COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HS2011 Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations

Pre-requisites : HS1001 Person and Society

No. of AUs. : 3

Contact Hours : 39

Course Aims

Ethnicity has become “the pandemic of contemporary social life“. This course explores how and why ethnicity and ethnic relations matter so much to social life, now and then. Ethnicity and ethnic relations have strong and sometimes unconscious influences upon how we see ourselves, how we view other people and on how other people see us.

The course fosters understanding of how and why cultural, social, emotional, economic and political dimensions come into play when ethnicity and social constructions of race influence the social relations of people. The topics focused on are: feelings of home and belonging; the competition over access to resources; ethnic loyalties; social inequalities; the characteristics of multi-cultural societies; nationalism; ethnic/racial violence and inequality; ethnic cooperation; assimilation; globalization; and intersectionality. The scope of the course is necessarily world-wide, yet includes many comparisons with events in Singapore.

The aim of the course is produce understanding of how perceptions of ethnicity and race work in social interactions; and to be able to critically assess the enormous consequences ethnicity has for social life and for the structures of contemporary society. The course emphasizes that ethnicity means different things to different people, that ethnicity often does not work alone as a criterion to classify people into systems of social hierarchies and that ethnicity works in conjunctions with social class, race and gender, as well as other vectors of difference.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course students should be able to

- Define and critique historical and contemporary definitions of race and ethnicity and how they are employed in the practice of power, inequality and domination.
- Accurately define and discuss concepts of privilege, intersectionality and groupism with relevant examples.
- Identify different forms of racial and ethnic discrimination as well as speak about difficulties in distinguishing between these categorizations and actions.
- Describe with in-depth empirical knowledge the different systems states’ utilise in dealing with diverse ethnic populations. Students should be able to discuss the everyday implications of these policy initiatives for both minority and majority groups.
- Describe attempts at anti-racism and the ways in which ethnic and racial minorities deal with ethnic inequalities.

Course Content

Week 1  Introduction to the course
Key concepts: The social construction of race
               Biological determinism
               Genetics and the re-emergence of “science” of race

Week 2  Colonial and post colonial constructions of race and ethnicity
Key concepts: Colonial capitalism and commodification
               Stereotyping

Week 3  What is Ethnicity? What is Race?
Key concepts: Difficulties of defining ethnicity
               Discourse and power

Week 4  Ethnicity without Groups
Key concepts: Groupism
               The boundary-making approach

Week 5  Ethnicity and nationalism
Key concepts: Primordialism
               Civic nationalism
               Everyday nationalism

Week 6  Ethnicity as Resource
Key concepts: Ethnic Enclaves, Social networks, Ethnic Politics

Week 7  Ethnicity and Intersectionality
Key concepts: Intersectionality, feminism
               Gender, religious and class identities

Week 8  Intra-ethnic diversity
Key concepts: Pan-ethnicity
               Intra ethnic differences
Week 9  Race and Ethnicity in Singapore
Key concepts:  Multiracialism
Everyday racism

Week 10  Ethnic Privilege & Inequality
Key concepts:  Chinese Privilege/majority privilege
White privilege
Social capital

Week 11  Ethnic Conflict
Key concepts:  Ethnonationalism
National identity
Populism

Week 12  Questioning the continued significance of ethnicity
Key concepts:  Post-racial society
Limits of social constructivist approach

Week 13  Review
Summary and review of key points in the course

Course Assessment
CA1  Class participation : 10%
CA2  Poster : 30%
CA3  Discourse Analysis : 30%
Final Examination : 30%
Total : 100%