

Unit 9: week 3 - study guide for test 1

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



Unit 9: Week 3 - Study Guide for Test 1 Use the following as a guide. The test covers chapter's 1-3 plus any supplementary articles or documentaries that were required. This is only a guide. Remember that since this is an open book test, ANY question pertaining to the readings could show up. Be sure to have read thoroughly before beginning the test. Please note that starred items could be included as possible short essays (requiring a 1-2 paragraph response). I also suggest that you go over the discussions as well. Questions pertaining to ideas in the discussions may be included. Chapter 1: Minority group — a subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than do the members of a dominant or majority group. The five characteristics of a minority or subordinate group are unequal treatment, distinguishing physical or cultural traits, involuntary membership, awareness of subordination, and in-group marriage. *Racial and ethnic groups...Why the distinction? A racial group is a group that is socially set apart because of obvious physical differences. Each society defines what would be considered the obvious physical differences. We know for certain one of the most obvious is skin color. Here in our country, we basically use black and white as the color distinction. Other countries use a different distinction because, for example, in one culture, most individuals may be classified as black but they may be various shades of black which is where the racial difference occurs. In the US, many smaller clusters of individuals are categorized as ethnic area which holds a specific ethnic group. For example, South Brunswick has a large Indian population which is to say, Indian's make up a large ethnic group within the township. New Brunswick could be another example as there is a large community of

Hispanics within the town. Whereas the term racial group is primarily used to discuss minorities, the term ethnic group is used to discuss a group of individuals of the same race. Also, racial groups are defined by their physical differences and ethnic groups are defined by their cultures. Using these definitions there is clearly a distinction between the two terms. Why this distinction exists is probably so that society can categorize the individuals they are discussing. What is important is that racial groups are inherently who a person is so although it may be hidden or changed at times based on the individual, a person's race is who they are. In contrast, an ethnic group can be a group of racial similar people or even religiously similar. So sometimes, an ethnic group can be chosen. *WEB DuBois: The problem of the color line and double consciousness W. E. B. DuBois was an African American sociologist who received a doctorate degree from Harvard and is considered the first black individual to do so. From our text we learn that he was instrumental in the organization of the NAACP which is a prominent organization designed to support the black individuals of society. (Schaefer pg 8). DuBois played a large role in opening up opinions to the disparities and discriminations of the black individuals of our society. Dubois says so very eloquently, " Let not color or race be a feature of distinction between White and Black men, regardless of worth or ability..., " (Schaefer pg 9). When DuBois speaks of color line, he is discussing the differences of races in regards to their color and other physical characteristics. From what I can interpret, DuBois may have developed the term double consciousness when referring to how people see themselves through others eyes. Also, what they see is how they measure their self worth in the grand scheme of society. *

Does Race Matter? (p. 10 begin) and the social construction of race Our text answers this question by saying, " No, but because so many people have for so long acted as if difference in physical characteristics as well as geographic origin and shared culture do matter, distinct groups have been created in people's minds. " (Schaefer pg 10). Social construction is a sociological term used to describe what opinions society places on particular subjects. In this case, the social construction of race refers to not what a person's race is but how society perceives the races. " Race is a social construction, and this process benefits the oppressor, who defines who is privileged and who is not, " (Schaefer pg 12). Basically, we all know there are numerous races that make up our culture but what determines which is the dominate race? It is argued that people in power make those determinations so they are telling everyone which race is superior to the other. Because of these opinions and social construction, yes, race is important. Race could be the difference between success and failure. Our society has not evolved enough to treat all races equally even though our forefathers determined that we all are equal. *Although we learn in grade school to salute the merits of living in the great " melting pot, " true cultural pluralism has always been more of an ideal than a reality...In the U. S. and globally. Explain why by identifying and giving examples of the following patterns of intergroup contact: genocide, expulsion, secession, segregation, amalgamation, assimilation, and pluralism. " Pluralism implies that various groups in a society have mutual respect for one another's culture, a respect that allows minorities to express their own culture without suffering prejudice or discrimination, " (Schaefer pg 25). Our text describes this term as an " ideal" meaning that it is something

our society hopes to be able to practice amongst all individuals. However, it is quick to note that it should be more like a "reality" in the sense that it is something that society is obligated to believe in, (Schaefer pg 26). It can definitely be seen as a conflict within society as individuals may be forced to make opinions based on what is right versus what they may have been taught to believe all their lives. The US is truly a "melting pot" meaning a society with a variety of cultures and races that make up the whole. Because of this, we have an obligation to respect every different culture as well as every race. Social construction tends to make this a difficult goal to obtain but there are many organizations in place which try to make these gaps smaller. There are many advantages to integrating one culture into another. For example, in my hometown, many of us love to eat sushi. With the uprising of this wonderful food choice, those that are not Asian have been able to dive into the culture through a wonderful eating experience. Another example could be many of the courses offered here at Rutgers. There are courses in Russian literature and Chinese film for example. I would imagine that a large portion of the participants may have some cultural interest but there are many that take these types of classes just to broaden their own experiences. These types of classes could help in making the gap smaller between cultures and could help to improve cultural pluralism. Chapter 2: Ethnocentrism — or the tendency to assume that one's culture and way of life are superior to all others. This is a form of prejudice and would result in discrimination. Our text describes this (pg34) as a motivating factor behind some criminal acts. *Prejudice and Discrimination — Prejudice is a negative attitude toward an entire category of people. For example, the Klu Klux Klan

who we were exposed to in the CP Ellis story was extremely prejudice against blacks. Another example would be Nazi germany and Hitler's prejudice again jewish people. Showing both of these examples also give us a look at some of the most horrendous hate crimes in human history.

Discrimination is the denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups because of prejudice or for other arbitrary reasons. Whereas prejudice is an attitude, discrimination is an action. For example, if someone says they don't like a person because they are black, that is prejudice. If that same person refuses to allow the black individual into their restaurant, that is discrimination. Our society has had some severe cases of both of these and we are still struggling to overcome some of the cruelties of the past.

Unfortunately, these actions didn't die off in the past, I think they have just become less obvious. Merton and LaPiere Studies — Robert Merton showed that prejudice and discrimination are related to each other but are not the same. He gives 4 types of people when discussing this issue and they are, " unprejudiced nondiscriminatory (all weather liberal), unprejudiced discriminator (reluctant liberal), prejudiced nondiscriminatory (timid bigot), and prejudiced discriminator (all weather bigot), " (Schaefer pg 36). I can immediately tell from the descriptions that the final one would be the most severe because the implications to the term show that this individual is always in a mode that is highly discriminatory. I would agree with these categories mostly based on personal observations and knowing some people that do have tendencies to be discriminatory. Merton's is saying that not all individuals' personal opinions and attitudes toward other should be construed as negative behavior as well. The LaPiere study was about half a

century ago and " exposed the relationship between racial attitudes and social conduct, " (Schaefer pg 37). What LaPiere did was travel with a Chinese couple and observes if the racial attitudes he expected or were historically evident actually occurred. His conclusion was that it wasn't apparent all the time. This could show that people tend to be polite in person but what they say or do in private is another situation. *Theories of prejudice: Scapegoating theory, Authoritarian Personality, Exploitation theory, Normative approach — Scapegoating says that prejudiced people believe they are society's victims. They blame what bad things happen to them or other misfortunes on people of a different race. Again, the CP Ellis story we read later our lessons was a perfect example. CP Ellis felt he was given a very hard life and has suffered not only with personal troubles but also money issues. He wanted to blame someone and his association with his father and the Klan made it easy for him to blame the blacks. Authoritarian Personality is " a psychological construct of a personality type likely to be prejudiced and to use others as scapegoats, " (Schaefer pg 39). So, using the same previous example, it could be said the CP Ellis' suffers from authoritarian personality because his actions of using the blacks as scapegoats. Exploitation theory is, " a Marxist theory that views racial subordination in the US as a manifestation of the class system inherent in capitalism, " (Schaefer pg 39). It is to say that in the jungle there is a food chain, the lion eats the rabbit that eats the mice, etc. Within current society, it is expected that there are different classes of individuals and some who will say this is a necessary part of life. It is unfortunate that sometimes this class system reflects on a specific racial group. The normative approach is, "

the view that prejudice is influenced by societal norms and situations that encourage or discourage the tolerance of minorities, " (Schaefer pg 40). This is a very important concept because it shows that a lot of the actions and opinions of people that are discriminatory get that way because they are taught that or they grow up in an atmosphere of prejudice. Again, CP Ellis grew up with a Klan father so it was only natural that he developed some of these tendencies as well. What is even more significant is being able to recognize all these theories and to combat their existence with education. Some individuals may be beyond help but many can learn to change given the right education.

Stereotypes and Racial Profiling — Stereotypes are unreliable generalizations about all members of a group that do not take individual differences into account. For example, Hitler did not care how much or little Jewish heritage an individual had when he systematically exterminated millions, he only cared that a drop of Jewish blood ran through their veins. He didn't care about the persons contributions to society or their intelligence. Part of this concept of stereotyping is a term called racial profiling which is any arbitrary police initiated action based on race, ethnicity, or natural origin rather than a person's belief. We see many news reports about this very subject where police use unnecessary force or violence just because of a person's race. A " post racial" era?

Color-blind racism — Color-blind racism refers to the use of race-neutral principles to defend the racially unequal status quo. One example the book gives is how Asian's are rarely used in feature films except where martial arts is also highlighted. Postracialism is a common theme and is another tem used to describe color-blind racism. Other terms are laissez-faire and aversive

racism. *Reducing prejudice (p. 48 begin) — The question remains after all these discussions, can prejudice be reduced? Our text suggests many different ways in which it is possible to treat and educate those who practice prejudicial attitudes. For example, education, mass media, avoidance versus friendship, and corporate response (diversity training). The education portion of reducing prejudice would be in the form of programs and conferences designed at teaching people what to look for, ways to combat the situations and additional training that could be passed on. For example, we viewed the video about Jane Elliott's school. Her program with small children appears to be groundbreaking and based on the follow up with the student's years later, also successful. Another important tool is mass media. For example, in my previous women study classes I was exposed to the way the media shows women. There are a excessive amount of commercials featuring women as the cook, cleaner, and childcare provider however very limited showing a man in the same roles. There have been advances however and our text discusses one such TV show called The Cosby's which had a huge television audience which included all races, not just black as all the characters on the show were, (Schaefer pg 49). The next area is avoidance versus friendship. This discusses the social distance scale by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess which " asks people how willing they would be to interact with various racial and ethnic groups in specified social situations, " (Schaefer pg 51). The importance of this study is to show the patterns that become evident particularly within the White American and Europeans. This is an example of the Social Distance Scale. There was another scale mentioned called the Equal Status Contact which states, " intergroup contact between people of

equal status in harmonious circumstances will cause them to become less prejudiced and to abandon previously held stereotypes, " (Schaefer pgs 51-52). Therefore, by incorporating more fun and interesting activities that are not racially motivated, the pattern of prejudice could be learned to be reduced. What do you think about Jane Elliott's efforts at reducing prejudice (presented in the documentary A Class Divided)? What are the strengths and weaknesses of her methods? What else might you suggest? Jane Elliott's efforts in the documentary we watched for class should be applauded. It was interesting to note that the town where Jane worked as a teacher was primarily white Christian and to this day, that status hasn't changed much. However, Jane continues to give her lesson on prejudice and it appears to be particularly helpful. When the students of one class were interviewed years later after watching themselves in the documentary, it was fascinating to see how emotional they were. Even years later, the lesson was felt very deeply. The strengths would be the instant feelings of rejection on the children. But the weakness could be that they may recognize it is not a real situation. Also, if the lessons taught are not encouraged at home or within their community, it may not make a difference. Although starting young is particularly important, I would propose all family members be exposed to the lesson. The documentary mentioned how the concepts used were taken into the work force within a conference type atmosphere. Although adults do react the same, I personally do not see the impact as much as I did with the small children. That may be because as we get older, we get tougher in our emotions and it could be hard to break old habits. Chapter 3: *Total discrimination — " Discrimination is the denial of opportunities and equal

rights to individuals and groups because of prejudice or for other arbitrary reasons, " (Schaefer pg 61). I think in the US we recognize that there is discrimination but many choose to believe that they are incapable of it or that it is not as horrible as people may make it out to be. Total discrimination is a more recent concept which is, " current discrimination operating in the labor market and past discrimination, " (Schaefer pg 62). It is saying that because of particular items in a person's past like education and social status, individuals are discriminated against in the work place. That discrimination can show itself in such areas as hiring, advancement and even pay scales. It is not something that is randomly made up but an actual occurrence. For example, someone who was not provided a decent education because of their social status or ethnic group would have difficulty finding advanced employment. In current day, employers won't even look at a person unless they have a full four year degree or higher. Many individuals just aren't able to take advantage of that type of education. Hate Crimes — when a victim is selected because of certain characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. We see numerous hate crimes in the news almost daily. The Rutgers campus recently became a focal point of a perceived hate crime when Tyler Clementi, a student at Rutgers, committed suicide after his roommates posted him in gay videos. *Institutional discrimination (Why is institutional discrimination considered more important than the everyday discrimination of individuals?) — This form of discrimination " is the denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups that result from the normal operations of society, " (Schaefer pg 65). This is particularly important because it goes to the root of functioning

as an average human being within society. One example mentioned is that IQ tests are geared towards middle class white American children therefore any other child taking the test would be at a disadvantage before even answering the questions. If everyone starts out on an even playing field and then points are taken away for items that cannot be mastered, then society may be working towards treating every individual equally. But this isn't the case. When a hard working Hispanic man who has been in his employment for 20 years is denied credit or needs additional collateral when compared to a hard working white man, this type of discrimination is inexcusable because it comes from a person's perception not from what abilities they may or may not have. Measuring discrimination (p. 66 begin) — There are many ways in which society measures discrimination. For example, economics is probably the most prevalent as it is the easiest to examine and study. The chart in our text shows that median incomes vary quite a bit depending on a person's race, ethnicity and even gender. What is particularly interesting to me, but not surprising, is that white American males do not hold the highest title any longer. This now goes to the group of Asian American men within society. Although the salaries are higher, the statistics haven't changed much. Hispanics and Native Americans still fall on the lowest end of the economic tier. *Civil Rights Act of 1964 — “ Prohibited discrimination in public accommodations such as hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations and amusement parks. Publicly owned facilities such as parks, stadiums and swimming pools also prohibited from discriminating. Also forbade discrimination in all federally supported programs and institutions such as hospitals, colleges and road construction projects. Since then there have

been numerous amendments because as times change, so does the need for the Act to change. (pg 69) Redlining — African Americans, Latinos, and other fall victim to redlining or the pattern of discrimination against people trying to buy homes in minority and racially changing neighborhoods. *Why does the text author make the distinction between income and wealth? “ Income refers to salaries and wages, and wealth is a more inclusive term that encompasses all of a person’s material assets including land, stocks and other types of property, ” (Schaefer pg 71). I feel the main reason for the distinction is because many individuals of specific ethnic groups cannot obtain property, sometimes even regardless of the income they make. Because of this, for some individuals, wealth may not be a possibility.

*Environmental justice — Refers to the efforts to ensure that hazardous substances are controlled so that all communities receive protection regardless of race or socioeconomic circumstance. (Schaefer pg 72-73).

Affirmative action — Affirmative action is the positive effort to recruit subordinate-group members, including women, for jobs, promotions, and educational opportunities. (Schaefer pg 73). It was a phrase coined by President John F. Kennedy calling all to the cause of making sure that applicants were treated properly and fairly during all stages of the interview through employment process.

Reverse discrimination — is an emotional term because it conjures up the notion that somehow women and minorities will subject white men in the US to the same treatment received by minorities during the last three centuries. (Schaefer pg 76)

Glass Ceiling — Refers to the barrier that blocks the promotion of a qualified worker because of gender or minority membership. (Schaefer pg 78). *Be able to discuss the article on

CP Ellis.. What led to his involvement in the Klan and what led to his denunciation of it? What factors led to the change? What made CP Ellis join the Klan? What made him change? Why is this relevant today? Does CP's account support any of the theories we have read about in this section (for example, scapegoat theory on page 38 of our textbook or the contact hypothesis on page 51)? What role does the economy play in shaping intergroup relations? (You can speculate on this last one...) The story of CP Ellis was particularly interesting because of the evolution his life took. I think there were many reasons that guided CP Ellis into the paths he choose in life. For example, he had a rough upbringing and then when he was married and had his own children, he suffered a lot as well. It appears his life was a constant struggle to survive while he worked extremely hard to support his family. The moment that the Klan came into his life was when he was at his service station observing Klan members. They would come in talking once a week and they approached him to join the group with them. He was immediately interested because he felt his current struggles needed to be blamed on someone and who better, in his opinion, then the black people. This came natural to him because he was familiar with the Klan from his father. I feel that his attitudes began to change when he started to notice that the government was discriminating against all people, not just blacks. He started to understand what those in power were doing to every citizen and it was a real eye opener. One of the theories we discussed during this section is called scapegoat theory. " Scapegoating theory says that prejudiced people believe they are society's victims, " (Schaefer pg 38). I can definitely see the correlation between this theory and CP Ellis' feelings

towards black people. He needed to blame someone for his troubles and the hard times he was experiencing so he selected the group of individuals that he had grown up feeling negatively against. The root meaning of scapegoating is that it is more convenient to blame another individual than to take responsibility for a person's own shortcomings. Intergroup relations are how we look at ourselves and how we look at others and the way that different groups interact with each other within society. I feel that the economy plays a huge role in intergroup relations because some races and ethnic groups are not only defined by the color of their skin but also by their social class. Intergroup relations focus on the comparisons of groups based on many aspects including economic ones. Even as an outsider speculating on this subject, it is easy to see that under many circumstances, black individuals are stereotypically placed in a different economic level than many white individuals are. It is some of these types of opinions that historically have caused animosity amongst different ethnic groups. Unit 9: Week 3 - Some notes on the Social Construction of Race Notes on The One-Drop-Rule and the Social Construction of Race 2/4/2013 Eleanor LaPointe (Note that many of the ideas below were presented by you in Discussion B last week. This is a synopsis with perhaps a few additional ideas.) The idea of race does not come from biology. It started in Europe as Europeans moved out across the world and found that they needed a way to control people as they took over their land or enslaved or exterminated them. The invention of scientific racism was one of the most effective weapons devised to conquer and subjugate. Carolus Linnaeus was a botanist in the 1700's (from Norway, I believe). He is credited with the first scientific classification of humans into

groups now called " races." He wanted to classify humans in the same way that clams, flowers, and insects were classified. But, he wasn't just an objective nonpartisan scientist. He classified in a particular way--one that put his group on top and all others below. The result was the beginnings of a scientifically-backed hierarchical ordering of people. It should be mentioned that even during Linnaeus's time, the ideas he put forth were highly contested. That is, not everyone agreed. In fact many disagreed, including scientists like the German physiologist Blumenbach who felt that no real differences existed between people and that any visible differences were superficial. However, Linnaeus's ideas were more successfully incorporated into popular ideologies (or mythologies) because they supported the dominate group need to justify growing inequalities at the time. That is, the idea of race allowed oppressors to define who was privileged and who was not. Since this time, how humans have been categorized has changed a lot and there is much variation from place to place. How a " Race" is defined at any given time depends on an arbitrary set of features chosen to suit the labeler's purposes or biases or both. A good example is how U. S. laws concerning the definition of race have been used. Early on in the U. S. the question became: How to define or draw the line? This is an ongoing question. But in any case, from state to state, there was very little consistency in terms of how race would be defined. Some segregation-era artifacts include: Missouri: " 1/8 or more Negro blood" was the criterion. Georgia: " The term white person shall include only persons of the white race, who have no ascertainable trace of either Negro, African, Western Indian, Asiatic Indian, Mongolian, Japanese or Chinese blood in their veins."

Virginia: Had a similar law but with exceptions. A person could have a little Indian or African blood. Aren't these old laws though?? Actually, some are still on the books and have been upheld as recently as 1982. Louisiana is a good example. In this state, the 1/32 law was actually created in 1971 (prior to this, a person's race classification was less formal). On September of 1982, Susie Phipps obtained her birth certificate and was surprised to find that it listed her as black. At the age of 49, she had always thought she was white! She brought the matter to court and requested it be changed, but the state/court objected after being shown an 11-generation family tree with ancestors who included an early eighteenth-century black slave and a white plantation owner. The court claimed that she was 3/32 black--enough to make her black under state law. What is interesting is that the state of Louisiana could have decided that this law was outdated law and of no use anymore, but it did not! The bottom line is that historically, as now, where "black" and "white" begins and ends depends on who is doing the defining and for what purpose. Moreover, if you are raised in the U. S., it is nearly impossible to escape the fix that "race" has on how we think about ourselves and others. No matter how it is used these days, it is important to keep in mind the origins of these ideas and institutionalized practices: as a set of justifications in a hierarchical system allowing the privileged to reduce competition for valued resources. For ideas on the social construction of race in other countries, see chapter 16 in our text.