

SOC-S 410 ADVANCED TOPICS: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION RACE, ETHNICITY, AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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Purpose of this Course

The purpose of this course is to understand issues of race, ethnicity, and intergroup relations from a sociological perspective. We will examine how race, ethnicity, and racism impact contemporary social problems and public policy issues like immigration, affirmative action, education, media representation, urban development, and nation building. We will also delve into how race and ethnicity influence identity, everyday interactions, and romance. Of primary importance in this course is the understanding of race as a socially constructed phenomenon, intertwined with class and gender, that is manifested in a wide range of social institutions. I expect students to come away from this course with an in-depth understanding of sociological perspectives on race, ethnicity, and racism, as well as the ability to apply sociological critiques to current race and ethnicity-related events.

This course focuses on race, ethnicity, and social organization. Within that focus, I have selected class materials that present a variety of topics and arguments. It is likely that connections between our course and current and/or historical events outside the classroom will come up in lectures, class discussions, and assignments. Those connections may require careful thought rather than being immediately obvious, but the ability to understand and analyze connections among ideas and events is a core skill in a liberal arts education and will stand you in good stead in your life beyond IU.

Intensive Writing Learning Outcomes

- Accurately employ sociological vocabulary and concepts.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Develop arguments (claims to fact, value, or policy supported by evidence and reasoning).
- Distinguish between and employ different forms of evidence.
- Distinguish between formal and informal modes of reasoning (e.g., deduction vs. induction).
- Frame and develop a research question.
- Perform literature reviews.
- Employ American Sociological Association (ASA) style (see http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf)
- Adapt ideas to different audiences, e.g., the difference between addressing experts versus lay audiences
- Students will develop their ability to understand and analyze current and historical events through the lens of concepts from this course.

If you need help with writing fundamentals, check out Indiana University Writing Tutorial Service (<https://wts.indiana.edu/>). They are very helpful in helping students improve their writing skill.

Course Requirements

1. Reflection Memos (30%): Each student is required to complete nine (9) reflection memos of one and a half (1.5) to two (2) pages each (double spaced, 12pt font). The reflection memos should focus on the readings assigned for that week. Typically, a well-written

memo will compare the readings for that day to previous readings or theories, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented in the readings, or apply the readings to current events. A well-written memo will end with one or two lingering questions generated from the reading. The point of this exercise is to make sure you understand the material, and more importantly, that you can be creative in applying what you learned to other reading/theory/contexts. Reflection memos are **due at the beginning of class** and **must be uploaded to the course website on Canvas**. Memos that show a clear lack of effort will receive half or no credit.

2. Op-Eds (20%): Each student is required to write two op-eds, 600 to 800 words each. Students will learn how to write persuasively to a general audience by drawing on facts and sociological theories presented in class. Students will submit the first draft of the op-ed, and then revise their work based on my comments. Each rough draft is equal to 4% of final grade; each final draft is equal to 6% of final grade ($4\% \times 2 + 6\% \times 2 = 20\%$).
3. Midterm (15%): This midterm will consist of True/False, multiple choice, and short answer questions regarding the readings and lectures until this point. Students are not permitted to use notes during the test (i.e., it is a closed-book exam).
4. Final Paper (20%): Students will submit an 8 to 10-page research paper at the end of the semester on a topic of the students' own choosing. I expect students to meet with me at least once during office hours to discuss their final paper topic. Students will submit a paragraph description of their final paper topic for final approval by Friday, November 16. The final paper paragraphs are not worth points, but if you do not submit them on time, I will take 2 percentage points off the final paper grade. This may be the difference between an A- and a B+. I will provide more information about the final paper about midway through the semester.
5. Participation (10%): Class time will consist of lecture and discussion. I expect students to actively and meaningfully participate during the discussion period. Active and meaningful participation means talking in class to engage me and your fellow classmates. Completion of the reflection memos will help students prepare for active participation.
6. Pop Quizzes (5%): There will be several pop quizzes conducted at the beginning of class. These pop quizzes will cover the reading for that day.
7. Extra Credit Memo (Memo #10): You may submit an extra credit memo to replace a previous memo score.

Required Texts

Hirsch, Arnold R. 1983. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago 1940 – 1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Required Articles & Book Chapters

Additional readings book chapters are available through Canvas. Students are responsible for regularly checking both Canvas and email.

Classroom Policies and Expectations

- **Using AI for writing assignments is not allowed in this class.** Using AI defeats the main purpose of this class, which is to learn how to think through writing.
- **Please complete the readings before each class meeting.** I expect you to read the material carefully, think critically about the readings, and be fully prepared to discuss what we've read. Since this class incorporates both lecture and discussion, it is essential that everyone has read the material and arrives at class prepared to share their insights. Please be forewarned that I will give pop quizzes if it appears very few students have done the

reading. (If you miss class on the day of a pop quiz there will be no opportunity for a make-up.)

- **Class participation is part of your grade.** Participation is not limited to speaking up in class. It also encompasses attendance, focus, engagement, and attention. In order to get a high grade for class participation, you should consistently attend class and arrive *on time* having carefully read the material. Regular tardiness, chronic absenteeism, and/or lack of preparation for class will adversely affect your class participation grade.
- **Electronic devices are not permitted during class.**
- **Assignments should be submitted before class begins on the due date or they will be considered late.** Any late papers will be docked one letter grade for each day that they are late. In other words, if your paper is due Tuesday and I receive it Thursday, the highest grade you will be able to receive is a C. Unless you have email correspondence from me that says otherwise, assume that *any* paper received after the end of class on the due date will be penalized.
- **Assignments submitted more than two calendar days after the due date will not be accepted unless I have granted you an extension.** These will be granted only in the case of a serious and unforeseeable problem, the definition of which is subject to my discretion.
- If you believe I graded an assignment unfairly, come to my office and ask me to regrade it. Keep in mind that while I will review your paper, the resulting grade may be lower or higher than the original grade.
- **Students are expected to attend class regularly.** Each student is allowed to miss (3) classes without penalty. For every class missed after that point, the student's final grade will be downgraded by a third of a grade (e.g., A- to B+). Excused absences will only be granted for religious observances, for required attendance at university-sponsored events, and for job interviews or graduate school visits. For excused absences, students must submit documentation (via email) at least 24 hours prior to the class that will be missed.
- All students are subject to the policies outlined both in this syllabus and verbally as the course progresses. It is your responsibility to find out what took place during any classes you missed, and you are subject to any amendments or policy changes that were established on such days, whether or not you were present in class.
- In this class, we will discuss topics that can be sensitive and provoke heated discussion. Some conversations may discomfort or upset some of your previously held beliefs. While I do not promise that you will be comfortable or agree with all of the points raised (either in the course materials or by your classmates), we must maintain a respectful atmosphere towards each other and be careful to disagree without being disagreeable.
- **Feeling sick? If you have a positive COVID-19 test, have COVID-like symptoms, or have been instructed to quarantine you should not attend class.** To ensure that you can do this, attendance in this class will be taken but will be prorated and will not lower a student's grade when that student was absent due to compliance with campus isolation expectations. Please work with your instructor to determine a path to continue your progress in the class during these absences, in whatever way the instructor determines fits within course objectives.

Academic Integrity

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards detailed in the [*Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct* \(Code\)](#). Academic misconduct is defined as any activity that tends to undermine the academic integrity of the institution. Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, violation of course rules, and facilitating academic dishonesty. When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained

therein is yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. All suspected violations of the *Code* will be reported to the Dean of Students and handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final course grade, and a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. For more information, see: <http://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/ethics-misconduct-legal/index.shtml>. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification from your instructor in advance.

Re: Note Selling: Several commercial services have approached students regarding selling class notes/study guides to their classmates. Selling the instructor's notes/study guides in this course is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct (violation of course rules). Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment for which the notes/study guides are being sold, a reduction in your final course grade, or a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. Additionally, you should know that selling a faculty member's notes/study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, or via Canvas may also constitute a violation of IU information technology and IU intellectual property policies; additional consequences may result.

Special Needs

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IU seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor and to contact the Disability Student Services Office (812.855.7578; <http://studentaffairs.iub.edu/ds>) about any special learning or study needs related to a documented disability. If you need individual accommodations to meet course objectives, please see the instructor as soon as possible so that we can ensure your full participation in class and a fair assessment of your work.

Religious Observances

In accordance with the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, students who wish to receive an excused absence from class for religious reasons must submit a request form available at the link below for each day they will be absent. This form must be presented to the course instructor by the end of the second week of the semester. A separate form must be submitted for each day. The form must be signed by the instructor, a copy retained by the instructor, and the original returned to the student. Information about the policy on religious observation can be found here: <https://policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-59-accommodation-religious-observances/index.html>.

Classroom Conduct

We may discuss sensitive issues in this class. Each person comes to the class with a unique background and perspective. I encourage students to draw on those perspectives in class discussions. Please keep in mind that sharing opinions and experiences is a valuable but sometimes uncomfortable experience. Everyone must make the commitment to create an atmosphere of respect for each person's contribution. Varying points of view are welcome and expected. Please be respectful and open-minded when listening to viewpoints different from your own. If you disagree with an argument, criticize the evidence that supports a stance or the negative implications of a viewpoint. Ask questions that challenge certain assumptions. But, please do not criticize the individual who holds that view. Lack of courtesy will not be tolerated and may result in a student being asked to leave and counted absent.

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX

IU policy prohibits sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with the IU Sexual Assault Crisis Services at (812) 855-8900, or contact a Confidential Victim Advocate at (812) 856-2469 or cva@indiana.edu. University policy requires me to share certain information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct with the campus Deputy Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator or the University Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken, and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/index.html> to learn more.

Bias Incident Reporting

Bias-based incident reports can be made by students, faculty, and staff. Any act of discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability can be reported through any of the options: 1) fill out an online report at <https://reportincident.iu.edu/>; 2) call the Dean of Students Office at (812) 855-8187. Reports can be made anonymously at <https://reportincident.iu.edu>.

Disability Services for Students

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities (e.g. mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision neurological, etc.). You must have established your eligibility for support services through the appropriate office that services students with disabilities. Note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place and are not retroactive; captions and alternate media for print materials may take three or more weeks to get produced. Please contact Disability Services for Students at <http://disabilityservices.indiana.edu> or 812-855-7578 as soon as possible if accommodations are needed. The office is located on the third floor, west tower, of the Wells Library, Room W302. Walk-ins are welcome 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. You can also locate a variety of campus resources for students and visitors that need assistance at: <http://www.iu.edu/~ada/index.shtml>.

Digital Access

Digital devices (like laptops and cell phones) are becoming increasingly important to success in college. In this course, you may need digital devices to access readings, complete and submit written assignments, complete online quizzes, verify your attendance, take in-class polls, coordinate with other students regarding group projects, complete and submit group projects. I recognize that some students are unable to afford the cost of purchasing digital devices and that other students rely on older, more problem-prone devices that frequently break down or become unusable. I also recognize that those technology problems can be a significant source of stress for students. Given those challenges, I encourage students to contact me and/or the teaching assistant if they experience a technology-related problem that interferes with their work in this course. This will enable me to assist students in accessing support.

I also encourage students to be aware of the many technology-related resources that Indiana University provides, including:

- Free on-campus wireless internet (wifi) access through the "IU Secure" network.
- Free software for download and for cloud-based use.

- Free unlimited, secure online storage through Box (a great way to back up files).
- Free 24/7 IU tech support (e.g., email, Canvas, wifi, printing, device setup, etc.).
- Free in-person tech support at the Learning Commons in the Wells Library and in IMU room M089.
- Students can borrow laptops and tablets from the Learning Commons in the Wells Library ([click here for hours](#)).
- Discounts on devices from leading technology companies, including Apple, Dell, and Microsoft.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

- General introduction
- Racial Formation (MEMO DUE)
 - Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 1994. "Introduction" in *Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s*.
 - Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 1994. "Chapter 4: Racial Formation" in *Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s*.
 - *Optional Reading:*
 - Feagin, Joe, and Sean Elias. "Rethinking Racial Formation Theory: A Systemic Critique." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.
 - Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2013. "Resistance is Futile?: A Response to Feagin and Elias." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

Week 2

- Structural Racism (MEMO DUE)
 - Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1997. "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation" *American Sociological Review*.
 - *Optional Readings:*
 - Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2022. "The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America." Chapter 1 in *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Pp.8-11 (section titled "Key Terms")
 - Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2022. "What Is Systemic Racism? Coming to Terms with How Racism Shapes 'All' Whites (and non-Whites)." Chapter 2 in *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*.
 - "Color-Blind Racism: Toward an Analysis of White Racial Ideology." Chapter 5 In Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2001. *White Supremacy and Racism in a Post-Civil Rights Era*.

Week 3

- Stratification theory
 - Wilson, William Julius. 2011. "The Declining Significance of Race." In *The Inequality Reader* edited by D. Grusky and S. Szélenyi.
 - Wilson, William Julius. 2011. "Jobless Poverty: A New Form of Social Dislocation in the Inner-City Ghetto." In *The Inequality Reader* edited by D. Grusky and S. Szélenyi.
- Race and Nation-Building (MEMO DUE):
 - "Racial Domination and the Nation-State." Part One Introduction, pp. 81 – 83 In Marx, Anthony M. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*.

- “We for Thee, South Africa.” Chapter 5, pp. 84–119 In Marx, Anthony M. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*.

Week 4

- **Race and Nation–Building**
 - “To Bind up the Nation’s Wounds.” Chapter 6, pp. 120 – 157 In Marx, Anthony M. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*.
- **General Discussion**
 - “Order and Progress” Chapter 7, pp. 158 – 177 In Marx, Anthony M. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*.
 - In Class Discussion

**** Op–Ed 1 Rough Draft Due ****

Week 5

- **Op–Ed In–Class Workshop**
- **Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position**
 - McIntosh, Peggy. 1998. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” Pp.165–169 in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*.
 - Bobo, Lawrence D. 1999. “Prejudice as Group Position: Microfoundations of a Sociological Approach to Racism and Race Relations.” Pp. 448–453.
 - *Optional:*
 - Brown, Michael K. “Of Fish and Water: Perspectives on Racism and Privilege.” Chapter 1 in *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color–Blind Society*. Pp. 34–36, 44, 45–51 (skim), 51–63.
 - Feagin, Joe and Eileen O’Brien. 2003. “Situations of Possible Discrimination: Action and Inaction Chapter 6 in *White Men on Race: Power, Privilege, and the Shaping of Cultural Consciousness*

**** Op–Ed 1 Final Draft Due ****

Week 6

- **Working Class White**
 - McDermott, Monica. 2006. Pp.12–15 in *Working Class White: The making and Unmaking of Race Relations*.
 - McDermott, Monica. 2006. “Experiences of White Racial Identity.” Chapter 2 in *Working Class White: The making and Unmaking of Race Relations*.
- **Backstage and Frontstage Racism**
 - Houts Picca, Leslie and Joe R. Feagin. 2007. “The Backstage.” Chapter 3 in *Two Faced Racism: Whites in the Backstage and the Front Stage*. Pp. 91–123 (up to “Racial Events: Family and Neighborhood”)
 - *Optional:*

- McDermott, Monica. 2006. "Situational Contexts and Perceptions of Prejudice." Chapter 3 in *Working Class White: The making and Unmaking of Race Relations*.

Week 7

- **Ethnic Boundaries (MEMO DUE)**
 - Fredrik Barth. 1969. "Introduction." *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- **Mexican American Boundaries**
 - Jiménez, Tomás R. 2008. "Mexican Immigrant Replenishment and the Continuing Significance of Ethnicity and Race." *American Journal of Sociology* 113(6):1527–1567.
 - *Optional Reading:*
 - Vallejo, Jody Vallejo. 2012. Mexicans or Coconuts: Middle-Class Minority and American Identities. Chapter 5 in *Barrios to Burbs: The Making of the Mexican American Middle Class*.
 - Gallagher, Charles A. 2003. "Color-Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line in Post Race America." *Race, Gender & Class* 10(4):22–37.

Week 8

- **Ethnic options (MEMO DUE)**
 - "Influences on Ancestry Choice." Chapter 3 in Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities In America*
- **Ethnic cultural practices and psychology**
 - "Cultural Practices" Chapter 5 in Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities In America*
 - "Social Psychological and Character Traits" Chapter 6 in Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities In America*

Week 9

*** Midterm ***

- **Intersectional stereotypes**
 - Ridgeway, Cecilia L. and Tamar Kricheli-Katz. 2013. "Intersecting Cultural Beliefs in Social Relations: Gender, Race, and Class Binds and Freedoms." *Gender and Society* 27(3):294–318.
 - *Optional Readings*
 - Galinsky, Adam D., Erika V. Hall, and Amy J. C. Cuddy. 2013. "Gendered Races: Implications for Interracial Marriage, Leadership Selection, and Athletic Participation." *Psychological Science* 24(4):498–506.

**** Op-Ed 2 Rough Draft Due ****

SPRING BREAK

Week 10

- Writing Workshop for Op-Ed
- Intersectional stereotypes in dating
 - Nemoto, Kumiko. 2009. "The Good Wife." Chapter 2 in *Racing Romance: Love, Power, and Desire Among Asian American White Couples*.
 - *Optional Reading:*
 - Moore, Mignon R. 2011. "Openly Gay Families and the Negotiation of Black Community and Religious Life." Chapter 6 in *Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood among Black Women*.
 - Ray, Rashawn. 2012. "Sophisticated Practitioners: Black Fraternity Men's Treatment of Women." *Journal of African American Studies* 16(4):638-57.

**** Op-Ed 2 Final Draft Due ****

Week 11

- Hidden violence
 - "The second ghetto and the dynamics of neighborhood change." Chapter 1
 - "An era of hidden violence." Chapter 2
 - "Friends, Neighbors, and Rioters." Chapter 3
- Hidden power and powerful neighborhoods (MEMO DUE)
 - "The Loop Versus the Slums." Chapter 4
 - "A Neighborhood on A Hill." Chapter 5

Week 12

- A Divided Chicago
 - "Divided We Stand." Chapter 6
 - Optional reading
 - "Making the Second Ghetto" Chapter 7
- Residential segregation in context
 - In Class Discussion
 - *Optional Reading:*
 - Lipsitz, George. 2011. "The Crime *The Wire* Couldn't Name: Social Decay and Cynical Detachment in Baltimore. Chapter 4 in *How Racism Takes Place*.

Week 13

- Hiring discrimination
 - Pager, Devah. 2007. Chapters 2 and 5 from *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*.
 - *Optional Reading:*

- García-López, Gladys. 2008. “Nunca Te Toman en Cuenta [They Never Take You into Account]: The Challenges of Inclusion and Strategies for Success of Chicana Attorneys.” *Gender & Society* 22(5):590–612.
 - Carbado, Devon W. and Mitu Gulati. 2013. “Why Act White?” Chapter 1 in *Acting White? Rethinking Race in “Post-Racial” America*.
- **Hiring discrimination and efforts to diversify (MEMO DUE)**
 - Weisshaar, Chavez, and Hutt. 2024. “Hiring Discrimination Under Pressures to Diversify.” *American Sociological Review*.

Week 14

- **Racialized Organizations**
 - Ray, Victor. “A Theory of Racialized Organizations.”
- **Diversity Practices in Organizations (MEMO DUE)**
 - Kelly, Erin and Frank Dobbin. “How Affirmative Action Become Diversity Management”

Week 15

- **Diversity Buffering**
 - Chavez, Koji, Alyssa Browne, and Kayla Cook. “Diversity Buffering and Support for Corporate Diversity Efforts.”
- **Robin DiAngelo, Ibram X. Kendi, and corporatization of the sociology of race. (MEMO DUE to be written on BOTH days of readings)**
 - TBD

**** Final Paper Due ****

RUBRIC FOR WRITING ESSAYS

___/20 As the last sentence of the first paragraph, does the writer offer concise, specific thesis sentence that answers the essay question?

___/20 Has the writer answered the question throughout the paper?

___/20 Does each paragraph address only one idea that elaborates on and supports the thesis statement?

___/20 Does the writer stay on topic and avoid tangents?

___/20 Does the writer consistently offer evidence (quotes and/or paraphrases that are correctly cited) from the readings to support her argument?

DOs and DON'Ts of WRITING ESSAYS

Sample Assignment: I examine how gendered racism is present in media coverage of Black male celebrities.

DO: Make sure that your paper has a thesis statement. Start with a general introduction that logically leads to your thesis statement. The thesis statement should be the last sentence in your introductory paragraph. It should be a **simple, concise, arguable** statement that you will then prove in the rest of your paper.

Example: A strong thesis sentence might be, "This paper examines gendered racism in media depictions of Black men celebrities." A weak thesis would be, "Gendered racism is an important theoretical concept which details the intersections of race and gender in shaping various groups' experiences, and is especially useful in examining media coverage of various Black men celebrities like rapper TI and athletes like Michael Vick." This latter thesis is too lengthy and detailed.

DO: Make sure your paper answers the question. Each paragraph should elaborate on and support the statement you made in your thesis. I should be able to isolate **any** of your supporting paragraphs and clearly see how it elaborates on your thesis sentence. If a paragraph does not directly explain your thesis, it does not belong in the paper!!

Example: I might structure paragraphs so that I take various aspects of gendered racism and apply them to media coverage of a particular Black man celebrity. In other words, one paragraph might apply Collins' "inherent criminality" concept to media coverage of Trayvon Martin, another might apply her "athlete" concept to media coverage of Michael Vick, while yet another paragraph might apply Collins' other concept of the "sidekick" to Will Smith. Each of these paragraphs thus elaborates on the idea conveyed in the thesis and remains focused on the topic at hand.

DO: Proofread your work! This is often the only way to make sure you have stayed on topic, that your paragraphs address only one idea, and that your thesis and supporting arguments make sense.

Example: After completing your essay, come back to it a few hours later to proofread with a fresh eye. Also, I strongly encourage you to have someone else look it over. The paper will make perfect sense to you because you wrote it, but someone else can tell you where it does not make sense or where your arguments are unclear.

DON'T: Use contractions. These are not appropriate for formal essays.

Example: Avoid "don't," "won't," "can't," "doesn't," and so forth. Use the more formal writing style appropriate for essays with "do not, will not, can not, does not," etc.

DON'T: Include more than one idea per paragraph. Generally, paragraphs should only be 4–6 sentences. If your paragraph is less than 4 sentences, it probably needs more development. If your paragraph is more than 6 sentences, you probably have more than one idea.

Example: If you have a two-sentence paragraph, consider what you're trying to say in that paragraph and how it could be further developed. Could you support your claim with a quote or reference to some of the course readings? Can you offer an example? Are you using terms that need definition? Is it explicitly clear how what you've described elaborates on and explains your thesis sentence?

DON'T: Use statements like “I think,” “I believe,” “In my opinion,” or other terms that use the first person. This weakens declarative statements.

Example: A statement like, “Gendered racism is clearly present in media coverage of Michael Vick as someone prone to criminal behavior,” is stronger and more effective than, “In my opinion, I think gendered racism is clearly present in media coverage of Trayvon Martin as someone who was inherently criminal.”