

Spring 2025
WHO 3931

M,W,F | Period 7 (1:55-2:45)
Keene-Flint 119

Prof. Mitchell Hart
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3-4 pm., and by appointment

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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 19th and 20th centuries.

Required Texts:

George Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History*

There will also be articles that are required as indicated in the weekly readings below. There are also articles recommended but not required for those who wish to delve deeper into the subject. These have been uploaded onto the e-learning (Canvas) site.

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

There are three mid-term exams in this course.

The first midterm exam, worth approximately 30% of the final grade, will be given on **Friday, February 21**.

The second midterm exam, worth approximately 30% of the final grade, will be given on **Friday, April 4**.

The third midterm exam will take place on **Wednesday, April 23**. This will be worth 40% of the final grade.

These exams will be in-class. On the day of the exam you will be need to bring a clean (empty) exam book—either blue or green—and a pen.

Note: in order to receive a final grade in this course you must take all three exams.

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.

Grading Scale

A = 100–93 (4.0) B = 86–83 (3.0) C = 74–71 (2.0) D = 62–60 (1.0)
A- = 92–90 (3.67) B- = 82–79 (2.67) C- = 70–67 (1.63) D- = 59–56 (0.67)
B+ = 89–87 (3.33) C+ = 78–75 (2.33) D+ = 66–63 (1.33) F = below 55 (0)
For more information see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code of the University of Florida. The Academic Honor Code is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and responsibility on the part of the University community. For a full explanation of visit:

www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html. An excellent website that discusses plagiarism, correct citing of references, and correct use of quotations is:

<http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=adaa44500eaf460a84f238e6b9a558f9>.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:

Disability Accommodations: Students requesting accommodation should first register with the Dean of Students Office so that you have documentation for all your courses. For more information about services available to University of Florida students: Dean of Students Office Disability Resource Center, 202 Peabody Hall or 0020 Reid Hall Phone: (352) 392-1261/(352) 392-8570 or at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

UF Counseling and Academic Resources: On-campus services are available for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals. They include:

1. U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or (352) 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
2. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1575,
3. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1171
4. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1161
5. CareerResourceCenter,ReitzUnion,(352)392-1601<http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>
6. E-learning technical support: (352) 392-4357/ email: Learningsupport@ufl.edu

<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

7. LibrarySupport,<http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>
8. WritingStudio,302TigertHall,(352)846-1138<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

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.

Important Note: The lectures and slides shown in class will not be available on Canvas and will not be distributed to you at any time during the semester. It does not matter what you hear or are told by others at the University. You are expected to take notes during the lectures.

Organization of the Course: The lectures 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 particular examples. 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:

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

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

Reading:

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

Optional: Biblical texts posted on Canvas

Hippocrates, "On Airs, Waters, and Places"

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

3. Racial Thinking in Medieval Christendom

Reading:

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

Thomas Hahn, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes"

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

4. Renaissance and the Age of Discovery

Reading:

Optional: 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:

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

Optional: 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. Racial Thinking in the United States

Reading:

Required:

Thomas Gossett, "Nineteenth-Century Anthropology"

Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924"

Optional:

Gossett, "The Indian in the Nineteenth-Century"

Peter D'Agostino, "Crania, Criminals, and the 'Cursed Race': Italian Anthropology in American Racial Thought, 1861-1924"

7. Darwin, Social Darwinism and Race

Reading:

Required: Thomas Gossett, "Race and Social Darwinism"

Optional: Robert Nye, "Heredity or Milieu: The Foundations of Modern European Criminological Theory"

8. Eugenics

Reading:

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

Wendy Kline, "Eugenics in the United States"

9. Racial Hygiene

Reading:

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

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