

The Idea of Race
HIST 3390: Special Topics
CRN 22592, Spring 2024
University of Texas at El Paso
MW 1:30-2:50
Liberal Arts Bldg. 207

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Office hours: Mon. 10:30 am--12:00pm; Wed. 12:15-1:15; and by appointment

Course Description

This course explores the history of the idea of race, as well as certain moments in the history of racism. During the early modern period (1400-1800), “race” became understood as a biological category whose members shared certain inherited physical and mental characteristics. Such thinking usually included a hierarchical ranking of races. During the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, race-thinking was often accompanied by the belief that race was tremendously important and was the key to understanding history and identity. These beliefs helped justify various forms of exclusion and oppression, with catastrophic consequences. Much of the readings, discussion and lecture will involve intellectual history and the history of science. But we will place these ideas in their social contexts (colonialism, slavery, national and religious identity), and will consider how three countries became overtly racist regimes: the United States after Reconstruction, Nazi Germany, and South Africa under apartheid. For history majors and minors, this course may be used to fulfill either field I (United States) or field IV (Europe).

Readings

Available in bookstore:

George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (2002)

Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott, eds., *The Idea of Race* (2000)

Other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

20% Attendance and participation. Read assigned material, attend class, pay attention and take notes, and participate in class discussions. Ideally, you should complete the reading listed for each class before that class occurs. But if you run out of time, you should still come to class!

15% Informal responses on Blackboard. About every other week you will answer a question about the reading. Instructions will be provided for each of these informal writing assignments. Due dates will be announced as we go along.

15% 5-page paper using primary sources from week 4, due on Feb. 16.

5% Research exercise using 19th-century newspapers, on either Gobineau or Latin races, due on Feb. 28 or March 4.

20% Midterm exam, March 6. It will consist of a few essay-type answers to some pre-circulated questions involving the readings and material from the first half of the class.

5% Lead discussion on one of the readings on the syllabus during second half of course.

20% Take-home final exam. Will consist of essays and short-answer questions based on readings and lectures.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments (Subject to Change)

1/17 Introduction: Parameters and themes of the class

1/22 Definitions and significance

Fredrickson, *Racism*, introduction (pp. 1-13)

Holt, Thomas C. "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History." *American Historical Review* 100, 1 (1995): 1-20.

Staum, Martin S. *Labeling People: French Scholars on Society, Race, and Empire, 1815-1848* (2003), Chapter 1, pages 3-10

EARLY MODERN EUROPE AND THE INVENTION OF RACISM

1/24 Iberian Roots

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 1, pp. 17-35

James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought." *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, 1 (1997): 143-166.

1/29 The New World

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 1, pp. 35-42

Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, "The Conquests of the Canary Islands," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (1994), 134-156.

T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, excerpt

1/31 Transatlantic slavery and views of Africans

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 1, pp. 42-47

Vaughan, Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan. "Before *Othello*: Elizabethan Representations of Sub-Saharan Africa." *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, 1 (1997): 19-44.

2/5 Racial Bodies in the Colonial World

Read one of these:

- Chaplin, Joyce. "Natural Philosophy and an Early Racial Idiom in North America: Comparing English and Indian Bodies." *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997): 229-52.
- Cañizares Esguerra, Jorge. "New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650." *American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (1999): 33-68.

2/7 Racial Mixing in the Atlantic World

Holt, Thomas C. "Of Blood and Power: An Introduction." *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, 3 (2004): 435-438.

Read one of these:

- María Elena Marínez. "The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, 3(2004): 479-520
- Guillaume Aubert, "'The Blood of France': Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, 3 (2004): 439-478

THE RISE OF MODERN RACISM

2/12 La Peyrère, Bernier, Lamarck, Voltaire

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 2, pp. 51-64 (up to 1780s)

François Bernier, "A New Division of the Earth" (1684), in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 1-4.

François-Marie Voltaire, "Of the Different Races of Men" (1765) in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 5-7.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. and Andrew S. Curran, eds. *Who's Black and Why? A Hidden Chapter from the Eighteenth-Century Invention of Race*. Harvard University Press, 2022, preface and introduction, p. 3-25.

Recommended: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 24-36.

2/14 Buffon, Kant, Blumenbach

Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*, 3-8.

Immanuel Kant, "Of the Different Human Races" (1777) in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 8-22.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, J. from *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1795), in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 27-37.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. and Andrew S. Curran, eds. *Who's Black and Why? A Hidden Chapter from the Eighteenth-Century Invention of Race* (2022), introduction, p. 25-43.

Paper on Bernier, Voltaire, Kant, Blumenbach, Bordeaux due Feb. 16, midnight.

2/19 Age of revolution

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 2, pp. 64-75 (up to 1840s)

Staum, Martin S. *Labeling People: French Scholars on Society, Race, and Empire, 1815-1848* (2003), pages 13-22 (ch. 1) and 23-48 (ch. 2)

2/21 Nation and race

Johann Gottfried von Herder, from *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humankind* (1784) in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 23-26.

G. W. F. Hegel, "Anthropology" (1830) in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 38-44.

Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (1820), p. 1-6 of chapter 1 (not the 30-page dedicatory epistle!):

https://books.google.com/books?id=zzQJAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0 - v=onepage&q&f=false

2/26 Measuring skulls and contesting race

Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), chapters 1 and 3.

Recommended: one of these:

Britt Rusert, *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture* (2017), introduction.

Bay, Mia. *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People* (2000), introduction, 3-38.

2/28 1850s: Gobineau, Knox, Degeneration

Arthur de Gobineau, from *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853), in *The Idea of Race*, 45-53.

Stepan, Nancy Leys. "Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places." In *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, ed. J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, 97-120.

Sylvie André, "The Aryan Myth," in *Companion to Literary Myths, Heroes and Archetypes*, ed. Pierre Brunel. Routledge, 2016 [1988], 149-152.

Research exercise using 19th-century newspapers is due, if choosing Gobineau

3/4 Latin races, "Latin America", and other forms of whiteness

Michel Chevalier, *Society, Manners and Politics in the United States* (1839), introduction only (pages 9-18):

https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/S0KfXK0GCBMC?hl=en&gbpv=1

McGuinness, Aims. "Searching for 'Latin America': Race and Sovereignty in the Americas in the 1850s." In Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003, 87-107.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Harvard University Press, 1999, introduction (p. 1-12).

Research exercise using 19th-century newspapers is due, if choosing Latin races

3/6 Midterm

3/18 Darwin and Social Darwinism

Charles Darwin, "On the Races of Man" (1871), in *The Idea of Race*, 54-78.

3/20 China and Japan

Dikötter, Frank.

3/25 The Global Color Line

W. E. B. Du Bois, from *The Conservation of Races* (1897), in *The Idea of Race*, 108-117

Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race"

(1986) in *The Idea of Race*, 118-135

Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's*

Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality (2008), introduction.

3/27 Comparing the United States and Germany (1830s-1890s)

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 2, pp. 75-95

[Dreyfus Affair?

TWENTIETH CENTURY

4/1 Overtly racist regimes vs. imperialism

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 3, pp. 99-114

Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, selection.

4/3 Eugenics

Francis Galton, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims" (1904), in *The Idea of Race*, 79-83.

Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science*, chapter.

José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race*, TBA

4/8 Jim Crow and South Africa between the world wars

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 3, pp. 115-117

Franz Boas, "Instability of Human Types" (1911) in *The Idea of Race*, 84-88

Alain Locke, "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture" (1924) in *The Idea of Race*, 89-99

[Barkan or Conklin

4/10 Nazi Germany and Interwar Europe

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 3, pp. 117-128

Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, chapter 3: "Healthy Bodies, Sick Bodies."

4/15 United Nations and the Cold War

Ashley Montagu, "The Concept of Race in the Human Species in the Light of Genetics" (1941) in *The Idea of Race*, 100-107

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 3, pp. 128-132

Brattain, Michelle. "Race, Racism, and Antiracism: UNESCO and the Politics of Presenting Science to the Postwar Public." *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (2007): 1386-1413.

4/17 Post-war Europe: decolonization and immigration

Leopold Senghor, "What is 'Negritude'?" (1961), in *The Idea of Race*, 136-138

Neil MacMaster, *Racism in Europe, 1870-2000*, chapter 6

4/22 South Africa: apartheid

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 3, pp. 128-132

4/24 Social construction and identity

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, excerpt from *Racial Formation in the United States* (1986) in *The Idea of Race*, 181-212

Read one of these:

Michael Hanchard, "Black Cinderella? Race and the Public Sphere in Brazil" (1994) in *The Idea of Race*, 161-180

Linda Alcoff, "Mestizo Identity" (1995) in *The Idea of Race*, 139-160

4/29 Twenty-First Century

Fredrickson, *Racism*, chap. 3, pp. 139-150

5/1 Critical race theory

TBA

Final exam due on Wed. May 8 at midnight.