class discussion on the assigned article readings. Members of the DLG will summarize the article readings assigned for that day, consider them in conversation (noting parallels, tensions, etc.), place them in the context of the chapter introduction (noting how the articles illustrate important key terms and concepts), and highlight relevant examples (current events, videos, other articles). DLGs will also be responsible for creating several discussion questions to pose to the class and facilitating the ensuing discussion.

Additionally, it is expected that everyone – not just members of the participating DLG groups - will come to the week's meeting having read all of the articles indicated for that same week (see the Course Schedule for this information). If it becomes obvious that students are coming to class with these readings not prepared, the instructor reserves the right to issue quizzes/other assignments to ensure that these important readings are completed.

5. Midterm Project – 15%

The Midterm Project will ask you to do an in-depth consideration of yourself as an individual experiencing the world at a particular intersection of identity (race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation, etc.) and you will construct an Identity Journal. You will receive prompts to help you begin this project, but are encouraged to employ creativity to make this assignment meaningful.

6. Final Project & Reflection – 20%

The Final Project allows you the space to consider next steps after taking this course. For many of you, the information that was presented and discussed may have shifted your worldview or your sense of yourself as an actor or individual within the world. You may be considering how you can incorporate the information from this class into your everyday life, and you might be looking for ways in which others have done so. Importantly, this Final Project should be meaningful to you. Our Final Project will allow you to investigate **praxis**: work or actions informed by an ideological perspective – putting theory into practice. Your research for this project can take several forms, you can:

- Propose and take on a work of activism, yourself
- Investigate a *local individual who is an activist
- Investigate a *local activist organization

In Week 14 and Week 15 of the semester, you will present your work to the class and we will discuss your research and/or activism. You will submit a reflection on this project in Week 16 of the semester.

Requesting Alternate Assignments

If you request an alternate assignment for any of the assignments listed in this syllabus or required for the course, please be in contact with your instructor. In order to request an alternate assignment and receive credit for your submission, you must do so within 48 hours of the posted assignment due date. All accommodations/requirements communicated by UWM's Accessibility Resources Center (ARC) will be honored for assignments listed here, on Canvas, or otherwise negotiated or determined with your instructor.

For more information about student accommodations and services and ARC, contact them:

- Office: Mitchell Hall 112
- Phone: 414-229-6287
- Email: archelp@uwm.edu

University Policies & Links

1. Students with disabilities

Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. <http://uwm.edu/arc/>

2. Religious observances

Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted.

<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

3. Students called to active military duty

Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.

Students: <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>

Employees: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/download/policies/ops/bn9.pdf>

4. Incompletes

A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

5. Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment)

Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf

6. Academic misconduct

Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University.

<http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>

7. Complaint procedures

Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf

8. Grade appeal procedures

A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.

<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm>

9. LGBT+ resources

Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment.

<http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/>