Course Description and Overview

Social statistics were developed - in large part - to measure and study race and racialized population groups. Amidst the great eugenics debates of the early 20th century, interest in social statistics grew exponentially as social scientists sought to demarcate racial groups and to assess differences between human population groups so specified. Although interest in social statistics was initially closely tethered to the study of race and social stratification; today, most social scientists study these topics separately. As a result, best practices in social statistics are often blind to race and ethnicity and students of race and ethnicity are often uninterested in statistics. This course will develop quantitative researchers that give greater, more careful and keen consideration to how race and ethnicity fit in their statistical models and race and ethnicity scholars with a greater ability to understand, critique and use quantitative methods. In order to achieve these goals, the course is mostly conceptual and participants are strongly recommended to have had one of each of the following courses prior to attendance: a basic course in race and ethnicity, a graduate level course in research methods and a graduate level course in social statistics. For those interested in a more focused study of quantitative methodologies, participants are encouraged to dual enroll in one of the many training courses offered at the ICPSR Summer Program (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/).

Over the course of four weeks, the course will cover four broad topic areas of particular interest to social scientists, interested in race, ethnicity and statistics. The first week focuses on key concepts and includes a special session on race, ethnicity and research ethics. The first day focuses on debates concerning the conceptualization of race and ethnicity. Are these concepts the same? If not, how and why might they be different? Does it really matter? The second day focuses on developing an understanding of ethnogenesis, racialization and race making as key concepts for those interested in the study of race and ethnicity. How and why are racial and/or

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1 This version of the syllabus reflects a re-conceptualization of this course. I am still finalizing minor revisions to the current syllabus. The final syllabus will be available on the first day of class. Please forward any clarifying questions to: Mosi Ifatunji (ifatunji@unc.edu).
ethnic groups created? What is their function in Western societies? The third day focuses on parsing different conceptualizations of prejudice and discrimination. There is a long history of studying prejudice in the social sciences. We review arguments concerning the primary motivation for inter-group ‘ethno-racial’ prejudice? Although there is also a long history of concern with discrimination in the social sciences, best practices for the empirical investigation of discrimination, from the perspective of those who are targeted, are still forthcoming. How is discrimination experienced and best conceptualized? The fourth day focuses on understanding inequality and stratification. How are these concepts related and different? Finally, we consider different theoretical models for conceptualizing racial orders. What groups exist and how are they arranged relative to one another? How does this vary over time and various levels of geopolitical space?

The second week moves from conceptualization to operationalization. It begins with a conversation on the different ways in which social scientists measure race. The first day will review various methods for measuring race, ranging from self-reports of racial identity to measures of genetic ancestry. The next day focuses on how social scientists operationalize race and ethnicity in multivariate statistical models. How are race and/or ethnicity operating in our investigations? Are they present? Should they be present? Are they an independent variable or an outcome? Are they moderating or mediating a particular statistical relationship? We then shift our attention to the various measures of social inequality. How do we know when disparity is present? We will review the strengths and limitations of a range of such measures, from mean differences to more complex measures of segregation and social network distance. There is a great debate concerning how we might best measure prejudice. Given our course debates concerning the nature of prejudice, how do we measure it using quantitative methodologies? The course devotes an entire day to reviewing and debating the most prominent measures and best practices in the study of prejudice. After gaining greater clarity on the measure of prejudice, we then consider the other side: best practices in the measurement of discrimination in the social sciences. Surprisingly, this is a topic that remains in its infancy, especially when compared to the study of prejudice.

After exploring these core issues, participants will be guided through their implications for research design and data collection. The third week is ideal for participants at the early stages of a new study but is also useful for those already analyzing previously collected data. How do we take race and ethnicity into account when planning our studies? Were these issues adequately and appropriately considered during the creation of our secondary datasets? This week will review strategies associated with both traditional and emerging methods for collecting quantitative data. Although it reviews methods, it is largely focused on ideas and moves the student toward an expanded perspective on what is both important and possible in the areas of design and collection. It begins with a review of strategies to optimize (and maybe achieve) questionnaires and scales with construct invariance between racial and ethnic groups. Are the same questions always the same? Should we expect universal social constructs? We then transition to unique issues facing researchers conducting social surveys and experiments. Are all sampling frames created equal? How important is complex survey design? Does population representation matter in our social experiments? There are also new and emerging quantitative data sources and methods. How might quantitative researchers interested in race and ethnicity employ and/or incorporate big data and agent-based modeling in their study design and statistical method? Let’s think outside the box!

The final week focuses on statistical analysis and inference. Although this course is designed to challenge participants’ current thinking in these areas, it also seeks to provide practical guidance in best practices. Therefore, we begin the final week reviewing the history and limitations
associated with using social statistics to study racial and ethnic groups. Although many of these issues will have been touched upon prior, these discussions will consolidate our understanding and focus on pragmatic solutions that are mindful of limitations, specific to the study of race and ethnicity. The course dedicates three days to a largely conceptual review of a wide range of statistical techniques – e.g., interactions, multivariate decomposition, propensity score analysis and structural equation modeling. We will also review the availability of various datasets – housed at ICPSR – that reflect best practices in data collection and design and that are best suited for studying various issues related to race and ethnicity.

Course Readings

The course requires a fairly substantial amount of reading. This is mostly because the course is actually designed to be a full 16-week semester course. In order to complete reading, the class will divide the readings and produce written summaries. Each student will be required to read one of the required readings for each day. Course readings will be randomly assigned. Students will complete a one-page review of the assigned reading. The reviews will summarize and critique the readings. Reviews will include composting a set of discussion questions that students feel will be useful in promoting discussion as well as their own clarifying questions.

Course Lectures

Each class will include a lecture. The majority of the lectures will be provided by the Instructor, but the course will include a number of guest lectures from local and national experts. The principle aim of the lecture portion of each class will be to provide a context for the course readings. Lectures will not be summaries of the course readings. Instead, while lectures will be on the topic for the day but go beyond the course readings. This not only will make for a more interesting classroom experience, but it will also all the course to cover more material than otherwise possible.

Course Format

The course is designed to pair the best of informative lecture and class discussion. The course will be divided into two parts. Half of each class will be dedicated to a lecture that is on the topic of the day, but that goes beyond the readings assigned for the day. Lectures will employer a wider lens and provide a larger context for course readings. The course will include several guest lectures from various local and national experts. The non-lecture portion of the class period will focus on student summaries of the readings and targeted questions and comments regarding student projects (see Course Readings).

Course Assignments and Grading

There are three points of student evaluation. Each portion of the course is weighted evenly toward the course grade. First, daily reviews will be scored. Second, there will be several course quizzes. The number of course quizzes are unknown. Course quizzes are designed to encourage course attendance and provide a means to evaluate student comprehension of course lectures. Third, students will compose a written methods statement. The methods statement can include a variety a formats but is intended to demonstrate student mastery of the course material. Student methods statements will be decided on during one-on-one meetings with the course instructor. Possible methods statements include – but are not limited to: an extended review of one of the course topics (e.g., conceptualizing ethnoracial orders or measuring prejudice), a study proposal or a methodological critique of the literature in a particular area of the literature on race and ethnicity.
Course Listserv

With student approval, students will be added to a listserv, dedicated to a discussion of the intersection between race, ethnicity and research methods, broadly speaking. Although the course is focused on race, ethnicity and quantitative methods, the listserv will discuss methods and methodology more broadly. In addition to discussions on important topics, list members will be able to use the list to think through various issues related to study design, dataset availability and various analysis techniques. The instructor will also assist members in remaining current on issues related to the course by sending information on newly published books, articles, related course offerings, workshops and conferences.

Course Registration and Fees

Course registration, fees and discounts can be accessed at:
https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/sumprog/2014/

Additional Monographs and Edited Books


Course Schedule

WEEK 1: CONCEPTS AND ETHICS

Monday, June 23: Background Conversations with Individual Students

Tuesday, June 24: Conceptualizing Race, Ethnicity and Ethnoraciality


Wednesday, June 25: Racialization and Race Making


Thursday, June 26: Prejudice and Discrimination


Friday, June 27: Social Stratification, Racial Orders and Research Ethics


WEEK 2: MEASUREMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION

Monday, June 30: Measuring Race


Tuesday, July 1: Operationalizing Race


Wednesday, July 2: Measuring Disparities


Thursday, July 3: Measuring Prejudice and Discrimination


WEEK 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Monday, July 7: Designing Interview Questions


Tuesday, July 8: Social Survey Methods


National Center for Health Statistics (pp. 69-74).


Wednesday, July 9: Experimental Methods


Wikoff, William, Reginald F. Frye, Hongjie Zhu, Yan Gong, Stephen Boyle, Erik Churchill, Rhonda M. Cooper-Dehoff, Amber L. Beitelshees, Arlene B. Chapman, Oliver Fiehn, Julie A.


***Sankar, Pamela and Jonathan Kahn. 2005. “BiDil: RaceMedicine Or Race Marketing?” *Health Affairs*


Thursday, July 10: Social Surveys with Embedded Experiments


Friday, July 11: Agent-Based Models and Big Data


Stewart, Quincy Thomas. “Big Bad Racists, Subtle Prejudice and Minority Victims: An Agent Based Model of the Dynamics of Racial Inequality.” Currently under review for *American Journal of Sociology*.


### WEEK 4: STATISTICAL METHODS AND DATA AVAILABILITY

Monday, July 14: History and Limitations

Tuesday, July 15: Techniques


Wednesday, July 16: Techniques

Thursday, July 17: Available Datasets (with John Garcia)

Friday, July 18: Available Datasets (with Ishtar Govia)