

IHST 291-IH2 A: History of the Idea of Race Spring 2010

Class Time: Wednesdays 7-9:45 pm, Bunting Center 480

Instructor: Nina Brown

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Office and office hours: By appointment

*“The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.”
Thomas Paine*

Recent genetic research has revealed that humans are more than 99.9 percent identical and racial categories have no meaningful basis in biology, but race remains a powerful idea in contemporary society, contributing to our personal identities and persistent inequalities. This course examines the history of the idea of "race" beginning in the late Middle Ages when Europeans first encountered the diversity of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. These initial encounters formed the basis for a "science" of race that emerged during the Enlightenment and reached its peak during the Victorian period when the presumed superiority of white Europeans was used to justify the exploitation of non-white peoples.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course examines the history of an idea that has influenced our most basic understanding of others and ourselves. Race is an aspect of individual identity that can be a source of pride and a basis for connection to the histories of our families and our communities. However, the idea of race is also linked to racism, discrimination, and violence and has served as a justification for attitudes that divide human beings from one another.

As we examine the history of the idea of race we will confront historical periods in which people were degraded or harmed on the basis of their perceived racial identity. This kind of history is unpleasant and a paradox of participating in this class is that we must expose ourselves to materials and ideas that we would normally consider racist and thoroughly objectionable. I teach this class because I am convinced that the effort is worthwhile and that understanding the origins of the idea of "race" is a first step in eliminating racial inequalities and reaffirming our shared humanity.

*Because history is the story of many lives, it does not make sense to study it from the perspective of the instructor alone. For this reason, we will work together to create a *democratic classroom*, in which all the participants (students and teacher) share responsibility for deciding what happens in our class. Like traditional courses, this class includes reading assignments, films, and lectures, but you should expect to spend a large portion of the class time engaged in large and small group discussions.*

REQUIRED TEXTS: (available in the bookstore and on reserve in the library)

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- *How the Irish Became White* by Noel Ignatiev
- *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin
- *Materials on the class Blackboard Site* (<http://blackboard.mica.edu>)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DUE DATES

	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Points</i>
<i>Reading Responses (2 single spaced pages each)</i>	<i>Six (6) due during the semester. You choose the dates, but papers must be turned in at the start of class and address the reading assignment for the current class.</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Short Class Report (1-2 single spaced pages)</i>	<i>1 time during the semester. Choose a Date/Topic from the signup sheet in class</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Research Topic (2-3 sentences)</i>	<i>April 7</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Research Paper (3-4 single spaced pages)</i>	<i>May 5 at the start of class</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Class Participation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>10</i>

Reading Responses (see Blackboard for a sample)

During the semester, you will submit **6 short writing assignments**. Each paper should be 2 pages (single-spaced) and will relate to the reading assignment. Reading responses are due at the start of class and must address the assigned reading for the **current class**. Your paper should have 3 sections:

1. "My First Reaction." Describe in a **paragraph or two** your thoughts about the reading assignment(s). Did you like the assignment? What was interesting/disturbing/surprising?
2. "Selected Quotations." Choose some sections from the reading assignment, copy them into your paper (with page numbers), and explain why these quotations are interesting or important for understanding the text or the history of the idea of race. Aim for at least 1 paragraph of explanation for each quote. You could use quotes that highlight the author's main point, or other sections containing interesting and important information. Use a minimum of **3 quotations**.
3. "Questions." Write at least **3 discussion questions** about the reading assignment(s). You can start by thinking about what you might ask the author if he/she were coming to class. Think about issues or controversial points you would like to talk about with your classmates.

Short In Class Report (see Blackboard for more information)

During one class this semester you will be asked to contribute to the discussion by investigating a current event or topic and sharing what you have learned with your classmates. I will assign the topics and you may choose your date/topic from the sign-up sheet, which will be posted permanently on Blackboard following the 1st class. This is meant to be a brief informal talk that requires only some basic Internet research (i.e. Googling) or in some cases a visit to an event or museum. **Please note:** Although this assignment calls for Internet research, you should be careful not to copy (plagiarize) what you find online. This assignment requires you to summarize or synthesize information from Internet sources in your own words while adding your own opinions.

Research Topic and Paper

The assignment is a 3-4 page (single-spaced) paper discussing a contemporary or historical issue or event related to the idea of race. The topic of this paper is open, but you will need to draw on one or more of our reading assignments and use additional resources from the library. We will be working on developing research topics in class and detailed guidelines about the paper will be available on Blackboard. **On April 7th, you**

must submit a 2-3 sentence description of your research topic. The final paper is due at the start of class on May 5.

Class Participation

Active engagement in class is a part of your grade. We will be using a variety of approaches to class discussion and I hope that you will find a setting in which you feel comfortable sharing your ideas. If you are less comfortable speaking in front of the class, consider bringing in a printout of a relevant news item that can be distributed to the class. Class attendance, including on-time arrival will be part of your class participation grade so if you will be late or absent due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances you should contact me (e-mail is fine) so that I can record your absence as "excused." Habitual lateness and leaving early from class will lower your grade.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without acknowledgment. Submitting work containing plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and will be brought to the attention of the Chair of the department. A repeat offense will result in failure of the course. Document your citations in a bibliography at the end of your paper and follow standard guidelines such as MLA or Chicago manual style. Please check with me if you have any questions.

ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

<http://www.mica.edu/LRC>

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE

From the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). The Office works to provide EHS support for all members of the MICA community. The primary goal of the Office is to be proactive in establishing a culture of safety in which each member of the community shares ownership responsibility that allows each person to be involved in maintaining a healthy work and studying environment. EHS uses several methods to achieve this objective.

First, the EHS office looks at the totality of the EHS requirements by combining campus needs with state and federal requirements and clearly communicating the shared policies and procedures. Second, EHS identifies training needs and develops guidelines for the use of equipment, material and procedures. Third, we ensure compliance with policies through evaluations, inspections, and committees.

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to understand health and safety policies relevant to their individual activities and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan, as well as to participate in training, drills, etc. It is also each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of the Academic Department's also publish EHS procedures and policies such as a dress code, the use of personal protective equipment, fire safety, training, and how to properly dispose of chemical waste. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, it is the responsibility of the faculty to review, test, and assess each student's awareness of basic safety procedures, such as evacuation routes, use of chemicals, fire prevention, and all other guidelines posted by the Environmental Health and Safety Office, (e.g., smoking policy, independent studio policies, pet policy, disposing of hazardous and chemical waste, etc).

To become a member of the Faculty EHS Committee or for any questions relating to EHS, please contact Denelle Bowser, EHS Manager, at dbowser@mica.edu or by calling 410.462.7593. You can also visit the department online at www.mica.edu/ehs

H1N1 PANDEMIC INFORMATION

What to do if I get sick?

If you are sick consider the following:

- Limit contact with other people as much as possible. **DO NOT GO TO CLASS!** Seek medical attention at Mount Royal Medial Assoc. (410) 225-8855 but please call ahead
- Students who are sick should self-isolate for at least 24 hours after any fever is gone.
- Make sure to get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids to keep from being dehydrated
- Avoid normal activities including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings

Reporting Procedures

- Contact the Office of Student Affairs at 410-225-2422 who will assist with plans for self-isolation, arranging for meals, and any other necessary support
- Contact any faculty whose class you anticipate missing and inform them of your illness. Work with them to make arrangements for catching up on any missed work. If you have difficulty reaching your faculty or if your illness lingers to the point where you will miss two or more of any one class contact the Office of Student Affairs

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 20: Introduction to the History of the Idea of Race

Jan 27: Conquest, Colonization and First Encounters with the “Other”

Columbus: The Christopher Columbus Letter. Blackboard.

Chanca: Letter Written to the City of Seville. Blackboard.

Feb 3: Racial Thought in Colonial America

Calloway: Native American Perspectives on Early America. Blackboard.

Morton and Wood: Colonial Attitudes Toward Native Americans. Blackboard.

Feb 10: The Enlightenment and Its Contradictions

Enlightenment Reading Packet. Blackboard.

Jefferson: Notes on the State of Virginia. Blackboard.

Feb 17: Slavery: Our “Peculiar Institution”

Douglass: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas. Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 and 11

OR

Jacobs: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, 18 and 19

Feb 24: European Immigrants and the New Racial Hierarchy

Ignatiev: How the Irish Became White. Chapter 2 (stop at the section on the Walnut Street Jail p.42), Chapter 4, and Chapter 5

Z Magazine: Interview with Noel Ignatiev. Blackboard. Optional reading.

Mar 3: Racial Exclusion: Native American Removals and Anti-Chinese Laws with film “Separate Lives”

Lai et al.: Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants. Your choice of sections. **On reserve in library.**

Roosevelt: The Winning of the West Excerpt. Blackboard.

Mar 10: “Science” and the Proof of Race with film “The World’s Greatest Fair”
Hornaday: *Basest Instinct*. Blackboard.
Haller: *The Species Problem*. Blackboard.

Mar 17: Spring Break: No Class

Mar 24: Racial Purification Projects: The American Eugenics Movement and the Nazi State
Cold Spring Harbor Lab: *American Eugenics Movement Exhibits*. Blackboard.
Burleigh and Wiperman: *Barbarism Institutionalized*. Blackboard.

Mar 31: WWII Japanese Internment with film “Japanese Incarceration”
Ishizuka: *Lost & Found: Reclaiming the Japanese American Incarceration*. Blackboard.
Griffin: Begin reading *Black Like Me*. Read “October 28, 1959” entry (page 1) through “November 10-12” (page 44). You will need to read to the end of the book, the “December 1st” entry (page 133) by the start of class on December 4.
Note for reading response papers: Do not write a reading response on Griffin until you have read to the end of “December 1st”—base your papers on the other reading assignments for each week instead.

Apr 7: Laws of Racial Division: Segregation in Public and Private
****Research Paper Topic Description Due****

Griffin: Continue with *Black Like Me*. “November 14” (page 45) through “November 15” (page 78)
Loewen: *The Great Retreat*. Blackboard.

Apr 14: The Civil Rights Movement with film “Standing on My Sisters’ Shoulders”

Griffin: Continue with *Black Like Me*. “November 16” (page 79) through “November 24” (page 120)
King: *My Pilgrimage to Non-Violence*. Blackboard.
Moody: *The Jackson Sit-In*. Blackboard.

Apr 21: Structural Inequality in American Life with film “Hard Times at Douglass High”

Griffin: Finish Reading *Black Like Me*. “November 25” (page 120) through “December 1” (page 133)
Kozol: *Still Separate, Still Unequal*. Blackboard.
Blackmon: *Slavery Under Another Name* excerpt. Blackboard.
New York Times: *1 in 100 Adults Behind Bars*. Blackboard.

Apr 28: Challenging “Whiteness”

Ignatiev: *Abolitionism and “White Studies.”* Blackboard.
Winant: *Behind Blue Eyes*. Blackboard.

May 5: Mixed Race, Multi-Race, Post Race? The Future of Race in America
****Final Papers Due at the Start of Class****

U.S. Census: *The American Population in 2050*. Blackboard.
Los Angeles Times: *Post Race America*. Blackboard. *Required only for those writing reading response papers this week*