

Soc/Anth 205 Ethnic Groups in Contemporary Societies
 Three-Part Assignment: Group Discussion, Presentation & Term Paper

Tomorrow, November 4, 2008 is an historic day in the United States. We will either have an African-American President or a Woman Vice-President as a result of tomorrow's election. We have given a great deal of consideration in this class to inter-group relationships and most especially inter-group conflict. At the base of this discussion is the concept of stigmatization.

Erving Goffman, author of the book defined *Stigma*, defines stigmatization as the act of assigning a "spoiled identity" to another. To be stigmatized is to be regarded as less than human. It is a social relationship that allows "normal" people to feel okay about themselves at the expense of marking another person as "abnormal."

Part of the minority group/dominant group relationship relies upon stigmatization to increase the power of the dominant group and reduce the life chances of minority group members. Thus, tomorrow's election is important because, at least symbolically, a stigmatized person will be breaking a mold that once said the presidency is not a place for women or African Americans.

| USA TODAY GALLUP POLL | Non-Hispanic Whites | Blacks | Hispanics |
|---|---------------------|--------|-----------|
| If Barack Obama wins the presidential election, do you think race relations will: | | | |
| Get better | 54% | 65% | 63% |
| Not change | 25% | 16% | 21% |
| Get worse | 20% | 16% | 13% |
| | | | |
| If Obama loses, do you think race relations will: | | | |
| Get better | 13% | 18% | 14% |
| Not change | 54% | 45% | 56% |
| Get worse | 31% | 34% | 26% |

Source: USA TODAY/Gallup Poll taken June 5-July 6 of 702 non-Hispanic whites, 608 blacks and 502 Hispanics. Margins of error: Plus-or-minus 5 to Plus-or-minus 6 percentage points.

There are many who see this election as a major stepping stone to political and social change.

With this background, your assignment for this course will be as follows:

- November 4 Pay attention to discussions of race or ethnicity about the election from different media sources. They can be radio, television, internet or print. It can be anything that has to do with race or ethnicity and the election: voting patterns, innuendoes by commentators, favorable or unfavorable portrayals, frank discussions about race relations, etc. Bring 3 examples of the race and/or ethnicity references with you to class on November 5th.
- November 5 We will break into groups of 3 or 4 at the beginning of class. This will be the group with whom you will be making your class presentations on December 1st. You will have some specific questions to discuss regarding your media references. Then you will be given information of the presentation and accompanying term papers. The projects are going to be about developing better ethnic and race relations in the United States.
- December 1 Each group will give a presentation and each member of the group will write an accompanying term paper. The presentation will be 100 points. The term paper will be 100 points. You will receive more information about both on November 5.