

RACE AND IDENTITY IN THE EARLY UNITED STATES

Topics in Race and Ethnicity (21:512:409)
Mondays & Wednesdays, 4-5:20pm
Conklin Hall, Room 446
Spring 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This upper-level history course introduces the historiography of the complex topic of race in the United States, focusing on the period between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. Over the past half-century, scholars have dramatically reshaped our understanding of “race,” both as it functions in the present day, and how our current racial categories were established in the context of African enslavement in the New World. One of the critical interventions of this scholarship has been to highlight the importance of “whiteness” as an often-unmarked racial category; and to trace the extent to which the American nation was conceived and functioned as a “White republic.” Furthermore, in the context of a history classroom, the topic of race and identity raises the important issue of the politics of the past—how different “pasts” are claimed by different identity groups, in ways that historicize and naturalize categories such as race and nation.

This course is designed for students who already have a college-level grounding in the history of the United States during this period (e.g., have taken History of the U.S. I). The focus of the course is less on how differently raced individuals and people actually lived, what they did, etc.; than on how they came to have racial identities, and how those identities intersected with structures of power and other of forms of identity (gender, class, sexuality, etc.) in the early United States. We will approach this subject from two angles: first, by looking at some of the many cultural, legal, and political ways that race was constructed and maintained in the early United States; and then by focusing on the role of narrations of the past in supporting Black and White racial and national identities.

The reading assignments for each class consist of key works of scholarship on these themes, which will be elaborated through lectures and group work focusing on relevant primary documents. We will also visit the Newark Museum in small groups outside of class time (sign-up sheets will be distributed in early February).

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

10% Class Participation

Participation will be graded in terms of regular and constructive contributions to class discussions and group work, as well as performance on occasional readings quizzes and other short in-class writing assignments. For each unexcused absence beyond three, your FINAL GRADE will drop by 5%.

15% Response papers

Students will write three 2-3 page papers, responding to the readings for class. Students may select which set of readings to respond to, but the papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day for which the readings are assigned. At least one of these papers must be written during Unit 1 (by March 9). No late response papers will be accepted.

20% Short Papers (due March 2 and May 4)

20% Midterm Exam (March 11)

35% Final Exam (May 13)

POLICIES

Academic Integrity All assignments submitted for this class must be your own original work, and information derived from other sources—whether or not you quote it directly—must be cited appropriately. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be investigated fully, in accordance with the Rutgers Policy of Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>).

Accommodations If you require accommodations to meet course requirements, please inform me as early in the semester as possible. If you do not already have a Letter of Accommodation from Disability Services, please contact the Paul Robeson Campus Center Office of Student Life and Leadership to obtain one (<http://robeson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html>).

Attendance Students are expected to make every effort to attend class regularly. Excused absences require documentation in writing, and are defined by the course catalog as: “illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” For each unexcused absence beyond three, your FINAL GRADE will drop by 5%. Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Cell Phones Except in cases of emergency, cell phones must be turned completely off during class.

Citations For response papers, brief parenthetical in-text citation that includes the author and the page number is sufficient—e.g., (Moses, 24). All other written work should use Chicago-style footnotes and bibliography, unless otherwise specified.

Communication Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions related to the class. I strongly urge everyone to take advantage of my office hours—or to make an appointment if you are unable to come then. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours, so please plan ahead if you have a question related to a paper or exam.

Computers and Tablets Laptops and tablets are permitted in class for the purposes of accessing the readings and taking notes only. Please do not use facebook/email/etc during class time, as it can be a distraction for yourself and other students.

Lecture Slides PowerPoints for all lectures will be posted on Blackboard before each class, and are recommended to be used as study guides for exams.

Written Work All written work must be submitted in **hardcopy**, either in class, or to the folder outside of my office. Late work will be penalized an automatic ½ letter grade reduction for each day (i.e., the maximum grade that can be earned on a paper that is turned in the day after it is due is an A, the following day an A-, etc.), unless a doctor's note or similar official excuse can be provided. No late response papers will be accepted.

LECTURES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

We will be reading all or most of the following books, which are available for purchase at the campus bookstore, at NJ Books, and via Amazon, and on reserve at the library:

1. Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). Available as e-book
2. Michael A. Morrison and James Brewer Stewart, editors, *Race and the Early Republic: Racial Consciousness and Nation-Building in the Early Republic* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002). Available as e-book
3. Susannah J. Ural, editor, *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). Available as an e-book
4. David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. Edited by Sean Wilentz (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

All other readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Please bring your readings and notes with you to every class

Wednesday, January 21

Introductions

Unit 1: Creating and Contesting American Race

Monday, January 26

Theorizing Race, Ethnicity, and Nation

- Thomas H. Eriksen, "What is Ethnicity?" in *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 1-17.
- Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation," reprinted in *Race Critical Theories*, edited by Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg (London: Blackwell, 2002), 123-145.
- Benedict Anderson, "Introduction" in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 1991), 1-7.

Wednesday, January 28

Slavery and Race

- Barbara J. Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* 1/181 (1990): 95-118.
- Scott L. Malcolmson, "'The Essence of Whiteness': Spain, England, and the Colors of Empire," in *One Drop of Blood: The American Misadventure of Race* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000), 277-291.

Monday, February 2

White Racial Science in the Early American Republic

- *Skull Collectors*, Introduction and Ch. 1

Wednesday, February 4

Classifying Native Americans

- *Race and the Early Republic*, Ch. 2
- *Skull Collectors*, Ch. 2

Monday, February 9

American School of Ethnology

- Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, Ch. 3

Wednesday, February 11

Black Ethnology

- Mia Bay, selection from *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- *Race and the Early Republic*, Ch. 4

Monday, February 16

Race-Making “Things”

- Robin Bernstein, “Introduction: Playing Innocent: Childhood, Race, Performance,” in *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 1-29.
- Kirk Savage, selection from *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Wednesday, February 18

American Imperial Expansion

- *Skull Collectors*, Ch. 4
- *Race and the Early Republic*, Ch. 8
- *Civil War Citizens*, Ch. 6

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, February 18-20

Newark Museum visits in small groups, times TBA

Monday, February 23

Labor, Immigration and Race

- *Race and the Early Republic*, Ch. 1, Ch. 5, Ch. 6

Wednesday, February 25

Northern Racism

- *Race and the Early Republic*, Ch. 3
- *Civil War Citizens*, Ch. 7

Monday, March 2

Museums and Art Academies as Race-Making Places

Paper 1 Due

Wednesday, March 4

Race in the Confederacy

- *Civil War Citizens*, Ch. 2, Ch. 4, Ch. 5

Monday, March 9

Race in the Union

- *Civil War Citizens*, Ch. 1, Ch. 3

Last Day to Submit First Response Paper

Wednesday, March 11

Midterm Exam

SPRING BREAK: No class March 16 or 18

Unit 2: White and Black American Pasts

Monday, March 23

The Role of Racial and National Histories

- Thomas Eriksen, "Ethnic Identity and Ideology," in *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, 59-77
- Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 1-14.

Wednesday, March 25

History and Citizenship

- David C. Littlefield, selection from "Revolutionary Citizens, 1776-1804," in *To Make Our World Anew, Volume 1: A History of African Americans to 1880*, edited by Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Partha Chatterjee, "National History and its Exclusions," reprinted in *Ethnicity*, edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 209-214.

Monday, March 30

Biblical History

- Hilton Obenzinger, selection from "'Christianography' and Covenant," in *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)
- Stephen G. Hall, selection from *A Faithful Account of the Race: African American Historical Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 17-61

Wednesday, April 1

Heroes of the American Revolution

- Margot Minardi, selection from *Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Monday, April 6

Ancient Egypt as American History

- Wilson Jeremiah Moses, selection from "From Superman to Man: A Historiography of Decline," in *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 44-63.
- Scott Trafton, selection from "The Curse of the Mummy: Race, Reanimation, and the Egyptian Revival," in *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 140-164.

Wednesday, April 8

Ancient Greece and Rome

- Eran Shalev, selection from “Taking the Toga: American Patriots Performing Antiquity” in *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 114-141.
- Selection from Hall, *A Faithful Account of the Race*, 61-73

Monday, April 13

African History

- James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ch. 1-2, pp. 17-65

Wednesday, April 15

Black Historians

- David Walker’s *Appeal*, Articles I and II

Monday, April 20

David Walker’s World

- David Walker’s *Appeal*, Articles III and IV

Wednesday, April 22

Americans in Ancestral Lands

- Sidbury, *Becoming African in America*, Ch. 4, pp. 91-126
- Steven L. Dyson, selection from “Prehistory,” in *Ancient Marbles to American Shores: Classical Archaeology in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 14-21

Monday, April 27

Native American History as White History

- Philip J. Deloria, selection from “Fraternal Indians and Republican Identities,” in *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 46-62.
- Jill Lepore, “The Curse of Metamora,” in *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 191-226.

Wednesday, April 29

Anglo-Saxons and Normans

- Ritchie Devon Watson, Jr., “A Universal Yankee Nation: Northern Racial Mythmaking,” in *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 119-134.
- Reginald Horsman, “Providential Nation” and “Romantic Racial Nationalism,” in *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 81-97 and 158-186.

Monday, May 4

Final Exam Review

Paper 2 Due

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 13, 11:45am-2:45pm