

**Sept. 22**

1. Origins of racial and ethnic categories
2. **Prejudice, inequality, and racism**
3. Theoretical tradition 2: conflict theory

# **Prejudice, inequality, and racism**

# Racial and ethnic identity

## Identity

- Race, ethnicity, and nationality are important aspects of many people's identities
- Define ties to a community, sets of traditions, and shared culture and past
- Still true for racial categories, despite their oppressive origins and social ascription
- Complex relationship between internal culture and external hierarchies

## Power structures

- Race, ethnicity, and nationality are very often employed in the definition and maintenance of power relations
- Power relations between groups
- Power relations between individuals

# State oppression

## Formal state oppression

- Governments often employ racial, ethnic, and national categorization to justify formal policies of dominance

## Elimination

- Genocide
  - Holocaust
  - Indigenous Americans
  - Congo Free State
- Expulsion
  - Acadian expulsion
  - Indigenous Americans
  - Jews (1492) and Moriscos (1609) from Spain

## Subordination

- Segregation
  - South African apartheid
  - American slavery and “Jim Crow” laws
  - Suffrage (voting) restrictions
- Assimilation
  - Residential schools
  - Colonial religious conversion
  - Banning behavior/dress (e.g. hijab, turban, kippah ban)

# Informal discrimination

## Non-state sanctioned discrimination

- Much racial, ethnic, and national oppression exists outside of formal legal frameworks
- Culturally and socially supported

## Physical violence

- Although laws may not differentiate along racial or ethnic lines, rates of violence and enforcement of laws do
  - Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls
  - Police violence
  - “Stand your ground” laws

# Informal discrimination

## Unequal opportunity

- Education
- Employment and wages
- Housing
- Credit

## Everyday perceptions

- Informal interactions display marked discrimination in treatment and expectations
- **Racial steering and social expectations**  
Representation of Black Americans and expectations of criminal activity
- **“Status characteristics”**  
Informal expectations of leadership  
Internalized racial stereotypes
- **Socialization and self-perception**

# Informal discrimination

## Privilege

- Any socially enforced power relation has winners and losers
- Dominant groups usually seen as “normal” baseline
- Dominated experience seen as abnormal or exceptional  
Marginalization of oppressed communities’ experience
- Intersects with other power structures, not always aligned  
Wealth, class, education, ...
- ‘Privilege’ refers to *de facto* benefit of being a member of a dominant racial or ethnic category  
Trust versus distrust  
High versus low expectations  
Benefit of the doubt versus suspicion