University of Alabama in Huntsville

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RCEU Project Proposals   Faculty Scholarship

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"I want them to know I'm part of the community": LGBTQIA Mixed-Race Experiences of Misperception

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Project Title

"I want them to know I'm part of the community:" LGBTQIA mixed-race experiences of misperception

Faculty Information

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Proposal ID   RCEU22-SOC-JPS-01

RCEU22-SOC-JPS-01 Project Proposal

I. Project Description

Since race is a socially constructed category, what race someone "looks like" is based on societal associations of physical and other characteristics. However, racial perception is inextricably linked to perceptions of gender and sexual orientation, which also rely on socially defined descriptive characteristics. As a part of Dr. Sims' ongoing research project "Decentering Heteronormativity in Critical Mixed Race Studies," this RCEU project will analyze 20 LGBTQIA mixed-race adults' experiences with being misperceived by race, gender, and/or sexuality. The motivation for and goal of the project is to understand how narrowly defined descriptive characteristics impact real people and to use that knowledge to improve sociological theories as well as the social experiences of multiply marginalized populations.

II. Student Duties, Contributions, and Outcomes

a. Specific Student Duties

The student-researcher's duties will include data analysis and literature review. Regarding the former, the student-researcher will learn to use QDA Miner, a qualitative data analysis software package, while working with Dr. Sims to analyze 20 LBGTQIA mixed-race interviewees' experiences. The student-researcher will also find and read about 15 peer-reviewed research articles (i.e., about two per week) on race, gender, and sexual perception/misperception. They will produce an annotated bibliography that they and/or Dr. Sims can use to write a literature review for a future publication.

b. Tangible Contributions by the Student to the Project

The student-researcher will advance this project by helping complete data analysis and by helping start or complete the literature review. These contributions will directly lead to publication of the work.

c. Specific Outcomes Provided by the Project to the Student

As an outcome of participation in this project, the student-researcher will firstly learn and gain practice conducting qualitative analysis. Secondly, from searching for relevant literature, the student will learn how to find, read, and identify key findings from scholarly work as well as gain knowledge of perceptions and misperceptions of race, gender, and sexual orientation. Finally, from completing an annotated bibliography, the student-researcher will improve their writing skills. These outcomes will be useful to the student-research in future courses, graduate school, and/or a variety of employment positions.

III. Student Selection Criteria

The student-researcher must have an interest in supporting race, gender, and/or sexual minorities and in studying race/ethnicity, gender, and/or sexuality. They must also have at least sophomore standing by summer 2022, and have passed the following college level courses (or have the transfer equivalent):

(1) *both* EH101: College Writing I and EH102: College Writing II

(2) *either* SOC100: Introduction to Sociology or PY101: General Psychology I

(3) *any* methods course (e.g., SOC301, PSY302, COM370, etc.)

Applicants who have also completed college courses on, or who have experience in organizations that focus on, Race/Ethnicity, Gender/Sexuality, and/or Qualitative Research Methods will receive preference.

IV. Project Mentorship

Dr. Sims will provide the student-researcher with skills training and mentorship. Meeting two times a week in the Sociology Department Lab, one meeting will be devoted to data analysis and the other to literature review. During data analysis meetings, Dr. Sims will first teach, then supervise, and finally simply hear reports on the student-researcher using the computer software to analyze the textual data. During literature review meetings, the student-researcher and Dr. Sims will discuss the most recently read articles. By listening to the student-researcher's summary of the articles as well as reviewing drafts of the annotated bibliography, Dr. Sims will be able to ensure that the student-researcher is learning to find appropriate academic literature, that they are learning how to identify and synthesize key information from the studies, and that their writing skills are improving.