

# Syllabus of Record



**Program:** CET Colombia

**Course Code / Title:** (CA/SOCI 330) Race and Identities: Debates in the Colombian Context

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Economics

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites / Requirements:** No

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## Description

This course uses a comparative approach to examine the history of racial thinking and racialization in the Americas. Using Colombia as a case study and employing an intersectional methodology, the course pays particular attention to how discourses of race, gender, nation, politics, and development intersect to create identities that are complex and multifaceted yet circumscribed by the socio-historical context in which they flourish. Leveraging the city of Cali as classroom, the course includes a significant field-based component that allows students to engage with local perspectives through guest speakers and visits to NGOs and ethnic communities.

## Content Warning

At times, this course intentionally invites students to engage with readings and content that are controversial. Students might find this disturbing. The intention is not to endorse perspectives but to rigorously engage with them. If certain material is emotionally challenging, students may discuss concerns with the faculty before or after class. Students may also leave the classroom without academic penalty if discussions become too emotionally challenging. Students remain responsible for all missed material.

## Objectives

Through participation in this course, students will:

- Identify major historical events that have influenced the study of race and identity in Latin America.
- Discuss contemporary theoretical approaches to the study of race and identity.
- Solidify their analysis of how race, gender, and politics shape identities within specific socio-historical contexts.
- Conduct qualitative research in the Colombian context and present findings to peers.
- Strengthen academic presentation skills
- Hone intercultural communication skills.

## Requirements

The course consists of lectures, seminar discussions, and field visits to organizations, communities, and government institutions. Active participation is essential. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and field study course components in accordance with CET attendance policies. Students must complete assigned materials before each class session and participate thoughtfully in discussions and activities.

Course materials include readings (generally 20–30 pages per class session), films, podcasts, social media content, and visual arts. Assignments must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

## **Traveling Seminar**

The *Traveling Seminar* is a required field study course component designed to deepen students' understanding of course themes through experiential learning. Students are expected to participate fully in all seminar activities and complete related written and/or oral assignments. Seminar-related work contributes to multiple components of the final course grade, including participation, homework, and the designated Traveling Seminar field report.

### **Graded assignments include:**

**Participation:** Active engagement in seminar discussions, in-class exercises, and field-based activities demonstrating preparation, critical reflection, and respectful dialogue with peers and community interlocutors.

**Homework (Conceptual Analysis Worksheets and Field Reports):** Short written assignments designed to develop students' ability to synthesize course readings, analyze key theoretical concepts, and reflect on insights gained through site visits and experiential learning.

**Traveling Seminar Field Report:** Analytical written report based on the Traveling Seminar experience, requiring students to connect field observations with course themes related to race, identity, and socio-historical context.

**Presentation:** A 15–20 minute oral presentation with discussion component in which students use secondary research and field-based insights to explain and critically analyze a major concept explored in the course.

**Final Project:** An 8–10 page research paper developed in consultation with the instructor that investigates a course-related topic using interdisciplinary approaches, accompanied by an interactive multimedia teach-in presentation designed to communicate findings to peers.

## Grading

Participation	10%
Homework (4 at 5%)	20%
Traveling Seminar Field Report	10%
Presentation	20%
Final Project	40%
• Written Component —	20%
• Teach-In Presentation —	20%

## Readings / Resources

Alves, Jaime, and Aurora Vergara-Figueroa. "En la Sucursal del Cielo (In the Branch of Paradise): Geographies of Privilege and Black Social Suffering in Cali, Colombia." In *Comparative Racial Politics in Latin America*, edited by Kwame Dixon and Ollie A. Johnson III, 183–210. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Aragón, Margarita. "The Difference That 'One Drop' Makes: Mexican and African Americans, Mixedness and Racial Categorisation in the Early Twentieth Century." *Subjectivity* 7, no. 1 (2014): 50–65.

Baker, Elna. "Act 3: Babies Buying Babies." *This American Life*, episode 347. Aired January 18, 2008.

Barragán, Yesenia. "Free Black Women, Slavery, and the Politics of Place in Chocó, New Granada." *Revista de Estudios Colombianos* 47 (2016): 57–66.

Buck-Morss, Susan. "Hegel and Haiti." *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000): 821–65.

Ceron-Anaya, Hugo, Patricia Santana Pinho, and Ana Ramos-Zayas. "A Conceptual Roadmap for the Study of Whiteness in Latin America." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2023): 177–99.

Dolby, Nadine. "Encountering an American Self: Study Abroad and National Identity." *Comparative Education Review* 48, no. 2 (2004): 150–73.

Helg, Aline. "Simón Bolívar's Republic: A Bulwark Against the 'Tyranny' of the Majority." *Revista de Sociología e Política* 20, no. 42 (2012): 21–37.

Lasso, Marixa. "Race, War, and Nation in the Caribbean Gran Colombia, Cartagena, 1810–1832." *American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (2006): 336–61.

Lovelace, Vanessa. *Trailing Freedom: Embodied Resistance, Geopolitics, and a Black Sense of Freedom*. PhD diss., University of California, 2017.

Malagón, Camilo. "Post-Conflict Visual Ecologies: Violence and Slow Violence in Chocó." *Revista de Estudios Colombianos* 55 (2020): 30–41.

McClintock, Anne. "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising." In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*, 207–31. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Restrepo, Eduardo. "Ethnicization of Blackness in Colombia." *Cultural Studies* 18, no. 5 (2004): 298–315.

Viveros Vigoya, Mara. "Social Mobility, Whiteness, and Whitening in Colombia." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2015): 496–512.

Vergara-Figueroa, Aurora. *Afrodescendant Resistance to Deracination in Colombia*. Cham: Springer, 2017.

Veras, Edlin. *They Say We're Expendable: Race, Nation, and Citizenship in the Dominican Republic*. MA thesis, University of South Florida, 2021.

Wade, Peter. "Articulations of Eroticism and Race: Domestic Service in Latin America." *Feminist Theory* 14, no. 2 (2013): 187–202.

———. "Race in Latin America." In *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology*, edited by Deborah Poole, 177–192. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.

Zapata Olivella, Manuel. "A Stranger Under My Skin." *Afro-Hispanic Review* 2, no. 3 (1983): 8–15.

## **Content**

### **Topic 1: Introduction to the Course—Studying the history of race and racialization in a global context**

- Learning to locate identity/race in a global context
- Comparative methods for understanding different racial regimes

### **Topic 2: Race and masculinity during the struggle for independence**

- The construction of national racial imaginaries
- The construction of Black political subjectivity

### **Topic 3: Intersections of race and gender**

- The gender-sex-race matrix in historical perspective
- Theories of intersectionality
- Black women, politics, and debates about freedom and citizen rights

#### **Topic 4: Tracing and comparing race, ethnicity and identities in Colombia and in Latin America**

- Race and identity in comparative perspectives
- Historical overview of race and ethnicity in Latin America
- Key aspects of racial ideologies in Colombia

#### **Topic 5: Racial domination, social (im)mobilities and strategies of coping with racial stigmatization**

- Social whitening
- Symbolic violence and making of racial identities
- Resistance, endurance and resilience

#### **Topic 6: Black struggles for self-determination**

- Introduction to the history of Afro-Colombian social movements
- Political change and the (re)shaping of black identities
- Field visit to women-led organization

#### **Topic 7: The other history of education in Colombia**

- Legal reform and the turn toward multicultural education (1990's -present)
- "Ethno-education" and the Cátedra de Estudios Afro-Colombianos" (Black Studies Course)

#### **Topic 8: Displacement and violence: (re)configuring identities on the move**

- Forms of migration (internal displacement and migration)
- Continuum of violence(s)
- Racialized geographies, imagined belongings
- 'New' categories of identity

#### **Topic 9: Coping with racial stigmatization, violence and displacement**

- The effects of displacement
- Remembering violence, re-making identity

#### **Topic 10: Race and urban marginality: The case of Cali, Colombia**

- The real and imaginary geographies of race and class in Cali
- Intersection of race, class, gender, and "urban development" projects
- Field visit to community organization in Agua Blanca

#### **Topic 11: Gentrification, race and the (re)making of the tourist city: The case of Cartagena**

- Tourism, the modernization of city, and the whitening of urban space
- Ethnography of urban reform: Race vs class in debates about gentrification

#### **Topic 12: Employment discrimination and labor activism**

- Theories about discrimination in the labor market
- The wage gap: the confluence of race and gender
- Political organizing and labor activism

**Topic 13: Music and Afro-Colombian social movements**

- Youth culture and political mobilization
- Globalization and the commodification of racial identities
- The role of popular music cultures in socio-political activism

**Topic 14: Blackness and the literary imagination**

- Introduction to the history of Afro-Colombian literary production
- Afro-Colombian literature in a diasporic perspective

**Topic 15: Race and the cinematic imagination**

- The representation of blackness on the screen
- The intersection of race and nature on screen
- Film screening: *Chocó*, Dir. Jhonny Hendrix, 2012, 80 mins, drama

**Topic 16: Conclusion—Black political organizing in the 21st century**

- Pacemaking and Black political participation
- Gender, sexuality and activism