

RACE MATTERS

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Race Matters is an interdisciplinary learning community for first-year students that focuses on race, ethnicity, and related matters (such as gender, sexuality, class, and religion) in the twenty-first century. Students take a sequence of three courses: one in the fall semester (RAMAT 110), one during January term (SOAN 121), and one in the spring semester (RAMAT 130). The thoroughly integrated curriculum of these three courses bridges the humanities and the social sciences, offering students a deep and broad engagement with race and ethnicity in the contemporary world. Race Matters students receive credit for four OLE Core requirements: the First-Year Seminar (fall semester), Power and Race (January term), Social Sciences (January term), and Writing and Rhetoric (spring semester). The three-course sequence includes a special section of SOAN 121 ("Introduction to Sociology") during January term.

Overview of the Program

Race Matters is an interdisciplinary, integrated linked-course sequence on an enduring and dynamic topic of considerable interest to students and society at large: the role of race in the twenty-first century, with a general though not exclusive focus on the United States. As the title of the learning community is meant to suggest, the subject is not merely "race" in its narrowest sense but a broader array of phenomena that could be called "race matters." Many of these "race matters" concern the intersection of race with one or more related axes of identity, such as religion, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. For instance, Race Matters considers the experiences of Muslim Americans, South Asians, and Sikhs since 9/11; it examines the diverse communities, histories, and individual experiences grouped under broad labels such as "Asian American" and "Latinx"; it takes up the role of gender and sexuality within racial and ethnic communities, as well as within movements such as Black Lives Matter; it attends to shifting ideas about citizenship, immigrants, and refugees; it looks at the increasing visibility of self-identifying biracial and multiracial Americans; and it explores the role of geography, technology, changing demographics, and broader economic and political forces (such as globalization and nationalism) in shaping race matters in the present.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Program

Admission to the Program

Students apply to Race Matters after they are admitted to the college. Each year about 19 first-year students are admitted to the program.

Course Equivalents for OLE Core attributes

By successfully completing the Race Matters program, students fulfill the following OLE Core requirements:

- The First-Year Seminar
- Power and Race

- Social Sciences
- Writing and Rhetoric

Courses

RAMAT 110: *Race Matters*

Race Matters is a three-course, interdisciplinary learning community for first-year students that focuses on race, ethnicity, and related matters (such as gender, sexuality, class, and religion) in the twenty-first century with a general though not exclusive focus on the United States. The thoroughly integrated curriculum of these three courses bridges the humanities and the social sciences, offering students a deep and broad engagement with race and ethnicity in the contemporary world. This course is the first course in the three-course Race Matters Sequence. All students who commit to this course are also committing to enroll in SOAN 121 during January Term and RAMAT 130 during Spring. RAMAT 110 is offered annually in the fall semester.

SOAN 121: *Introduction to Sociology*

This course helps students explore the connections between society and their own lives. Students answer challenging questions such as "Do we have a 'human nature'?", "Why does social inequality exist?", "What is race?", and "How do societies change?" In answering these questions students learn to develop a sociological imagination. In doing so they review the various research methods and theories that form the sociological tradition. This course is open to first-year students or students in certain accredited programs. Open to all students when taught during the summer. Offered each semester. Also counts toward race and ethnic studies and gender and sexuality studies majors and gender and sexuality studies concentration.

RAMAT 130: *Race Matters*

Race Matters is an interdisciplinary learning community for first-year students that focuses on race, ethnicity, and related matters (such as gender, sexuality, class, and religion) in the twenty-first century with a general though not exclusive focus on the United States. The thoroughly integrated curriculum of these three courses bridges the humanities and the social sciences, offering students a deep and broad engagement with race and ethnicity in the contemporary world. This course is the third course in the three-course Race Matters Sequence. It is only open to Race Matters students. RAMAT 130 is offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisite: RAMAT 110 and SOAN 121.

Faculty

Program Director, 2024-2025

David C. Schalliol

Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology
social stratification; urban sociology; visual sociology; criminology; education

Marc David

Associate Professor of Practice of Sociology/Anthropology
Social class, race, cultural politics of heritage and historical representation in the U.S.

Dana Horton

Associate Professor of English and Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Black feminist theory, African American literature, hip hop studies, Black Atlantic studies, postcolonial literature, multiethnic literature, contemporary American literature, slave narratives, and visual rhetoric

Jaden Janak

Assistant Professor of History
LGBTQ+ history, abolition, and popular culture

Jennifer Kwon Dobbs

Professor of English and Race, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Associate
Dean of Interdisciplinary and General Studies
poetry and poetics; creative nonfiction; Asian American literature;
critical adoption studies