ANT 3451 (ANTHROPOLOGY OF RACE AND ETHNICITY)

Fall Semester 2011, Section U03, Class # 86786
TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS, 11:00 to 12:15 PM
SIPA Building, Room 100

PROFESSOR: Dr. Abraham D. Lavender, Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies
(Sociology, Anthropology, Geography), SIPA Building, Room 334. The best contact is
lavender@fiu.edu. More contact information will be given during the first class. For academic
information on the professor, see http://gss.fiu.edu

Graduate Assistant: Parvaneh Pulling

PURPOSE OF COURSE:

The purpose of this course is to study the ethnic composition within the United States throughout
its history, analyzing how ethnic identity is or is not maintained over time, and how ethnicity has
been and is a major factor within the United States. We will follow the definition of ethnicity as
a “peoplehood” which can be based on race, religion, language, country of origin, or two or more
of any of these. We will briefly examine how the importance of these dimensions differs greatly
in different countries, with race historically being by far the most consequential dimension
within the United States, but with other dimensions varying in importance in different countries
and times. We also will analyze DNA, and see the part it plays in ethnic/racial identity.

The class will begin with lectures on sociological concepts related to ethnicity, including
theoretical concepts such as assimilation, pluralism, and enclaves. We will look at several
theoretical explanations of why different approaches have been used at different times in the
history of the United States, and by different ethnic groups. Emphasis also will be put on
different ways that minority groups can interact with the larger society, and the consequences for
different groups. We also will look at the social, economic, political, and other characteristics of
different ethnic groups.

This course will look at the BIG PICTURE of ethnicity within the United States, beginning with
Native Americans before European settlement, and then discussing different ethnic groups which
have come to the U.S. throughout its history (mostly from a chronological approach). Because of
the large number of groups to be discussed (We are the “Nation of Immigrants”) discussions will
sometimes be brief. The overall emphasis will be conceptual and descriptive analyzes of many
groups within the U.S., and in the second part of the course some short movies (about 15 minutes
each) will be utilized to visualize the history of some of the ethnic groups. Some attention will be
given to areas outside of the U.S. During the latter part of the course, we will spend some time
looking specifically at ethnicity in South Florida, including Miami-Dade County. Some special
emphasis will be given to ethnic groups (especially Hispanics, Blacks, and Jews) which are
major groups in South Florida.
READINGS:

(1) NATIVE ROOTS: HOW THE INDIANS ENRICHED AMERICA, by Jack Weatherford. The title is descriptive; this book discusses Native American (Indian) contributions to the U.S. culture. While the professor lectures on concepts, definitions, theories, etc., in the first half of the course, read assigned chapter of this book. The first test will include questions from this book.

(2) THE SECRET JEWS OF SPAIN, PORTUGAL, AND ITALY: PAST AND PRESENT EFFECTS OF THE INQUISITION, edited by Abraham D. Lavender and Dolores Sloan. This book, comprised of ten articles, describes the meaning of ethnic and religious identity for one of the “classic” historical ethnic groups, and illustrates how changes can occur in ethnic identity. Most of this book should be read during the first half of the semester, for the first test.

(3) HAVING OUR SAY: THE DELANY SISTERS’ FIRST 100 YEARS, by Sarah L. Delany and A. Elizabeth Delany, with Amy Hill Hearth. This book, published in 1993, tells the story of two sisters who were born in 1889 (“Sadie”) and 1891 (“Bessie”), and who lived to ages 101 and 103. It is an easy-reading book which shows the life of African-Americans in this time period. Read this book in its entirety during the second part of the course.

(4) THE NEW AMERICANS: HOW THE MELTING POT CAN WORK AGAIN, by Michael Barone. This book discusses six ethnic groups in the United States: Latinos, Blacks, Irish, Jews, Italians, and Asians. Each section, with about 40 pages, will be assigned during the semester, some for the first test and some for the second test. For the first test, read the chapters on Latinos and Blacks. The remainder of this book will be read in the second half of the class.

(5) IN ADDITION, so that you can become aware of constantly changing current events relating to ethnicity, numerous articles/etc. on contemporary events and issues relating to ethnicity will be assigned during the semester, and you are responsible for the material on these readings.

GRADING:

There will be two tests. Test 1 will be just before the middle of the semester and Test 2 will be about one to two weeks before the end of the course (the exact date for each will be announced soon). Each test will have 33/50 questions. Because of the large size of the class (c. 100), the answers will be multiple-choice. Each test will be about half from class material and about half from assigned readings. The final grade (except for attendance) will be a combination of the tests, with the highest grade, whichever it is, counting 2/3s, and the lowest counting 1/3.

ATTENDANCE:

This is not a correspondence course or an online course, and attendance will be taken frequently. The professor reserves the right to adjust a grade downwards for any student who misses more than one-third of the classes when attendance is taken. On campus education also consists of the class atmosphere, hearing other student comments, observing class interactions, etc. There will be frequent class discussions, and students are encouraged to participate. Absences near the end of the semester, after Test 2, will count double.