

## Race & Ethnicity in Latin America (JINS 338)

Spring 2026  
MC 209, MWF 10:30-11:20

Marc Becker  
marc@truman.edu

### Description

How have Latin Americans constructed and interpreted racial, ethnic, class, and gender identities and ideologies? We will begin this course with a theoretical discussion of race, class, and gender, and then proceed to an evaluation of how they intersect and influence each other in a Latin American context. How do these identities help us understand Latin American history and culture? What functions have these identities played in Latin American societies, and how have they influenced cultural, economic, and political developments? How have the intersections of these identities contributed to the emergence of new forms of identity that contribute to the rich diversity that is Latin America? Throughout this entire process we will constantly critique our assumptions of these categories in order to understand better the purposes they play in society.

**For the first part of the class, unless you are leading discussion or running stack, please leave your devices at home.** (You will need a personal device for the second part of the class.)

### Reading

One required book; other readings will be posted to Brightspace.

Moraña, Mabel and Miguel Alejandro Valerio, ed. *Mapping Diversity in Latin America: Race and Ethnicity from Colonial Times to the Present* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2024). ISBN: 9780826507242

### Assignments and grades

Grades are calculated out of a percentage total possible points for the class, and not of the completed assignments: 90-100 percent is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, and 60-69 is a D. Below 60 percent is an F. Successful completion of all assignments, including leading discussion and running stack when signed up to do so, is required to receive credit for this class.

**Race & Ethnicity.** We will start the class with a reflection on what race and ethnicity means to you. 1 pt.

**Personal identity exercise.** Create an identity wheel (a circle or pie chart) with “slices” whose size indicates the relative importance of each item to your own identity. Label each slice with an “A” if it is an advantaged or privileged part of your identity that benefits you, and a “T” for targeted parts that may put you at a social disadvantage (even if that part of your identity is important to you). Due by class time on Wednesday, January 14 and present your identity wheel to the class. 5 pts.

**Reading responses:** For the first part of the class, post a comment, question, response, or reaction for each daily reading to the discussion board on Brightspace by midnight the day

before each class period. 1 pt each.

**Participation:** Physical presence and active engagement with the discussion in the classroom. 1 pt each.

**Reflection:** For the first part of the class, after each class period post to the discussion board on Brightspace an analysis of the classroom discussions for that day. Due by midnight the night before the next class period. 1 pt each.

**Class discussion leader:** For the first part of the class, one student will sign up to lead the discussion (organize the reading responses in Brightspace into a logical flow) for each class period. Share your discussion questions with the instructor before class (and with the entire class if you like). 5 pts.

**Running stack.** For the first part of the class, one student will sign up to moderate discussion (run stack) to assure that everyone has equal space to speak. This student will mark off students who have participated actively in class discussion. 5 pts each.

**Essay on race and ethnicity:** For the second part of the class, you will develop a paper on race and ethnicity in a series of stages (dates to be determined). You will want to bring a personal device for this part of the class. This final essay should be about 15 pages long, typed, double-spaced, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. Due at the time of the final exam, Thursday May 7, 9:30-11:20 a.m., in our normal classroom MC209 where we will discuss the essays and what you learned in the class (and yes, sorry, attendance and participation in the final exam discussion is required to pass the class). 100 pts.

For the rest of the class, we will form pods of three and each of the following assignments will be developed in a folder you will create within your pod.

**Library introduction:** Meet in library classroom (PML 103)

**Paper proposal:** Draft a proposal for your paper, including a paragraph describing your project, what questions you seek to address, and a hypothesis of what you expect to find (the thesis statement of your research paper). Present the proposal to the class. The proposal is required to continue with the class.

**Source analysis:** Analyze a scholarly book related to your paper topic. Write a 3-page essay summarizing the book's contents and critiquing the author's assumptions. The essay must be typed, double-spaced, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. We will discuss these essays in class. 5 pts.

**Introduction:** Draft a preliminary introduction for your paper. In this tentative introduction, state your paper's topic, the problem that it addresses, its relation to existing work, and its argument.

**Outline:** Outline the contents of the paper in a manner you find efficient, but create a plan for each section, stating which issues belong in which section, and showing the overall structure of

your paper.

**Full draft:** Turn in as polished a draft as you can of the full fifteen pages. This full draft should, with the exception of an occasional flaw in structure and slip in formulation, read and look like a finished paper. This will be returned with a preliminary grade and detailed feedback so that you can make final improvements.

**Peer Review:** Peer review the papers for the other two people in your pod plus one other (tbd). Add marginal comments to the peer review draft (be sure that edits are set to "suggestions" so I can see that you have provided marginal comments) plus write a paragraph outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Add this paragraph either to the paper draft or send it to both the author and myself (marc@truman.edu). 5 pts.

**Presentations:** Give a formal, professional ten-minute presentation, describing your paper's topic and argument, what's been written about that topic previously, your contribution to the field, and the sources you used to make your argument. I expect everyone to be present for your peers' presentations.

**Final paper:** The final paper should be about 20 pages in length. The paper should rest on primary sources and be framed in terms of the historiography on the topic (typically presented at the beginning of the paper). The essay must include footnotes or endnotes and bibliography and the style must conform to that found in Turabian/Rampolla/Chicago Manual of Style. Papers submitted without page numbers will be docked half a letter grade. The papers are due at time of final exam, Thursday May 7, 9:30-11:20 a.m., in our normal classroom MC209 where we will discuss the essays and what you learned in the class (and yes, sorry, attendance and participation in the final exam discussion is required to pass the class). Papers must be uploaded to Brightspace where they will undergo a Turnitin plagiarism check (you can upload your paper multiple times in advance if need be). 100 pts.

## Addendum

Also see syllabus resources for students: <https://wp-internal.truman.edu/provost/syllabus-resources-for-students/>.

**Credit generation** – This is a three-credit course with three weekly face-to-face 50-minute face-to-face meetings with your professor.

**Expectations** – My expectations of you as students in this class are fairly straightforward and not unlike those of any other college-level class:

1. I expect you to complete the assigned readings before class.
2. I expect you to come to class prepared to think about and discuss these readings.
3. I expect you to be fully present and engaged in class lectures and discussions. This means no inappropriate use of personal technology devices. If we are meeting remotely over zoom, you should have your camera turned on. If there is a reason you cannot or do not want to have your camera turned on, just please let me know.
4. I expect you to complete all assignments, and to turn all of them in on time.
5. I expect all written essays to be your own original work. Plagiarism (presenting other's work as your own) or inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate your work is intellectual dishonesty and the basis for failing an assignment and possibly the entire class.

If you run into any problems that hinder you from meeting any of these expectations, please let me know. I think you will find that as with most of your professors I can be completely reasonable, but I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me or disappear from class without explanation. Remaining in touch is important. I do want you to excel in this class, and will bend over backwards to do what I can to ensure that you do. But please do not take advantage of my generosity and keep in mind that your instructors are people as well, and we have our breaking points. If I am bent over backwards and you keep pushing, I *will* break and you will not be happy with the consequences because you will fail the class.

**Writing-enhanced** – This class has been designed to help satisfy the writing-enhanced requirement of Truman's Dialogues Curriculum. As such, the various written projects will assist the quest to improve your writing and critical thinking skills as well as help you understand how interconnected are cognition, the writing process, and the final written product.

There are 3 "pillars" or objectives for writing assignments for a Writing Enhanced class: Cognition, Process, and Product:

- **Cognition:** writing that is focused on helping the student generate and organize thought about the subject. This includes self-reflection. It is sometimes called "writing-to-think" or "writing-to-learn." You will achieve this with a reflection essay on what race and ethnicity means to you on the first day of class.
- **Process:** both a set of habits that helps writers overcome process-related issues (anxiety, writer's block, developing routines, etc.) and the best procedural practices for successful writing. You will achieve this through the proposal and draft stages of the final paper.

- **Product:** writing that is focused on communicating ideas to others. This type of writing targets an audience and adjusts style, content, and form accordingly. You will achieve this with your final paper.

**Requirements** – Our goal is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of race and ethnicity in Latin America, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Complete reading assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class. Lectures and discussions will complement the readings and assume the base level of knowledge that they present, so it is critically important that you keep up with the readings. Please drop me a note if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

**Attendance policy** – Students are expected to attend all their classes and participate actively in discussions. Poor or irregular attendance will adversely affect the quality of work and the course grade. A student who has to miss class must contact the course instructor and give a clear, valid explanation. Extended absences (for example, medical) should be documented (for example, by a note from the doctor). The student has the responsibility to make up any work missed, with deadlines at the discretion of the instructor. For university guidelines on attendance: [http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=801&hl=attendance+policy&returnto=search#Attendance\\_Policy](http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=801&hl=attendance+policy&returnto=search#Attendance_Policy)

**Regular and Substantive Interaction Policy**– Federal regulations related to financial aid require that students demonstrate that they are actively engaged in the courses they take. For the purposes of this class, establishing academic engagement requires, at a minimum, attendance at a class session or completion of one of the assignments for the first week of the semester. If you are unable to attend class or complete an assignment you must contact me. Failure to engage without an explanation by Saturday, January 17, 2026 will result in your removal from the course the following week. Under certain circumstances, removal could impact your scholarship eligibility or financial aid.

**Writing Center** – The Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.truman.edu/>), in Pickler Memorial Library 107, is open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, and is a good resource for improving your writing. They can help you to brainstorm, adjust style(s), fix grammar, references, citations, and the like. Never be too embarrassed or ashamed to seek out help.

**Academic integrity** – Personal and scholarly integrity are expected of everyone in the class. Failure to live up to those responsibilities, risks earning a failing grade on the assignment/examination, a failing grade for the course, and/or in serious cases expulsion from the academic program or University. The University policy on academic dishonesty as published in the Student Conduct Code and General/Graduate Catalog applies ([http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=1192#Academic\\_Dishonesty](http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=1192#Academic_Dishonesty)).

The Truman State University Student Conduct Code (8.020.01) defines the term

“academic misconduct” to include: 1) cheating, defined as using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information aids in any academic exercise; 2) fabrication, defined as falsification or invention of any information or citation in an exercise; 3) facilitating academic misconduct, defined as helping or attempting to help another in an act of academic dishonesty; and /or 4) plagiarism, defined as representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in an academic exercise. Students who are caught committing acts of academic misconduct in this course will be subject to the full range of penalties, including failing the assignment and the course. In every case, the Dean of Student Affairs Office and the Vice President for Academic Affairs will be notified; these officials have the power to suspend or expel students for academic misconduct. For more information see these two websites:

[http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=491#Academic\\_Dishonesty](http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=491#Academic_Dishonesty) and <http://www.truman.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2014-Student-Conduct-Code.pdf>.

**ADA accommodations for students with disabilities** – The university is committed to making every possible effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Services Office (x4478) as soon as possible. Also see <http://disabilityservices.truman.edu/>.

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations students with documented disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Office of Student Access and Disability Services (OSA) as soon as possible. Truman complies with ADA requirements. For additional information, refer to the Office of Student Access and Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.truman.edu/>

You may also contact OSA by phone at (660) 785-4478 or email [studentaccess@truman.edu](mailto:studentaccess@truman.edu)

**Notice of Compliance** – In compliance with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, age, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission to or employment in its education programs or activities. The University complies with the regulations implementing Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and other state and federal laws and regulations.”

**Discrimination and Title IX** – Truman State University, in compliance with applicable laws and recognizing its deeper commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion which enhances accessibility and promotes excellence in all aspects of the Truman Experience, does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, or protected veteran status in its programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs and activities. Apparently political ideology is not included, so we can discriminate based on that. Faculty and staff are considered “mandated reporters” and therefore are required to report potential violations of the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policies to the Institutional Compliance Officer.

Title IX prohibits sex harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking and retaliation. Truman State University encourages individuals who believe they may have been

impacted by sexual or gender-based discrimination to consult with the Title IX Coordinator who is available to speak in depth about the resources and options. Faculty and staff are considered “mandated reporters” and therefore are required to report potential incidents of sexual misconduct that they become aware of to the Title IX Coordinator.

For more information on discrimination or Title IX, or to file a complaint contact the Institutional Compliance Officer (<https://titleix.truman.edu/>), Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator  
Office of Institutional Compliance  
Violette Hall, Room 1308  
100 E. Normal Ave  
Kirksville, MO 63501  
Phone: (660) 785-4354  
[titleix@truman.edu](mailto:titleix@truman.edu)

The institution’s complaint procedure can be viewed at <http://titleix.truman.edu/files/2015/08/University-Complaint-Reporting-Resolution-Procedure.pdf> and the complaint form is accessible at <http://titleix.truman.edu/make-a-report/> .

**FERPA** – Education records are protected by the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result, course grades, assignments, advising records, etc. cannot be released to third parties without your permission. There are, however, several exceptions about which you should be aware. For example, education records can be disclosed to employees or offices at Truman who have an “educational need to know”. These employees and offices may include your academic advisor, the Institutional Compliance Officer, the Registrar’s Office, or Student Affairs depending on the type of information. For more information about FERPA, see <http://www.truman.edu/registrar/ferpa/>.

**Recording** – No recording in the classroom is permitted without the explicit and written permission of the instructor.

**Statement on disruptive behavior:**

“Behavior that persistently or flagrantly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students’ ability to learn and an instructor’s ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be asked to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.” *(From Washington State University, suggested by Lou Ann Gilchrist).*

**The minimum investment of time necessary by the average student to achieve the learning goals of the course**, both in the class sessions and in autonomous learning activities. Apparently, the federal government has mandated that all syllabi should contain information that documents the activities that warrant the credit hours awarded. For each hour in class, students should expect to devote approximately two additional hours per week to completing the course work. This is true for all classes.

You can access the University’s standard attendance policy at <http://policies.truman.edu/policylibrary/attendance-policy/>.



**Emergency Procedures** – In each classroom on campus, there is a poster of emergency procedures explaining best practices in the event of an active shooter/hostile intruder, fire, severe weather, bomb threat, power outage, and medical emergency. This poster is also available as a PDF at this link: <http://police.truman.edu/files/2015/12/Emergency-Procedures.pdf> .

Students should be aware of the classroom environment and note the exits for the room and building. For more detailed information about emergency procedures, please consult the Emergency Guide for Academic Buildings, available at the QR code shown or at the following link: <http://police.truman.edu/emergency-procedures/academic-buildings/>

This six-minute video provides some basic information on how to react in the event there is an active shooter in your location: <http://police.truman.edu/emergency-procedures/active-shooter/active-shooter-preparedness-video/> .

Truman students, faculty, and staff can sign up for the TruAlert emergency text messaging service via TruView. TruAlert sends a text message to all enrolled cell phones in the event of an emergency at the University. To register, sign in to TruView and click on the “Truman” tab. Click on the registration link in the lower right of the page under the “Update and View My Personal Information” channel on the “Update Emergency Text Messaging Information” link. During a campus emergency, information will also be posted on the TruAlert website <http://trualert.truman.edu/>.

**Appropriate use of technology** – Appropriate use of technology is encouraged and inappropriate use is—well, inappropriate and detrimental to our common learning environment.

### **Other random things I’m supposed to tell you:**

The best way to contact me outside of class is via email and typically I am able respond fairly quickly. If you don’t receive a response from me (like, in more than a day) please try again because the email probably was lost, but first check your spam filter because thanks to Elon Musk my emails *will* go to spam.

Assigned work is due at the time specified; if you anticipate you may struggle to meet those deadlines, you should discuss an extension with me in advance.

I plan to provide prompt feedback on assignments, typically before the next class period.

This class has no prerequisite or enrollment requirements.

It has no expectations for prior knowledge/skills.

It has no special equipment or technology requirements.