

Anthropology 3640
RACE AND HUMAN EVOLUTION
Spring 2020—Online Version

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Course Description

As current events and the everyday lived experience of individuals confirms, race is an open wound on the American body politic. Various forms of racism remain prevalent in our society. This is evidenced most recently by dangerous rhetoric around the event that has forced this course out of the classroom and online; namely, the description of COVID-19 as a “foreign” disease, a “Chinese virus”, and the even the “Kung-Flu.”

This course examines the paleoanthropology of human biological differences; i.e., the differences commonly associated with racial identity and why/how those differences evolved. Our focus is on the history of thinking about human biological/physical differences, with the ultimate goal of better understanding the nature and sources of differences between groups of human beings. We will consider the uses to which particular conceptions of race have been put in Western culture. Our examination of racial differences will proceed in light of evolutionary theory, the human fossil record, and cross-cultural anthropological knowledge. Our aim is to examine myth and reality in popular and scientific understandings of race, and the social and political consequences of this knowledge.

The course contributes to the cultivation of what many scholars are calling “racial literacy.” Acquiring such literacy is an important step in moving the country toward a more progressive view of human differences that is fundamentally antiracist.

Course Objectives

1. Understand how definitions of race have changed over time and why particular conceptions are popular at certain moments in history.
2. Identify the most important scholars and activists on the front lines of discussing and debating race through time, and their signature contributions—for better or worse!
3. Explain how an evolutionary view of human diversity can contribute to the debate today, and further progress toward an antiracist society.

Course Requirements

This course is offered as a guided reading and writing class. You will be evaluated on:

- (a) **Weekly writing assignments** (80%). These assignments will be based on the required readings. They will vary in their nature and form.
- (b) **Final Writing Project** (20%)
 - Graduate students: a final research paper. See the “Research Guidelines” document posted on the Course Portfolio site.
 - Undergraduate students: a final essay exam. Undergraduates may substitute a research paper for the final essay exam.

Course Materials

All readings, assignments and other materials for the course are available in the DU Portfolio Community: <http://portfolio.du.edu/raceevol>. The course is not currently on Canvas, except for this syllabus. Additional elements of the course may be moved to Canvas as we progress through the term.

Email Communication

Our primary mode of communication this term will be email. This is largely because the internet connection at my house in Denver is inconsistent and that complicates Zoom meetings. Because email is so critical, we need to adhere to three policies:

- I will only contact you from my official du.edu account. I'm required to contact you only through your du.edu account. Please use your DU account to contact, or reply to me.
- I check my email regularly every day. Please regularly check your DU email account for announcements about the course. There will always be one message sent towards the end of the week describing the next week's work.
- I will normally answer your emails to me within a few hours on most days, including the weekends. Please reply with similar promptness to emails I address to you as an individual (as opposed to announcements sent to the entire class).

→ **NOTE:** Please do not hesitate to contact me privately about any matter related to the course! I'm always happy to answer your particular questions about the material, and confer with you privately about where you stand grade-wise. This is the only course I'm teaching this term. Thus, I'm fully prepared to give you and your academic work the close personal attention that DU tuition entitles you to. I'm here to serve!

Course Schedule

Week

Topic

1 **March 30-April 3.**

Orientation: Familiarize yourself with the course portfolio site and its contents.

→ **Complete the online "Racial Literacy" Quiz...just for fun! Go to**

<http://newsreel.org/guides/race/quiz.htm>

→ Read Saitta, D. 2020 "My Whiteness Narrative". Manuscript.

2 **April 6-April 10.**

Introduction: Scope and Aims of the Course; Origin of the Concept of Race.

Readings:

- American Anthropological Association Statement on Race (1998).
- Gould, S. 1994 The Geometer of Race. *Discover Magazine*, November.

→ **Assignment #1 due weekend of April 11-12.**

3 **April 13-April 17.**

Human Evolutionary History: Natural Selection & Biodiversity.

Readings:

- Jablonski, N. 2011 Why Human Skin Comes in Colors. *AnthroNotes* 32(1), Spring.
- Pontzer, H. 2012 Overview of Hominin Evolution. *Nature Education Knowledge* 3(10):8.
- Harari, Y. 2014 An Animal of No Significance. Chapter 1 in *Sapiens*, by Y. Harari.
- Optional: Chapters from Park, *Biological Anthropology* (chapter 3 on Evolutionary Genetics and chapter 4 on Evolutionary Processes). Read these chapters if you need a refresher course on the mechanics of evolutionary change.

→ **Assignment #2 due weekend of April 18-19.**

- 4 **April 20-24.**
Paleoanthropology, Race, and Storytelling.
Readings:
- Gould, S. 1979 Piltdown Revisited. *Natural History*, March.
 - Waters, A. 1997 Descent of (White) Man: Race and Gender in Human Evolution Exhibits. *Museum Anthropology* 20(3):101.
 - St. Felix, D. 2018 The *National Geographic* Twins and the Falsehood of our Post-Racial Future. *The New Yorker*, March 14.
- **Assignment #3 due weekend of April 25-26.**
- 5 **April 27-May 1.**
19th Century Scientific Racism and Its Critics: Monogeny & Polygeny; Douglass & Darwin.
Readings:
- De Gobineau, A. 1967 (1853) Excerpt from *The Inequality of Human Races*, pp. 205-212. Howard Fertig, NY.
 - Nott, J. and G. Gliddon 1854 Excerpt from *Types of Mankind*, pp. 448-465. Lippincott, Grambo and Co., Philadelphia.
 - Douglass, F. 1950 (1854) Commencement Address at Western Reserve College: The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered. In *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, edited by P. Foner, volume II, pp. 289-309. International Publishers, NY.
 - Darwin, C. 1871 On the Races of Man. In *The Descent of Man*, by C. Darwin, pp. 222-273. P.F. Collier and Son, NY.
- **Assignment #4 due weekend of May 2-3.**
- 6 **May 4-May 8.**
Early to Mid-20th Century Developments: DuBois & Boas; Race & Eugenics.
Readings:
- Du Bois, W.E.B. 1897 The Conservation of Races. *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers*, No.2. Washington, D.C.
 - Boas, F. 1906 Commencement Address at Atlanta University, May 31, Atlanta University Leaflet, No. 19.
 - The 1924 Racial Integrity Act (*Wikisource*).
 - Gunther, 1929 The Nordic Race as Ideal Type. From: *Nazi Culture*, edited by G. Mosse. Schocken Books, NY (1966).
 - Wannsee Protocol 1942 <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/news/uploads/WannseeProtocols.pdf>
 - Gould, S.J. 1992 The Most Unkindest Cut of All. *Natural History*, February.
- **Assignment #5 due weekend of May 9-10.**
- 7 **May 11-May 15.**
Race & Evolution in the Post-War Period: The “New Physical Anthropology”; Coon and His Critics.
Readings:
- UNESCO Statement on Race (1950).
 - UNESCO Statement on Race (1951).
 - Washburn, S. 1951 The New Physical Anthropology. *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 13:298-304.

- Coon, C. 1967 (1962) Selections from *The Origin of Races*, by C. Coon. Alfred Knopf, NY.
 - Livingstone, F. 1962 On the Non-Existence of Human Races. *Current Anthropology* 3 (3):279.
 - Dobzhansky, T. 1963 Review Coon's *Origin of Races*. *Scientific American*, February.
- **Assignment #6 due weekend of May 16-17.**

8 May 18-May 22.

Radical and Reactionary Perspectives on Race in the Civil Rights Era.

Readings:

- Davis, A. 1971 Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves. *The Black Scholar* 3(4):2-15.
- Lewontin, R., S. Rose, and L. Kamin 1984 What is Race? In *Not in Our Genes*, by R. Lewontin, et al, pp. 119-129. Pantheon Books, NY.
- Lynn, R. 1991 The Evolution of Racial Differences in Intelligence. *Mankind Quarterly* 32:99-121.
- Rushton, J.P. 1996 Statement on Race as a Biological Concept.

→ **Assignment #7 due weekend of May 23-24.**

9 May 25-May 29.

Race in the Early 21st Century.

Readings:

- Leroi, A. 2005 A Family Tree in Every Gene. *New York Times*, March 14.
- Wade, N. 2014 Evolutionary Perspectives on Race. In *A Troublesome Inheritance*, pp. 238-251. Penguin, NY.
- Weingard, B. et. al 2016 On the Reality of Race and the Abhorrence of Racism. *Quillette*, June 23.
- Spencer, R. 2017 Race—Stalking the Wild Taboo. *National Policy Institute Blog*, October 5. <https://nationalpolicy.institute/2017/10/05/race-stalking-the-wild-taboo/>
- Reich, D. 2018 How Genetics is Changing Our Understanding of 'Race'. *The New York Times*, March 25.

→ **Assignment #8 due weekend of May 30-31.**

10 June 1-June 5.

What is to be Done?

Readings:

- Culotta, E. 2012 Roots of Racism. *Science* 336:825-827.
- Fuentes, A. et al. 2019 AAPA Statement on Race and Racism. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 169:400-402.

→ **Assignment #9 due weekend of June 6-7.**

11 FINAL ESSAY OR RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE June 11, by 11:59 PM.

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