

## Race, space, and biopolitics

Few students of the city, colonialism, or violence can escape at some point addressing the question of race. As a system of classifying and segregating bodies, race pops up even when we think we are studying something else. Obviously there is biological variation within the human species, but exactly *why* this variation has become so insidiously political is a difficult problematic, shaking up any attempt at disciplining academic boundaries. This graduate seminar seeks to investigate the conceptual intricacies of the becoming-political of human life, of “biopolitics.” Four books by key contemporary theorists of racism – Michel Foucault, Paul Gilroy, David Theo Goldberg, Ann Laura Stoler – will be studied by placing them within ongoing theoretical debates on the many dimensions of race: migration, capitalism, sexuality, crime, science, and war. Other important theorists we will read include Giorgio Agamben, Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Elizabeth Grosz, Alphonso Lingis, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, and Naomi Zack, and Slavoj Žižek. The course understands the politicization of phenotypic differences to be a planetary process, to a large extent determined by European colonization involving real bodies positioned in particular places and inequalities. It is however also entirely contingent, and thus changeable by antiracist politics and research.

This is the structure of the semester:

**I Defending society** 1 The racial nation 2 The racial state 3 Race war

**II Capitalism/racism** 4 Racial divisions of labor 5 Racial commodities 6 Racial neoliberalism

**III Landscapes of race** 7 Colonial households 8 The postcolonial center 9 Crime 10 Borderlands

**IV Race and sex** 11 Miscegenation 12 Racial flesh 13 Third wave feminism

**V Debating diversity** 14 Debating diversity

**Required books** Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*; Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*;

David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race*; Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*

**Workload** 100-150 pp. reading/week; students take turn circulating reading reports; one 25-page paper theorizing race from own research **More information** Arun Saldanha, [saldanha@umn.edu](mailto:saldanha@umn.edu)

## Race, space, and biopolitics

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### **I Defending society**

1 The racial nation

2 The racial state

3 Race war

### **II Capitalism/racism**

4 Racial divisions of labor

5 Racial commodities

6 Racial neoliberalism

### **III Racial landscapes**

8 Colonial households

9 The postcolonial center

10 Crime

11 Borderlands

### **IV Race and sex**

11 Miscegenation

12 Racial flesh

13 Third wave feminism

### **V Debating diversity**

14 Debating diversity

## Required books

- Foucault, Michel, *“Society Must Be Defended”*: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey. New York, Picador, 2003.
- Gilroy, Paul, *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Goldberg, David Theo, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Malden, MA, Blackwell, 2008.
- Stoler, Ann Laura, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2002.

## Class format

Students take turn preparing a reading report of 3 to 4 pages (1.5 spacing), in which they summarize the innovative arguments of the weekly reading(s), discuss any disagreements they might have, and formulate two questions they would like to discuss in class. The student takes about 10 minutes to introduce the readings and themes. Arun spends about 20 minutes elaborating on the themes, presenting some ways the readings bear on current work, and identifies remaining problems. After that follows discussion, moderated jointly by the introducer and Arun. The ultimate aim of the discussion is to clarify the material so that all participants will be able to use it for their own ongoing conceptualizations of race, space, and biopolitics.

## Reading schedule

### DEFENDING SOCIETY

#### 1 The racial nation (January 27)

David Theo Golberg, “Buried, alive”, “‘Killing me softly’: civility/race/violence”, and “Deva-stating discriminations, discriminating devastations (On racial Americanization)”, in *TR*, pp. 1-105.

Michel Foucault et al., Foreword, Introduction, Course Summary, Situation of the Lectures, and Chapters six and seven, *SMBD*, pp. ix-xxii, 115-166, and 265-294.

#### 2 The racial state (February 3)

Howard Winant and Michael Omi, “Racial formation” and “The racial state,” in *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 53-94.

Foucault, "Right over death and power over life," in *The Will To Knowledge: The History of Sexuality 1*. Trans. Robert Hurley. London: Allen Lane, 1979 [1976], pp. 133-159.

Foucault, Chapters eight to eleven, *SMBD*, pp. 167-264.

Goldberg, "Precipitating evaporation (On racial Europeanization)", *TR*, pp. 151-198.

### **3 Race war (February 10)**

Giorgio Agamben, "Introduction," "The politicization of life," and "Biopolitics and the rights of man," in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998 [1995], pp. 1-12, 119-135.

Foucault, Chapters one to five, *SMBD*, pp. 1-114.

optional

Judith Butler, "Indefinite detention," in *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. London, Verso, 2004, pp. 50-100.

## CAPITALISM/RACISM

### **4 Racial divisions of labor (February 17)**

Jacqueline Jones, "Places of labor's 'hard usage' in the South before slavery," in *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor*. New York, Norton, 1998, pp. 23-54.

Vincent Sarich and Frank Miele, "Race and physical differences" and "Race and behavior," in *Race: The Reality of Human Difference*. Boulder, Westview, 2004, pp. 161-232.

Mark M. Smith, "Learning to make sense," in *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2006, pp. 11-28.

Goldberg, "Targets of opportunity (On racial Palestinianization)", in *TR*, pp. 106-150.

### **5 Racial commodities (February 24)**

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri "Biopolitical production," in *Empire*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 22-41.

bell hooks, chapters 10 to 13, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representation*. New York, Routledge, 1994, pp. 109-154.

Anne McClintock, "Soft-soaping empire: commodity racism and imperial advertising," in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York, Routledge, pp. 207-231.

Aaron Bobrow-Strain, "White bread bio-politics: purity, health and the triumph of industrial baking," *cultural geographies*, 15(1):19-40.

John G. Russell, "Consuming passions: spectacle, self-transformation, and the commodification of blackness in Japan," *positions*, 6(1):113-177.

### **6 Racial neoliberalism (March 3)**

David Harvey, TBA in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*. London, Verso, 2007.

Goldberg, "Enduring occupations (On racial neoliberalism)," *TR*, pp. 327-375.

Michel Foucault, Chapter nine, in *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 215-238.

## LANDSCAPES OF RACE

### **8 Colonial households (March 10)**

Stoler, "Genealogies of the intimate: movements in colonial studies", "Carnal knowledge and imperial power: gender and morality in the making of race", "A sentimental education: children on the imperial divide", "A colonial reading of Foucault: bourgeois bodies and racial selves", "Memory-work in Java: a cautionary tale" and "Caveats on comfort zones and comparative frames", *CKIP*, pp. 1-21, 41-78, 112-218.

## **SPRING BREAK**

### **9 The postcolonial center (March 24)**

Gilroy, "'Has it comes to this?'" and "The negative dialectics of conviviality" in *PM*, pp. 87-152.

Richard Dyer, "Introduction", "The matter of whiteness" and "Coloured white, not coloured", in *White*. London, Routledge, 1997, pp. xiii-81.

### **10 Crime (March 31)**

Loïc Wacquant TBA, in *Deadly Symbiosis: Race and the Rise of Neoliberal Penalty*. Cambridge, UK, Polity, 2008.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore TBA, in *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007.

Alphonso Lingis, "The religion of animals", in *Dangerous Emotions*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 53-66.

### **11 Borderlands (April 7)**

Mae M. Ngai, TBA in *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2005.

Melissa Wright, "The dialectics of still life: murder, women and disposability" and "Maquiladora mestizas and feminist border politics" in *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. New York, Routledge, 2007, pp. 71-122.

Gloria Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a new consciousness" in *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza*, third edition. San Francisco, Aunt Lute, 2007, pp. 99-122.

Asia Watch Women's Rights Project, *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand*. New York, Human Rights Watch, 1993, 160 pp., available via Google Books.

optional

Jan Jindy Peteman, "Body politics: international sex tourism", *Third World Quarterly*, 1997, 18(1):93-108.

## RACE/SEX

### **11 Miscegenation (April 14)**

Robert Young, "White power, white desire: the political economy of miscegenation" and "Colonialism and the desiring machine", in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 133-172.

Stoler, "Rethinking categories: European communities and the boundaries of rule" and "Sexual affronts and racial frontiers: cultural competence and the dangers of métissage", *CKIP*, pp. 22-40 and 79-111.

Naomi Zack, TBA in *Race and Mixed Race*. New York, Routledge, 1994.

### **12 Racial flesh (April 21)**

Elizabeth Grosz, "The evolution of sex and race," in *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004, pp. 64-92.

Alphonso Lingis, "Schizoanalysis of race," in Christopher Lane, ed. *The Psychoanalysis of Race*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, pp. 176-189.

Lingis, "Satyrs and centaurs: miscegenation and the master race," in Alan D. Schrift, ed. *Why Nietzsche Still? Reflections on Drama, Culture, and Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 154-169.

optional

Lingis "Beauty and lust" and "Joy in dying," in *Dangerous Emotions*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 139-172.

### **13 Third wave feminism (April 28)**

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of struggle: third world women and the politics of feminism", in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 43-84.

Inderpal Grewal, "Gendering refugees: new national/transnational subjects" and "Transnational America: race and gender after 9/11" in *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 158-220.

Jasbir Puar, "Homonationalism and biopolitics" in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 1-36.

Katie Hogan, "Detecting toxic environments: gay mystery as environmental justice", in Winona LaDuke and Rachel Stein, eds. *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*. Piscataway, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 2004, pp. 249-261.

### **DEBATING DIVERSITY (May 5)**

Gilroy, "On living with difference", "Race and the right to be human," and "Cosmopolitanism contested", *PM*, pp. 1-86.

Max Shachtman, "Communism and the Negro," in *Race and Revolution*, ed. Christopher Phelps. London: Verso, 2003 [1933], pp. 3-102.

### Some titles that didn't make it into the reading list

Susan E. Babbitt and Sue Campbell, eds. *Racism and Philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Robert Bernasconi, ed. *Race (Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy)*. Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2001.

Bernard Boxill, ed. *Race and racism (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Sara Eigen and Mark J. Larrimore, eds. *The German Invention of Race*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006.

David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York: Norton, 1981.

Arun Kindnani, *Echoes of Empire: Racism, Migration and the War on Terror*. London: Pluto, 2007.

Jonathan Marks, *Human Biodiversity: Genes, Race, and History*. New York: de Gruyter, 1995.

Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Charles W. Mills, *Blackness Visible: On Philosophy and Race*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Donald S. Moore, Jake Kosek, and Anand Pandian, eds. *Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference*. Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2003.

Tram Nguyen, *We Are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories From Immigrant America After 9/11*. Boston: Beacon, 2005.

Peter O. Osborne and Stella Sandford, eds. *Philosophies of Race and Ethnicity*. London: Continuum, 2002.

Vandana Shiva and Ingunn Moser, eds. *Biopolitics: A Feminist and Ecological Reader on Biotechnology*. London: Zed, 1995.

Stephen Steinberg, ed. *Race and Ethnicity in the United States: Issues and Debates*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.

Peter J. Taylor, Saul E. Halfon and Paul N. Edwards, eds. *Changing Life: Genomes, Ecologies, Bodies, Commodities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Julie K. Ward, ed. *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

Cornell West, *Race Matters*. Boston: Beacon, 1993.

Howard Winant, *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparisons*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Howard Winant, *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Naomi Zack, *Thinking About Race*. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth, 1998.

Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race*. New York: Routledge, 2002.