

History of Modern Racism

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PHL/ANT/AFA 203: History of Modern Racism
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Racial classification today is commonplace; people routinely catalogue others and themselves as members of this or that race, and most assume that everyone can be racially categorized. In other words, most Americans believe that their race is a "real," biological feature of persons, an objective, physical feature as measurable and verifiable as their sex, height, weight or age. Yet most scholars agree that race is a thoroughly modern notion. In fact, many argue that the concept of "race" as we use it was "invented" as recently as a few hundred years ago. In this course, we will look at the "invention" of race and the effects this concept has had in American culture. The course will begin with "scientific" writings on races in the 17th century and critically assess the role those thoughts played in the justification of the slave trade and slavery in the United States. We will examine the legal status of non-whites in the United States, both prior to the Civil War and after the Civil War. We will then look to see how the concept of race evolved in our "separate but equal" society, from the (in)famous Dred Scott decision to the landmark Brown v. School Board of Education decision, which declared "separate but equal" as unconstitutional. Finally, we will consider the new race arguments springing from the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the effects those arguments have had on race consciousness today.

Required Texts:

The Idea of Race, eds. Bernasconi and Lott (BL)
White on Black, Pieterse (P)
Race and Races: Cases and Resources for a Diverse America, eds. Perea, Delgado, Harris, Wildman (PDHW)
A Little Matter of Genocide, Churchill (C)

I place unreturned assignments in a file drawer in the Philosophy Office, FH 544. This file drawer is a public space and you can retrieve your graded work at your convenience.

Course Requirements:

Extra credit is not possible at any time for anyone under any circumstances.

Grade Scale:

A 95-100
A- 90-94.9
B+ 87-89.9
B 84-86.9
B- 80-83.9
C+ 77-79.9
C 74-76.9
C- 70-73.9
D+ 67-69.9
D 64-66.9
D- 60-63.9

2 exams (midterm and final): These exams will require students to demonstrate an understanding of key philosophical terms used in the course as well as demonstrate knowledge of the central debates in these areas of study. All the questions for both exams will be essays. Both exams will be open notes but not open book. You are required to bring to each exam a large (8.5 x 11) bluebook. The midterm is worth 10% and the final is worth 20% of the course grade.

article write-ups: Students are required to write a short essay that describes the main ideas of each article assigned from the Idea of Race (BL) text. The essays are due in class on the day for which the article(s) is assigned. These essays should be about 100-200 words long (typed, double-spaced). Handwritten essays are accepted only in extraordinary circumstances and are NOT advisable. The write-ups are due when you arrive to class. (If you are late to class, place the essay on the table at the front of the classroom and take your seat.) Students who miss class may not hand in the essay later. If you anticipate missing a class, you may turn in the essay PRIOR to the class you will miss.

12 write-ups are assigned; the 2 lowest grades will be dropped. The write-ups will count for a total of 20% of the course grade.

Each write-up essay will be graded using the following scale:

- 4: demonstrates an understanding of the important idea(s) of the article
- 3: demonstrates a familiarity with the main idea(s) of the article
- 2: demonstrates a familiarity with at least one idea in the article
- 1: demonstrates some understanding of the article
- 0: demonstrates no understanding of the article; did not hand in a write-up

Discussion participation: Once a week students are required to post a response on the web

page created for this class in response to a "Case Study" question. I will hand out Case Study questions every Monday during class; after that class the questions will be posted on the web. A response (or a response to a student's response) is due by the following Sunday at midnight. You are required to answer only one question to one case study per week (although you are free to respond to as many questions and/or posts as you wish.) The web postings will count for a total of 20% of the course grade.

You get to this address via my web page: <http://spruce.flint.umich.edu/~jamia/>

As you write your answer, keep in mind that the point of writing a posting is to initiate thoughtful and dispassionate discussion. This will not happen if you fail to make it clear which case you are writing about or which question you are answering. Moreover, it is not enough to merely answer the question; you must also give a reason for that answer. Your reason does not have to be lengthy, but it must be there. It is pointless simply to write "Yes, he should" or "No, that is wrong" as such an answer does not contribute to a philosophical discussion.

Please keep in mind that you are not permitted to skip weeks and then "load up" by writing several posts at the end of the semester. Posts will be graded on a pass/fail basis and you will receive 1 point for every post that "passes." 14 posts are required so your participation grade will be determined by dividing the number of points you earn by 14.

The first post will be due Sunday, January 11 at midnight; the last will be due Sunday, April 18, at midnight.

Critical Essays: After the midterm, we will be reading primarily from the Race and Races text. Once a week you will be required to hand in a critical essay addressing the issues raised in the articles in that text. I will hand out the essay question on Fridays during class. The papers, which must be 2-3 pages long (typed, double-spaced) will be due one week later in class. There will be a total of 9 essays due. None of the grades will be dropped, but you may rewrite any essay once. The new paper grade will be averaged with the grade of the first version. The essays will count for a total of 30% of the course grade.

Semester Schedule:

1/5: introduction to course

1/7: Bernier (BL), Voltaire (BL); Imagery of Eurocentrism (P)

1/9: Kant (BL); Savages, Animals, Heathens, Races (P)

1/12: Herder (BL); Slavery and Abolitionism (P), In the Dark Continent (P)

1/14: Blumenbach (BL); Colonialism and Western Popular Culture (P)

1/16: Hegel (BL); Images of Apartheid (P), On Adventure in Africa (P)

1/19: Martin Luther King Day-No Classes

1/21: Gobineau (BL); Servants (P)

1/23: Darwin (BL); Entertainers (P)

1/26: Galton (BL); Popular Types (P), Kidstuff (P)

1/28: Boas (BL), Locke (BL); Libido in Colour (P)

1/30: Montagu (BL); Blacks in Advertising (P)

2/2: midterm exam

2/4: Defining Racism, pages 1-13 (PDHW)

2/6: Defining Racism, pages 14-50 (PDHW)

2/9: Defining Race, pages 50-64 (PDHW)

2/11: Defining Race, pages 64-77 (PDHW)

2/13: Defining Race, pages 77-90 (PDHW)

2/16: African Americans, pages 91-103, (PDHW)

2/18: African Americans, pages 103-118 (PDHW)

2/20: African Americans, pages 118-131 (PDHW)

2/23: African Americans, pages 131-141 (PDHW)

2/25: African Americans, pages 141-156 (PDHW)

2/27: African Americans, pages 156-172 (PDHW)

2/29-3/7: Winter Break-No Classes

3/8: Genocide in the Americas, pages 97-122 (C)

3/10: "Nits Make Lice," pages 129-188 (C)

3/12: "Nits Make Lice" continued, pages 188-252 (C)

3/15: American Indians, pages 173-191 (PDHW)

3/17: American Indians, pages 191-219 (PDHW)

3/19: American Indians, pages 220-245 (PDHW)

3/22: Latinos/as, pages 246-291 (PDHW)

3/24: Latinos/as, pages 291-325 (PDHW)

3/26: Latinos/as, pages 326-366 (PDHW)

3/29: Asian Americans, pages 367-397 (PDHW)

3/31: Asian Americans, pages 397-412 (PDHW)

4/2: Asian Americans, pages 412-428 (PDHW)

4/5: Whiteness, pages 429-455 (PDHW)

4/7: Whiteness, pages 455-478 (PDHW)

4/9: Whiteness, pages 478-499 (PDHW)

4/12: Race and Crime, pages 1017-1034 (PDHW)

4/14: Race and Crime, pages 1035-1066 (PDHW)

4/16: Race and Crime, pages 1066-1076 (PDHW)

4/19: Race and Crime, pages 1076-1090 (PDHW)

4/20: study day-no classes

4/21: Final Exam, 1:30-4:00