Global Perspectives in Higher Education: Race and Higher Education in Brazil
A graduate-level study abroad course offered by NYU Steinhardt

Orientation 1: Friday, April 11, 2014, 12:00-2:00 PM
Orientation 2: Friday, May 2, 2014, 12:00-2:00 PM
Sunday, August 3, 2014: Check in date for hotel in São Paulo
Saturday, August 23: Check out date for hotel in Rio de Janeiro
Final Class Meeting in New York City: Friday, September 12, 6:00-9:00 PM

Instructor:
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Catalog description
Global Perspectives in Higher Education: Brazil, HPSE-GE 2153, 3 credits
In this intensive, three-week study abroad program, students experience life and culture in Brazil while gaining an understanding of critical issues in access to higher education. Through readings, classroom discussions, visits to public and private higher education institutions, and NGOs, we will engage in discussions with presidents, provosts, directors, faculty members, deans, activists, and students. Special lectures with sociologists and national officials will help us understand the goals and future aspirations of Brazilian higher education and how higher education meets the social, political, and cultural needs of society.

Course examines race classification systems in Brazil from an historical point of view, then moves to an analysis of contemporary issues of race and higher education, especially regarding debates around affirmative action, access to education, and the value of diversity in education.

Brazil has the largest and arguably best higher education system in Latin America, but it has also been one of the most unequal in terms of access. However, in the past 10 years, Brazil has adopted the most ambitious and transformative affirmative action policies in the world. But as these policies are implemented, there are still questions about who is white and who is black in Brazil. In addition, affirmative action policies are also tied to socioeconomic status. How do Brazil’s sweeping, new affirmative action policies take this into account? And what are the implications for students and institutions? We will delve into a great national debate, engaging with university presidents, faculty, students and administrators, policymakers, activists, and researchers.

In addition to the academic content, this course provides an introduction to the vibrant culture and life of Brazil. We visit three distinct regions and include historical and sightseeing tours to complement the academic program. Students experience life in three cultural capitals—São Paulo, Salvador da Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro—while we grapple with dilemmas arising from the implementation new universities policies and a rapid expansion of higher education.

Course objectives
Students will be able to:
1. explain the historical underpinnings and contemporary complexities of racial classification in Brazil
2. describe contemporary Brazilian higher education systems, including:
   a. public versus private university sectors and institutional variety
   b. so-called social inclusion, affirmative action, and race- or social-quota policies
   c. legal and policy frameworks underpinning university policies and individuals’ race/color identification
   d. government involvement in higher education policy and planning
3. evaluate arguments and evidence invoked by scholars, policymakers, university administrators, students and lay citizens on the benefits and deficits of race- and SES-based admissions policies
4. analyze the links between race-based university admissions practices and local, regional and national politics in Brazil
5. frame their own theoretical positions about the meanings of education as a public good
6. demonstrate an understanding of globalization, internationalization and higher education

Course Reading

Required books
Edward Telles, Race in Another America: the Significance of Skin Color in Brazil (Princeton University Press, 2004). We will read the full book and students should purchase a copy and bring it along during travel.
Rohter, Larry, Brazil on the Rise: The Story of a Country Transformed (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). We will read the full book and students should purchase a copy. It is not necessary to bring it on the trip, but may be helpful.

Required articles (available on NYU Classes)
Guimarães, Antônio Sérgio, “Colour and Race in Brazil: from whitening to the search for Afro-descent” (paper presented at XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology, Gothenburg, July 2010).

You should also be reading, on an ongoing basis, current articles on Brazil in the NY Times, The Economist, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, University World News, and other sources.

Other reading will come from the following books and articles (you do not need to purchase these books—excerpts are available as PDFs on our course’s NYU Classes site):
Livio Sansone, Blackness Without Ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil (Palgrave McMillan, 2003), Introduction and Chapter One.


Schneider, Ann Christin, *Affirmative Action in Higher Education: The United States and Brazil* (Saarbrücken, VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009)

Schwartzman, Simon, Multiple articles on globalization and higher education in Brazil

**Recommended readings:**


Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and Slaves*, (various editions available, first published 1933)


**Further Bibliography on Race and Affirmative Action in Brazil:**


I will also assign a small number of shorter articles, accessible on NYU Classes or on the Web via the JSTOR database, available to you online through Bobst Library. Please note: I expect you to do all of the assigned reading, on time.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Short Essay (20% of final grade)

I will ask you to submit a shorter (5-6 page) essay on some aspect (your choice) of the topic of race in a comparative context, US and Brazil. This essay is due before travel commences and is intended for you to formulate an understanding of key issues in advance of travel. You should refer to Telles, Rohter, Guimarães and Paiva at least, and others if possible. You can, for example, focus on the different racial classification systems and their origins, Affirmative Action issues and in Brazil and the US in a comparative context, or another topic of your choosing. You will email this paper to me by 12:00 noon on Monday, July 28.

Scholarly Blog or Written Reflective Journal (25% of final grade)

You will create a scholarly blog or written journal (handwriting is acceptable) on the course topic and update it regularly with: 1) Your analysis (not just descriptions) of class readings and activities; 2) Your analysis of guest lectures and site visits and location interactions. You may also include, as supplemental materials, relevant newspaper and other articles and links on the course topic, and visual images relevant to the course. You will complete at least seven substantive entries (of about one to two pages, each) over the duration of the program, written during travel. Two driving question should inform each written entry: 1) "What surprised me in our lecture/site
visit/discussion and why was I surprised?"; and 2) "How does the analytical framework of the course (readings, visits, interactions) help me make sense of that surprise?"

Your blog/journal will serve as “field notes” for the final paper and therefore the more detailed your journal, the better it will serve you. **You will submit your journal every Saturday morning during travel, and I will return it to you every Sunday evening.**

Field Conversations (5% of final grade)
In pairs or small groups, you will conduct three informal conversations with Brazilians that you meet at universities, NGOs, other site visits, or public spaces such as cafes. I will give you some sample questions to spark conversation, and you will be able to add your own as well. This is intended to create interactions with Brazilians and to engage you in cross-cultural communication, difficult as it may be with language barriers. You are not conducting interviews or collecting data, but rather engaging in informal discussion. You will work in pairs or small groups (for safety, do not engage in one-on-one conversations with strangers) to connect with locals on the topics of our course. You will keep notes on your conversations in a separate part of your journal. This is intended to be challenging, and you will be graded not so much on the quality of your conversations as the quality of your reflections on these interactions.

Final paper (30% of final grade)
The final paper (approx. 15-20 pages) will be on a topic of your choice, drawing together themes and issues that we examine in the course. This paper can address your specific interests as they intersect with course content. The paper should reference and argue with the assigned texts in the course (which is to say, *Race in Another America* and those listed as required, above), and should incorporate specific examples from the experiential learning component of the course (i.e., the trip to Brazil, site visits, conversations with experts, and your personal observations). You are not required to do additional reading beyond what I have assigned, but in some cases you will find such reading to be necessary for your topic. **You will submit your final paper by 12:00 noon on Friday, September 12, 2014.**

Participation (20% of final grade)
Because of the experiential nature of this course, your participation is critical. I will encourage you to ask questions of lecturers at site visits, of experts, of the sources we read, of yourself, and of each other. Engage, have fun, ask questions, be troubled.

I expect that you will read all assignments thoroughly before each class and come prepared to ask questions, engage in discussion and listen thoughtfully to your classmates and me. Listening is part of participation, and therefore your careful attention to discussion is important. Please remember that attendance ≠ participation. Attendance at all class sessions does not automatically confer a participation grade of A. I absolutely expect full attendance, and therefore simply coming to every class session will be regarded as “average,” which translates into a grade of C. **Participating in class will increase your grade beyond the C.**

Attendance
Since the course depends on an exchange of verbalized ideas and experiential learning, attendance is critical. I expect you to attend, on time, all class sessions. If you must miss a class, you remain responsible for completing that meeting’s readings and also submitting to me any written work due on that day. Missing class does not allow you to submit work late: instead, you should submit your work before your absence. I excuse absences only with medical or other third-party documentation.

Note on Form
Written work must be typed in 10-, 11- or 12-point font, double-spaced with page numbers and normal margins. Papers should be stapled, not paper-clipped. I expect you to follow formal style in your written work and **properly cite all sources and quotations.**

My policy on late work, extensions, incompletes
I do not accept late work and I do not grant extensions. Written work is due at the start of class on the dates stipulated unless otherwise directed. I will not grant incompletes in this course except in the most calamitous circumstances, usually medical.

**Academic Honesty**
I take very seriously any breach of university policy on academic honesty, including plagiarism, submitting the same work for two courses, or other academic fraud or dishonesty. Plagiarism will normally result in failing in the course, not just the paper itself.

**GRADING**
Short essay, due before travel commences: 20%
Journal or Blog entries: 25%
Field Conversations: 5%
Discussion/Participation: 20%
Final paper: 30

**Evaluation Standards for Written Work and Participation**

**A = Outstanding.** “A” students demonstrate commitment to class in attendance, participation, and preparation; this means maintaining virtually perfect attendance, reading assignments fully, and showing keen interest during class meetings. They ask questions and are able to connect past learning with the present; they show initiative and are not afraid to be creative. Written work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of the material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights, and well-reasoned commentary and analysis. Students also demonstrate skillful use of source materials, illuminating examples and illustrations, fluent expression, and no grammatical errors. [A = 94-100 points; A- = 90-93]

**B = Good.** “B” students are generally well prepared and participate positively. Their commitment to class may vary: at times they may seem bored or distracted, at other times engaged and involved. They have interest in the subject and have the ability to master critical material. Some students under-utilize their skills, but such students tend to improve over the duration of the course. Written work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of the material, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad levels of analysis. Work reflects competence, but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source materials, examples, illustrations, are used appropriately and articulation/writing is clear. Papers have been carefully proofread. [B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83]

**C = Fair.** “C” students show little sincere interest in course readings and class discussion. They are not visibly committed to class and body language often expresses boredom. Such students may be talented, but for whatever reasons they have clearly not mastered the given material. They have poor study habits and try to minimize their study time. Written work is only fairly correct, superficial, incomplete, or expresses some significant errors or weaknesses. Source materials may be used inadequately or inappropriately, and arguments lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations. Writing/articulation is vague, hard to follow, or cluttered with technical errors. [C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73]

**D = Deficient.** “D” students participate rarely, show lack of interest, and have generally misunderstood much of we have done, said, and/or read (if they have indeed prepared or read anything to begin with). Written work demonstrates serious errors in understanding, fails to express the rudimentary aspects of the material, and may contain little logical development in its arguments. Sources may be used inappropriately or not at all, and writing/articulation appears deficient. [D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66]

**F = Fail.** Work is unacceptable, not submitted, or not attempted. This is also the grade for plagiarized work or work that breaches university policy on academic honesty. [F = 63 and below]