

Racism and Anti-Racism in Comparative Perspective

Objectives:

The empirical focus of this seminar will be the frameworks through which members of various racial groups understand and respond to ethnoracial stigmatization and discrimination. The first month will be spent reading recent theoretical and empirical literatures on identity, boundaries, racism, anti-racism, and cognate topics. We will then turn to our empirical projects. You will be asked to define your research questions in dialogue with the relevant literatures. You will develop a research design to answer these questions with the use of archival evidence, interviews, or ethnographic data. On Weeks 5 and 6 we will cover the basic techniques for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing qualitative data. The remainder of the semester will be organized as a research workshop where we will discuss collectively the research problems each member encounter as you collect data and engage in data analysis. At the same time we will continue to read and discuss the recent literature on racism and anti-racism as needed. The last weeks will be for student presentations.

Throughout the semester, the course will operate on two interrelated dimensions, one focused on theoretical approaches to racism and anti-racism, the other focused on the practical techniques of data collection, such as identifying key informants, selecting respondents, collecting field notes, analyzing data, writing, and presenting findings.

Requirements and Grading:

Students will be asked to make a few class presentations and post discussions of the empirical literature on identity and racism and anti-racism over the first month. They will also write memos in preparation for the term paper, including one statement on their research question, a blueprint of their project, and an interview schedule. Presentations and memos will count for half of the final grade, with the final paper counting for the other half.

Structure:

The first three weeks will be spent surveying collectively, and reporting on, relevant theoretical background and recent research on racism and anti-racism, as well as on relevant theoretical background. These readings will inform our research throughout the semester and will remain points of reference.

