

Spring 2019  
HIS 3454, section 334D  
EUH 3931, section 334F  
AMH 3931 section 334E

M,W,F | Period 7 (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM)  
Keene-Flint 121

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## **The History of Racial Theories**

This course introduces students to the subject of racial ideas and images as they developed over time in Europe and the United States. We will begin with the ancient world and the question of what it means to “think racially.” Did racialism exist in the ancient world? How did ancient Greeks and Romans think about difference? How did the authors of the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testament) think about difference? Is the recognition of difference at the physical or anatomical level necessarily racial thinking, or is something additional required? What was the relationship between the physical and non-physical (i.e., intellectual, spiritual, moral) in ancient thought? Did difference necessarily imply hierarchies of superior and inferior? And what, finally, were the practical, material implications of all this thinking about difference? We will begin in the ancient world and proceed to ask these questions of texts produced in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Age of Discovery, Enlightenment, and into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Required Texts:**

George Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History*  
Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*

There will also be articles that you will be required to read over the course of the semester. These have been uploaded onto CANVAS.

**Course Requirements:** Attendance is required. More than three unexcused absences and your grade will begin to suffer seriously.

There are two mid-term exams in this course and one take-home assignment.

The first midterm exam, worth approximately 25% of the final grade, will be given on March 1.

The second midterm exam, worth approximately 35% of the final grade, will be given on April 24.

These exams will both be in-class. They will consist mainly of essay questions; there may also be identifications.

There is also a take-home assignment, which is worth 45% of the final grade. The details of this assignment will be provided to you early on in the semester and will also be posted on the Canvas site.

Grades are based on a number of interconnected factors: mastery of assigned material, analytical skills, and writing ability. Quality counts over quantity. To the extent that we can judge such things, effort also counts. This does not mean that you get credit just for showing up and doing the minimal amount of work. Rather, it means that you get some credit if your work conveys an investment of time and mental energy on your part, even if the final product is not perfect.

Please do not hesitate to contact me during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students with disabilities need to talk with me and inform me of their special needs. Please consult the official University handbook for information on disability policies.

**Organization of the Course:** The lectures and discussions are organized thematically. We will spend as much time as necessary on a theme and then move on to the next. Classroom meetings will consist of a combination of general historical background and focused analysis of a particular example of culture. The reading assignments are designed to supplement these thematic discussions. If you attend class on a regular basis you should have no trouble matching the readings to the lectures.

## **Course Content and Schedule**

### **1. Introduction**

Reading:

George Fredrickson, *Racism*: "Introduction," pp. 1-14, and "The Concept of Racism in Historical Discourse," pp. 151-170.

Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, "Three Centuries' Perspectives on Race and Racism," pp. 391-424

Optional Reading: Gould, "Introduction," pp. 19-61.

## **2. The Ancient World: Biblical and Classical Thinking about Difference**

### **Reading:**

Biblical texts

Hippocrates, "On Airs, Waters, and Places"

Fredrickson, *Racism*, Chapter 1: "Religion and the Invention of Racism," pp. 15-48.

Frank Snowden, "Misconceptions about African Blacks in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Specialists and Afrocentrists," *Arion*, 1997

## **3. Racial Thinking in Medieval Christendom**

### **Reading:**

Robert Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity"

Thomas Hahn, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes"

Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race", parts I and II

## **4. Renaissance and the Age of Discovery**

### **Reading:**

Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, "Before Othello: Elizabethan Representations of Sub-Saharan Africans," *The William and Mary Quarterly*

James Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," *The William and Mary Quarterly*

## **5. The Paradox of the Enlightenment and the Emergence of Modern Racial Thought**

Reading:

Frederickson, *Racism*, Chapter 2, "The Rise of Modern Racism(s)," pp. 49-98;

Nicholas Hudson, "From "Nation to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*

Londa Schiebinger, "The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*

## **6. The Nineteenth Century I: Race and Nationalism in Europe**

Reading:

Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, "Measuring Heads," pp. 105-141.

## **7. The Nineteenth Century II: Race and Slavery in the United States**

Reading:

Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, "American Polygeny and Craniometry Before Darwin," pp. 62-104.

## **8. Darwin, Social Darwinism and Eugenics**

Reading:

Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, "Measuring Bodies," pp. 142-175.

Sheila Faith Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany," *Osiris*

### **9. "Double Consciousness": How the Objects of Racial Theory Respond**

Reading:

Gilman and Stepan, "Appropriating the Idioms of Science"

### **10. Race and Racism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Reading:

Frederickson, *Racism*: "Climax and Retreat: Racism in the Twentieth Century," 97-138

Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, "The Hereditarian Theory of IQ," pp. 176-265.

### **11. Conclusion**

Reading:

Frederickson, *Racism*, "Racism at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century," 139-150.