ETHNIC AND RACIAL TENSIONS

Winter 2022

**Instructor:** Dr. Rochelle Wijesingha

**Email:** wijesir@mcmaster.ca

**Lecture:** Wednesdays 11:30AM - 2:20PM  
**Room:** Live, on Zoom

**Office:** Zoom

**Office Hours:** By appointment

# Course Description

# The aim of this course is to allow students to develop a better understanding of contemporary ethnic and race relations in Canada. A series of current debates and controversies on various theoretical and practical issues within the area of ethnicity and race will be presented and discussed. These include examining issues of police brutality and racial profiling, multiculturalism and reasonable accommodation, politics of recognition, environmental racism, Indigenous-settler relations, Whiteness, media portrayals, and intersections of ethnicity and race with other social traits. Students should be aware that this course will entail a heavy reading load.

# Course Objectives

This course addresses at least three University [Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](https://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html):

1. This course will enhance the depth and breadth of students' knowledge of ethnic and racial tensions. Students will gain a critical understanding of the key concepts, methodologies, current advances, theoretical approaches and assumptions in the area of ethnic and racial tensions.
2. Students will be able to apply the knowledge gained in the area of ethnic and racial tensions through reviewing, presenting and critically evaluating information both during class participation and when completing assignments. Students will also be encouraged to propose solutions to the debates presented in class.
3. Students will be required to discuss issues related to racial and ethnic tensions in Canada. Doing so will enhance students' communication skills as well as develop an awareness and understanding of the limits of their own knowledge.

# Required Materials and Texts

All readings are available online via Avenue to Learn

# Class Format

This class will be a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

# Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation (15%)
2. Presentation (20%)
3. Critical commentary (10%)
4. Critical reflection (25%)
5. Op-ed paper (30%)

# Course Evaluation – Details

## Seminar participation (15%)

Students are expected to attend every class having read and reflected on all the assigned readings. Students should be prepared to actively participate in class discussions and contribute weekly to the discussion board on Avenue to Learn. Participation will be evaluated based on class attendance as well as the quality of the student's comments and questions in class and on Avenue to Learn.

## Presentation of weekly reading (20%)

Students are required to present one of the assigned weekly readings. All readings will be presented on the week to which they have been assigned. Presentations should be a maximum of 15 minutes long and summarize the main ideas of the article as well as include critical insights. Students should also connect the article to the broader topic of the week. Students are encouraged to use a visual component such as PowerPoint.

## Critical commentary of reading from presentation (10%)

Students are required to submit a critical commentary on the assigned reading that they presented on. The critical commentary should not be a mere summary of the reading. Instead, students are expected to make critical insights, connections, and/or criticisms of the readings. Students are also encouraged to connect the article to the broader topic of the week and include a personal response to the issues raised. The critical commentary should not exceed two pages double-spaced.

## Critical reflection (25%), due March 2nd

Students are required to write a 4-page critical reflection on the topic of environmental racism. Students will be provided the questions on the topic for which they are to answer in the critical reflection. Students should use the readings for that week, the lecture as well as additional literature on environmental racism and its impacts to inform their critical reflection. More details on the assignment will be provided in class and on Avenue to Learn.

## Op-ed paper (30%), due April 6th

Students are required to write a short, informed opinion piece (1250 words) for a public audience on a topic/debate covered in class. Students may choose another topic related to the course with prior approval from the instructor. Students can assume that the reader has some knowledge of the topic but are not specialists. Therefore, concepts should be clearly explained. Students should take a clear stance on an issue or debate and try to persuade their audience of their position and also address competing positions. More details on the assignment will be provided in class and on Avenue to Learn.

# Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

## Week 1: Introduction (Jan 19)

## Week 2: Defining and Measuring Race (Jan 26)

Satzewich & Liodakis (2013), “The Concepts of Ethnicity and ‘Race’”

Synnott & Howes (1996), "Canada's Visible Minorities: Identity and Representation"

Tuvel (2017), “In Defense of Transracialism”

## Week 3: Multiculturalism and Reasonable Accommodation (Feb 2)

Kymlicka (2004), "The Limits of Tolerance"

Sriskandarajah (2008), "Demonstrating Identities: Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and Tamil Canadian Identities"

Dufresne, Kilibarda, Blais & Bibeau (2019), "Religiosity or Racism? The Bases of Opposition to Religious Accommodation in Quebec”

## Week 4: Politics of Recognition (Feb 9)

Coulthard (2007), "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada"

Cui (2012), “Two Multicultural Debates and the Lived Experiences of Chinese-Canadian Youth”

Wark (2021), “Land Acknowledgements in the Academy: Refusing the Settler Myth”

## Week 5: Environmental Racism (Feb 16)

Waldron (2018), “Re-Thinking Waste: Mapping Racial Geographies of Violence on the Colonial Landscape”

Thomas & Haynes (2020), “Black Lives Matter: The Link Between Climate Change and Racial Justice”

## Week 6: Reading Week - No Class (Feb 23)

## Week 7: Indigenous and Settler Relations (Mar 2)

Krause & Ramos (2015), "Sharing the Same Waters"

Denis (2015), "Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: The Reproduction of Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-White Canadian Relations"

Lawrence & Dua (2005), "Decolonizing Antiracism"

*\*\*Critical Reflection due\*\**

## Week 8: Policing (Mar 9)

Satzewich & Shaffir (2009), "Racism versus Professionalism: Claims and Counter-Claims about Racial Profiling"

Henry & Tator (2011), "Rejoinder to Satzewich and Shaffir on 'Racism versus Professionalism: Claims and Counter-Claims about Racial Profiling"

Samuels-Wortley (2021), “To Serve and Protect Whom? Using Composite Counter-Storytelling to Explore Black and Indigenous Youth Experiences and Perceptions of the Police in Canada”

## Week 9: Media (Mar 16)

Collins (2014), “The Construction of Race and Crime in Canadian Print Media: A 30-Year Analysis”

Cui & Worrell (2019), “Media, Symbolic Violence and Racialized Habitus: Voices from Chinese Canadian Youth”

Gilchrist (2010), "'Newsworthy' Victims? Exploring Differences in Canadian Local Press Coverage of Missing/Murdered Aboriginal and White Women"

Hockin-Boyers & Clifford-Astbury (2021), “The Politics of #diversifyyourfeed in the Context of Black Lives Matter”

## Week 10: Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and Gender (Mar 23)

Rose (1994), "Bad Sistas: Black Women Rappers and Sexual Politics in Rap Music" [CP]

Emerson (2002), "'Where my girls at?' Negotiating Black womanhood in Music Videos"

Zinn & Dill (1996), “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism”

## Week 11: Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation (Mar 30)

Patel (2019), "'Brown girls can’t be gay’: Racism Experienced by Queer South Asian Women in the Toronto LGBTQ Community"

Callander, Newman & Holt (2015), "Is sexual racism really racism? Distinguishing attitudes toward sexual racism and generic racism among gay and bisexual men"

Seitz (2020), “‘Missing’ Racialized Violence, Disturbing Continuities: Countertopographies of Violence in the Bruce McArthur Murders”

## Week 12: Whiteness and Conclusion (Apr 6)

Hartigan (2015), “Understanding Whiteness”

Perry (2001), "White means never having to say you're ethnic"

DiAngelo (2012), “What Makes Racism So Hard for Whites to See?”

*\*\*Op-Ed paper due\*\**

# Course Policies

## Submission of Assignments

Assignments must be turned in electronically to Avenue to Learn by the deadline listed on the course outline.

## Late Assignments

Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 1 mark per day that they are late.

## Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

# University Policies

## Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academiccredentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academiccredit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)**.**

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca%20) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [*Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities*](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf)policy.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

## Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

| **MARK** | **GRADE** |
| --- | --- |
| 90-100 | A+ |
| 85-89 | A |
| 80-84 | A- |
| 77-79 | B+ |
| 73-76 | B |
| 70-72 | B- |
| 67-69 | C+ |
| 63-66 | C |
| 60-62 | C- |
| 57-59 | D+ |
| 53-56 | D |
| 50-52 | D- |
| 0-49 | F |