Race and Ethnic Relations Bibliography in Preparation for
M.A. Comprehensive Exam

This list of literature on “Race” is by no means comprehensive and exhaustive, but gives a taste of the breadth of subjects with which a race scholar should be familiar. There are classic works omitted from this list and empirical works which are not represented—not to slight those important contributions, but to hone in on the range of theoretical works and controversial ones that have shaped important debates in the discipline over the past twenty years. General topics, themes and tensions that a graduate student should be comfortable discussing include, but are not limited to:

The race/ class debate on causes of inequality in the U.S.

Divergent and integrative theories of race within sociology, ethnic studies, and multi-disciplinary spaces (i.e. critical race studies, cultural studies, postcolonial theory, multi-systems feminism)

The socio-political and historical roots of contemporary racial hierarchies

Institutional and ideological manifestations of racism.

The social construction of whiteness

The role of immigration, miscegenation laws and labor laws in racial formations

The concept of racial/ethnic identity as a fluid not fixed notion

Institutional and ideological prospects for anti-racist social change, resistance, and transcendence.

Sample Comp Exam Questions for Race & Ethnicity

1) Some scholars argue that racial inequality is secondary to social class inequality and thus declining in significance. Others argue that racism is by no means secondary, and takes on a life of its own as a source of social inequality, both ideologically and institutionally. In your essay join this debate. Provide a general overview of the theoretical arguments on both sides of the issue within the sociology of race and ethnic studies. Take a position, and make a theoretically and scientifically sound argument by supporting your position with the academic literature that grounds the study of race and class.

2) In the post-Civil Rights era, sociologists have increasingly studied issues of race with an intersectional lens by examining the manner in which race intersects with class, gender, and sexuality to shape social life. Why is the use of such a lens important in contemporary sociology? How does it challenge traditional assumptions about race? How does an intersectional approach to examining issues of race, such as racial inequality in the workforce and education, political mobilization along racial lines, immigration, and the proliferation of
colorblind ideology, deepen and complicate our understanding of these issues? In your answer, discuss at least three issues of race in depth. Be sure to cite at least 5 seminal works in your answer.

3) Today, some people claim the US is now a "post-racial" society in which discussions around race and racism are no longer relevant to current social realities. As a sociologist of race and ethnicity, do you agree with such a claim? Why or why not? In your response, draw upon existing scholarly work to support your argument.

**General Topics, Themes and Issues in the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations**


Collins, Patricia Hill. *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice (Contradictions in Modernity).* University of Minnesota Press.


Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2014 Racial Formations in the United States from the 1960’s to the 1990’s. Routledge Press


