

ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS (40%)
Khanna / Soc 019 TAP

As a writing-intensive TAP seminar, essays will be worth 40% of your overall grade. Students will be expected to prepare 3 essays during the course of the semester on topics related to race relations in America. The focus for each essay is detailed below.

All essays should be *at least* 5 full pages (with the exception of essay #1, which should be at least 3 full pages), double-spaced, typed, Times New Roman font, 12 point type, and 1" margins. A full bibliography should also be attached to each essay assignment (see final page for instructions on citing references). Failure to follow these guidelines will result in deducted points.

All grades will be evaluated using letter grades and will translate into the following numerical grades for the purpose of calculating your final grade: A+ (98), A (95), A- (92), B+ (88), B (85), B- (82), C+ (78), C (75), C- (72), D+ (68), D (65), D- (62). Failing grades will be calculated based on the particular circumstance.

Essay	Description	Percentage of Grade	Due Date
1	My Power & Privilege in American Society	10%	9/29
2	Making a Persuasive Argument	15%	10/27
3	Moving Forward for Racial Justice	15%	12/6

Essay 1: My Power & Privilege in American Society

In this course, we will explore the topics of power and privilege as they pertain to race in American society. We will draw on Peggy McIntosh's article, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (assigned on your syllabus; read it before you start this assignment) as well as discuss the ways in which one's race shapes life chances, opportunities, and social experiences.

According to Peggy McIntosh, some of us experience "privileges" (e.g., such as race privilege) that impact our lives in ways that go unnoticed to us (they are "invisible" privileges), and because of this, we take them for granted. We get these privileges because our group is considered "the norm" in American society; in the case of race, whites are privileged because "life in the US is organized around whiteness" and because, in America, "white means normal" (Wade and Sharp, p. 84). According to McIntosh, we are often taught to consider the disadvantages of other groups, but in doing so we neglect to see how our own group is advantaged.

This assignment is designed to help you begin to identify some of the daily effects of "privilege" in your life. This includes not only "privilege" based on race or ethnicity (as discussed in the above article and in class lecture), but *ALL* types of privilege – e.g. privilege based on race, ethnicity, skin shade, social class, age, gender, nationality,

religion, sexual orientation, physical attractiveness, height, weight, physical ability, and so on.

For this essay, choose **one particular privilege** that you benefit from *other than race*, and in 3-5 pages, carefully describe the privilege and how you benefit from this privilege (give concrete examples). *Draw links to arguments made in Peggy McIntosh's article when possible/applicable.*

These privileges should be a list of special circumstances and conditions that you experience but: (1) you did not earn, (2) you get because your group is considered to be "normal" in society, and (3) you generally take for granted.

Examples include privileges you receive in society because you are American, white, male, light-skinned (for example, as a person of color), thin, Christian, able-bodied, physically attractive, heterosexual, thin, tall (especially if you are a male), etc. Here are a few examples of privilege statements:

- *Male Privilege: I can be as promiscuous as I want and not be labeled a "slut" or "whore."*
- *Heterosexual Privilege: I will never be referred to as that "straight" girl or called "hetero" in a derogatory manner.*
- *Christian Privilege: It is likely that state and federal holidays coincide with my religious practices, thereby having little to no impact on my job and/or education.*
- *Able-Bodied Privilege: I can do well in a challenging situation without people commenting on how much I must be an inspiration to others.*

You must also include in your essay at least two reference sources from scholarly journal articles, magazines, news articles, or books to support your argument (and include an attached bibliography).

Essay #2: Making a Persuasive Argument

Many topics regarding race in America are arguably controversial, contentious, multi-sided, and heavily debated. For this assignment, you will choose *one* of three topics, take a position, and argue your position in a clear, succinct, and persuasive way. You must (1) introduce the topic with background, (2) take a position, (3) and make a persuasive argument regarding your position. You must draw on at least 5 reference sources to support your argument – not Wikipedia, but rather scholarly books and articles. Your topic choices are:

- (a) Affirmative Action: Is affirmative action in higher education necessary?
- (b) Racial Profiling: Is racial profiling defensible public policy?
- (c) Media and Race: Does the media contribute to the propagation of racial stereotypes and racism in American society?

For this assignment, you must have ONE classmate (or peer, friend, or someone at the writing center) read your essay and provide comments/corrections before you turn it in. Thus, when you turn in your essay assignment, you will also turn in your reader's comments stapled to the back of your paper with their name and association to you (or you can include your earlier draft with their markings). IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THIS COMPLETED BEFORE THE DUE DATE, and use his/her comments to further strengthen your essay. Thus, you will want to complete your first draft well-before the deadline to give your reader enough time to read it and you enough time to revise it based on his/her comments. Ask the person who reads your essay to consider:

- *Does the author clearly introduce the topic with some background information?*
- *Is the paper clearly organized? (an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, a clear conclusion)*
- *Is his/her argument clear, persuasive, and credible?*
- *Are there holes in the argument that need to be addressed before turning in the assignment?*
- *Is the essay well written -- with proper punctuation, spelling, & grammar?*

Essay #3: Moving Forward for Racial Justice

By the end of the course, my hope is that you have a better understanding of racial inequality, institutionalized discrimination and racism, and the complicated history of race relations in the United States.

Now the question is – where do we go from here? According to a recent Pew study (2016), blacks and whites have very different perceptions of race relations in the US today (read: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/>), though as you have learned, clear and deep disparities exist between racial groups today in the areas of education, work/employment, criminal justice, healthcare/health, banking, housing, and so on.

In this 5 page essay (with at least 3 references), you will address the following question: *What steps do you believe can (and should) be taken to combat racism and promote racial justice in the United States today?*

You have 3 options with regard to your audience:

- (a) Write a formal report to the President of the United States (as head of a specially appointed task group for addressing racial inequality).
- (b) Write an article for the Burlington Free Press directed at fellow Vermonters.
- (c) Write a BuzzFeed-style article directed at peers of your age group.

ADDENDUM ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's *words, ideas, or other original material* without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to works published in print or on-line, manuscripts, lecture material, and the work of other student writers. Anytime you draw on the work or ideas of another, be sure to cite them and include them in your bibliography! **I take plagiarism very seriously** and I expect all students to follow UVM's Code of Academic Integrity (for more information, see: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>).

How to Cite References: To cite references you must: (1) include in-text citations when necessary (next to the sentences within your essay that you are citing), and (2) an alphabetized bibliography of all references used attached to your essay. All in-text citations must be accounted for in your bibliography and all references in your bibliography should be cited in the text.

EXAMPLES:

For within-text citations in your essays, where you are *paraphrasing* someone else's ideas, always include the author's last name and date. Examples:

According to Bonilla-Silva (2010), racial inequality is masked by the ideal of a colorblind society.

To argue that race is not biological is not the same thing as saying it doesn't exist (Buffington 2015).

If you *directly quote* from a particular reference, also include the page number, like this:

According to Beverly Tatum (2007), "the experience of exclusion from educational opportunity is not limited to black children. Latinos share that history." (p. 29).

If these references are cited in the body of your essay, then they must also be fully listed in alphabetical order in your bibliography at the end of your essay. For full instructions on how to properly cite and format your references (whether they be journal articles, books, magazine/newspaper articles, etc.) AND TO AVOID PLAGIARISM, see http://lib.trinity.edu/research/citing/ASA_Style_Citations_4.pdf and http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf