

102379/Special Topics in Philosophy/Spring 2020

Graduate Seminar on the History and Philosophy of Race and Racism

Meetings take place Thursdays via Zoom from 11-2

Unit Description:

This semester the focus of this unit will be on the history, philosophy, and politics of race and racism.

Academic race discourse sits at the intersection of overlapping research programs taking place in a number of fields including cultural anthropology, the history of science, sociology, political theory, communication studies, and critical philosophy of race. While the questions being posed by these fields generally start with an analysis of the concept of race—and its various histories as a biological, political, and/or cultural construction—the subsequent investigations cover a wide territory such that analyses of socio-economic forces, power and oppression in the State, the history and politics of slavery, immigration and asylum, incarceration, and institutional and structural racism, sit alongside separate investigations in black feminism, political phenomenology, standpoint epistemology, and philosophical historiography, to name only a few.

In this semester's unit we will open with an overview of the area, and some brief time spent on the major discussions taking place in anthropological, sociological, and philosophical discourse from population genetics to "white fragility" and the racial justice movement today.

The remainder of the semester will be divided into themes including:

Anti-Black Racism and the African American Experience, from the "New Negro" to Black Liberation
European Colonialism and the Politics of Revolution
Islamophobia as Racism
Aboriginal Sovereignty

Housekeeping Notes:

All readings will be available on vUWS, with additional source material added on a regular basis. Students should check the vUWS site regularly for announcements and changes to the schedule.

Attendance in the seminar is compulsory so please send me a brief email if you anticipate an absence due to illness or misadventure: j.mensch@westernsydney.edu.au

Remember to always have a copy of the readings, either printed out or on a digital device, to class with you so you can follow along with the discussion and text analyses.

I am happy to meet people by appointment, just send an email and we'll set up a zoom time: j.mensch@westernsydney.edu.au

Week	<p>Seminars meet every Thursday on Zoom from 11-2</p> <p>Please have digital or hard copies of seminar readings with you to consult during class; all required and recommended readings will be available on vUWS.</p>
1: 23/7	<p>Required: Read Hochman, “Janus-Faced Race: Is Race Biological, Sociological, or Mythical?” in <i>The American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i> (forthcoming); Lentin, “Race Beyond Social Construction,” in <i>Why Race Still Matters</i> (Polity Press, 2020), 16-51; Macintosh, “The Invisible Knapsack”; Listen to the <i>Invisibilia</i> podcast, “White v. White” (link on vUWS). Read through the ‘Conceptual Toolkit’ I’ve put together for you.</p> <p>Recommended: Gravlee, “How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality,” <i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i> 139 (2009): 47-57; Goodman, Moses, and Jones, “Creating Race,” “Human Mismeasure,” “Inventing Whiteness,” in <i>Race: Are We so Different?</i> (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012): 15-61; Omi and Winant, “Racial Formation in the United States,” in <i>The Idea of Race</i> (Hackett, 2000): 181-212.</p> <p>Background Reading (Social Sciences/History): Diangelo, <i>White Fragility: Why it’s so hard for white people to talk about racism</i> (Beacon Press, 2018); Kendi, <i>How to be an Antiracist</i> (Penguin, 2019); Bonilla-Silva, <i>Racism without Racists</i> (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018); Delgado and Stefancic, <i>Critical Race Theory</i> (NYU Press, 2017); Oluo, <i>So You Want to Talk about Race?</i> (Seal Press, 2018); Irving, <i>Waking up White</i> (Elephant Room Press, 2018); Roediger, <i>Working Toward Whiteness</i> (Basic Books, 2005); Painter, <i>The History of White People</i>; Wing Sue, <i>Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence</i> (Wiley, 2015); Wing Sue, <i>Microaggressions and Marginality</i> (Wiley, 2010); Moses et.al, <i>How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology</i> (Altamira, 2014); Fairbanks, <i>Everyone is African: How Science Explodes the Myth of Race</i> (Prometheus, 2015); Kevles, <i>In the Name of Eugenics</i> (Harvard, 2004); Roberts, <i>Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century</i> (New Press, 2011); Wailoo, et.al., <i>Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History</i> (Rutgers, 2012); Zuberi, <i>Thicker than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie</i> (Minnesota Press, 2001); Saini, <i>Superior: The Return of Race Science</i> (Fourth Estate, 2019).</p>
2: 30/7	<p>Required: Listen to the <i>Code Switch</i> Podcast, “All the Glisters is Not Gold” (link + transcript on vUWS); Watch <i>Othello</i> (EduTV link on vUWS); Read Thompson, “The Blackfaced Bard: Returning to Shakespeare or Leaving Him?” <i>Shakespeare Bulletin</i> 27:3 (2009): 437-456; Fishburne and Lennix, “Two Actors on Shakespeare, Race and Performance,” <i>Ibid.</i>, 399-414.</p> <p>Recommended: <i>Othello</i> and <i>Titus Andronicus</i>, summary and comments available on vUWS; Listen to the <i>Code Switch</i> podcast, “From Blackface to Black Fishing” (link on vUWS).</p> <p>Background Reading (Cultural Studies/History): Heng, <i>The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages</i> (Cambridge, 2018); Thompson, <i>Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America</i> (Oxford, 2013); Thompson, <i>Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage</i> (Routledge, 2008); Daileader, <i>Racism, Misogyny, and the Othello Myth</i> (Cambridge, 2005); Strings, <i>Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia</i> (NYU Press, 2019); Sammond, <i>Birth of an Industry: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Rise of American Animation</i> (Duke, 2015).</p>

<p>3: 6/8</p>	<p>Required: Kant, “Of the different races of human beings” [1775], “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race” [1785], both in Kant, <i>Anthropology, History, Education</i> (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 82-97, 143-159; Bernasconi, “Who Invented the Concept of Race?” in <i>Race</i> (Blackwell, 2001), pp. 11-36.</p> <p>Recommended: Bernasconi, “Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up?” <i>Radical Philosophy</i> 117 (2003): 13-22; Bernasconi, “The Philosophy of Race in the 19th Century,” in <i>The Routledge Companion to 19th-c Philosophy</i> (Routledge, 2010), pp. 498-521</p> <p>Background Reading (Philosophical Historiography): Smith, <i>Nature, Human Nature, & Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy</i> (Princeton, 2017); Curran, <i>The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment</i> (JHU Press, 2011); Eigen and Larrimore, <i>The German Invention of Race</i> (SUNY, 2006); Mikkelsen, <i>Kant and the Concept of Race: Late Eighteenth-Century Writings</i> (SUNY, 2013); James, <i>The Black Jacobins</i> [1938] (Penguin, 2001); Brown, <i>Until Darwin: Science, Human Variety, and the Origins of Race</i> (Routledge, 2016); Park, <i>Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830</i> (SUNY, 2013); Bernasconi and Lott, eds. <i>The Idea of Race</i> (Hackett, 2000); Taylor et.al., <i>The Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Race</i> (Routledge, 2018).</p>
<p>4: 13/8</p>	<p>Required: Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself</i> [1845], chs. 9-10; Lebron, “American Shame and Real Freedom,” in <i>The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea</i> (Oxford, 2017), pp. 1-34; Threadcraft, “What Free Could Possibly Mean,” <i>Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body and the Body Politic</i> (2018), pp. 34-68.</p> <p>Recommended: Douglass, “The Color Line” [1881]; Listen to the podcast <i>In Our Time</i>, “Frederick Douglass” (link on vUWS).</p> <p>Background Reading (History/Literature): Parkinson, <i>The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution</i> (UNC Press, 2016); Gordon-Reed, <i>Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings: An American Controversy</i> (UVA Press, 1988); Gordon-Reed, <i>The Hemingses of Monticello</i> (Norton, 2008); Blight, <i>Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom</i> (Simon & Schuster, 2018); Reynolds, <i>Mightier than the Sword: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Battle for America</i> (Norton, 2011); Butler, <i>Kindred</i> [1979] (Headline, 2018); Sharpe, <i>In the Wake: On Blackness and Being</i> (Duke, 2016); Rankine, <i>Citizen</i> (Graywolf, 2014).</p>
<p>5: 20/8</p>	<p>Required: Gates, “The Lost Cause that Built Jim Crow,” <i>NYT</i>, 8/11/2019; Blight, “Europe in 1989, America in 2020, and the Death of the Lost Cause,” <i>New Yorker</i>, 1/7/2020; Truscott, “I’m a Direct Descendent of Thomas Jefferson. Take Down his Memorial,” <i>NYT</i>, 6/7/2020; Williams, “You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument,” <i>NYT</i>, 26/6/2020; Faruqi, “Morrison Deflects from the Real Issues of Black Lives Matter,” <i>The Saturday Paper</i>, 20/6/2020; Arnott, “Australia’s Deep Connection with Enslavement,” <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>, 16/6/2020.</p> <p>Recommended: Listen to the podcast <i>7am</i>, “It’s not about the Statues or Chris Lilley” (link on vUWS), listen to the podcast <i>Throughline</i>, “A Race to Know,” (link + transcript on vUWS).</p>

	<p>Background Reading (Social History): Gates, <i>Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow</i> (Penguin, 2019), Foner, <i>The Second Founding</i> (Norton, 2019).</p>
6: 27/8	<p>Required: Du Bois, “The White World,” “The Colored World Within,” in <i>Dusk of Dawn</i> [1940] (Library of America, 1986): 652-715.</p> <p>Recommended: Du Bois, “The Conservation of Races” [1897] in <i>Race</i> (Blackwell, 2001), pp. 84-91; Du Bois, “Of the Dawn of Freedom,” “Of Booker T. Washington and Others,” in <i>The Souls of Black Folks</i> [1903], (Library of America, 1986): 372-404; Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> [1952] (Grove Press, 2008).</p> <p>Background Reading (Du Bois Studies/History/Social Sciences): Appiah, <i>Lines of Descent: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Emergence of Identity</i> (Harvard, 2014); Zumwalt, <i>Franz Boas: The Emergence of the Anthropologist</i> (University of Nebraska Press, 2019); King, <i>Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century</i>; Hurston, <i>Dust Tracks on a Road</i> [1942] (Harper Collins, 2006); Burkholder, <i>Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race, 1900-1954</i> (Oxford, 2011); Lott, “Du Bois’s Anthropological Notion of Race, in <i>Race</i> (Blackwell, 2001), pp. 57-83; Jeffers, “The Cultural Theory of Race: Yet Another Look at W.E.B. Du Bois’s ‘Conservation of Races’,” <i>Ethics</i> 123:3, (2013): 403-426; Robinson, “The Formation of an Intelligentsia,” “Historiography and the Black Radical Tradition,” in <i>Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition</i> (North Carolina Press, 1983): 175-240.</p>
7: 3/9	<p>Required: Memmi, “Portrait of the Colonizer,” in <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i> [1957] (Souvenir Press, 2016): 47-88, 116-120; Onishi, “George Floyd’s Killing Forces Wider Debate on France’s Slave Trading Past,” <i>NYT</i>, 24/6/2020</p> <p>Recommended: Listen to the podcast <i>Rough Translation</i>, “We Don’t Say That” (link + transcript on vUWS).</p> <p>Background Reading (Decolonial Literature): Fanon, <i>A Dying Colonialism</i> [1959] (Grove Press, 1965); Said, <i>Orientalism</i> [1978] (Penguin, 2003).</p>
8: 10/9	<p>Required: Memmi, “Portrait of the Colonized,” in <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i> [1957] (Souvenir Press, 2016): 123-197; Watch, “In My Blood it Runs” (ABC iview link on vUWS).</p> <p>Recommended: Fanon, “Concerning Violence,” in <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> [1961] (Penguin, 2001): 27-84; Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” <i>Journal of Genocide Research</i> 8:4 (2006): 387-409.</p>
9: 17/9	<p>Required: Stokely Carmichael, “What We Want,” <i>NYRB</i>, 22/9/1966; Taylor, “The Double-Standard of Justice,” in <i>From #Blacklivesmatter to Black Liberation</i>, (Haymarket Books, 2016): 107-133; Listen to the <i>7am</i> podcasts, “Inside the Tanya Day Inquest,” and “Black Witness White Witness” (links on vUWS).</p> <p>Recommended: Watch Ava DuVernay’s <i>13th</i> (available on Youtube; link on vUWS); Taylor, “How do we change America?” <i>The New Yorker</i>, 8/6/2020; May and Yancy,</p>

	<p>“Policing is doing what it was meant to do. That’s the problem,” <i>NYT</i>, 21/6/2020; Dickerson, “A Minneapolis Neighborhood Vowed to Check its Privilege. Its Already Being Tested,” <i>NYT</i>, 24/6/2020; Hodges, “As Mayor of Minneapolis, I saw how White Liberals Block Change,” <i>NYT</i>, 9/7/2020.</p> <p>Background Reading (African American Studies/Labor and Economic History): Joseph, <i>The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.</i> (Basic Books, 2020); Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (The New Press, 2012); Taylor, <i>Race for Profit</i> (UNC Press, 2019); Roediger, <i>The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class</i> (Verso, 2007); Katznelson, <i>When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America</i> (Norton, 2005); Rothstein, <i>The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America</i> (Norton, 2018).</p>
10: 24/9	<p>Required: Raboteau, “Know Your Rights!” in <i>The Fire this Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race</i> (Scribner 2017): 157-177; Listen to the <i>Code Switch</i> podcast, “A Decade of Watching People Die,” (link + transcript on vUWS); Listen to the <i>Breathless</i> podcast, “The Death of David Dungay Jr.” (link on vUWS); Read Price, “Please Stop Showing the Video of George Floyd’s Death,” <i>NYT</i>, 3/6/2020; Watch Milord, “Eric Garner’s Family is Still Grieving” [link to video in article], <i>New Yorker</i>, 12/6/2020.</p> <p>Recommended: Sontag, <i>Regarding the Pain of Others</i> (Penguin, 2003).</p> <p>Background Reading (Visual Studies): Browne, <i>Dark Matters. On the Surveillance of Blackness</i> (Duke, 2015); Baker, <i>Humane Insight. Looking at Images of African American Suffering and Death</i> (Univ. of Illinois Press, 2017); Mirzoeff, <i>The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality</i> (Duke, 2011); Mirzoeff, <i>The Appearance of Black Lives Matter</i> (Name Publications, 2017).</p>
11: 1/10	Mid-Semester Break: NO SEMINAR
12: 8/10	<p>Required: Morsi, <i>Radical Skin, Moderate Masks: De-Radicalising the Muslim and Racism in Post-Racial Societies</i> (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017): 1-62.</p> <p>Recommended: Bernasconi, “Islamophobia as a Racism,” <i>Eco-Ethica</i> 5 (2016): 167-184; Lentin, “Good Jew/Bad Jew,” in <i>Why Race Still Matters</i> (Polity Press, 2020), 131-170.</p> <p>Background Reading (Political Theory/Cultural Studies): Fernando, <i>The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Settlerism</i> (Duke, 2014); Tyrer, <i>The Politics of Islamophobia: Race, Power and Fantasy</i> (Pluto Press, 2013); Fekete, <i>A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration, and Islamophobia in Europe</i> (Pluto Books, 2014).</p>
13: 15/10	<p>Required: Harkin, “State Lady Report,” in <i>Archival Poetics</i> (Vagabond Press, 2019); Uluru Statement from the Heart; Davis, “The Promise of an Australian Homecoming,” <i>The Monthly</i>, July (2020): 8-11; Scheck & Haggis, “Terrains of migrancy and whiteness: how British Migrants locate themselves in Australia,” in <i>Whitening Race</i> (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004), pp. 176-191; Moreton-Robinson, <i>The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty</i> (Minnesota, 2015): chs. 11-12, pp. 153-189.</p>

	<p>Recommended: Read Bennett, “How Do Light-Skinned Aboriginal Australians Experience Racism?” <i>AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples</i> 10:2 (2014): 180-192; Haggis, “Thoughts on a politics of whiteness in a (never quite post) colonial country: abolitionism, essentialism and incommensurability,” in <i>Whitening Race</i> (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004), pp. 48-58; Elder, Ellis, and Pratt, “Whiteness in Constructions of Australian Nationhood: Indigenes, Immigrants, and Governmentality,” in <i>Whitening Race</i> (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004), pp. 208-221.</p> <p>Background Reading (Decolonial Literature/History): Benton, <i>A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900</i> (Cambridge, 2010); Fitzimmons, <i>James Cook</i> (Hatchette, 2019); Gascoigne, <i>The Enlightenment and the Origins of European Australia</i> (Cambridge, 2002); Benton, <i>Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900</i> (Cambridge, 2002); Ford, <i>Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836</i> (Harvard, 2010); Anderson, <i>The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia</i> (Duke, 2006); Gammage, <i>The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia</i> (Allen & Unwin, 2011); Pascoe, <i>Dark Emu</i> (Magabala, 2014); Coleman, <i>Terra Nullius</i> (Hatchette, 2017).</p>
14: 22/10	<p>Required: Moreton-Robinson, <i>The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty</i> (Minnesota, 2015), Intro-ch. 3, pp. xi-31.</p> <p>Recommended: Watch, <i>The Final Quarter</i> (EduTV link on vUWS); Read Behrendt, “Aboriginal Sovereignty,” in <i>Sovereignty: Frontiers of Possibility</i> (University of Hawaii Press, 2013): 163-177; Walter and Butler, “Teaching Race to Teach Indigeneity,” <i>Journal of Sociology</i> 49:4 (2013): 397-410; Giannacopoulos, “<i>Nomophilia</i> and <i>Bia</i>: The Love of Law and the Question of Violence,” <i>Borderlands</i> 10.1 (2011): 1-19.</p> <p>Background Reading (Critical Indigenous Studies): Moreton-Robinson, <i>Talkin’ Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism</i> (University of Queensland Press, 2002); Moreton-Robinson, <i>Critical Indigenous Studies</i> (University of Arizona Press, 2016); Smith, <i>Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples</i> (Zed Books, 1999); Simpson, <i>As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance</i> (University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Wilson, <i>Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods</i> (Fernwood, 2008).</p>