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Jennifer E. Robe
Portland State University

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Mixed-Race Studies;
Misstep or the next step for Ethnic Studies in a blending nation?

by
Jennifer E. Robe

Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Ann Mussey PhD

Abstract

In January of 2011, the New York Times reported that 2010 U.S. Census data shows that younger generations are self-reporting their racial identity as multiracial or mixed-race in higher numbers than ever before[1]. Classes in higher education that engage with race and ethnicity, often but not always as part of Ethnic Studies programs in universities, discuss and critique the categorizations of race and ethnicity. However, there is a social, political and economic power and privilege that groups have in being recognized as part of a categorized racial and/or ethnic group that mixed-race or multiracial identified individuals do not have when their identity is underrepresented or unrepresented. There is a very small number (under ten) universities in the U.S. that offer courses or programs that focus their study on a mixed-race identity. The potential problem in this change is a growing mixed-race identified population is the possibility that a growing number of students in classes that will not find a curriculum that centers on their racial experiences. That is the question I will address - are the racial experiences and understandings of mixed-race identified people being addressed in classes that engage with and critique race? I survey a small sample of students currently enrolled in classes which engage with race and ethnicity at Oregon universities about their racial experiences to find out if they see mixed-race studies as having a place in the future of "Ethnic Studies" classes in higher education.

Introduction

Race is not as simple as checking a box or a category on a form. Race is an identity, a lifetime of experiences; it is complex, fluid and a piece of one's self that holds many contradictions. I am writing from the standpoint that racism is real, and I will not be constructing an argument which seeks to support nor challenge the existence of institutional racism in the United States and globally. However, in the pursuit of knowledge, which is ideally a fundamental piece of higher education, it is my intention to analyze the examination of race in university classrooms where the curriculum centers upon the discussion and critique of race and ethnicity. In this essay I will first explain how racial categorizations came into use, the history that surrounds those parameters of race, the institutional inequity that has accompanied racial categorizations and the fluctuation of those categories up until the present time. I argue that racial categorizations do not accurately document racial identities and experiences and also that higher education is the platform by which we can effectively critique ongoing racial and ethnic categorization. Ideally it is also a place where space is created for students to learn and explain their own racial experiences and histories.

Despite the ambiguity of racial and ethnic identifications (which I discuss in detail later on) many academic programs have been set up to teach the experiences and histories of groups of people, such as Black and African-American Studies, Chicano/Latino Studies, Native and Indigenous Nations Studies, Asian Studies etc. Currently there are some (very few) universities that are beginning to include classes on Mixed-Race Studies as well. My field research is a survey with 49 students in Oregon universities currently enrolled in classes that critically engage with the subject of race and ethnicity.

What I explore in my research is if students view these classes (where curriculum centers on a mixed-race or multiracial identity) as having a place in higher education and whether or not the study would be helpful or counterproductive in the debate around the usefulness of racial and ethnic categorizations. Radical political, racially-based movements of the 1950s through the 1970s fought to create visibility of racial groups in efforts to discuss the very real oppression and racial

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[1] Saulny, Susan. "Black? White? Asian? More young americans choose all of the above." *The New York Times. Jan 29, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/30/us/30mixed.html?_r=3&ref=raceremixed&*

inequality they were experiencing because of their race. One of the things they shared was a demand for the right to an education that taught their own racial histories and experiences.

In her book *Ethnic Options,* Mary Waters argues that ethnic categories do not encompass the experience of ethnicity and ethnic identity for all people. From her own research into census data on self-reported ancestry, she writes:

> One thing that became clear from the data was that there was an awful lot of flux going on among these later-generation Americans – intermarriage was high, parents were not giving the same ancestry for their children as for themselves, and re-interview studies indicated that some people were changing their minds about their ancestry from survey to survey.[2]

I agree with Waters assertions although my research examines those who are not necessarily able to categorize their identity and experiences in a nation where we are still required to categorize ourselves. In looking at the experiences of mixed-race and multiracial identified people and the experience of occupying that middle-place between categorizations. I will argue later on that people do experience privilege by having a place in the categorization of race. If we were to agree with Waters' argument that categorizations of ancestry do not work, then we are ignoring the experience of gaining privilege and access to communities and resources through "passing" and/or being able to choose a category to fit into. As Margaret Hunter writes in "The Beauty Queue: Advantages of Light Skin," "In the United Stares, color, more than any other physical characteristic, signifies race. But "color" is also an attribute of individuals – human skin tone varies within and across 'race' categories."[3] What Hunter is arguing is that beauty, privilege and power are associated with light skin even within communities of color, and color creates a rift within communities based on a narrative which effectively oppresses all people of color. Skin color has the ability to determine if an individual experiences empowerment and/or ostracism within their own community as well as within the narrative of the dominant (in this case White) group. The issue of race difference and color difference are inextricably linked to systemic inequality. Although being able to "pass" as part of a marginalized community may allow for a person to have visibility, "passing" as part of the dominant community associates one with the position of the oppressor. This position of negotiating ones identity in order to gain or lose visibility and access to resources is an experience that some mixed-race people encounter; which are unique experiences that differ from being part of a recognized racial group.

The question I asked in my field research is - do mixed-race students feel that their experiences are being adequately engaged with in their education – I explore their responses for an answer to whether or not mixed-race studies, a study based on a new racial category *can* and whether or not they *should* have a place in the future of higher education.

Part I

A Failing Definition of Terms; "Race," "Ethnic," and "Ethnicity"

In this paper it is important to note that I use both "race" and "ethnicity" and often discuss them in a similar context. These are two different terms applying to two different forms of categorization, where "race" is typically used to refer to the physical features of an individual (such as hair type, skin color, eye color, bone structure) while ethnicity is typically used to indicate one's culture,

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[2] Waters, Mary C.. Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. xii

[3] Hunter, Margaret L. "The Beauty Queue: Advantaged of Light Skin" *Race In An Era of Change: A Reader.* Dalmage, Heather and Katz Rothman, Barbara. New York. Oxford University Press. 2011. Pp. 83

history, region, beliefs, language and sometimes nationality. Though nationality is a separate identity categorization, ethnicity is sometimes used to indicate nationality. The reason I say that these are "typical" uses of the terms is because there are *not stable or consistent definitions of either "race" or "ethnicity."*

Here is a diagram of the definitions of "race" as written by the Oxford Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary and from Dictionary.com. They have been given a standard format but the text is copied directly from each source as printed. The bold sections of text on the charts will be discussed later on.

Oxford English Dictionary[4]	Merriam-Webster Dictionary[5]	Dictionary.com[6]
race2 (second definition)	race3(third definition)	race2 (second definition)
Noun	Noun	Noun
each of the major divisions of humankind, having distinct physical characteristics: people of all races, colors, and creeds	*a breeding stock of animals*	*group of persons related by common descent or heredity.*
a group of people sharing the same culture, history, language, etc.; an ethnic group: we Scots were a bloodthirsty race then	*a family, tribe, people, or nation belonging to the same stock*	*a population so related.*
the fact or condition of belonging to a racial division or group; the qualities or characteristics associated with this: people of mixed race	*a **class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits, or characteristics***	***Anthropology a. any of the traditional divisions of humankind,** the commonest being the caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negro, **characterized by supposedly distinctive and universal physical characteristics**: no longer in technical use.*
a group or set of people or things with a common feature or features: some male firefighters still regarded women as a race apart	*an actually or potentially interbreeding group within a species; also : a taxonomic category (as a subspecies) representing such a group*	*b. **an arbitrary classification of modern humans,** sometimes, especially formerly, based on any or a combination of various physical characteristics, as skin color, facial form, or eye shape, and now frequently based on such genetic markers as blood groups.*
***Biology** a population within a species that is distinct in some way, especially a subspecies: people have killed so many tigers that two races are probably extinct*	*a **category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits***	*c. a human population partially isolated reproductively from other populations, whose members share a greater degree of physical and genetic similarity with one another than with other humans.*
(in nontechnical use) each of the major divisions of living creatures: a member of the human race the race of birds	*obsolete : inherited temperament or disposition*	*a group of tribes or peoples forming an ethnic stock: the Slavic race.*
literary a group of people descended from a common ancestor: a prince of the race of Solomon	*distinctive flavor, taste, or strength*	***any people united by common history, language, cultural traits, etc.: the Dutch race.***
archaic ancestry: two coursers of ethereal race	***Medical Definition 1** a: an actually or potentially interbreeding group within a species; also **:** a taxonomic category (as a subspecies) representing such a group, b: breed*	
	Medical Definition 2: a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits	
Origin	**Origin**	**Origin**
early 16th century** (denoting a group with common features): via French from Italian **razza, of unknown ultimate origin	*Middle French, generation, from Old Italian **razza**. **First Known Use: 1580***	***1490–1500**; < French < Italian **razza, of obscure origin***

These are the following definitions of "ethnicity" and of "ethnic."

[4] "race". Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press. 24 September 2012 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/race--2

[5] "race" Merriam-Webster Dictionaries. April 2008. Merriam-Webster Dictionaries. 11th ed. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/race

[6] "race." *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 30 Sep. 2012. <Dictionary.com http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/race>.

Oxford English Dictionary[7]	Merriam-Webster Dictionary[8]	Dictionary.com[9]
Ethnicity	*Ethnicity*	*Ethnicity*
Noun	*Noun*	*Noun*
the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition: *the interrelationship between gender, ethnicity, and class*	*ethnic quality or affiliation: students of diverse ethnicities*	***ethnic traits, background, allegiance or association***.
	a particular ethnic affiliation or group: students of diverse ethnicities	*an ethnic group: Representatives of several ethnicities were present*
Origin	**Origin**	**Origin**
(information not provided)	***First known use – 1950***	***1765-75***, *for earlier sense: ethnic + -ity*

Oxford English Dictionary[10]	Merriam-Webster Dictionary[11]	Dictionary.com[12]
Ethnic	**Ethnic**	**Ethnic**
Adjective	Adjective	Adjective
of or relating to a population subgroup (within a larger or dominant national or cultural group) with a common national or cultural tradition: leaders of ethnic communities	***Heathen***	***pertaining to or characteristic of a people, especially a group (ethnic group) sharing a common and distinctive culture, religion, language***, *or the like*
of or relating to national and cultural origins: *two playwrights of different ethnic origins*	*of or relating* **to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background**: *ethnic minorities*	***referring to the origin, classification, characteristics***, *etc., of such groups*
denoting origin by birth or descent rather than by present nationality: *ethnic Albanians in Kosovo*	*being a member of a specified ethnic group <an ethnic German>*	*being a member of an ethnic group, especially of a group that is a minority within a larger society: ethnic Chinese in San Francisco*
characteristic of or belonging to a non-Western cultural tradition: *ethnic dishes*	*of, relating to, or characteristic of ethnics: ethnic neighborhoods, ethnic foods*	*of, pertaining to, or characteristic of members of such a group*
archaic neither Christian nor Jewish; pagan or heathen.		***belonging to or deriving from the cultural, racial, religious or linguistic traditions of a people or country***: *ethnic dances*
		Obsolete. Pagan; heathen.
Origin	**Origin**	**Origin**
late Middle English (denoting a person not of the Christian or Jewish faith): via ecclesiastical Latin from Greek ethnikos 'heathen', from ethnos 'nation'. ***Current senses date from the 19th century***	*(information not provided)*	***1325-75;*** *Middle English ethnik heathen < Late Latin ethnicus < Greek ethnikos*

[7] "ethnicity" Oxford Dictionaries. 2010.
[8] "ethnicity" Merriam-Webster Dictionaries. 2008.
[9] "ethnicity" Dictionary.com. 2012.
[10] "ethnic" Oxford Dictionaries. 2010.
[11] "ethnic" Merriam-Webster Dictonaries. 2008.
[12] "ethnic" Dictionary.com. 2012.

The definitions, sources of definitions, and origins all vary from dictionary to dictionary, where both race and ethnicity are defined as culture, language, region, interests, descent and nationality, as well as through shared physical traits. In light of these definitions, race and ethnicity intersect, and these examples demonstrate how race and ethnicity are identified and discussed using a common language. Without endorsing the interchange between using "race" and "ethnicity" I use both identity categories in context to illustrate how they are discussed in referenced texts, as well as by how respondents who took part in my research study self-identified in their own words.

It is also notable that both Oxford Dictionaries and Merriam-Webster Dictionaries rely on medical definitions of race while Dictionary.com uses anthropological definitions of race, all with ambiguous origins. In this paper I will discuss why medical definitions as well as sociological and anthropological sources have been used to identify race. While "ethnicity" is defined centrally as the noun of the adjective "ethnic," both definitions are provided and "ethnic" is defined by Merriam-Webster in one way as "heathen" while Oxford identifies ethnic as characteristic of belonging to non-Western cultural tradition. What is evident in these definitions is an evocation of distaste, as well as an implicit statement that Western tradition is not "ethnic." This effectively normalizes Western traditions as the standard by which "other" traditions are categorized as "ethnic," *and* the Oxford Dictionary touts itself as "the world's most trusted dictionaries." These definitions serve to support Mary Waters' argument, that for Americans who identify and can pass as white, having an ethnic identity is a personal choice, an option that does not affect every-day life; choosing not to have an ethnic identity simply makes one "more American." She argues that the accompanying effect of ethnic options on race relations in the U.S. is that an ethnic identity does interfere in all areas of daily life for people who are visibly identifiable as non-white.[13] Her belief then, is that ethnic identification has a negative outcome exclusively for people of color, despite the fact that people of all ethnic identities are nationally required to identify their racial and ethnic identities.

The way in which the United States has sought to numerically tabulate and categorize people by manufactured identity categories, such as race or ethnicity, is through self-reported census data collected every ten years, beginning in 1790. However, the racial composition of the United States has obviously changed over time and the details of changing racial formation can only be explained through its historical context and significance.

A Brief History and Purpose of Racial Categorization in the U.S.

There is no way to write a brief history of race in the United States that is all-encompassing of the experiences of all people, except to explain the origins of racial categorizations and some of the major social phenomena which determined the lives of people based on their racial identities. Racial formation and identity have taken many shapes in the history of the United States; all of which carry a unique purpose as well as a unique history. As mentioned earlier, the way in which people document racial composition and change in United States is through census data collected every decade from 1790 up until the most recent 2010 census.

However, what is not so explicitly written in the history of the United States is that in 1790 (14 years after the U.S. declared itself an independent nation) "English-stock Americans" counted for only 49.2% of the total population (3,172,444 in 1790) of the United States. And Blacks were the second largest identifiable group, comprising 19.3% of the population. In fact, Blacks were 2.7 times as numerous as the second largest White population – the Germans. This means that there were more Africans than Europeans in America during the colonial period. And 92% of Blacks were

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[13] Waters, Mary C.. Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. 147, 156

slaves. [14] It is also necessary to take into consideration that at the time of the first census report, slaves were taxable property, and the census is self-reported data; thus the likelihood of under-reported slave populations to save taxation is very high. Slavery was legal in the Western Hemisphere for 396 years from 1492 to 1888 where Brazil was the last country to abolish legal slavery. And as Joane Nagel writes in her book *Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality*,

> No territory was more likely to be seen as a barren of civilization and empty of civilized peoples than the 'Dark Continent" of Africa. Europeans casual musings about exploiting and Africans were not new notions for the New World. When Columbus boarded the Santa Maria and set sail west, the Europeans he left behind had been exploiting and enslaving Africans for at least a century, and much longer if the Greeks and Romans are taken into account, since both of these European-based empires were built on the backs of slave labor and stolen land. [15]

Nagel also points out that Europeans also transported beliefs with them about native and tribal peoples as they voyaged from the "Old World" into the "New World." And the Old World "primitives" included groups such as the Irish, Sicilians, and the Samis. [16] It also can absolutely not be overlooked that indigenous peoples who were native to these newly colonized areas also faced enslavement, genocide and forcible removal from their lands. Bartolomé da Las Casas, a Spanish bishop and mentor to Columbus is a lesser-known personality than Columbus, but his influence on the slave trade cannot be overlooked. Las Casas was a prominent figure in the council of the Indes, and it was he who suggested to the council the replacement of African slaves for those of the indigenous people. The need for replacement was due to the fact that the illnesses brought from Europe to newly colonized areas had wiped out a majority of the native populations. This is what is written in *The History of the Indes:*

> Before the invention of mills here, a few residents who had acquired money by means of Indian sweat, seeing their Indians die rapidly, asked for license to import black slaves. Some even promised Clergyman Casas, to free their Indians in exchange for a dozen Negroes. At that time the clergyman enjoyed the favor of the King and was in charge of promoting the Indian cause; thus he procured black slaves in exchange for Indian freedom…[following the transportation of Black slaves] Yet the Indians were not freed nor were their burdens alleviated, and Casas would do nothing for them. [17]

The point then in this context, is that people have been enslaved in the United States since its inception (before the United States went from a collection of colonies to an independent nation) and those enslaved were done so on the basis of their physical appearance, culture, and their place of origin. These are the very traits that are currently used to designate race and ethnicity.

But it is a grave misconception to say that it was only people with dark skin who were used for slave labor in colonial times. Irish, Italian and Jewish Americans were also designated as part of a lesser class but not by their distinguishable physical traits, rather by their place of origin, religion and cultural difference from the dominant class. This is why the authors of two volumes of *Racial Formation in the United States,* Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue that the "ethnicity based paradigm" played a defining role in racial formation in the United States. [18] They write that the

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[14] Archdeacon, Thomas J. *Becoming American An Ethnic History.* New York. The Free Press. Macmillan Inc.1983. pp. 24

[15] Nagel, Joane. "Sex and Race: The Color of Sex in America" *Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality.* New York. Oxford University Press. 2003. Pp. 91.

[16] Nagel 91

[17] Collard, Andree. *The History of the Indes.* New York & London. Harper & Row Publishers. 1971. Pp. 257-258

[18] Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1986). *Racial formation in the United States: from the 1960s to the 1980s* (p. 201). Routledge & Kegan Paul. Pp. 23

ethnicity paradigm does acknowledge Black "uniqueness" because of their experience of institutionalized discrimination rooted in slavery; however, the Irish exemplify an ethnicity-based paradigm of racialization. It is true that the Irish were indentured servants, different than the designation of slave; however, what is often overlooked is that the Irish who immigrated to the United States were in fact slaves to the British before their forcible removal from Europe. [19] Although the Irish fit into the current understanding of "whiteness," their rejection from the dominant class in the early United States was based rather on their ethnic group – specifically their religion, customs and country of origin. However, there is no way of equalizing or comparing the experiences of people who are enslaved and oppressed based on their ethnic designation to those of African and Indigenous origins. This is only to explain the history of racial formation in the United States and to articulate that many groups experienced oppression based on loosely-defined categorizations of people.

Omi and Winant elaborate on the historical flexibility of other racial categorizations as well. They write,

> Consider the US Census. The racial categories used in census enumeration have varied widely from decade to decade. Groups such as Japanese-Americans have moved from categories such as 'non-white,' 'Oriental,' or simply 'Other' to recent inclusion as a specific 'ethnic; group under the broader category of 'Asian and Pacific Islanders.' The variation both reflects and in turn shapes racial understanding and dynamics. It establishes often contradictory parameters of racial identity into which both individuals and groups must fit.[20]

Omi and Winant also explain that this way of categorizing people by "ethnicity" is much more recent, coming about during the mid-1900s which they call the "ethnicity-based paradigm," and they also claim that this has become the dominant paradigm. They argue that the ethnicity-based paradigm, as all paradigms of racial categorization, arose as a response to the changing social and political views that reflected their respecting time periods.[21] These changes that they refer to are the social and political transformation from viewing race as biological (which arose from "scientific" attempts to prove racial superiority of whites) to viewing it in sociological terms. They explain

> The ethnicity-based paradigm arose in the 1920s and 1930s as an explicit challenge to the prevailing racial views of the period. The pre-existing biological paradigm had evolved since the downfall of racial slavery to explain racial inferiority as part of a natural order of humankind. Whites were considered the superior race; white skin was the norm while other colors were exotic mutations which had to be explained, Race was equated with distinct hereditary characteristics. Differences in intelligence, temperament, and sexuality (among other traits) were deemed to be racial in character. Racial intermixture was seen as a sin against nature which would lead to the creation of 'biological throwbacks.' These were some of the assumptions in social Darwinist, Spencerist and eugenicist thinking about race and race relations. But by the early decades of the twentieth century biologism was losing coherence.[22]

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[19] McGee, Thomas D'Arcy. *The Irish position in British and in republican North America* Montreal. M. Longmore and Co. Printing House. 1866. Pp. 11

[20] Omi and Winant pp. 3

[21] Omi and Winant pp. 14-15
[22] Omi and Winant 14-15

In this statement, they mention the medical colonization of race that sociologists were attempting to move away from in this more ethnicity-based method of racial reorganization. W.E.B. Dubois eloquently describes the experience of Black slaves during the Reconstruction Period following the theoretical end (I say theoretical because there are many accounts of peonage that lawmakers were/are aware of which continue into the late 20th century) to legal slavery in the United States. Dubois writes, "[T]he slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again towards slavery."[23] During the time of legal slavery, there were a set of laws called the "Slave Codes" which regulated the behavior and treatment of slaves. Immediately following the emancipation proclamation, former slave states passed legislation of a revision of the Slave Codes called the Black Codes. And as Angela Davis writes in *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

> The new Black Codes proscribed a range of actions – such as vagrancy, absence of work, breach of job contracts, the possession of firearms and insulting gestures or acts – that were criminalized only when the person was Black….Particularly in the United States, race has always played a central role in construction presumptions of criminality.[24]

The official Black Codes were established in former slave states, but a national system of legal segregation also emerged during the reconstruction period which is most commonly referred to as the Jim Crow era, based upon a popular minstrel show performer at the time who used the character name "Jim Crow." Michelle Alexander, the author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness,* calls this era the beginning of "a new racial caste system."[25] The Black Codes and Jim Crow were both legal forms of discrimination, although Black-Americans were also subject to extralegal subjugation such as lynching and terrorization by white hate-groups like the Klu Klux Klan, who especially targeted Blacks among others. And Jim Crow laws persisted for approximately one hundred years after legal slavery ended in the United States. One way legal segregation was justified for such a lengthy period of time was through popularized Social Darwinist approaches to "science" such as the eugenics initiative.

The eugenics program and the scientific colonization of race started to gain momentum in the late 1800s. These were new methods of justifying the mistreatment and dehumanization of the "undesirable" divisions of the population, Blacks in particular. During this period we started to see some new ideologies on race begin to surface. Before this time, white superiority was just assumed but during this time period "researchers" attempted to "prove" the physical evolutionary superiority of white Europeans. There is very little (if any) productive information worth noting that surfaced from Francis Galton's (a British researcher who pioneered the eugenic initiative) research and eugenics program. The purpose of the research was to "encompass the social uses to which knowledge of heredity could be put in order to achieve the goal of 'better breeding.'"[26] Researchers attempted to biologically define race and to scientifically prove the superiority of whites, but in the end they were unable to find any evidence that race is in any way biological. This proved to be a catalyst for sociologists' efforts to promote the notion that race is actually a social-constructed idea. Unfortunately the eugenics program cannot be either diminished or disregarded, as their research gained immense support and some of the literature it produced was quite influential to the past and present national consciousness on race. Here is an example of some of the eugenics literature included in a college textbook which was used for a "Western Civilization" course taught in the early 1900s.

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[23] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America*. New York. Free Press. 1999.

[24] Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York. Seven Stories Press. 2003. Pp. 28
[25] Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* New York & London. The New Press. 2010. Pp. 20
[26] Stepan, Nancy. *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*. Ithaca, NY. Cornell University Press. 1996. Pp.1

> The Ancient Greeks and Romans belonged to the Caucasian race. Among the individuals of this race we fins the most perfect types of beauty, strength, physical and intellectual power, and of harmonious proportion of all parts which make up a human being. The typical Caucasian, then, may be considered the typical man, and all others as departures from this type…In intelligence and civilization the Caucasian race takes the lead.[27]

The term "Caucasian" surfaced from the eugenics research and it still remains in use as a method of identifying one's race as white. But if we skip a little further ahead, this is what the same textbook has to say about the "negro" race.

> Members of the Ethiopian or negro race are known by their dark skin, varying from a jet black to brown or dusky, their short woolly hair, prominent jaws, thick lips, retreating foreheads, head full back of the ears, broad flat note, generally ungainly form…In average mental power it takes the lowest rank…The negroes of Africa have from nature no feeling which transcends the childish level[28]

And finally, this is what it has to say about the purity of the "Caucasian" race:

> To illustrate, the greatest civilization has been among the European or Caucasian race. This race is noted for its intellectual and physical superiority, as well as for its restless and aggressive energy. Let a branch of this race be given the same physical surroundings as a branch of one of the other races, and the result in the course of time as far as rapid advancement is concerned, will be largely in its favor.[29]

In this final example, we can see that scientists at this time were so convinced by the superiority of whites ("Caucasians") that they believed even a mixture of their genetics with any other race would ensure their advancement over those without such coveted genetics. Blacks fall at the bottom of the list of all desired characteristics. As is obvious by this text, the "research findings" of eugenics were more or less a collective list of observations based on an already racially biased standpoint. Taking into consideration that this was a textbook used in a science class in American universities, from this we can easily determine that contrary to popular belief, neither history nor science are objective studies, particularly when conclusions are extrapolated from the eugenics 'research.'

The point of relaying these pivotal historical events is not to illustrate the entire unfolding of American history, but rather to give some context into the formation of the current ethnicity-based discourse on race. From the building of the nation upon slave labor to Affirmative Action debates in the 1980s and 1990s, and even in the debates of the current 2012 Presidential election – race is an issue that stirs debate, and it is a reflection of Americas racial past. From its inception the United States have always maintained notions of race which determined the conditions which people lived under, based on their differences from the dominant class. So when we look at a process like the census data collection taken every ten years it is important to know how those numbers were collected and used for national interests.

Needless to say, the process by which census data is collected has changed during the dramatic transformation of the United States from 1790 until the present time. For the past four decades (from 1970 – present) the Interagency Committee for the Review of the Racial and Ethnic Standards, a division of the Whitehouse Office of Management & Budget is responsible for the

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[27] Lind M.D., G. Dallas. *The Marvelous Story of Man*. Thompson & Thomas. 1900. Pp. 138,139
[28] Lind pp.144, 277
[29] Lind pp. 474

revisions made to racial and ethnic categorizations on the U.S. census.[30] For example, the primary revision made between the previous 2000 census categorizations and the 2010 census is with the category of "Hispanic or Latino" people. "Hispanic or Latino" is an ethnic category because it indicates specifically place of origin (the place of origin is also non-specific as they include most of the Latin American and South American nations and sometimes Spain) and the 2000 census treated it as an ethnic category where a person who identified ethically as "Hispanic or Latino" could identify as any race from the following racial categories: White, Black or African-American, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race. The 2000 census reported that a majority of those who identified as "Hispanic or Latino" also identified as White or Some Other Race.[31] In the 2010 census a revision was made. It reads:

> "Definition of Hispanic or Latino Origin Used in the 2010 Census - 'Hispanic or Latino refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race."[32]

Later on in the census report, it is explained in more detail:

> People of Hispanic origin may be any race. For the 2010 Census, a new instruction was added immediately preceding the questions on Hispanic origin and race, which was not used in Census 2000. The instruction stated that 'For this census, Hispanic origins are not races' because in the federal statistical system, Hispanic origin is considered to be a separate concept from race. However, this did not preclude individuals from self- identifying their race as "Latino," "Mexican," "Puerto Rican," "Salvadoran," or other national origins or ethnicities; in fact, many did so. If the response provided to the race question could not be classified in one or more of the five OMB race groups, it was generally classified in the category Some Other Race. Therefore, responses to the question on race that reflect a Hispanic origin were classified in the Some Other Race category.[33]

The result from this 2010 revision is that "Hispanic and Latino" are reported together, *but as a separate race category from all other groups*, titled in the report "Hispanic or Latino Origin and Race." Hispanic and Latino individuals (as characterized by the given description) could report their individual racial identity from the provided six racial categories, but only in reference to their Hispanic or Latino identity. This way, their racial identity was not reported with the rest of the racial data as it had been previously in the 2000 census. Changes like these theoretically help to report data trends more accurately, but they can also profoundly influence statistical data reflecting the total population. This is especially important considering the "Hispanic and Latino" population is the second (the first being White Alone) largest population of 50,477,594 from the total population of 308,745,538 and also accounting for over half of the total population growth between 2000 and 2010. An interesting fact to note in revisions like this between 2000 and 2010, is the population growth of self-reported "White non-Hispanic" people declined by 5% and in the footnote accompanying this statistic reads:

> The observed changes in race and Hispanic origin counts between Census 2000

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[30] Office of Management and Budget http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards

[31] Estimates projections, P., Modified, T., Summary, R., States, U., Rico, P., Bureau, T. C., & Program, P. E. (2010). MODIFIED RACE SUMMARY FILE METHODOLOGY, 2 http://www.census.gov/popest/research/modified.html

[32] Estimates projections, P., Modified, T., Summary, R., States, U., Rico, P., Bureau, T. C., & Program, P. E. (2010). MODIFIED RACE SUMMARY FILE METHODOLOGY, 2 http://www.census.gov/popest/research/modified.html pp 2
[33] MODIFIED RACE SUMMARY FILE METHODOLOGY, 2-4

and the 2010 Census could be attributed to a number of factors. Demographic change since 2000, which includes births and deaths in a geographic area and migration in and out of a geographic area, will have an impact on the resulting 2010 Census counts. *Additionally, some changes in the race and Hispanic origin questions' wording and format since Census 2000 could have influenced reporting patterns in the 2010 Census.[34]*

The report itself claims inconsistencies in the data, yet we rely on it as the most accurate measurement of the nation's demographics. The fact that "Hispanic or Latino" is identified by the census regulations as an *ethnic* category, but *racial* data from "Hispanic or Latino" folks are reported in a completely separate data set from the racial data of the total population cannot be taken lightly. These revisions to racial and ethnic categorizations that are done before each U.S. census, demonstrate the fluidity of identity that cannot be so easily recorded by checking a box. If revisions are made to racial and ethnic categories each time there is a census collected, then there are going to be different results each time. The census report has the ability to alter data outcomes based on revisions in order to reach a desired outcome. In *Race and Immigration*, Gerald Jaynes hypothesizes that definitions of race can be changed in order to maintain the Black/White Paradigm even as racial mixing and integration persists.[35] If Hispanic or Latino people can independently self-determine their race, then if categories like "light-skinned Latino" and "dark-skinned Latino" are constructed, then this maintains a continuum based on Black-White dichotomous perceptions of race.

The Black Panther Party, the Present, and the Ongoing Resistance to Mixed-Race Categories

Being a part of two or more "racial groups" is not a new identity, however the recognition of a racial identity as "mixed race" is still under debate. In 2012 the ability for an individual to mark their identity as "mixed race" without further explanation is extremely limited as is often ambiguous. It occupies a "middle place" within the current categorizations and understandings of race that exist. Mixed-race or multi-racial comes with a follow-up question that aims to answer one thing - what mix? Mixed-race does not immediately provide a visual understanding of what a person looks like and what traits we can associate them with, in contrast to a more "fixed" racial group. Are you part Black? White? Latino/Chicano? East Asian? South Asian? Indigenous? What are you? The preoccupation of "what mix" is not a benign question because it effectively categorizes one more narrowly as part of an oppressed or dominant racial group. The question seeks to determine ultimately the color of one's skin. Going back to Hunter's argument, even within communities of color skin-tone determines the level of acceptance and empowerment and because of the link between skin-color and power. The question of "what mix"" is pressed to find out whether a mixed person is a part of what community and whether or not they are gaining power from their position of ambiguity.

The requisite of knowing "what mix" is laden within a torrential history where physical traits determine one's ability to prosper or endure in what bell hooks commonly refers to as "a white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy." In a society where there is such an emphasis on *knowing* one's specific racial makeup due to a long history of racial oppression in the United States, ambiguity means invisibility. Those who are marginalized by their race or ethnicity have limited resources and racial/ethnic solidarity is one of the ways that social organizations have come together to serve the needs of their people. Omi and Winant discuss the importance of radical social movements in the changing national views on race when the ethnicity paradigm (which they call the dominant paradigm of ethnicity and the centerpiece of liberal racial politics) was introduced in the mid-

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[34] MODIFIED RACE SUMMARY FILE METHODOLOGY pp 5

[35] Jaynes 4

1900s. Radical social movements of the time used the ethnicity paradigm to demand further restructuring – "one which would recognize the pervasiveness of racial oppression not only in 'normal politics' but in the organizing of the labor market, in the geography of living space, and in the forms of cultural life."[36] During this period of transformation the Black Power movement, a movement that mobilized around these new definitions of race, came into being. The face of this movement, the Black Panther Party (originally the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense) formed with the agenda of creating a community where the needs of specifically Black communities could be met. When Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale formed the organization together in 1966 they created a "Ten Point Program" (later named the Ten Point Platform) which articulated what the party called for. They demanded ten things,

1. "We want freedom. We want the power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalist of our white community.
4. We want decent housing, fit for the shelter of human beings.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American history. We want the education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
6. We want all black men to be exempt from the military service.
7. We want an immediate end to the [emphasized] Police Brutality and Murder of black people.
8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in a court by a jury of their peer group -- people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United-Nations supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate for the purpose of determining the will of black people as our national destiny."[37]

As Mumia Abu-Jamal writes in *We Want Freedom,* "the [Ten-Point] program, while central to the Party, was not the ideology of the Party; it was more of an organizing tool. It was a way of getting folks to think about change, and it proposed solutions to problems faced by Black folks around the nation."[38] The significance of this platform and social organization cannot be overstated, especially considering the deliberate attempt to bury and disregard the party as radical, violent and unimportant. The Panther platform was dangerous because it negated the ideological power of the United States government. As evidenced by the *Marvelous Story of Man* textbook, students in public schools are taught ideas that do not threaten the fabric of U.S. institutions, thus there is no standard of teaching about the Panthers in U.S. public schools.

Although what is critical to note with the example of the Black Panthers, is that Black folks were able to come together based on their identity as a Black individual. The party did not consist solely of Black identified people, however it was their intention to change the social conditions facing oppressed communities starting with the Black community. Some of the survival programs started by the Black Panther Party were the free breakfast program, the free clothing and shoes program, the free ambulance program, sickle-cell anemia testing, police-alert patrols, the Panther newsletter (*The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service)*, Seniors Against a Fearful Environment (S.A.F.E.) and a free pest control program. The programs were categorized into four social policy

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[36] Omi and Winant 139

[37] Abu-Jamal, Mumia. We Want Freedom. Cambridge, Massachusetts: South-End Press, 2004. (97-100)

[38] Abu-Jamal 101

areas: human sustenance, health, education and criminal justice. [39] These programs were extremely successful while the party was active. In Lee Lew-Lee's documentary "All Power to the People," Emory Douglas explains that Jessie Andrew, the former Treasurer of the state of California said that the Black Panther Party was feeding more hungry children every day than the United States government in their free-breakfast program.[40]

Many of the programs that exist today, still exist because of the work that the panthers were doing. As Mumia Abu-Jamal writes, "Organizations such as the Black Panther Party, which have appreciable impacts on community consciousness and political development, do not simply fade into the ether. Throughout African-American history, we have seen the demise of one group presage the rise and development of another."[41] A number of local radical and revolutionary formations following the Panthers took the baton and continued the race that the Panthers began. In Philadelphia, ex-Panther members formed the Black United Liberation Front that continued many of the Panther survival programs (including the free-breakfast program) in the local area. The New African Vanguard Movement began in Los Angeles in 1994, which is an organization founded by the collective leadership of some former Panthers and many others that uses an updated version of the original Panther platform (the "Eight Point Platform") and is still active.[42] The Panther legacy takes many forms but their transformative revolutionary message has stayed strong through the people.

The Panthers were specifically set up to fight for the rights of Black folks; however, they expanded their outreach and partnerships to several other growing organizations under the same Panther ideology, "All Power to All People." At the time of his death at age 21, Fred Hampton the leader of the Chicago chapter of the party was putting together what was called the Rainbow Coalition which was a declaration of the Black Panther Party's partnership with other social organizations forming at that time. It was meant to assemble all movements fighting for the rights of their people, including the Young Patriots, the Chicano Brown Berets, the Puerto Rican Young Lords, the American Indian Movement, the Red-Guard, everyone. It was the "multi-ethnic" political partnership that Huey Newton later on extended to partnership with the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation movements as the first major social organization to partner with the Gay Liberation movement. [43] The alignment (not merging because they retained their individuality) of these organizations was done with the purpose of gaining rights for all oppressed people of every color. In "Brown Power to Brown People: Radical Ethnic Nationalism, the Black Panthers and Latino Radicalism, 1967-1973" Jefferey Ogbar writes,

> In many instances it was Latinos who proved to be the Panthers' most intimate allies. By 1967 the Brown Berets had become the first major organization to model itself after the BPP, emerging as a self-described 'shock troops' for a burgeoning Chicano movement...People of Mexican descent in the United States, like many other people of color, had sought to approximate the cultural standards of white

[39] Abron, JoNina M.. ""Serving the People": The Survival Programs of the Black Panther Party." *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*. 1st ed. Charles E. Jones. 1st ed. Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 2005. 179.

[40] Lew-Lee, Lee, dir. *All Power to the People!*. Dir. Emory Douglas. Santa Monica Video Inc., 1996. Film. 23 Sep 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWJmnFNF8no.

[41] Abu-Jamal 233
[42] Abu-Jamal 234, 235

[43] Hilliard, David, and Donald Weise. *The Huey P. Newton Reader*. 1st ed. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002. 157-160. Print.

Americans, despite the overt hostility they endured at the hands of those whites. From the European standard of beauty to the pride that people took to proclaiming European ancestry (or the denial of Indian or African ancestry), Mexican people experiences the psychological effects of racism, again as had black people"[44]

He was careful to note that Mexican-Americans, or "bronze" people experience racism as people of color in the United States. The Brown Berets even drafted "eight points of attention" which copied verbatim the [Panther] Party's eight points.[45] The partnership between the Panthers and the Brown Berets predominately took place with the west coast chapters in California, and on the east coast, Ogbar writes that "none had more intimate ties with the Black Panther Party or the Black Power movement than the largely Puerto Rican Young Lords Organization.[46] Organizing and political movements for Black and Brown people happened together during the Black Power movement.

To attest for the American Indian Movement Leonard Paltier, an active member of AIM during in the 1960s and 1970s explained "Well of course we had our own programs you know, the American Indian Movement, and we started but we patterned them after the Black Panthers organizations. We had free breakfasts, we built schools, we had our own clinics, and we went into of course communication. A lot of the things the panthers did, we patterned our ideas off of them."[47] Even more specifically, Dan Berger writes in "The Struggle is for Land" that AIM started a twenty point program that stressed land, resources and self-determination, which was more or less their own version of the Panther platform tailored to the needs of Indigenous communities living in the United States.[48] The Black Panthers were dedicated to the empowerment of all people and they forged these alliances with the Brown Berets, the Young Lords, the American Indian Movement and many more organizations, and their stance was reflected in their party slogan: "We say All Power to All the People – Black Power to Black people, and Brown Power to Brown people, Red Power to Red People and Yellow Power to Yellow people. We say White Power to White people"[49]

So again, what is the significance of the Black Panther Party and their allegiance to organizations that fought against oppression of their people? They *all* had a racial or ethnic identity at the core of their ideological actions. All of these organizations shared in the Panther beliefs and every single one of them called for a change in the institutional, political and socioeconomic structure nationally and globally – for *their people*. I argue that mixed-race people of color (and light-skinned people) were certainly involved in some, but more than likely all of these organizations at some level – but there is no mention in the Panther scriptures about a mixed identity or a partial Black identity. One would have had to choose their ethnicity, their race accordingly to be a part of these communities as they experienced the same struggles, just as Assata Shakur, Elaine Brown, Kathleen Cleaver, Afeni Shakur among many other women leaders of the Black Panther Party explained that they were all put in the place (internally and externally) where they had to choose which was more important – being Black or being a woman.[50][51] The Black Panther Party at the height of its membership was by majority women members[52], yet the alliance between the Panthers and the

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[44] Ogbar, Jeffrey O.G.. "Brown Power to Brown People: Radical Ethnic Nationalism, the Black Panthers, and Latino Radicalism, 1967-1973." *In Search of the Black Panther Party*. Ed. Lazero, Jama. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. 253, 260

[45] Ogbar 257
[46] Ogbar 262
[47] Lew-Lee "All Power to the People"
[48] Berger, Dan. "The Struggle Is for Land!" *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism* 1st ed. New Brunswick, NJ and London. Rutgers University Press. 62

[49] Jones, Charles E. and Jeffries, Judson L. *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* 1st ed. Baltimore, Maryland. Black Classic Press 2005. 3

[50] Gay, Jasmine. *Afeni Shakur: Evolution of a Revolutionary.* New York. Atria Books. 2004. Pp.49
[51] Shakur, Assata. *Assata: An Autobiography.* Chicago. Lawrence Hill Books. 2001. Pp.54
[52] Jones and Jefferies 45

Women's Liberation Movement (predominately composed of White women) came much later in the party's history. Mixed-race people, if they are aware of their multi-racial ancestry, have a need to choose what part of themselves they identify with to the world. This loss of association with a movement they believed in is what was at stake for mixed-race people who were involved with social organizations like the Black Panthers.

In my research study I asked the participants (all students) what was at stake when a person identifies as mixed-race rather than as a part of a more fixed racial group. There were some commonalities in their responses. Some answered that a mixed-race identity is "too confusing" and/or "non-specific," that it "challenges the power of the Black/White dichotomy" (which I'll admit, I was impressed with as a response) and several wrote that they "may be seen as less-than by other minority groups." The most intriguing response to this question came from one participant who answered "it represents a future of mixed-race individuals and the world is moving too slowly in their understanding of race."

I would like to pose three primary forms of resistance to mixed-race categories that persist in higher education which I will argue is an explanation as to why mixed-race studies is not widely accepted. The first is that simply adding another recognized category of Mixed-Race or studies on this identity to universities does not help the critique or deconstruct identity categorizations that are rooted in a history of racial apartheid. The second is that the recognition of a multicultural or multiracial identity does not benefit the Black community as Blackness is constructed uniquely by the One-Drop Rule. And thirdly, adding Mixed-Race Studies to colleges and universities may further challenge the survival of struggling Ethnic Studies departments and programs.

Given the present discourse we have on race in this country, the resistance to adding another recognized identity of mixed race comes both (historically) from proponents of a racial hierarchy where whites maintain superiority, as well as by people of color who actively fight against racial inequality. The United States' discourse on race has been shaped profoundly by its history of political regulation of sexuality in efforts to prevent racial mixing – I'm speaking of course, of miscegenation laws. Paul Finkelman writes about this policing of sexuality that took some of its earlier forms in the state of Virginia, where he extends his focus. As he writes,

> Virginia's early laws criminalizing interracial marriages proved to be the most durable legacy of the colonial response to race. The anti-miscegenation laws of 1865-70 that otherwise created a fundamentally new racial order, and even the Brown revolution of 1954. They remained on the books in Virginia and elsewhere in the South until 1967. At one time or another, at least thirty-eight states prohibited racially mixed-marriages, not only between whites and blacks, but also among others…As late as World War II, thirty-one states still forbid racially mixed-marriages. In 1956, the Supreme Court refused to rule on the constitutionality of miscegenation laws, in a decision constitutional law professors have difficulty explaining by any theory of law. Sixteen states still had such laws on their books, in 1967, when the Supreme Court found them unconstitutional in Loving v Virginia."[53]

The criminalization of interracial sex was in place to prevent racial mixing that ultimately, as Finkelman describes, "stemmed from the creation of slavery. "[54] But miscegenation laws were not ruled unconstitutional until over one hundred years after legal slavery ended in the United States. A mixed-race person in the context of this history was viewed as a product of sexual transgression rooted in the fear of Black and White interracial sexual relationships. But as Ranier Spencer argues

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[53] Finkelman, Paul, Crimes of Love, Misdemeanors of Passion: The Regulation of Race and Sex in the Colonial South (1997). THE DEVIL'S LANE: SEX AND RACE IN THE EARLY SOUTH, pp. 132-133
[54] Finkelman 126

in *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix* some view a mixed-race identity as a bridge of multiculturalism to deconstruct the Black White dichotomy. However, as he writes,

> As is the case with so much of multiracial ideology, the claim of racial bridging is merely stated without the least bit of critical backing, while no one inside the movement, and precious few outside it, care to point out the inconsistency. It is no more than an unproven desire, a case of wishful thinking, based on a supposed alterity of multiracial people that harks back to the marginal man.[55]

The "marginal man" that Spencer refers to was a fictional archetype character created by Sociologist Robert Ezra Parks that was meant to embody a person whose occupied two opposing racial or ethnic groups.[56] So Ranier critiques the viability of this ideology of mixed-race people being a "bridge" or a carrier of racial understanding. By adding another category of race, we are unable to break down the current constructions of race as we are still lacking the objectivity or neutrality to do so in our discourse on race.

This brings me to my second point, that recognition of a mixed-race or multiracial identity does nothing to aid, and is potentially damaging to Black-Americans, as Blackness has a unique construction. Blackness has historically been constructed as having a part of African-American ancestry, regardless of physical traits – hence, the one-drop rule. This ideology was constructed during slavery times where a person had to be able to name your 64 (sometimes 128) most recent relatives and prove that none of them were Black in order to be exempt from slavery. A mixed-race identity has nothing to do with the Black/White dichotomy, or Black/White Paradigm as Gerald Jaynes calls it[57] as it is about people who occupy the middle place of race; but at the same time, a mixed-race identity has everything to do with Blackness as mixed-race positionality means – where does this individual fall in the measure of race between whiteness and blackness? As Omar Ricks writes in *Playing Games With Race,*

> Even if multiracialism shifts us from the one-drop rule to a more graduated *mestizaje* model of racialization, this changes nothing for black people because blackness is still located at the 'undesirable' end of the continuum—or, more accurately, hierarchy. In my view, it is necessary that we first understand the stability of that unethical structural relation before we can say that multiracialism challenges racism by injecting into the racist structure a "more fluid" sense of identity. Ranier Spencer's 2009 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, "Mixed Race Chic" (Spencer, 2009, May 19), for example, asked, 'how can multiracial identity deconstruct race when it needs the system of racial categorization to even announce itself?' Posing this question as a statement would be to say that one needs for there to be a structure of race in order to call oneself multiracial. Small wonder, then, that so many celebrations of multiracial identity sound antiblack. They are…[58]

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[55] Spencer, Rainier. *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix.* Boulder, Colorado. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010. Pp 207

[56] Park, Ezra Robert. 1927. Mixed-Race Studies: Marginal Man http://www.mixedracestudies.org/wordpress/?

[57] Jaynes, G. D. (2000). *Immigration and Race: New Challenges for American Democracy* (p. 327). Yale University Press. Pp 13

[58] Ricks, Omar. "Playing Games with Race," *The Feminist Wire*, June 3, 2011. http://www.thefeministwire.com/2011/06/03/playing-games-with-race/

Ricks' gives some insight into the belief that we are unable to move towards a new consciousness on race, a "mestizaje"[59] (a name given by Gloria Anzaldua that I will discuss in detail later on) without relying on ideas from our racial past. Namely, that we cannot create a new identity category without relying on the rhetoric of previously constructed racial categorizations of race. Ethnic Studies programs may also experience this same challenge when they attempt to critique constructions of race and ethnicity as departments like Black or African-American Studies, Chicano/Latino Studies, Asian Studies, Native and Indigenous Nations Studies, which are sometimes often independent of the meta-department classification of Ethnic Studies – maintain their position through an implicit validation of racial and ethnic categorizations.

Which brings me to the third form of resistance to mixed-race categories that I identified earlier - that adding another study or department to, or independent of Ethnic Studies departments could potentially further challenge these departments struggling to survive in the current political and economic climate. In a racially-charged decision made by lawmakers in January of 2012, the state of Arizona put a ban on teaching ethnic studies in public schools. An article featured in the LA Times summarized this action with "the state enacted to protect the reputation of the White majority."[60] This is not a small action taken in a controlled environment as similar legislation has begun in the state of Utah. Is this type of action representative of the attitudes of the entire nation? Absolutely not. But it illustrates a viable force pushing to silence those who teach the histories of people with a history of racial and ethnic oppression.

We can recall that the fifth point of the Black Panther Party's Ten-Point Platform is the right to education, specifically, "we want the education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society." Consequently, how does one receive an education that teaches their true history and their role in society if their history has not yet been written or recognized? Despite all of the resistance to recognizing mixed-race as a valid identity, there are many who still believe that mixed-race is an identity, a space in-which people live; Gloria Anzaldúa is at the forefront of this ideology.

Gloria Anzaldúa & Moving Towards A New Consciousness

As is illustrated by the Black Panthers, even within movements fighting for social equality, there are people who are further marginalized by identity-based movements. Queer and trans, working-class people of color for example, live within the point of intersection where they experience oppression based on their sexuality, class, gender and racial identities. In her book *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Gloria Anzaldúa calls intersecting identity the experience of "la mestiza" which derives from an Aztec word meaning "torn between ways" where la mestiza lives in the place of the Borderlands.[61] The "Borderlands" is not easily defined as she means it in many contexts, both literal and experiential. This may also mean the experience of literally crossing borders from nation to nation, from culture to culture, from one language to one or many languages. La mestiza also experiences an inner war of cultural and spiritual values in "the coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference…la mestiza faces the dilemma of the mixed breed"[62] For Anzaldúa, this is exhausting way one lives when they occupy the place of the

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[59] Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera.* 1st ed. San Francisco. Spinsters|Aunt Lute, 1987. Pp77

[60] Rodriguez, Gregory. LA Times. Feb. 20,2012. http://articles.latimes.com/2012/feb/20/opinion/la-oe-rodriguez-ethnic-studies-20120220

[61] Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera.* 1st ed. San Francisco. Spinsters|Aunt Lute, 1987.

[62] Anzaldúa 78

Borderlands, because they are trapped between the rigid boundaries of dominant stance and counterstance where they must constantly negotiate their own beliefs, particularly in opposition to the dominant (Western) culture. "Subconsciously" she says, "we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance," but that counterstance is not enough because it reduces la mestiza to violence and it is not a way of life. The step towards a new consciousness (the consciousness of the mestizaje) towards liberation for la mestiza is "the step towards action rather than reaction."[63]

What Anzaldúa argues is that we must move towards a new consciousness, one that has a tolerance for ambiguity in order for the individual who lives in the Borderlands, and for all of us to have liberation from conflict and violence in our identities. We are not yet in this place of consciousness, which is perhaps what has fueled my research.

Part II

Research Study Methodology

My research study utilizes a Mixed-Methodology where I use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data. The population group that I sampled are students currently enrolled in classes or majors that focus on the study of race and ethnicity in Oregon Universities. The sample size is of course relatively small where I gathered data from 49 participants in a survey where I asked them a couple yes/no questions and several write-in response questions about their racial and/or ethnic identity and how well they felt that their class is engaging with their own personal experiences. The way that possible survey participants were chosen was by class, where the instructor was contacted with details about the research project and I was allowed to visit one or more of their classrooms to ask if they would like to take part in the survey. It was then passed around along with an informed consent form which included my contact information, and they were given 5-10 minutes to respond before the completed surveys were collected.

The yes/no questions included whether or not they have ever identified as mixed-race or multiracial, and whether or not they would be interested in taking a class whose focus is on Mixed-Race Studies. When I asked students how they name their racial and/or ethnic identity I intentionally left a blank space for them to write in how they identify as well as asking them if they name their race and/or ethnicity differently depending on who is asking the question, with a space to explain if necessary. The participants were asked what they feel is the purpose of classes that engage with race and ethnicity and how well they feel that the purpose they identified is being fulfilled.

Data Analysis: I. Quantitative

To recall a previously mentioned point, the 2010 the U.S. Census Bureau report included six "fixed" racial categories for respondents to choose from, which included White, Black or African-American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, with a non-specified race option meaning "Some Other Race." All of those who reported as Some Other Race were evaluated and organized into 31 modified race groups. My research findings illustrate the complexity of racial identification when people who self-report their race are not put into "modified categories."[64] The first observation to note is that out of 49 participants, there are 26 different ways respondents named or identified their race and/or ethnicity.

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[63] Anzaldúa 77-78

[64] Estimates projections, P., Modified, T., Summary, R., States, U., Rico, P., Bureau, T. C., & Program, P. E. (2010). MODIFIED RACE SUMMARY FILE METHODOLOGY, 1–4.

Of the respondents, only 21 percent reported that they have identified as mixed-race or multiracial before which would seem relatively insignificant if not for the fact that the U.S. Census Bureau reported only 2.9% of the U.S. population as identifying as part of two or more racial groups. A total of 32 or 65% of participants identified themselves as being part of one group, thus 35% reported being a part of two or more racial or ethnic groups. 15 out of the 32 who identified as part of one group named themselves as white, Caucasian or Euro-American.

Perhaps the most surprising of all findings is that 78% of respondents said "Yes" to the question – would you be interested in taking a class whose focus is on the study of a mixed-race or multiracial identity? If 21% reported as identifying as mixed-race or multiracial before and 78% reported they would be interested in taking a class on mixed-race identity, there appears to be a significant interest in mixed-race studies even in this time where higher education is becoming less and less affordable for students.

Data Analysis: Qualitative

As a researcher, one has to search for the implicit question within the question, and on the subject of race, I believe that qualitative analysis is essential in analyzing discourse within a few handwritten words on a page. I intentionally asked participants to name their race and/or ethnicity knowing full well that race and ethnicity are two different pieces of one's identity. The purpose is to see if participants would name race and ethnicity in a singular way, identify them separately or explain that race and ethnicity are two different identities that are often blurred together. Of course, this can also indicate that a participant identifies with the culture associated with a racial group they identify with.

The fact that 15 out of 49 total participants identified as white while later on articulating that they often would identify differently as Irish, Italian, Portuguese, English, Romanian or simply as European American agrees with Mary Waters argument in "Optional Ethnicities." She writes "For white students, the ethnicity they claim is more often than not a symbolic one."[65] She asserts that these "optional ethnicities" for whites carry with them, an erasure of an oppressed history for non-whites.

Were there a significant number of students surveyed that identified as mixed-race alone? No, there was only one. However, a trend that surfaced in my data analysis is that all but one of the students who said they would be interested in taking a class on mixed-race studies had different responses as to why they would be interested in the subject. This makes it very difficult to organize into thematic responses, but I can give some of the consistencies in the responses: they had a partner of a different racial identity or a mixed-race child, it was something they hadn't learned about before in an academic setting and would be interested, that it's important to understand different identities and experiences, and two respondents said it would help them better understand the different parts of themselves.

The research question that guided this entire study was – are the racial experiences and understandings of mixed-race identified people being addressed in classes that engage with and critique race? Based on the responses I got from the students I surveyed, I believe the answer to

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[65] Waters, Mary C.. "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?" In Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America, edited by Sylvia Pedraza and Ruben Rumbaut, 444-454. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press, 1996. Pp 205.

this question is no, they are not. But is the inclusion of mixed-race studies into higher education the next step towards engagement with all students' racial and ethnic experiences? That is yet to be determined.

Conclusion/Further Questions

Through this research process my question has changed shape. Given that the students in this study overwhelmingly answered yes, they would be interested in taking a class on mixed-race studies, then my question as I move forward is – why *haven't* more universities experimented with bringing mixed-race studies into their curriculum that engages with race and ethnicity?

What does it mean for a person who speaks one language, only knows one nation of residence who occupies the spiritual and psychological borderlands that Anzaldúa writes of? A person who identifies as multi-racial without a pre-constructed ethnicity then only has a word, a notion of where they belong amidst a nation reliant on choices and dichotomous structures of choosing. The evidence shows that our national consciousness is not yet that of la mestiza as Gloria Anzaldúa defines it, since we are still required to negotiate and categorize our identify ourselves amongst a list of unclear choices. As a mixed-race, queer person of color born in this nation, the child of two orphaned parents, one a first-generation immigrant – my race and my ethnicity is a place where I have only borrowed language to explain where I fit.

In 1986 Omi and Winant concluded, "For now, racial dynamics are adrift in the unsettling waters of an overall crisis in US politics and culture."[66] I argue that we are still occupying this place of crisis, and if we are not yet in the place of higher consciousness, then we must learn to create change within the boundaries of the society in which we live.

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[66] Omi and Winant 144

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