

Race in Comparative Perspective
GOV 94RC
Dr. Christopher Rhodes
Fall 2023 Syllabus

Course Meetings:
Tuesdays 6:00-8:00pm
CGIS Knafel K031

Email: crhodes@post.harvard.edu
Office Hours: TBD

Introduction

In much of the “West,” including the Americas and Europe, issues of racial identity permeate politics, economics, culture and society. Race exists alongside classifications such as gender, religion and class as one of the dominant social forces in many societies, providing a source of both cooperation and conflict for people across a host of social contexts.

Yet, despite its pervasiveness in modern politics and social organization, the predominant western conception of race is a relatively recent idea formed in the context of European imperialism, trade, exploration and slave trading and developed by many of the most important Enlightenment figures of the 17th and 18th centuries. This course explores various analogues to “race” that developed in other civilizations; focuses on the context and thinkers that were key to the European development of race and racism in the modern era; and examines the variations in “race” that developed in various political and social contexts.

The course is divided into four sections. Section I looks at the world before race, exploring notions of identity and division from a variety of cultures from ancient times. Section 2 examines the “invention” of race, examining the various religious, philosophical, economic, “scientific” and political factors that contributed to the development of modern western ideas of race and racial hierarchy. Section 3 examines ideas and practices concerning race, showing how the concept of race has been conceived in significantly diverse ways across countries and over time. Section 4 examines how individuals, organizations and communities have defined, redefined, and mobilized their own racial identities across a number of countries, regions and time periods.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend all class meetings in person. Students are additionally expected to complete all required reading for each week before class, and come prepared to discuss the material in class. Beyond generally reading the course material, students may be assigned specific readings that they should be prepared to discuss in class. Absences from class meetings or failure to actively participate in class discussions can negatively impact your class participation grade. If you anticipate missing a class meeting due to an acceptable reason (such as illness or bereavement, religious holiday or observance, or approved university-sponsored activity or event), please inform instructor in advance and, when applicable, complete a written assignment to be given in lieu of attendance for that meeting. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please contact your professor as soon as you can after the meeting to discuss the missed material and possible make-up assignment.

A note on class discussions and inclusion: Dealing with issues of race and racism can be challenging. Nothing in the course is intended to shock or offend, but we will be reading and discussing ideas, policies and practices that may contain shocking or offensive content. There will presumably be disagreements and divergent viewpoints within the class, which are key parts of academic discourse. I ask that you approach readings and discussions with an open mind and heart, and that you show yourselves and your classmates respect and grace as you engage with one another. Please reach out to me (or if you are uncomfortable doing so, speak with a resident advisor) if at any point you become uncomfortable or distressed by class material or discussion.

Readings

Readings are drawn from academic journals, scholarly books and news sources and can be accessed through the course website. Some readings may change to reflect current events – changes will be announced and posted to course website. Readings present a variety of perspectives, some of which may qualify, contradict or oppose perspectives from other readings. Documents on this list have been chosen for a variety of reasons. The inclusion of a reading on this syllabus should not be considered an endorsement of the content or viewpoints expressed in that reading. All readings should be approached critically.

A note on “how” to read for this class: There are a number of assigned readings for this course. Most of them are required, and you are expected to have completed these before each meeting. When reading, generally read first and foremost for main ideas, points and motivations of each article. What are the authors trying to say, and why are they trying to make these points? Additionally, the texts are rich in details and examples that you can think about and even explore based on what you are reading. Don’t get bogged down trying to read footnotes (though they are there if you want to explore a particular point from the reading in greater depth), and don’t worry if some of the articles contain technical details (quantitative analysis, game theory, etc.) that might be unfamiliar. If you understand these analytical tools, great! If not, try to focus on the main substantive points the author is trying to make.

The Harvard College Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the Harvard College Honor Code, which states: “Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.”¹

For more information on the Honor Code, see: <https://honor.fas.harvard.edu/about>

¹ “The Harvard College Honor Code.” <https://honor.fas.harvard.edu/honor-code>. Accessed August 5, 2021.

Course Policy on Collaboration

You are allowed and encouraged to discuss course material with your classmates and others outside of class. However, there are no collaborative written assignments for this course, and all graded assignments are intended to be completed individually. All written work submitted by a student for this class should consist of that student's own individual ideas, that student's research and be in that student's own words. All quotations, paraphrases and additional uses of others' ideas and work should be clearly and properly identified and referenced. See honor code above for class expectations.

Assignments

The final grade for this class will be based on the following assignments:

- Class participation (20% of final grade)
 - Includes attendance, general participation during in-class discussions and discussions of specific assigned readings.
- Three short (5 page) papers (16% each, 48% total)
- Final 10 page paper (32%)
 - Paper prompts will all be distributed early in the semester, as will a grading rubric. Papers should be submitted by the due date and time; late papers will subject to a grading penalty, as specified on the prompt. Contact your professor as soon as possible if you anticipate that you may not be able to submit a paper by the date and time when it is due.

Course Preview Period Meeting

Introduction to Gov 94RC: “ ‘Race is a Social Construct.’ So What?”

For a flavor of the topics covered in the course, feel free to read or skim any of the following passages, which are posted on the course website. (Enrolled students will be expected to read these passages in addition to the week 1 material below.)

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A brief history of humankind*. Random House, 2014. Chapter 8 “There is No Justice in History” (excerpt)

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial formation in the United States*. Routledge, 2014. Chapter 2.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the world and me*. One World, 2015. Chapter 1 (excerpt)

Class Outline
SECTION 1: THE WORLD BEFORE RACE(?)

September 5

Week 1: *The Middle Kingdom and the “Four Barbarians”*

Required readings:

Li, Jianjun. "The “Chinese/barbarian distinction” and cultural nationalism." In *Between Deontology and Justice*, pp. 217-229. Routledge, 2019.

Ge, Zhaoguang. "Ethnicity: Including the “Four Barbarians” in “China”?" In *What Is China?*, pp. 64-94. Harvard University Press, 2018.

Fiskesjö, Magnus. "On the ‘raw’ and the ‘cooked’ barbarians of imperial China." *Inner Asia* 1, no. 2 (1999): 139-168.

Dikötter, Frank. "Group definition and the idea of ‘race’ in modern China (1793–1949)." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 3 (1990): 420-432.

Campbell, Charlie. “How Beijing Is Redefining What It Means to be Chinese, from Xinjiang to Inner Mongolia” *Time*. July 12, 2021.

Additional resources:

Zhi, Chen. "From exclusive Xia to inclusive Zhu-Xia: the conceptualisation of Chinese identity in early China." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14, no. 3 (2004): 185-205.

Junping, Liu and Deyuan Huang. "The evolution of tianxia cosmology and its philosophical implications." *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 1, no. 4 (2006): 517-538.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/where-did-indians-come-from-part-3-what-is-caste/>

September 12

Week 2: *Caste is Exactly Like Race, Except Not At All*

Required readings:

Kallie Szczepanski, Kallie. "History of India's Caste System" ThoughtCo. Feb. 25, 2020.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The origins of our discontents*. Random House, 2020. Selected passages.

Gupta, Dipankar. "From Varna to Jati: The Indian caste system, from the Asiatic to the feudal mode of production." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 10, no. 3 (1980): 249-271.

Nadkarni, M. V. "Is caste system intrinsic to Hinduism? Demolishing a myth." *Economic and political weekly* (2003): 4783-4793.

Chakravorty, Sanjoy "Viewpoint: How the British reshaped India's caste system" BBC. June 19, 2019.

Chakravarti, Ananya "Caste Wasn't a British Construct – and Anyone Who Studies History Should Know That" *The Wire (India)*. June 30, 2019.

Mazumdaru, Srinivas "Caste protests spotlight India's contentious quota system" DW. February 23, 2016.

Jones, Timothy. "India's caste system: Weakened, but still influential" DW. July 17, 2017.

Kelkar, Ram. "The Nationalists Try – But India Remains Among the World's Oldest Melting Pots" *The Wire (India)* August 12, 2021.

"Skin colour tied to caste system, says study" *Times of India*. Nov 21, 2016.

Additional Resources:

Freitas, Kripa. "The Indian caste system as a means of contract enforcement." Northwestern University, unpublished manuscript (2006).

Focus on the non-technical parts of the article (pages 1-11, 45-47); you don't have to read the rest (though you can if you are interested and/or like economic modeling).

Bates, Crispin. "Race, caste and tribe in central India: The early origins of Indian anthropometry." (1995).

Fuller, C. J. "Ethnographic inquiry in colonial India: Herbert Risley, William Crooke, and the study of tribes and castes." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 23, no. 3 (2017): 603-621.

September 19

Week 3: Playing the 'Rome' Card: Ancient Greco-Roman Identities

Required readings:

Kennedy, Rebecca Futo "Is there a race & ethnicity in Greco-Roman antiquity?" Classics at the Intersection (Blog). April 8, 2019. <https://rfkclassics.blogspot.com/2019/04/is-there-race-or-ethnicity-in-greco.html>

Rubel, Alexander. "What the Romans really meant when using the word 'Barbarian.' Some thoughts on 'Romans and Barbarians' " in Curcă, Roxana-Gabriela, Alexander Rubel, Robin P. Symonds, and Hans-Ulrich Voß, eds. Rome and Barbaricum: Contributions to the Archaeology and History of Interaction in European Protohistory. Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, 2020.

Isaac, Benjamin. The invention of racism in classical antiquity. Princeton University Press, 2013. Chapter 5 "Roman Imperialism and the Conquest of the East."

Ando, Clifford. "Race and citizenship in Roman law and administration." Xenofobia y racismo en el mundo antiguo (2019): 175-188.

Joshel, S. (2009, January 04). Roman Slavery and the Question of Race. BlackPast.org. <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/perspectives-global-african-history/roman-slavery-and-question-race/>

Additional Resources:

Garnsey, Peter. Roman citizenship and Roman law in the late empire. In Swain, Simon, and Mark J. Edwards, eds. Approaching late antiquity: the transformation from early to late empire. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Kennedy, Rebecca Futo "E Pluribus Plures: Identities in a Multiethnic Ancient Mediterranean" Classics at the Intersection (Blog). July 14, 2019. <https://rfkclassics.blogspot.com/2019/04/is-there-race-or-ethnicity-in-greco.html>

Moralee, Jason. "Maximinus Thrax and the politics of race in late antiquity." Greece & Rome 55, no. 1 (2008): 55-82.

Bond, Sarah E. "Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color" Hyperallergic. June 7, 2017. <https://hyperallergic.com/383776/why-we-need-to-start-seeing-the-classical-world-in-color/>

September 26

Week 4: Father Abraham Had Many Sons

Required readings:

The Books of Genesis and Exodus excerpts (English Standard Version preferred)

Ophir, Adi, and Ishay Rosen-Zvi. *Goy: Israel's multiple others and the birth of the gentile*. Oxford University Press, 2018. Introduction and Chapters 1 and 5.

Isaac, Benjamin. *The invention of racism in classical antiquity*. Princeton University Press, 2013. Chapter 13 "Jews"

The Quran (excerpts)

Albayrak, Ismail. "The People of the Book in the Qur'ān." *Islamic Studies* (2008): 301-325.

El Hamel, Chouki. "'Race', slavery and Islam in Maghribi Mediterranean thought: the question of the Haratin in Morocco." *The Journal of North African Studies* 7, no. 3 (2002): 29-52.

Additional Resources:

Lopez-Jantzen, Nicole. "Between empires: Race and ethnicity in the early Middle Ages." *Literature Compass* 16, no. 9-10 (2019): e12542.

De Rougemont, Denis. *The idea of Europe*. Macmillan, 1966.(excerpts)

Ophir, Adi, and Ishay Rosen-Zvi. *Goy: Israel's multiple others and the birth of the gentile*. Oxford University Press, 2018. Chapters 2 and 8.

Friday, September 29 PAPER 1 DUE BY 5PM EST VIA EMAIL

SECTION II: THE INVENTION OF RACE

October 3

Week 5: I've Got Soul (But I'm Not a Soldier): The Catholic Church and Race

Required readings:

Johnson, Sylvester. *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God*. Springer, 2004. Chapter 2: Divine Identity and the Hamitic Idea in Historical Perspective

Hochman, Adam. "Is 'Race' Modern?" *Aero*. March 12, 2020. <https://aeon.co/essays/fact-check-the-idea-of-race-is-not-modern-but-late-medieval>

Noonan Jr., John T. "Development in Moral Doctrine" *Theological Studies* 54 (4), 1993. Pgs 664-667.

Panzer, Joel. "The Popes and Slavery." *The Church in History Information Center*. 1996.

(Don't worry, the Papal documents are generally pretty short)

Pope Urban II. "Speech at Council of Clermont" 1095. (Five versions of the Speech)" <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/urban2-5vers.asp>

Pope Eugene IV. "Sicut Dudum" January 13, 1435.

Pope Nicholas V. "Dum Diversas." 1452.

Pope Nicholas V. ""Romanus Pontifex." 1455.

Pope Alexander VI "Inter Caetera." May 4, 1493.

Pope Paul III. "Pastorale officium" May 29, 1537.

Pope Paul III. "Sublimis Deus" June 2, 1537.

Pope Gregory XVI, "In Supremo Apostolatus" December 3, 1839

Pope Paul VI. "Gaudium Et Spes" December 7, 1965. (Sections 27-29)

October 10

Week 6: "The Fellow Was Quite Black" – The Enlightenment and (Scientific) Racism ***Required readings:***

Marks, Jonathan. "Long shadow of Linnaeus's human taxonomy." *Nature* 447, no. 7140 (2007): 28-28.

Hoquet, Thierry. "Biologization of Race and Racialization of the Human." In Bancel, Nicolas, Thomas David, and Dominic Thomas, eds. *The invention of race: scientific and popular representations*. Routledge, 2014. 17-32.

Kant, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* 1764. (excerpt)

Larrimore, Mark J. "Substitutes for Wisdom: Kant's Practical Thought and the Tradition of the Temperaments." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39, no. 2 (2001): 259-288.

David Hume, *Of National Characters* (excerpt)

Waldmann, Felix. "David Hume was a brilliant philosopher but also a racist involved in slavery." *The Scotsman*. July 17, 2020. See also Waldmann, Felix. *Further Letters of David Hume*. Edinburgh Bibliographical Society. 2014.

Poskett, James. "Django Unchained and the Racist Science of Phrenology." *The Guardian* (London). Feb. 5, 2013.

Additional resources:

McGrath, John. "The Enlightenment" in *Modernization of the Western World: A Society Transformed* (2nd Edition). , Ch.10 "The Enlightenment." Routledge 2018.

SECTION III: RACE WITH MANY TRACKS

October 17

Week 7: This is America: Spanish and British Colonialisms

Required readings:

Martínez, María Elena. "Social Order in the Spanish New World." *When Worlds Collide: The Untold Story of the Americas After Columbus* (2010).

Bustamante, Adrian. "The Matter Was Never Resolved: The Casta System in Colonial New Mexico, 1693-1823." *New Mexico Historical Review* 66, no. 2 (1991): 2.

Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America*. Hachette UK, 2016. Part I. "Cotton Mather" (Chapters 1-6).

Marx, Anthony W. Making race and nation: A comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil. Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pgs,120-157, 217-249.

Additional resources:

Franklin, John Hope, and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham. From slavery to freedom. New York: Knopf, 1956. Chapters 5-8.

Slack Jr, Edward R. "The Chinos in New Spain: A corrective lens for a distorted image." *Journal of World History* (2009): 35-67.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "America Wasn't a Democracy, Until Black Americans Made It One" *New York Times*. Aug. 14, 2019.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20 PAPER 2 DUE BY 5PM EST VIA EMAIL

October 24

Week 8: Fifty Shades of White: British Martial Races and Theories of Whiteness

Required readings:

Spivey, Adam. "Friend or Foe? Martial Race Ideology and the Experience of Highland Scottish and Irish Regiments in Mid-Victorian Conflicts, 1853-1870" East Tennessee State University Masters Thesis. 2017.

Rand, Gavin. "'Martial Races' and 'Imperial Subjects': Violence and Governance in Colonial India, 1857-1914" *European Review of History—Revue europe'enne d'Histoire* Vol. 13, No. 1, March 2006, pp. 1-20

Kirk-Greene, Anthony HM. "'Damnosa Hereditas': Ethnic ranking and the martial races imperative in Africa." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 3, no. 4 (1980): 393-414.

Hochman, Adam. "Of Vikings and Nazis: Norwegian contributions to the rise and the fall of the idea of a superior Aryan race." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 54 (2015).

Eltringham, Nigel. "'Nordics' and 'Hamites': Joseph Deniker and the Rise (and Fall) of Scientific Racism." In *Ideas of 'Race' in the History of the Humanities*, pp. 251-272. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017.

Additional resources:

Staudenmaier, Peter. "Racial Ideology between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Julius Evola and the Aryan Myth, 1933-43." *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, no. 3 (2020): 473-491.

October 31

Week 9: Black Powers: Haiti and Brazil

Required readings:

Garrigus, John. *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue*. Springer, 2006:

- Chapter 2, "Race and Class in Creole Society: Saint-Domingue in the 1760s"
- Chapter 5, "Citizenship and Racism in the New Public Sphere"
- Chapter 8, "Free People of Color in the Southern Peninsula and the Origins of the Haitian Revolution, 1789–1791"

Charles, Jean Max. "The Slave Revolt That Changed the World and the Conspiracy Against It: The Haitian Revolution and the Birth of Scientific Racism" *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 51(4) 2020: 275–294.

Marx, Anthony W. *Making race and nation: A comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pgs 81-83, 158-193, 250-266.

Htun, Mala. "From 'Racial Democracy' to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil." *Latin American Research Review*. 2004.

Additional Resources:

Winant, Howard, "Rethinking Race in Brazil." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Feb. 1992.

Fry, Peter. "Politics, Nationality, and the Meanings of 'Race' in Brazil." *Daedalus* 2000.

Aubert, Guillaume. "'The Blood of France': Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004): 439-478.

November 7

Week 10: Gotta Keep 'Em Separated: Apartheid South Africa and Whiteness in the US

Required readings:

Marx, Anthony W. *Making race and nation: A comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pgs 84-119, 194-216.

Adhikari, Mohamed. "'God made the white man, God made the black man...': Popular racial stereotyping of Coloured people in apartheid South Africa." *South African Historical Journal* 55, no. 1 (2006): 142-164.

Baldwin, James. "On being white... and other lies." *Essence* 14.12 (1984): 90-92.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a different color*. Harvard University Press, 1999. Introduction.

Yang, Philip Q. and Koshy, Kavitha. "The 'Becoming White Thesis' Revisited," *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 1.

Beltran, Cristina (interviewed by Lulu Garcia-Navarro). "Understanding Multiracial Whiteness And Trump Supporters" NPR. January 24, 2021. (Read or listen) <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/24/960060957/understanding-multiracial-whiteness-and-trump-supporters>

Additional Resources:

Karlsson, Jenni. "Schooling space: where South Africans learnt to position themselves within the hierarchy of apartheid society." *Pedagogy, Culture and society* 12, no. 3 (2004): 327-346.

Waters, Mary C. "Optional ethnicities." in Andersen, Margaret, and Patricia Hill Collins. *Race, class, & gender: An anthology*. Nelson Education, 2015. 201-209.

Friday, November 10 PAPER 3 DUE BY 5PM EST VIA EMAIL

SECTION IV: THE AVENGERS

November 14

Week 11: Pan's Labyrinth: African, Arab, and Indigenous Identities and Solidarities

Required readings:

Adogamhe, Paul G. "PAN-AFRICANISM Revisited: Vision and Reality of African Unity and Development" *African Review of Integration* Vol.2 No.2, July 2008

Mellon, James G. "Pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism and inter-state relations in the Arab World." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8, no. 4 (2002): 1-15.

Hall, Thomas D., and James V. Fenelon. "Indigenous movements and globalization: What is different? What is the same?." *Globalizations* 5, no. 1 (2008): 1-11.

Lawrence, Bonita, and Enakshi Dua. "Decolonizing antiracism." *Social justice* 32, no. 4 (102 (2005): 120-143.

Hedetoft, Ulf Riber. *The Politics of Multiple Belonging: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe and East Asia*. Ashgate, 2004. Chapters 12 and 13.

Additional resources:

Contee, Clarence G.. "Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919." *The Journal of Negro History* , Jan., 1972,

Stastny, Angelique, and Raymond Orr. "The influence of the US Black Panthers on indigenous activism in Australia and New Zealand from 1969 onwards." *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 2 (2014): 60-74.

Hammine, Madoka. "Indigenous in Japan? The reluctance of the Japanese state to acknowledge indigenous peoples and their need for education." In *Sámi educational history in a comparative international perspective*, pp. 225-245. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.

November 21

Week 12: Racial Alchemy

Required readings:

Calderon, Jose. "'Hispanic' and 'Latino' The Viability of Categories for Panethnic Unity." *Latin American Perspectives* 19, no. 4 (1992): 37-44.

Vidal-Ortiz, Salvador, and Juliana Martínez. "Latinx thoughts: Latinidad with an X." *Latino Studies* 16, no. 3 (2018): 384-395.

Kibria, Nazli. "The contested meanings of 'Asian American': Racial dilemmas in the contemporary US." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21.5 (1998): 939-958.

Bhangal, Naseeb and Oiyen Poon. "Are Asian Americans White? Or People of Color?" *Yes! Magazine* Jan. 15, 2020.

Trieu, Monica M. "'It was about claiming space': exposure to Asian American studies, ethnic organization participation, and the negotiation of self among southeast Asian Americans." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 21, no. 4 (2018): 518-539.

Additional Resources:

Padilla, Felix M. "On the Nature of Latino Ethnicity." *Social Science Quarterly* 65.2 (1984): 651. ProQuest. Web. 11 Aug. 2021.

Marrow, Helen. "To be or not to be (Hispanic or Latino) Brazilian racial and ethnic identity in the United States." *Ethnicities* 3, no. 4 (2003): 427-464.

Zhou, Min. "Are Asian Americans becoming 'White'?" *Contexts*. Vol 3 (1). Winter 2004.

FINAL PAPER DUE DATE TBD