Taking Account of Race, Racism, and Privilege

CHAPTER LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

• Differentiate between race and ethnicity
• Define sociology and the sociological imagination
• Distinguish between different forms of racism
• Understand what is meant by the social construction of race
• Describe demographic shifts in American society along racial/ethnic lines
• Explain how race functions at the level of identities, ideologies, and institutions
• Discuss the Millennial generation’s attitudes on race

As I write this introduction to the third edition of Recognizing Race and Ethnicity, Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert announced that the two police officers who fatally shot African American Stephon Clark almost one year prior, on March 18, 2018, would not face charges in the shooting. Clark was unarmed and shot to death in his grandmother’s backyard as he was being pursued as a vandalism suspect. Police mistook the cell phone Clark was holding for a gun and fired twenty shots at him. A feeling of déjà vu came over me, as I realize the first sentence of the second edition of this text begins with a similar story—the announcement that Caesar Goodson Jr., the sole Baltimore police officer charged with murder in the death of 25-year-old African American Freddie Gray during an encounter with police on April 12, 2015, had been found not guilty.

After a string of similar incidents in which unarmed African Americans—such as Trayvon Martin, Oscar Grant, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner,
Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Rekia Boyd, Tanisha Anderson, and so many others—were killed by police or self-proclaimed neighborhood watchmen, it seems hard not to see this as part of a larger pattern. In the face of so many incidences, we must ask, “Is the violence against black bodies a result of isolated incidences which can be reduced to the poor decisions of those involved? Or is there a larger problem at hand—one that indicates that ‘all lives’ do not, in fact, matter?” (Weissinger, Mack, and Watson 2017:1). Police shootings of unarmed African Americans have inspired protests, activism, and the emergence of a new social movement, Black Lives Matter.

While it is still rare for a police officer to be charged and convicted of an on-duty shooting, there are two recent examples where police officers were held accountable for their actions. Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke, who shot and killed unarmed 17-year-old Laquan McDonald, was found guilty of second-degree murder and received a sentence of six years and nine months, far shorter than the eighteen years prosecutors were seeking. Michael Slager, the North Charleston, South Carolina, police officer who shot and killed unarmed African American Walter Scott, was sentenced to twenty years in prison for his actions in late 2017. In this case, Judge David C. Norton described the shooting as “reckless, wanton and inappropriate” (Blinder 2017).

W. E. B. Du Bois begins his seminal work, The Souls of Black Folk, with the prophetic statement: “The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line” (1989:1). His comment remains true today, but we would instead say the problem of the twenty-first century remains a problem associated with the racial order, the collection of beliefs, suppositions, rules, and practices that shape the way groups are arranged in a society; generally, it is a hierarchical categorization of people along the lines of certain physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features (Hochschild, Weaver, and Burch 2012). The United States has not resolved the “race problem,” as it has historically been referred to by social scientists, and part of the reason is that white people have never considered it to be their problem to solve. The term race problem implies a problem of racial minorities. Du Bois expresses this implication in his first chapter: “Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question ... How does it feel to be a problem?” (1989:3). Race relations in a society, whether problematic or not, involve all racial groups, including the dominant racial group.

The election of President Barack Obama led to immediate claims in the media that the United States was a postracial society, a society that had moved beyond race, because Obama could not have won the presidency without a significant number of white votes. However, as sociologists point out, Obama may have won
the presidential elections in 2008 and 2012, but most whites did not vote for him (Wingfield and Feagin 2010). While Obama won significant majorities of racial minority votes, from 62 percent of the Asian American vote and 66 percent of the Latino vote to 95 percent of the black vote, he won only 43 percent of the white vote in 2008 (Wingfield and Feagin 2010). The kind of opposition he faced while governing was virulent and unlike anything past presidents have experienced. For instance, he is the only president to have his birthright questioned. Perhaps even more disturbing, the US Secret Service reported approximately thirty death threats against Obama daily, which is four times the number made against the previous president (Feagin 2012).

The election of Donald Trump stifled any discussion of the United States as post-racial, as he began his political career by promoting the idea that President Obama was not born in the United States and thus was not a legitimate president, and he made racism a central aspect of his campaign and presidency (see Chapter 13). A few examples include his campaign kick-off when he referred to Mexican immigrants coming to the US as rapists and as bringing crime and drugs, which he followed with, “some, I assume, are good people” (Silva 2018). He later criticized federal judge Gonzalo Curiel, who is of Mexican descent and was born in Indiana, claiming he could not possibly be impartial in his decision making because he was Mexican. Perhaps most surprising was when he not only refused to condemn the white nationalists’ deadly violence at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA, in 2017 but also claimed that there were good people on both sides. The white supremacist who murdered forty-nine people gathered for worship at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March of 2019 cited President Trump as an inspiration in his manifesto, describing him as a symbol of “renewed white identity and common purpose.” While Donald Trump has claimed that he is the “least racist person that you have ever met,” his own comments and the avowed support he receives from white supremacists challenge that account (O’Connor and Marans 2016). Ta-Nehisi Coates counters Trump’s claim, stating, “In Trump, white supremacists see one of their own … To Trump, whiteness is neither notional nor symbolic but is the very core of his power” (2017:4).

While much has changed over the last century in terms of race, race remains a central organizing principle of our society, a key arena of inequality, and the subject of ongoing conflict and debate. Race also influences our identities, how we see ourselves. Ongoing evidence of the continuing significance of race manifests in both significant and obscure ways, as the following exemplify:

- White nationalists held a “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA, in August of 2017 and were met by antiracist counter protesters. Violence erupted and one counter protester, Heather Heyer, was killed in the conflict.
• On July 17, 2019, a noose was found on Stanford University’s campus near a residence hall where a group of largely minority high-school students were staying for a summer program (Griffith 2019).

• The State of New York recently convicted a white supremacist of terrorism; this is the first time in the state’s 231-year history that a white supremacist was convicted on terrorism charges (Kalmbacher 2019).

• For the first time in American history, the November 2018 elections saw two Native American women elected to the House of Representatives. Sharice Davids, a member of the Ho-Chunk nation, will represent Kansas and Deb Haaland, a Laguna Pueblo, will represent New Mexico.

• Numerous incidences of white women calling the police on black people for nonexistent offenses have drawn national media attention during 2018–2019. These include an incident at a corner store in Brooklyn where 53-year-old Teresa Klein called the police on a black child and accused him of sexual assault when his backpack brushed up against her as he walked past (Phillips 2018). Another involved a black man who was detained by a white police officer at gunpoint as he picked up trash in front of the building where he lived and worked in Boulder, CO (Stevens and Mervosh 2019).

• Rachel Dolezal ignited a nationwide debate in 2015 about racial identity when it was discovered that she, a woman born to two white parents, identified as black and had been passing as black for most of her adult life.

• According to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, women earn 81.1 cents for every dollar a man earns; but for black women, that pay gap is even greater. Black women earn 66.8 cents for every dollar white men earn, even when they have the same education, skills, and experience (Rankin 2016).

• After a sixty-two-year court battle over school integration, on May 18, 2016, the middle schools and high schools of Cleveland, Mississippi, were ordered by a judge to desegregate.

• Democratic Virginia Governor Ralph Northam faced demands for his resignation when a racist medical school yearbook photo emerged. As he admitted to wearing blackface during that time period, the Attorney General of the state, Mark R. Herring, also acknowledged wearing blackface at a party as an undergraduate. As of this writing, neither official has resigned over the scandal (Martin and Blinder 2019).

• LGBTQ people of color face disproportionate rates of violent victimization (Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock 2011). The year 2015 was the most violent year on record for transgender people: twenty-two transgender people were murdered, and nineteen of those were people of color (Fitzgerald 2017; Meyer 2015).
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE

Despite the undeniable racial progress that has been made during the twentieth century, ongoing racism exists and even harkens back to the racism of earlier eras. As the opening vignette describes, being a young person of color in the United States can be lethal. Oscar Grant, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Philandro Castile, Stephon Clark, and Jamar Clark are just a few of the black men who have been killed at the hands of police in the last few years. In fact, some have referred to the police shootings of unarmed black men as a “blatant disregard for black and brown bodies” and an example of “modern day lynching” (Embrick 2015:836–837). After the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, three African American women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, began an online campaign known as #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM). This has since grown into an international social movement, moving the hashtag from social media to the streets with, according to Garza, thirty-three chapters in the US and some abroad. Their initial goal was to draw attention to the injustices African Americans face, particularly at the hands of police. Ultimately, their objectives include celebrating blackness in a nation that denigrates it (see Chapter 6).

While Black Lives Matter activism has helped focus necessary attention on police killings of unarmed black men, the killings of African American women, LGBTQ

IMAGE 1.1: Unite the Right Rally. In August of 2017, white nationalists held a Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA. An antiracist counter protester, Heather Heyer, was killed by one of the white nationalists at the rally.
people of color, Native Americans, and Latinos have generated less media attention. Rekia Boyd, Sandra Bland, Gynnya McMillen, and Ty Underwood are just some of the African American or LGBTQ women of color recently killed, most while in police custody. The #SayHerName movement has emerged as a gender-inclusive racial justice movement to rectify this oversight.

In addition to these examples of “modern day lynching,” which reflect the racism of earlier eras, racist symbolism of previous eras also remains, providing evidence of the existence of ongoing racism. Nooses, for instance—visual reminders of an era when whites lynched African Americans, as well as Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Jewish Americans, and many other racial minorities, for real or imagined offenses—are still hung today to intimidate people of color. In 2019, nineteen black UPS workers in Ohio filed suit against their employer for the repeated racist discrimination they faced that their employer refused to address, including the hanging of nooses at an African American employee’s workstation and repeated uses of the ‘n’ word (Simon and Sidner 2019b). In 2018, eight African American employees of a General Motors plant in Toledo, OH, filed a lawsuit against GM for the daily racism they faced on the job, including the hanging of a noose and a declaration that the bathrooms were for “whites only” (Simon and Sidner 2019). Lynching imagery was pervasive on the internet during President Obama’s 2008 and 2012 election campaigns as well as during his presidency (Feagin 2012). In 2007, a noose was hung on the office door of an African American professor who taught courses on race and diversity at Columbia University. That same year on the same campus, a Jewish professor found a swastika on her office door. Both are professors of psychology and education and are involved in teaching multicultural education.

What is the message being sent by this kind of racial imagery? President Obama and the professors targeted in these examples violate what Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) refer to as racialized space, space generally regarded as reserved for one race and not another. Columbia University was being defined by some students as a white space, not only a racialized space where nonwhites are perceived as intruders and unwelcome but also an institutional space where white privilege is reproduced (Moore 2008). Additionally, research on the experiences of Latino college students finds they often refer to institutions of higher education as a “white space,” thus, as an environment where they feel less than welcome (Barajas and Ronnkvist 2007).

Are these isolated incidents? According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit group that tracks hate crimes and hate-group activity, the prevalence of nooses and other symbols of hate, such as swastikas, is not unusual (see Chapter 13). Often such incidents are explained as a practical joke, which raises the question, what exactly is funny about a noose? A noose is the ultimate symbol of terror directed primarily, but not exclusively, toward African Americans. This symbol is hard to joke about.
Lynching is generally regarded as a southern type of mob justice perpetrated by whites against blacks. Indeed, the great majority of lynchings fit this profile and thus became the focus of a major antilynching movement during the first half of the twentieth century (see Chapter 4). However, many other racial/ethnic minorities were also targeted for this type of violence. Part of the perceived “taming of the West” involved the lynching of thousands of Chinese, Native Americans, and Latinos, particularly Mexicans, by Anglo-Americans (Gonzales-Day 2006; Romero 2019). In Atlanta in 1915, Leo Frank, a Jewish factory manager from Brooklyn, was lynched for the murder of a young female factory worker, despite the fact that the evidence overwhelmingly pointed at someone else as the perpetrator of this crime. After Frank’s conviction, a mob broke into the jail and dragged him off to be lynched, rather than allowing his life sentence to stand. He was described as someone worthy of paying with his life for this horrendous crime, “not just some black factory sweeper, but a rich Jew from Brooklyn” (Guggenheim 1995).

Lynching is a public act—often occurring at night, yet nevertheless drawing large crowds of supporters. Photographers in the early part of the twentieth century routinely captured such moments, and often these photographs were made into postcards for popular consumption (Gonzales-Day 2006). Sociologically speaking, the use of public execution is meant to send a message to all members of the community. Lynchings are acts of terror, not just actions meant to punish one particular individual; terrorism is designed to instill fear in more people than the individual or individuals targeted. Thus, anyone currently teaching courses that challenge white supremacy could well interpret the hanging of a noose or a swastika on a professor’s door as being directed at them as well. The presence of souvenirs and postcards complicates the picture; beyond terrorizing minority communities, the lynching becomes a morbid celebration of dominant-group privilege.

Not long after the hanging of a noose at Columbia University, an African American man was elected president for the first time in US history. The success of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign clearly indicates racial progress. And yet, Obama’s presidency has been followed up by President Trump, a man who won by overtly deploying racism in his campaign and his governing. Such contradictions are actually part of a long history of societal contradictions surrounding the issue of race and are quite common; these may even become obvious to us if we take the time to reflect on some of the lessons we have been taught about race. According to white author and professor Helen Fox, “Everything I learned about race while growing up has been profoundly contradictory. Strong, unspoken messages about how to be racist shamefully contradict the ways I have been taught to be a good person” (2001:15). Students often note that they were taught to love everyone because “we are all children of God” while being simultaneously warned against interracial dating. Clearly, there is a fundamental, though often unrecognized, contradiction embedded in such messages.
Can you identify any contradictory messages surrounding race that you have been exposed to through the media, at home, in school, or in church?

Defining Concepts in the Sociology of Race and Ethnicity

This book approaches the study of race/ethnicity through a sociological lens. Sociology refers to the academic discipline that studies group life: society, social interactions, and human social behavior. Sociologists who study race and ethnicity focus on such things as historical and current conflict between racial/ethnic groups, the emergence of racial/ethnic identities, racial/ethnic inequality and privilege, and cultural beliefs about race/ethnicity, otherwise referred to as racial ideologies.

Sociologist C. Wright Mills (2000) introduced the concept of the sociological imagination to help us understand the ways history, society, and biography intersect; in other words, the sociological imagination is a perspective that encourages us to understand our lives as historically and culturally situated. This perspective can be used to more thoroughly understand your current situation as a college student. For instance, if you are an African American male student, the sociological imagination allows you to understand that you getting accepted into an institution of higher education is a product of more than just your own hard work (although that certainly played a role). It encourages you to see where you are today (your biography) as a product of a particular historical time and place. If you had been born in the southern United States in 1929, for instance, your odds of getting a college degree were much lower. Fewer Americans attended college overall, and it was even more difficult for African Americans, as most colleges and universities in the South were racially segregated.

Such a perspective keeps us from being overly individualistic in our thinking, which makes it an especially useful perspective for understanding race/ethnicity, which operates simultaneously at the historical, institutional, and individual levels. We live our lives as racial beings, as members of one or more racial groups that have a history that informs the present, and we constantly interact with institutions that have their own racial histories and present, which informs our experiences with those institutions. This textbook will focus on all of these angles: the US racial/ethnic history, racialized institutions, and racial identities.

Many students are uncomfortable with the discipline of sociology. It is tempting to counter every statement in sociological research about whites, blacks, or Latinos with, “Well, this is not true for all members of this group.” But sociologists take that
Taking Account of Race, Racism, Privilege

as a given. Sociologists study groups and patterns of behavior rather than individuals. By definition, sociologists acknowledge that there are always outliers, those who do not fit the pattern. However, the emphasis in sociology is on the patterns rather than on those exceptions to the rule. This is important for understanding the sociology of race/ethnicity because there will always be exceptions to the research presented, but the presence of such exceptions does not negate the research results. In American society, where individualism reigns supreme, this is often difficult to accept, but this text will be making claims about groups of people based upon scientific research, and the research is not going to apply to every member of a particular group.

While the sociology of race/ethnicity is interested in the racial hierarchy and the positioning of all racial groups in that hierarchy, much of the empirical research is focused on blacks and whites. This is not intended to ignore the experiences of Latinos, Asian Americans, American Indians, or any other racial group in America, but instead is meant to recognize that the black–white binary is the foundation of the racial hierarchy in the United States and remains so today. Thus, if we want to understand how couples in an interracial relationship negotiate race, we can opt to study black–white couples because they are the most stigmatized and historically it is their relationships that have been the “most forcibly prohibited” (Steinbugler 2012). Such research limitations can sometimes mistakenly portray racial politics as black–white and contribute to the invisibility of other racial minority groups.

We live in a culture where the meaning of race appears to be clear, yet scientists challenge our commonsense understandings about race. Race specifically refers to a group of people who share some socially defined physical characteristics, for instance, skin color, hair texture, or facial features. That definition more than likely reinforces our commonsense understanding of race. Most of us believe we can walk into a room and identify the number of different racial groups present based upon physical appearances. But is that really true? Many people are racially ambiguous in appearance, for any number of reasons, including the fact that they may be multiracial.

A term that is distinct from race yet often erroneously used interchangeably with it is ethnicity. Ethnicity refers to a group of people who share a culture, nationality, ancestry, and/or language; physical appearance is not associated with ethnicity. Both race and ethnicity are socially defined and carry significant meaning in our culture; they are not simply neutral and descriptive categories. A challenge social scientists offer is to understand race and ethnicity as social constructions rather than biological realities, despite the fact that the definition of race refers to physical appearance. The details concerning this very important distinction will be introduced later in this chapter.
While social scientists distinguish between the two categories of race and ethnicity, these are not mutually exclusive. In other words, people can identify according to their race and their ethnicity. For instance, a Nigerian American immigrant, an African American whose ancestors have been in the United States for hundreds of years, and a black Puerto Rican all have very different ethnicities, yet they are still classified as “black” in our culture. This text uses the term racial/ethnic to acknowledge that race and ethnicity overlap. In addition to using the term racial/ethnic, the term people of color will be used to collectively refer to racial/ethnic minority groups that have been the object of racism and discrimination in the United States, rather than using the term nonwhite. To use the term nonwhite reinforces white as the norm against which all other groups are defined, which is a perspective this text argues against.

Sociologists often use the terms minority group or subordinate group to express patterned inequality along group lines. From a sociological perspective, a minority group does not refer to a statistical minority (a group smaller in size). Instead, sociologists are referring to a group that is cumulatively disadvantaged in proportion to their population size. For instance, Native Americans are a minority group because they are disproportionately impoverished. Women are a minority group according to the sociological understanding of the term; however, while they qualify as a sociological minority, women are a statistical majority as they represent 51 percent of the US population. The opposite of this is also true: if there are disadvantaged groups, there are advantaged groups that sociologists refer to as majority groups or dominant groups. Again, we are not referring to statistics but instead to a group’s disproportionate share of society’s power and resources. In terms of race, whites are the dominant, majority group in the United States.

This text primarily emphasizes one status hierarchy: race. However, multiple status hierarchies are significant: there is a gender hierarchy, in which men are the dominant group and women are the minority group. Another status hierarchy of significance relates to sexuality: heterosexuals are the dominant group, while lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals comprise what we refer to as sexual minorities. Status hierarchies intersect with one another, resulting in unique experiences with discrimination and privilege: we may be members of a dominant group in one hierarchy and members of subordinate groups in others.

Sexualizing Racial/Ethnic Minorities

One of the primary areas where we can see the intersection of status hierarchies is the sexualizing of racial/ethnic minorities. As sociologist Joane Nagel states, “Sex matters in ethnic relations, and ... sexual matters insinuate themselves into all things racial, ethnic, and national” (2003:1).
WITNESS

“Sex is the sometimes silent message contained in racial slurs, ethnic stereotypes, national imaginings, and international relations … Ethnic and racial boundaries are also sexual boundaries” (Nagel 2003:2, 3).

Racial/ethnic minority group members in the United States must negotiate their sexual identities through a maze of demeaning and sometimes contradictory sexual stereotypes that work to portray them as deviant, “other,” and potentially threatening to the dominant group. African American men are portrayed as hypersexual, while black women struggle with often contradictory controlling images that are sexual in nature: mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and the Jezebel (Collins 1990) (see Chapter 11). The image of black men as hypersexual, animalistic, sexually immoral, and threatening is deeply rooted in American culture. After slavery ended, American literature and folklore were flooded with images of sexually promiscuous black men as threats to white women (Staples 2006).

Latino males are stereotyped as hypersexual, aggressive, and “macho.” Another stereotype is that of the “Latin lover,” who is seen as sexually sophisticated and thus a threat to white women. Latina portrayals follow a virgin/whore dichotomy: either she is a passive, submissive virgin or she is a sexually aggressive whore (Asencio and Acosta 2010).

Asian American sexuality is socially constructed to maintain white male dominance (Chou 2012). Asian American women are stereotyped as exotic and eager to please men sexually, specifically white men, while also passive and subordinate. Instead of being stereotyped as hypersexual as African American and Latino men are today, Asian American males are portrayed as weak and effeminate; they are emasculated, hyposexual, or even asexual (Chou 2012).

Sexual stereotypes of Native Americans are in many ways similar. For many decades, whites viewed Native Americans as savages and Native women as promiscuous and sexually available to white men. This later morphed into an image of Native women as “dirty little squaws” who slept with married white men, thus threatening white women and their families (D’Emilio and Freedman 2012). The bottom line is that sexual ideologies define racial and ethnic “others” as “oversexed, undersexed, perverted, or dangerous” (Nagel 2003:9).

Racism: Past and Present

Despite some racial progress, our society remains divided along racial lines and racial inequality persists. However, one can look at the previously discussed noose incidents as a sign of that progress: while they are disturbing, racist acts whose
Thinking About Race

intent is to terrorize minorities, they are only symbolic. Three or more generations ago, instead of nooses we would more than likely have seen the “strange fruit” that 1940s-era African American jazz singer Billie Holiday sang of—lynched bodies hanging from trees.

However, in the face of such a history, we must not underestimate the power of symbols. We live in a symbolic world, which means that we develop a shared understanding of our world through a variety of symbols; meanings are culturally conveyed and understood through symbols. Yet we do not all have equal power in defining symbols as meaningful. Part of the symbolism of a noose is recognition that, in the United States, white supremacy exists.

The act of hanging nooses, the cultural meaning of this symbol, and any denials of the significance of such symbolism all amount to racism. Racism refers to any actions, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors, whether intentional or unintentional, that threaten, harm, or disadvantage members of one racial/ethnic group, or the group itself, compared to another. Thus, racism can take many forms. It can manifest as prejudice, a belief that is not based upon evidence but instead upon preconceived notions and stereotypes that are not subject to change even in the face of contrary evidence. Prejudice relegates racism to the realm of ideas and attitudes rather than actions.

The type of racism that most people envision when they hear the word racism is actually individual discrimination, which refers to discriminatory actions taken by individuals against members of a subordinate group. Not hiring people because they are Latino is an example of individual discrimination. The minority applicants are not given a chance to even compete for the job, their candidacy dismissed due to the racial/ethnic group to which they belong. This type of racism has declined since the civil rights era simply because it is illegal and thus many employers discriminate less, or less overtly, out of fear of legal retribution.

The most prominent type of racism today is also the hardest to see: institutional racism. It is hard to see because it is found not in individual actions but in everyday business practices and policies that disadvantage minorities and offer advantages to dominant-group members; it is often written off as “just the way things are.” For instance, schools disproportionately rely on personal property taxes for the majority of their funding, something we will explore in great detail in Chapter 7. This type of system disadvantages schools that serve predominantly poor communities (the residents have less personal property and what they do have is valued less, thus fewer tax dollars are collected). As we will discover in the coming chapters, race and class overlap significantly; this type of funding system, while possibly not intentionally racist, manifests as racism because schools that have predominantly minority populations also tend to be the most impoverished and, thus, tend to get the least funding.
Racism has changed over the generations, yet it remains a significant facet of our society; “Malcolm X used to say that racism was like a Cadillac: they make a new model every year. There is always racism, but it is not the same racism” (Lipsitz 2001:120). Today’s racism is certainly different from the racism of the post–Civil War and post-Reconstruction era of segregation known as Jim Crow; however, that does not negate the fact that racism is alive and well and is something people of color experience in their daily lives and to which white Americans are often oblivious. Race and racism are constantly changing, responding to changing social contexts, societal demands, social movements, and varying political climates, to name a few significant influences.

The Continuing Significance of Race

One of the primary arguments in this text is that all of us are required to take account of race, to recognize the various ways race functions in our lives. As a white woman, I have to constantly reflect on the ways my race and gender (as well as social class, age, and sexuality) influence my experiences; I have to interrogate the ways my racial privilege, for instance, operates (see Chapter 2). Many of you are taking this course because it is a requirement. That is no accident. In our rapidly changing world, employers need a workforce that is familiar with and comfortable with all kinds of diversity, including, but not limited to, racial/ethnic diversity (see Box 1.1 Race in the Workplace: Diversity Training in Higher Education). Too often we Americans have fooled ourselves into thinking we understand one another when we clearly do not. During slavery, for instance, southern slaveholders were astonished at the demands of abolitionists, insisting that they treated “their” slaves well and that it was a mutually beneficial system. Later, during the civil rights movement, many southern whites again misunderstood race relations in their own communities, repeatedly claiming that “their Negroes” were happy and that only outside agitators, primarily those who were communist influenced, were the ones fighting for civil rights. During the early to mid-1970s, as busing became the solution to segregated schools in the North, intense rioting and violent opposition occurred in many cities throughout the North, most notoriously Boston. However, individuals in northern states did not consider themselves racially prejudiced, certainly not in the way southerners were stigmatized as racist. Their reactions to busing revealed a very different picture, however.

More-current examples of the continuing significance of race include the race-baiting Republican president Donald Trump has engaged in, specifically his claims that Mexicans are rapists and that we should build a wall to keep them out, and his campaign promise that if he became president of the United States he would deport all Muslims (see Chapter 13). The implementation of strict voter ID laws, which are
**BOX 1.1**

**Race in the Workplace:**

*Diversity Training in Higher Education*

*Diversity* and *multiculturalism* are often words associated with educational settings—schools of education explore curricular and pedagogical approaches to teaching students from diverse backgrounds and how best to educate all students about the multi-ethnic and multiracial US history. Many institutions of higher education have also signaled their commitment to diversity by hiring Chief Diversity Officers. Multicultural education challenges traditional historical narratives that focus narrowly on a white, male, and middle- to upper-class history.

However, diversity education reaches well beyond schools and has become an influence in the workplace as well. One reason for implementing diversity training is that the American workforce is changing demographically. Today there are more women and people of color in the paid labor force and entering professions; occupations are less segregated along racial and gender lines than they once were. Thus, there is more interaction among whites and people of color as well as among women and men in occupational settings. Additionally, employers are increasingly recognizing the need for hiring, training, retaining, and promoting minority workers. Diversity in all ranks of employment means that different people bring different skills, management styles, knowledge, and approaches to problem-solving, among other things, which, if tapped, work to the advantage of employers. Beyond such benefits, due to affirmative action policies and the various civil rights acts, employers are no longer free to overlook qualified minority candidates for employment or promotion without the threat of legal action.

Institutions of higher education are workplaces as well. On most campuses, the student body has become more racially/ethnically diverse, yet faculty diversity has been found to lag behind. One study found that even the hiring of Chief Diversity Officers has not influenced faculty demographics (Hansen 2018). While many in higher education are committed to diversity, it turns out that most college campuses are white spaces and too often embrace diversity as a brand rather than showing a real commitment to campus change (Berrey 2015). In fact, diversity agendas are generally “accompanied by the (unspoken) expectation that such minority representation should not threaten the status of white people and other dominant groups” (Berrey 2015:7).

The fall of 2015 witnessed minority student protests on numerous college campuses, including the University of Missouri, where they led to the ouster of two top-level administrators. Minority students are demanding their institutions hire more minority faculty, make a commitment to increasing racial diversity in admissions, and offer a more racially inclusive curriculum—demands that remain remarkably similar to those made in the 1960s (see Chapter 6).
What does a true institutional commitment to diversity on a college campus look like? It “permeates every aspect of the campus and is widely collaborative. It does not rest mostly on chief diversity officers, administrators in multicultural affairs and ethnic cultural centers, and faculty and staff of color. Instead, trustees, presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and others all across campus play meaningful roles in advancing it” (“Forum: What Does a Genuine...” 2016).

found in thirty-three states and require people to show a government-issued photo ID in order to vote, is also a good example of the continuing significance of race. Conservatives claim that such laws are necessary in order to protect against voter fraud. Liberals are critical of such laws for a number of reasons. First, there is no evidence of massive voter fraud that needs to be addressed. Second, such ID requirements would not stop voter fraud. Finally, liberals see this as a Republican tactic to suppress voter turnout among key constituencies, primarily African Americans and other racial minorities, students, and poor people, all of whom tend to vote Democratic. Former senator Jim DeMint claimed that where strict voter ID laws had been enacted, “elections begin to change towards more conservative candidates” (Graham 2016).

To take account of race is to bring it out into the open—to recognize how membership in particular racial/ethnic groups advantages some while hindering others. It exposes how race remains a significant social divide in our culture and, further, how it is embedded in our identities, ideologies, and institutions. Supreme Court justice Harry Blackmun used similar language in his opinion in the affirmative action case Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978):

A race-conscious remedy is necessary to achieve a fully integrated society, one in which the color of a person’s skin will not determine the opportunities available to him or her. ... In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. ... In order to treat persons equally, we must treat them differently.

In this opinion, Blackmun emphasizes that we must recognize race to get beyond it, that color-consciousness is preferable to color-blindness. Many Americans, particularly white Americans, would rather avoid recognizing the issue of race. Not being victimized by racism can lead many whites to believe that racism is fading away and that any emphasis on race only revives it. Even many progressive white people believe that acknowledging race is a form of racism and that denying race is equivalent to not discriminating against or holding stereotypical views about racial
minorities. This color-blind ideology dominates US culture; it’s the idea that we don’t see race, that racism is a thing of the past, and that if racial inequality still exists, it must be due to other factors, such as culture or personal ineptitude. Claiming we live in a color-blind society isn’t polite; it is problematic because it fails to challenge white privilege or acknowledge ongoing racism (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Haney Lopez 2006; Omi and Winant 1994). Instead, color-consciousness, recognizing race and difference rather than pretending we don’t, allows us to celebrate difference without implying difference is equivalent to inferiority.

**REFLECT AND CONNECT**

Do you claim to be color-blind? If so, what social pressures exist to encourage color-blindness? Does being color-conscious make you uncomfortable? If so, why?

**Cyber Racism**

The world has changed dramatically in the last three decades, particularly in terms of digital technologies, the internet, and the emergence of social media. Today’s generation of college students have not known a time when such technologies did not exist. In this new era, anyone with an internet connection can find white supremacists and their messages online, and white supremacist ideologies are easily spread across the globe. White supremacists were some of the earliest adopters of digital media technologies, creating, publishing, and maintaining some of the earliest web pages on the internet (Daniels 2009).

Due to this, scholars have coined the term cyber racism. Cyber racism refers to the widespread use of digital technologies and the internet by white supremacist movements throughout North America and Europe, spreading white supremacist ideologies across national boundaries (Back 2002; Daniels 2009). In addition to white supremacist websites, these groups also use cloaked websites, which are sites with a hidden agenda and whose authorship is concealed, and can be understood as a form of propaganda, a strategic disinformation campaign (Daniels 2009). Such sites allow regular people, casually surfing the internet, to encounter white supremacist ideas. An example of a cloaked website is Martin Luther King: A True Historical Examination, which is designed for a young audience and appears initially to be a tribute to him, yet contains misleading information designed to delegitimize him (Daniels 2009).

Other research has found negative biases against women of color embedded in search engine results and algorithms. Scholar Safiya Umoja Noble (2018) encourages readers to run a google search for “black girls” and compare the results to a search
for “white girls.” Search algorithms privilege whiteness and discriminate against people of color. Most of us mistakenly assume algorithms are objective or unbiased, yet, since they are designed by humans, they reflect the biases of their creators. And since the tech industry is overwhelmingly composed of white men, racial and gender biases are prevalent (Noble 2018).

RESISTING RACE

Discussing loaded topics, such as those related to racial issues, can make some people uncomfortable or even defensive and resistant. If any part of the previous section made you uncomfortable, remain engaged and learn from your sense of discomfort rather than avoid it. White college professor Helen Fox explains, “I learned from being forced to confront my blind spots, my resistance, the points at which my emotions take over from reason” (Fox 2009:12). You may be uncomfortable with discussions of race-related issues because our society generally does not encourage open, honest, and substantive discussions about race. Thus, some discomfort with an open discussion of race is to be expected. However, it is only through such discomfort that we truly grow.

WITNESS

An African American undergraduate student noted, “I firmly believe that you cannot change your perceptions of people who come from unfamiliar cultures while having safe and superficial chit-chat. It is only when you get uncomfortable and passionate that the true work towards reform can begin” (Fox 2001:51).

The way we view the world is influenced by our particular social statuses, such as race, class, sex, gender, and sexuality. We can only understand others by first understanding ourselves and how our social statuses influence our experiences in and understanding of the world. This text encourages readers to embrace an idea known as the standpoint perspective, which argues that knowledge is perspectival; meaning, people’s understanding of the world stems from their own social location, as women, or as people of color, or as a person with a disability, or as heterosexual, or some combination of these (Harstock 1987; Smith 1987).

One of the goals of this text is to stimulate honest rather than superficial conversations about race. In 1997, President Bill Clinton appointed a new commission to study the problem of race in the United States and to conduct a national dialogue on race. Clinton declared his initiative, entitled “One America in the 21st Century,” in a commencement address at the University of California at San Diego: “Over the
coming year I want to lead the American people in a great and unprecedented conversation about race” (Franklin 2009:xii). Clinton began this process with town hall meetings across the country, while opposition to the commission mounted. Much of the media coverage of Clinton’s initiative declared the racial dialogue initiative to be racially biased rather than progressive.

African American W. Ralph Eubanks grew up in Mississippi during the tumultuous 1960s. Exemplifying the standpoint perspective, he describes in his memoir, *Ever Is a Long Time* (2003), the dramatically different reactions of the local black and white communities to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. At his all-black school, Eubanks’ teacher relayed the news to the students through tears; later the black community gathered quietly at a neighbor’s home. Their mourning was interrupted by shouts spilling from a passing white school bus filled with children cheering, “They got him! Yay! They finally got him!” (Eubanks 2003:61).

Clinton was not the first president to direct attention to the issue of racial inequality or to face a backlash because of it. President Truman formed a Committee on Civil Rights in 1946. President Johnson appointed a White House Conference on Civil Rights in 1966, and in 1967 he created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, more commonly known as the Kerner Commission, to address urban rioting. Perhaps ironically, the nation’s first black president barely addressed race, with the exception of one eloquent campaign speech about race given on March 18, 2008. President Obama worked to balance embracing black America with a belief in policies that benefited everyone rather than those that targeted specific groups. When criticized by some prominent black Americans, such as Cornel West, for not addressing racism explicitly, he responded with, “I’m not the president of black America, I’m the president of the United States of America” (Kantor 2012).

**Examining Our Own Belief Systems Surrounding Race**

Conversations about race, which were the goal of the Clinton initiative, first require that we engage in a process of **self-reflexivity**, examining our conscious and unconscious beliefs about race. To be self-reflexive means to engage in an ongoing conversation with ourselves concerning what we are learning and to reflect on how it mirrors our experiences or challenges our long-held assumptions. Throughout this
text, you will be asked to understand and question your preconceived notions about race, racism, privilege, and racial inequality.

Self-reflexivity allows us to recognize that we are all oppressors, not only in our society but globally as well. A poor white man, for instance, has race and gender privilege but faces inequality along class lines. It is no healthier to be an oppressor than to be oppressed, although it is fair to say that the experience of being oppressed is the more damaging of the two. There are multiple status hierarchies, for instance, based on social class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability/disability. The only truly privileged person may be a wealthy, white, heterosexual man with no disabilities who claims citizenship in a wealthy country. And even then, should that privileged person live long enough, age becomes the great equalizer for two reasons: aging is an increasingly disabling process, and we live in a youth-oriented culture that does not value the elderly. Thus, even those who appear to have privilege on every status hierarchy can eventually face subordination when it comes to age.

Speaking “Race” Honestly

So, how do we have honest dialogues about race in a society that has taught us to avoid them, without putting people off? First, we must have the necessary tools to speak intelligently about race: to debate one another, to challenge false statements, and to critically interrogate media content. This text is designed to provide students with a foundation for this—you are being provided with a language for talking about race (which is why terminology is important), statistics for visualizing the extent of racial discrimination and privilege, and a sociohistorical framework for understanding race/ethnicity in the US and the world.

Second, the primary thing that is necessary for being able to talk about race is to break from our cultural norm of color-blindness. In her TED Talk, African American finance executive Mellody Hobson (2014) encourages us to abandon our commitment to color-blindness and instead to be color-brave (see Recommended Multimedia at the end of the chapter). She argues we need to speak openly about race—and that it makes good business sense to do so. The first step to fixing any problem, she argues, is to not hide from it, but instead to bring awareness to the issue. We need to be less anxious and more bold in our conversations about race. She continues, “We have to be willing to have pro-active conversations about race with honesty, understanding, and courage ... because it is the smart thing to do” (Hobson 2014).

Third, honest discussions about race emerge in classrooms in which students and faculty listen to one another respectfully. Antiracist activist and author Paul Kivel (2008) argues that the first thing we must do if we are to do antiracist work is to trust the stories told by people of color concerning their experiences with racism
and discrimination rather than disregard them. Many whites, for example, tend to assume people of color are exaggerating the racism they claim to have experienced or that they are placing too much emphasis on history. Some white people have faced racial discrimination that deserves to be heard and acknowledged as well. However, since non-Hispanic whites significantly outnumber all other racial/ethnic groups and hold the power in US society, white people do not encounter the ongoing, systemic racism that is too often experienced by people of color. White people may experience individual acts of discrimination or be prejudiced against by some people of color, but it is not systemic as the racism directed at people of color is, both historically and currently. As students, it is partially your responsibility to help establish norms of respect in your classroom so that you can have productive conversations about a topic that many of us have been taught is taboo.

To be self-reflexive about race forces us to acknowledge not only societal racism but the racism inevitably within us. The use of strong language (“inevitably”) is intentional. We live in a racist society; so we cannot be nonracist without actively working toward that goal. Anyone can be racist—meaning any person can hold prejudicial views regarding racial/ethnic others, and/or discriminate against racial/ethnic others. White people in no way corner the market on racial prejudice and discrimination. However, white people’s racism gets reinforced by society through the media, the attitudes of family members, political rhetoric, and educational institutions. This implies that racism can be understood as prejudice plus power. It may be that much harder for white people to see their racism because it is constantly being culturally reinforced, so it is the norm. Cultural norms are unquestioned practices or beliefs and thus are taken for granted. Racism manifests itself not only in attitudes but in cultural belief systems, individual actions, and institutional practices. Because people of color do not collectively hold enough positions of power, they tend not to have as much influence in creating cultural belief systems, known as racial ideologies, or institutional practices.

Because racism tends to be normalized in our color-blind society, organizations and individuals have emerged to actively fight racism (see Box 1.2 Racial Justice Activism: Eracism). This text focuses on racial justice activism, sometimes referred to as antiracist activism, which concerns groups and individuals who are actively working to eradicate racism. Each chapter will contain a special feature, “Racial Justice Activism,” by a racial justice activist or about an antiracist organization, so that you can see the work being done to counter the dominant pattern of racism within our society.
BOX 1.2
Racial Justice Activism: Eracism

“Eracism” is the slogan of a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization known as ERACE, which formed in New Orleans in the summer of 1993 and now includes a chapter in Atlanta. It grew out of a series in a local newspaper, the Times-Picayune, entitled “Together Apart: The Myth of Race.” ERACE’s objectives are to facilitate conversations between people of all races, to create an atmosphere in which people feel free to explore their perceptions, assumptions, and biases about race in a nonjudgmental setting, and to ultimately help put an end to racism. The idea is that honest discussion can help eliminate stereotypes and misconceptions.

ERACE sponsors monthly group discussions that are designed to foster an open, critical exchange of ideas. In addition to its monthly discussions, ERACE sponsors social gatherings and children’s play groups, and its members speak to schools, businesses, and the media. Additionally, their website also includes documents to help people learn to address racism in the home, in schools, the workplace, and in everyday interactions.

In 2010, the organization launched Eracism in Schools to connect two New Orleans schools, one with a predominantly black student population and the other with a predominantly white student population, for dialogues. For more information on ERACE, check out its website: www.eracismneworleans.org/.

UNDERSTANDING RACE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Have you ever questioned this concept called race? Most white people have not, because they view the world from a position of race privilege, the unearned advantages associated with being a member of a society’s dominant race. Having race privilege allows people to rarely even think about race, much less question its validity. White (race) privilege and the ways it manifests itself will be explored in much more detail in Chapter 2. However, it is not only white people who fail to question the notion of race. For people of color, their experiences with racial prejudice and discrimination emphasize the significance of race, and such experiences cause them not to question the concept of race, either. If you experience racial discrimination, race feels very real.

People who question the validity of race tend to be those who live in the racial margins—biracial and multiracial individuals, for instance. Racial categories in our society are treated as absolute, as either/or, and as biologically real. Yet biracial individuals live in a world of both/and—they are members of more than one racial group,
so discrete racial categories don’t apply to them. For example, monoracial people can fill out their demographic information on standardized tests or census forms without question, while biracial and multiracial people find themselves in a predicament. They are forced to think of themselves as either black, white, Hispanic, or Native American, when they may be all or some combination of the above categories. Their very existence challenges our societal racial categorization system. Thus, their standpoint on the world and their lived experience allow them to see what for many of us is difficult not only to see but to understand: that race is not real in a biological sense.

Race is a socially and politically constructed phenomenon. In other words, race is not biologically or genetically determined; racial categories, groups of people differentiated by their physical characteristics, are given particular meanings by particular societies in particular eras. It is political in that groups of people are socially constructed as different in order to exploit some groups and advantage others. Evidence for the social construction of race includes the presence of biracial and multiracial people, described above, who live in the racial margins and whose existence challenges the racial categorization system (where people have historically been said to be one race or another, not more than one).

Second, there is also more genetic variation within a so-called racial group than between groups. Think about this last statement for a moment and challenge how
you have been taught to think about race and the world. We all encounter very light-skinned African Americans who are identified and classified as black (in personal interactions or on official documents, for instance) and individuals with very dark skin who are similarly identified and classified as white. We see these physical variations every day; however, we tend not to let them challenge our assumptions about race. The idea of the social construction of race forces us to recognize that if such glaring contradictions exist, we must challenge our racial categorization system.

A third piece of evidence that race is a social construction is that racial categories change across time and place (see Box 1.3 Global Perspectives: The Social Construction of Race in Latin America).

To say that race is a social construction is to recognize that definitions of race change across time and place. In Latin America, for instance, race is understood differently than in the United States. A common theme of Latin American race relations is the notion of *mestizaje*, cultural and racial mixing that involves a progression toward whiteness. This is a concept generally applied to indigenous peoples, however, rather than to Latin Americans of African descent. In Peru, for instance, questions of race tend to refer to Indians rather than Afro-Peruvians (Golash-Boza 2012). For indigenous people in Peru, their racial status is determined by their educational attainment, social class, and certain cultural markers; thus, they hold the possibility of changing their racial status by changing these markers. However, for black Peruvians, their racial status strictly refers to skin color; thus, changing their racial status is not possible (Golash-Boza 2012).

In Brazil, race is defined differently than in the United States and is closer to that of Peru. Brazilians have never defined race in biological terms and instead embrace a form of colorism, whereby lighter-skinned citizens hold a higher social status. This is not defined as racism because these are not distinctions made upon biological-group membership. Mulattoes hold a special status in Brazil that is unheard of in the United States, one that is neither “black nor white” (Degler 1971). Historically, in the United States, the “one-drop rule” has applied, by which anyone with any African ancestry was considered to be black.

What is important about this is that throughout Latin America there is considerable racial mixing and understandings of race are different than those of the United States. However, the presence of extensive race mixing does not challenge white supremacy in these countries or the racial hierarchy, where racial minorities are disadvantaged compared to those designated as whites or those who are lighter skinned (Bonilla-Silva 2010).
of Race in Latin America). If race were biologically real, this would not be true. The racial category “white” has always been in flux. Groups that were once considered non-white include Americans of Irish, Greek, Italian, Armenian, and Jewish descent. Their physical appearance never changed, but their social status did, which offers more evidence that race is a socially constructed category. Prior to “becoming white,” members of these groups were discriminated against, assumed to be of inferior intelligence, and faced some of the same obstacles that black Americans have faced. For example, when Irish Americans were viewed as nonwhite, they were not considered qualified for certain jobs and their housing choices were limited (Ignatiev 1995). Over time, all of these groups came to be considered white, and with that changing racial/ethnic status came advantages that they could use every day (the social construction of whiteness is discussed in detail in Chapter 2).

For more evidence of race changing across time, consider a seemingly objective document: the census. Census data have been collected every ten years by the federal government since the first census of 1790, which was overseen by Thomas Jefferson. The census is supposed to provide us with a demographic snapshot of the United States: data on educational level, age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and much more illustrate the US population at a particular time (see Image 1.2). The census is assumed to contain objective and unbiased information. Social scientists use census data regularly in scientific research, thus affirming the validity of the document and the data collected.

REFLECT AND CONNECT

Speculate as to why such differentiations and subgroupings of blacks were considered necessary during the decades leading up to and immediately after the Civil War, yet have been considered unnecessary since 1890. Can you explain why such racial categorizations of African Americans were politically advantageous in some eras but not others?

However, racial categories on the census are always changing, which confirms the social construction of race as a reflection of sociohistorical eras (see Recommended Multimedia at the end of this chapter). For instance, the first census documented “whites” and “nonwhites,” with instructions to not count Native Americans at all. Prior to and following the Civil War, the census had multiple categories for blacks. For instance, in 1840, 1850, and 1860, census takers were provided with a racial category called mulatto, a person of mixed African and white ancestry, although this category was not explicitly defined at the time. In the 1870 and 1880 censuses, the category “mulatto” was defined and differentiated into two subgroups, quadroons (children of a white person and a mulatto) and octoroons (children of a white
person and a quadroon, thus, someone having one black great-grandparent), as well as a category referring to “people having any perceptible trace of African blood.” By 1890, census takers were asked to record the exact proportion of African blood, based upon physical appearance and the opinion of the census taker (the census did not begin using racial self-definitions until 1960).

Over the years, such groups as Japanese Americans have been classified on the census as “nonwhite,” “Orientals,” “other,” and currently “Asian or Asian Pacific Islander.” A relatively new ethnic category on the census is that of “Hispanic.” Many Latinos do not see themselves as “Hispanic,” as it is not a term they have used to define themselves. It is instead a term originated by the United States federal government. The term Latino references the Latin American origins of such people and thus tends to be more commonly used. On the 2000 census, the race question was split in two; the first question asking about the respondent’s Hispanic ethnicity and the follow-up question asking about the respondent’s race, which does not include a “Hispanic” option (see Image 1.3). Currently, “Hispanic” is not classified as a race on the US census despite the fact that whites are referred to as “non-Hispanic whites.” However, the US Census Bureau considered adding “Hispanic” as a racial category on the 2020 census in order to more accurately reflect how people self-identify their racial and ethnic origin. In fact, the Census Bureau recommended merging the race and ethnicity questions into one, as it was prior to 2000 (Bayoumi 2019). As previous eras exposed great interest in African Americans, as emphasized by their census categorizations in the eras surrounding the Civil War, political interest in Hispanics has existed since the 1970s.

![NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.](image1.3)

- **NOTE:** Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Mexican, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.

6. What is this person’s race? Mark one or more boxes.

- White
- Black, African Am., or Negro
- American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.
- Asian Indian
- Filipino
- Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.
- Japanese
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Native Hawaiian
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.
- Some other race — Print race.

![image 1.3: The social construction of race is exemplified by the changing racial categories on the census. This image is of the racial category question on the 2010 census. Currently, “Hispanic” is not a racial category, according to the US census; however, the Census Bureau is considering adding it as a racial category on the 2020 census. Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 census questionnaire.](source: US Census Bureau, 2010 census questionnaire.)
Another change the Census Bureau considered making for the 2020 census was adding more racial categories, including a new category, “Middle Eastern or North African (Mena).” This category would include people from Turkey, Iran, and Israel, who currently are counted as white by the census, but who are racialized as non-white in daily interactions, which means they experience prejudice, discrimination, and racial profiling based on their skin color and presumed race. Arabs and Middle Easterners are “neither fully white nor recognized as people of color” (Zopf 2018). The Trump administration rejected the suggested changes to the 2020 census (Bayoumi 2019).

Why keep track of the racial demographics of society at all? Aren’t we all just human beings? The American Civil Liberties Union urged the race category be removed from the census in 1960, but once various civil rights acts were passed, census data on race became useful for gauging compliance with laws barring various forms of discrimination. Thus, we come back to Justice Blackmun’s point—to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race.

Finally, from a biological science standpoint, it is not hard to recognize that racial categories are social constructions. Quite simply, their argument is that if two animals (and humans are animals) can breed, they are of the same species. Any further breakdown in the species “human being,” then, is socially generated rather than biologically determined. Additionally, after mapping the human genome, geneticists have not identified a gene that is found strictly in one racial group and not in another. Thus, there is no genetic marker for race.

But despite the lack of biological validity, race is a significant aspect of American society because we attach particularly salient meanings to specific physical characteristics and these meanings result in some very real consequences. Dislodging the notion that race is real in a biological sense is often difficult, particularly if this is your first encounter with this idea (after all, our genes determine what we look like, right?). Next time you walk into a room, see whether you can identify how many racial groups are present. While this may make you uncomfortable, as some people are racially ambiguous and you might hate to be wrong, most people assume that this task is possible. However, scientists know otherwise. Despite the lack of biological validity, race and ethnicity are important socially, which is why a critical investigation of race, racism, and race privilege is so important. It may be difficult to dislodge our misconceptions surrounding the biological validity of race, but it is important to recognize that there is power in the notion of race as a social construction. Anything that is constructed can be deconstructed. In other words, there is nothing inevitable about race, racism, and racial inequality. We could have a society without these problematic divisions, a society without a racial hierarchy.

Of course, the United States is not the only nation to struggle with the issue of racial categorization. France has implemented an antiracism model that has official
color-blindness at its core. The basis of this model is a 1978 law that prohibits the collection of racial/ethnic data, on the census or any other official document, such as those explaining educational demographics. It is also illegal for public or private institutions to collect racial/ethnic data. Similarly, most French people disavow racial/ethnic categorization, viewing these as divisive (Bleich 2003).

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Courses on race and ethnicity are required in many colleges and universities because the face of America is changing demographically. Figure 1.1, based upon Pew Research Center data, shows the demographic breakdown of racial/ethnic groups in the United States in 2017 and predictions for 2050.

REFLECT AND CONNECT

Take a minute to look over the demographic data in Figure 1.1. A Pew Center report says “non-Hispanic whites” will lose majority status by 2050. Based upon your understanding of race as a social construction, can you identify potential flaws in this prediction/interpretation of the data?

As the previous discussion makes clear, we cannot be sure that in thirty-something years these will be the census racial categories. Census racial categories have changed over time and it is reasonable to assume this will continue. If so, what changes do you predict in terms of future census racial categories?

A second flaw in the statement is the assertion that “non-Hispanic whites” will “lose majority status.” Sociologically speaking, to say that “non-Hispanic whites” will lose majority status speaks only to numerical status and says nothing about power and societal dominance. There is no evidence that whites will lose power, resources, and status and certainly no evidence that whites will become a minority group. Additionally, it is problematic because interpreting the data to mean whites will become a minority group only makes sense if we lump all racial minority groups together, in which case it would appear that whites will be 47 percent of the population in 2050 and nonwhites will be 53 percent. However, we disaggregate the data along racial-group lines. When viewed that way, non-Hispanic whites (at 47 percent) as a group are still considerably larger than the next largest group, Hispanics (at 29 percent). Interpreting changing racial demographics to mean that whites will lose majority status can be viewed not only as inaccurate but as incendiary in the current climate. It is the kind of statement that strikes fear in whites, increases antagonism toward immigrants, fuels racial tensions, and creates a climate of hostility overall.
At the same time, these are significant demographic changes confronting American society; essentially, the face of America is changing dramatically. In two short generations, American society will look very different. Thus, such changes require that we learn to understand one another, particularly cultural differences across racial/ethnic lines. Future teachers, a population that is still disproportionately white, middle class, and female, will be facing classrooms with much more racial/ethnic diversity than those they grew up in. The hope underlying courses in racial/ethnic diversity or a multiculturalism requirement is that today’s college students will come to embrace, not just tolerate, racial/ethnic differences.

**Millennials on Race: The ‘Woke’ Generation?**

This new edition of *Recognizing Race and Ethnicity* is framed by an exciting new survey entitled “The ‘Woke’ Generation? Millennials Attitudes on Race in the US” (Cohen et al. 2017). It is a first-of-its-kind, nationally representative survey of over 1,750 young adults, who were between the ages of 18 and 34 in 2017 and is designed to gauge what young people think about race today. The Millennial generation, sometimes referred to as Generation Y, refers to the generation of people born between the years 1981–1996. If you are a traditional-age college student reading this book, you are likely not a Millennial; instead you are a member of the Post-Millennial generation, those born in 1997 or later. You may have older siblings or cousins or friends who are Millennials, so their experiences are not too dramatically different from yours.
Millennials are an interesting generation demographically. They are now the country’s largest generation, having surpassed the Baby Boomers (1946–1964). They are also the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the country (see Figure 1.2). There is also a perception that Millennials are a more liberal generation and, indeed, more than 80 percent of voters under the age of 30 voted for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Democratic primary. They are also overwhelmingly liberal on a handful of social issues, including gay rights, immigration, and marijuana. And yet, we have to be careful treating this generation, or any generation, as a monolithic group. On gun rights and abortion, for instance, they mirror the wide range of attitudes found in the rest of the country (Thompson 2016). Millennial attitudes on racial issues, as we will explore throughout this text, are diverse as well (Cohen et al. 2017).

This survey finds, for instance, that Millennials of all racial backgrounds list racism as one of the most important problems facing American society. Additionally, a majority of Millennials surveyed feel that African Americans and Latinos are the groups that experience the most discrimination in our society. Millennial respondents were asked whether they felt the projected demographic changes described above would strengthen the country, weaken it, or not make much of a difference (see Figure 1.3). The diversity of the responses are telling: almost half of white respondents (49 percent) felt that this change would not make much of a difference, while people of color were more likely to say that these changes strengthened the country (46 percent of African Americans, 61 percent of Asian Americans, and 59 percent of Latinos) (Cohen et al. 2017).

**Figure 1.2:** As of 2018, Millennials surpassed Baby Boomers (1946-1964) as the largest generation. They also are the most racially diverse generation in American history.

Thinking About Race

Other questions explore Millennials’ opinions on the Black Lives Matter movement, Confederate symbols, whether or not President Trump is racist, and the extent of racial resentment and racial progress among their generation. We will return to these survey results throughout the book as we address these important topics and more.

A Note on Terminology

Racial terminology, specifically what terms are acceptable for describing a group of people, has changed over time. Many white students, particularly those who have not had much interaction with people of color, often feel hesitant to interact with students of color because they “don’t know what to call them” (Fox 2009:27). There is a fear that using the wrong terminology can be offensive and lead to misunderstanding.

Prior to the civil rights movement, most African Americans were referred to as “Negroes” and the term black was considered offensive by many (Martin 1991). During the Black Power movement of the late 1960s, people were encouraged to substitute the term black for Negro. Twenty years later, at a 1988 news conference, African American leader Jesse Jackson announced that “African American” was the...
preferred term for blacks. It was considered a more acceptable term than *black* because it referenced a land base and a cultural heritage (Martin 1991).

While this shift in terminology has been relatively successful, some blacks are hesitant to embrace it as an identity. As one undergraduate of African descent explains:

> My mother calls herself Black—capital B—my aunt won’t hear of anything but African American, and I prefer to be called an American of African Descent, which stresses the American-ness of my experience. We are an extremely diverse community that values our individualism and our independent thinking. (Fox 2009:30)

Another black undergraduate explains, “I am not an African American, I’m black. I refuse to be called American until the day that this country treats me with the same value and respect as everyone else” (Fox 2009:30). Ultimately, neither *black* nor *African American* is considered to be an offensive term, although individuals differ as to whether or not they personally feel comfortable with them. Both the terms *Negro* and *colored* are considered outdated and inappropriate terms for describing black people.

The term *Latino* is often preferred by Latinos to the term *Hispanic*. *Hispanic* is a term describing people of Spanish (and sometimes Portuguese) descent in the United States. It was a term created by the federal government in the early 1970s and is an umbrella term that includes over twenty different nationalities (Fox 2009). Because of its origins, it is not a term that many Latinos use to describe themselves. Some feel that the term needs to be retired. Others find the umbrella nature of both *Hispanic* and *Latino* problematic, preferring to see themselves as Mexican American or Puerto Rican, for instance. The term *Latino* is now used interchangeably with *Hispanic*, although *Latino* is the preferred term in this text.

The term *Chicano* was created by Mexican American activists during the Brown Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s (see Chapter 6). “During the 60s, young Mexican Americans started to use ‘Chicano/Chicana’ as an affirmation of pride and identity and to say, ‘We’re not Mexicans or Americans. We’re a combination—a special population with our own history and culture’” (Martinez 1997, quoted in Fox 2009:33). Thus, all Chicanos are Mexican Americans, but not all Mexican Americans embrace the term *Chicano*.

The terms *Native American*, *Native people*, *Indian*, *American Indian*, *indigenous people*, and *First Nations* are used interchangeably by Indians and non-Indians without offense; however, much like with the previous discussion, individuals have preferences for specific terms. One of the leaders of the American Indian Movement (see Chapter 6), Russell Means, commented:
You notice that I use the term *American Indian* rather than *Native American* or *Native indigenous people* or *Amerindian* when referring to my people. There has been some controversy about such terms. ... Primarily it seems that American Indian is being rejected as European in origin—which is true. But all of the above terms are European in origin [italics in the original].

(Nagel 1996:xii)

This text will use Native American, American Indian, Indian, and Native people interchangeably.

There has been less contestation surrounding terms used to describe Asian Americans. The term *Asian American* is an umbrella term that refers to a wide range of Asian ethnic groups in the United States. While the term *Asian American* is not considered offensive, it is more accurate to describe people as members of their particular ethnic group: Korean American, Japanese American, Chinese American, and so on. Using the term *Oriental* to describe Asian Americans is inappropriate due to the outdated and offensive nature of the term, similar to the use of the words *Negro* or *colored* to describe African Americans.

There are even fewer debates over what to call white people, with one notable exception, *Caucasian*, which is a term introduced in the late eighteenth century to refer to people of European origin (broadly defined) with white skin, referring to people from the Caucasus Mountains region, from Russia to northern Africa. Although it is not a term the US Census Bureau ever used to describe white people but is instead a racial classification employed by anthropologists, it quickly became synonymous with *white*. However, the term is losing its meaning, as most white people do not use it to describe themselves.

**REFLECT AND CONNECT**

Were any of the terms we just discussed new to you? If so, why do you think that is? Would you consider yourself someone who has avoided interracial interactions because you were unsure “what to call them”?

**RACIAL IDENTITIES, RACIAL IDEOLOGIES, AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM**

There are three interlocking aspects of race: identities, ideologies, and institutions. Racism and privilege are manifested in all three, so we must understand all three in order to fully grasp the intricacies of race in our society. Race is an arena of power and, as French theorist Michel Foucault emphasizes, power can be exercised as control through scientific knowledge. Chapter 3 focuses on the changing science of race and the many ways this has acted as a system of control. This text takes a
Taking Account of Race, Racism, Privilege

Taking Account of Race, Racism, Privilege

35
different approach than standard sociological texts that emphasize only social scientific research on racial inequality. This kind of approach fails to account for how science itself informs identities, ideologies, and institutions and actually helps maintain the racial hierarchy.

Racial Identities

What do we mean by “racial identity”? Our identity is how we see ourselves. We establish our racial identity, our sense of who we are racially and how we view ourselves, through interaction with others. In addition to interactions with others, the way race is discussed and presented in society contributes to the creation of individual and collective racial identities. The potential racial/ethnic identities one has to choose from change across time, similar to the changing census categories. A current example of such change is the increasing salience of biracial and multiracial identities. There is nothing new about people with multiple racial ancestries. What is new is that people are identifying as biracial or multiracial. Historically in the United States, the one-drop rule reigned, which meant that individuals with more than one

Image 1.4: The emergence of people who identify as biracial or multiracial is relatively new, despite the fact that there is nothing new about biracial/multiracial people. Racial identity options expand or contract in different historical eras.
Thinking About Race

racial heritage, one of which was black, identified themselves or were identified by others as black (in other words, to have “one drop” of black blood made one black, a policy that has not been applied to any other racial/ethnic minority group). The so-called biracial baby boom of the post-1960s era has resulted in many of the children of black–white interracial unions, those that have been defined as the most taboo in our culture, claiming a biracial identity rather than a black identity, as previous generations had (Korgen 1998).

Native American identity reclamation is another example of the significance of race as an identity and emphasizes the idea that identities are always in flux. In this case, many individuals who formerly viewed themselves as white are now reconnecting with their Native heritage and identify as Native American, specifically their tribal identity (Fitzgerald 2007; Nagel 1996). Thus, people who have assimilated, are perceived as white, and benefit from white privilege are instead claiming a nonwhite racial identity.

A final argument for why racial identity is important pertains to the idea of racial identity development. Psychologists have long studied identity development, particularly in adolescents; however, racial identity development has too often been overlooked. All people go through stages of development as they begin to define themselves in relation to others. Racial identity development is a part of this process, yet often not a conscious part of it. Researchers argue that racial identity development differs for white people and people of color (Helms 1990; Cross, Parham, and Helms 1991; Tatum 1992, 1994). For instance, whites in the first stage of racial identity development base their notions of people of color on media stereotypes because they tend not to have had much contact with people of color. For students of color, stage one involves internalizing many of the stereotypes about their own racial group and other people of color. For some, this can be the result of being raised in a primarily white environment. Thus, Tatum (1992) argues, they tend to distance themselves from the more oppressed members of their own group. Social psychologists use the term internalized racism to describe individuals who believe what the dominant group says about them; in other words, they internalize negative messages about their racial group.

WITNESS

“The greatest weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” South African liberationist and martyr Steven Biko, I Write What I Like (1978)
Racial Ideologies

Racial ideologies, or cultural belief systems surrounding race, are also significant and have changed over time, generally to meet the needs of the dominant group in a particular era or in response to changing social conditions. Societies establish racial hierarchies to benefit some groups while disadvantaging others, and ideologies serve to justify such arrangements. The current reigning racial ideology in the United States is that of color-blindness, or the color-blind ideology. Color-blindness is the idea that race no longer matters, particularly since the civil rights movement, and that if there is evidence of ongoing inequality along racial lines, it must be based on some nonracial factor, such as culture. This is a significant racial ideology because it allows white people, even those who consider themselves liberal and/or progressive, to deny the significance of race in our current society (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Omi and Winant 1994).

This is a justifying ideology because it allows us to think that the social activism of the 1960s resolved racial inequalities and thus we are a society that is beyond race. Color-blindness suggests that race no longer matters, which in turn implies that policies designed to address racial inequality, such as affirmative action, are no longer needed. And yet, such policies are designed to address not only current racial (and gender) inequality but also the ongoing effects of historical inequalities; as long as inequality remains, a need for social policies to address them remains. In previous eras, ideologies based on white supremacy predominated to justify slavery long after slavery had been introduced. Such ideologies served to deflect questions about the morality of slavery because they allowed white people to believe in the complete inferiority and inhumanity of blacks. White supremacist ideologies allowed Anglo-Americans to justify taking land away from Native peoples and engage in genocidal policies against them, due to the perceived inferiority of the Native peoples, who were viewed as “uncivilized heathens.”

Millennials on Race

Racial ideologies change over time and while scholars still describe the reigning ideology of the current era as color-blindness, Millennials’ attitudes on race may indicate that is shifting. For instance, Millennials of all racial backgrounds cite racism as one of the top three concerns facing our country (see Table 1.1). Additionally, when asked if racism remains a major problem in our society, a majority of all Millennials agree it is (see Figure 1.4). While there is great variation in the attitudes of whites and people of color on these questions, it might be evidence of the declining power of color-blindness among young people.
Racism remains a major problem in our society.

While racism is a top concern among Millennials of all racial backgrounds, there is considerable variation between groups. It is only among African Americans that a majority of respondents cite racism as a top concern (Cohen et al. 2017).

Institutional Racism

Finally, institutional racism is found in the ways societal institutions, such as those in the educational, economic, political, media, and legal spheres, are “raced.” Institutional racism is the most pervasive form of racism today and also the most subtle because it is found in everyday business practices, laws, and norms that create or maintain racial inequality, whether intentional or not. Institutional racism is often considered to be the most difficult kind of racial discrimination to see because it tends not to be an action taken by a particular person that others can point to and
recognize as racism. It is much more subtle than that, despite the fact that the racial manifestations are very real. Because this is the most prominent type of racism in the United States, it may explain why white people and people of color have such divergent views on the extent of racism that still exists in our society. As you can see by scanning the table of contents for this book, the second half of the book explores institutional racism and privilege in great detail.

Racial identities, ideologies, and institutions are intricately interconnected. For instance, when the ideology of white superiority reigned and the one-drop rule was established, biracial individuals saw themselves as black. They did not consider their white heritage as informing their identity in any way, nor were they encouraged to do so. Claiming a biracial or a multiracial identity is a post-1960s phenomenon. Additionally, ideologies inform institutional practices such as public-policy making, and vice versa. For instance, the emergence of a biracial or multiracial identity came as interracial relationships increased in the post-1960s era, after the last laws forbidding interracial marriage were overturned by the Supreme Court in 1967.

Another example of the interconnections between identities, ideologies, and institutions occurred during the 1990s with the battle for a multiracial category on the census, a clear institutional reflection of this growing movement of people who claim a multiracial identity. The Census Bureau did not opt for a specific biracial or multiracial category, but it did allow individuals for the first time to check more than one racial category (see Chapter 12).

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced key concepts necessary for understanding the history and current status of race in American society, particularly the idea that race is a social construction rather than a biological reality. We began by distinguishing between race and ethnicity while acknowledging that they are interrelated concepts, then explored the various types of racism, from prejudice to institutional racism to colorism. While there has been racial progress since the Jim Crow era, when whites terrorized minorities through lynching and other forms of violence, we do not live in a postracial society.

Studying race, racism, and race privilege is essential in our rapidly changing world. Most businesses recognize the changing face of America and expect future employees to be able to adapt to a diverse workforce. For that to occur, it is necessary that Americans of all racial/ethnic backgrounds understand one another and understand how race operates at the level of individual identities, as well as through ideologies and institutions. This text encourages us to take account of race in society by providing an essential history of racial/ethnic relations in the United States and explaining the significance of that history to current society. Additionally, the
emphasis on self-reflexivity, the call to look within ourselves to understand how racial ideologies inform our attitudes and beliefs concerning racial “others” as well as how such ideologies inform our identities, allows us to personally take account of race. While color-blindness remains the dominant racial ideology in the United States, it is more helpful to recognize race, racism, and privilege—in other words, to embrace color-consciousness.

**KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Color-blind ideology, color-blindness</td>
<td>Quadroon</td>
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<td>Color-consciousness</td>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>Colorism</td>
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<td>Cultural norms</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Racial justice activism</td>
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<td>Individual discrimination</td>
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<td>Institutional racism</td>
<td>Racial/ethnic</td>
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<td>Internalized racism</td>
<td>Racialized space</td>
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<td>Majority group (dominant group)</td>
<td>Racism</td>
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<td>Millennial generation</td>
<td>Self-reflexivity</td>
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<td>Minority group (subordinate group)</td>
<td>Social construction</td>
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<td>Octoroon</td>
<td>Sociological imagination</td>
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<td>People of color</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
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<td>Postracial</td>
<td>Standpoint perspective</td>
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<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>White space</td>
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**PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

1. Describe the life experiences that have informed your racial attitudes and beliefs and reflect on your level of interaction with members of other racial/ethnic groups. What in your life has facilitated or hindered you in interacting with members of different racial/ethnic groups?

2. Look around your campus (cafeteria, classes, and dormitories). Is there evidence of racial segregation? Why do you think self-segregation occurs? Is it harmful? What does it tell us about our society, if anything? Should we work to eradicate self-segregation? Why or why not?
CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Speculate on what changes you think will occur in census racial categories over the next fifty years, keeping in mind that census categories always reflect the prevailing notions of race and result from an intensely political process.

2. Explain how the racism of the dominant group can be understood as prejudice plus power and how the color-blind ideology is an example of dominant-group power.

ESSENTIAL READING


RECOMMENDED FILMS

*The Talk: Race in America* (2017). Directed by Sam Pollard. This documentary explores the necessity of conversations between parents of color and their children, especially their sons, about how to behave if they are stopped by police. Parents, children, academics, police officers, and community activists are interviewed in this engaging and timely documentary.

*A Girl Like Me* (2007). Directed by Kiri Davis. This film explores the ways racial stereotypes affect the self-image of young African American women and children. Through interviews with young African American women, the film explores racialized beauty standards surrounding skin color, body type, and hair texture, as perpetuated in the media.
Thinking About Race

*Race: The Power of an Illusion, Vols. 1–3* (2003). Produced by Larry Adelman. One of the best documentaries on race, this film explores the idea of race as a social construction and questions the idea that race is biological by exploring the science of race, historically and currently, how the idea of race was legitimized, and the ways race manifests itself in our daily lives.

*What's Race Got to Do with It?* (2006). Written, directed, and produced by Jean Chang. This film is a sequel to *Skin Deep* (1995), a look at race relations on college campuses. This new film explores the experiences of a diverse group of college students as they engage in a sixteen-week intergroup dialogue program. They challenge one another on issues such as minority underrepresentation, multiculturalism, individual responsibility, and affirmative action, and their experiences exemplify the attitudinal changes that can occur over a period of sustained dialogue.

**RECOMMENDED MULTIMEDIA**


Write a paper, three to four pages, reflecting on the survey results and the following questions: To what extent are the “Millennials Attitudes on Race in the US” survey results surprising to you? Or do you find the results consistent with the attitude of young people today? Explain your answer. What kinds of racial attitudes do you think Post-Millennials (those born in 1997 or later) will have? Why? Ask your parents and a couple other people their age some of the same questions from the survey. Reflect on how their answers are similar to or different from the attitudes of Millennials on race.

Explore the Census Bureau’s online graphic showing US population statistics by race between the years 1790 and 2010. Make an argument that this is evidence that race is a social construction. What about the changing US racial categories surprised you the most? What are the most consistent patterns, and why do you think this is so? www.census.gov/population/race/data/MREAD_1790_2010.html

Listen to *A More Perfect Union*, the speech on race given by Barack Obama during his 2008 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. As you listen, think about the following questions: What points do you agree with? What do you disagree with? Does the speech make you think about race in a new way? Why or why not? Reflect on this speech and President Obama’s eight years in office. To what
extent did President Obama affect race relations in the United States during his two terms? Give evidence to support your position. www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWe7wTVbLUU

*Color Blind or Color Brave? A TED Talk by Mellody Hobson.* www.google.com/search?ei=g7lwWvvEBpLjwOR0Ia4BQ&q=mellody+hobson+ted+talk&oq=Mellody+Hobson&gs_l=psy-ab.1.1.0i10k1l10.43914.59493.0.60856.23.19.1.0.0.0.172.1707.1j14.16.0...0...1.164.psy-ab..7.16.1802.6..0j35i39k1j0i131k1j0i131i67k1j0i67k1j0i20i264k1j0i20i263k1j33i160k1.191.N_uXSp939U4

What do you think of Mellody Hobson’s suggestion that we become “color-brave” rather than color-blind? What would this look like in your life?