

Race, space, and biopolitics

Few students of the state, the city, colonialism, gender or war 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.” The intellectual merits of four influential thinkers of race – Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Frantz Fanon and Michel Foucault – will be assessed by placing them within some of today’s debates on race and racism. We will read many key authors: Giorgio Agamben, Keith Ansell Pearson, Alain Badiou, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jared Diamond, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Scott F. Gilbert, Paul Gilroy, Arthur de Gobineau, Elizabeth Grosz, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Alphonso Lingis, Lynn Margulis, Ernst Mayr, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Slavoj Žižek, and Adolf Hitler.

The seminar has three premises. One is that the biological in biopolitics has to be given more serious attention than is common in the humanities. The second is that the spatialities of both biology and politics are crucial to the way they function. Racial formations develop *through* the spatial arrangements of national territories, divisions of labor, television, neighborhoods, surveillance, incarceration and street protest, for example. The third is that racism is a very pervasive kind of stupidity. Throughout, we will ask ourselves what kind of thinking effective antiracist politics requires. This is the structure of the semester:

I What is race? 1 Taxonomy 2 Self/other 3 Social construction

II What is biology? 4 Evolution 5 Phenotype 6 Migration 7 Population

III Biopolitics, geopolitics 8 The racial state 9 Race war 10 Racial capitalism

IV Racial flesh 11 Phenomenology of race 12 Psychoanalysis of race 13 Schizoanalysis of race

V What politics? 14 Superman 15 Revolution

Required books Darwin, *The Descent of Man*; Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*;

Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended.*”

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

Fall 2007. GEOG 8230 Theoretical Geography. Syllabus

Race, space, and biopolitics

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Few students of the state, the city, colonialism, gender or war 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.” The intellectual merits of four influential thinkers of race – Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Frantz Fanon and Michel Foucault – will be assessed by placing them within some of today’s debates on race and racism. We will read many key authors: Giorgio Agamben, Keith Ansell Pearson, Alain Badiou, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jared Diamond, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Scott F. Gilbert, Paul Gilroy, Arthur de Gobineau, Elizabeth Grosz, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Alphonso Lingis, Lynn Margulis, Ernst Mayr, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Slavoj Žižek, and Adolf Hitler.

Required books

Any edition in any language will do; in fact there will be interesting differences.

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (first edn. 1871; available online but purchase recommended); Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (written in late 1880s); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (first edn. 1952); Michel Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*” (lectures 1975-1976). All other material will be emailed or available as pdfs via the Wilson Library’s E-reserve.

Structure

We first discuss three of the main ontologies of race: the dominant one, a classification of humans according to essential traits, which as Foucault argues, arose with colonialism and the social and physical sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and led, via a certain interpretation of Nietzsche, to the Nazi notions of purity and *Lebensraum*; the anti-essentialist Hegelian take on race of Fanon, which still drives most postcolonial theory and critical race theory; and the realist approaches in sociology and Gramscian cultural studies, which try to steer between treating race as either ideology or social structure. We then explore the main philosophical and political implications of key biological concepts, especially but not only as they relate to the human species. We will take cue from some feminist theory in considering what progressive lessons might be available in biology, and how they have to be drawn to avoid any return to essentialism and reductionism. Returning to Foucault and critical race theory, the politicization of human biology through the construction of the nation-state, militarization, division of labor and consumerism is studied in depth. No doubt the students' own research will be of great relevance here. With the biological and the geopolitical dimensions of race now established, the last part of the semester simultaneously closes in on racial embodiment and elaborates Fanon's antiracist legacy. We will examine the lasting effect of Hegel on critical theory, specifically asking what kind of universality is presumed on the left, while evaluating the political potential of some Nietzschean alternatives.

A follow-up graduate seminar on race, space, and biopolitics is planned for Fall 2008. The weight will then lie on other important thinkers relevant in the conceptualization of race.

I What is race?

- 1 Taxonomy
- 2 Self and other
- 3 Social construction

II What is biology?

- 4 Evolution
- 5 Phenotype
- 6 Population
- 7 Migration

III Biopolitics, geopolitics

- 8 The racial state
- 9 Race war
- 10 Racial capitalism

IV Racial flesh

- 11 Phenomenology of race
- 12 Psychoanalysis of race
- 13 Schizoanalysis of race

V What politics?

- 14 Superman
- 15 Revolution

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 some 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

WHAT IS RACE?

Week 1. Taxonomy

Michel Foucault, "Classifying," in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Random House, 1970 [1966], pp. 125-165.

Arthur de Gobineau, "Racial differences are permanent" in *The Inequality of Human Races*. Trans. Adrian Collins. New York: Howard Fertig, 1999 [1853-1855], pp. 117-140.

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

Week 2. Self/other

G.W.F. Hegel, "Self-consciousness," in *Philosophy of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 [1807], pp. 104-138. Other translations are available online.

Frantz Fanon, "The fact of blackness," in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto, 1986 [1952], pp. 109-140.

Paul Gilroy, "The crisis of 'race' and raciology," in *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 11-53.

Week 3. Social construction

Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 1986, 10(2), pp. 5-27.

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.

Paul C. Taylor, "Three challenges to race-thinking," in *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004, pp. 27-69.

II WHAT IS BIOLOGY?

Week 4. Evolution

Charles Darwin, chapters I and II, in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. London: Gibson Square, 2003, pp. 5-65.

Friedrich Nietzsche, "The will of power as knowledge" and "The will to power in nature," in *The Will to Power*. Ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Random House, 1967, pp. 261-381.

optional:

Ernst Mayr, "How and why does evolution take place?" and "Variational evolution," in *What Evolution Is*. New York: Basic Books, 2001: 73-114.

Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan, "Masters of the biosphere," in *What Is Life?* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 87-112.

Week 5. Phenotype

Charles Darwin, chapters VIII and XVII to XXI and "Supplemental note," in *op. cit.*, pp. 207-259, 500-624.

optional:

Scott F. Gilbert, "Ecological developmental biology: developmental biology meets the real world," *Russian Journal of Developmental Biology*, 2004, 35(6), pp. 425-438.

Week 6. Migration

Charles Darwin, "Geographical distribution," in *The Origin of Species*. Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth, 1998 [1859], pp. 262-289. Available online.

Jared Diamond, "How Africa became black," in *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton, 1997, pp. 376-401.

Richard York, "*Homo floresiensis* and human equality: enduring lessons from Stephen Jay Gould," *Monthly Review*, 2005, 56, pp. 14-19.

Week 7. Population

Ernst Mayr, "The systematic categories and the new species concept," in *Systematics and the Origin of Species from the Viewpoint of a Zoologist*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1942, pp. 102-122.

Theodosius Dobzhansky, "Individuals, populations, and races," in *Evolution, Genetics, and Man*. New York: Wiley, 1955, pp. 134-164.

Darwin, chapters VI and VII, *Descent*, pp. 146-206.

optional:

Lisa Gannett, "Racism and Human Genome Diversity research: the ethical limits of 'population thinking,'" *Philosophy of Science*, 68: pp. 479-492.

III BIOPOLITICS/GEOPOLITICS

Week 8. The racial state

David Theo Goldberg, "The time of racial states," in *The Racial State*. Malden, MA., Blackwell, 2002, pp. 36-56.

Michel 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.

Michel Foucault, chapters 6 and 9 to 11, in *"Society Must Be Defended:" Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76.*

Ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003 [1997], pp. 115-140, 189-264.

Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*. [1925], TBA.

Nietzsche, "The will to power as society and individual," in *op. cit.*, pp. 382-418.

Week 9. Race war

Foucault, chapters 1 to 5, 7 and 8, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-114 and pp. 141-188.

Nietzsche, book two, "Critique of the highest values hitherto," in *op. cit.*, pp. 85-257.

optional:

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, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1998 [1995], pp. 1-12, 119-135.

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

Week 10. Racial capitalism

Fanon, chapter 4, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-108.

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

Gilroy, "'After the love has gone': biopolitics and the decay of the black public sphere," *op. cit.*, pp. 177-206.

optional:

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.

IV RACIAL FLESH

Week 11. Phenomenology of race

Fanon, introduction and chapter 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-40.

Daniel W. Conway, "Nietzsche's proto-phenomenological approach to the theoretical problem of race," in Jacqueline Scott and A. Todd Franklin, eds. *Critical Affinities: Nietzsche and African American Thought*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 125-148.

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

optional:

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.

Week 12. Psychoanalysis of race

Fanon, chapters 2, 3, and 6, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-82, 141-209.

Slavoj Žižek, "Love thy neighbor? No, thanks!" *The Psychoanalysis of Race*. Ed. Christopher Lane. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, pp. 154-175.

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.

Week 13. Schizoanalysis of race

Alphonso Lingis, "Schizoanalysis of race," *Psychoanalysis of Race, op. cit.*, pp. 176-189.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "The conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation" and "A recapitulation of the three syntheses," in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983 [1972], pp. 84-113.

Nietzsche, "The will to power as art," *op. cit.*, pp. 419-453.

optional:

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

V WHAT POLITICS?

Week 14. Superman

Nietzsche, "European nihilism" and "Discipline and breeding," *op. cit.*, pp. 7-82 and pp. 457-550.

Darwin, chapters III to V, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-145.

optional:

Keith Ansell Pearson, "Nietzsche contra Darwin," in *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition*. London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 85-122.

Week 15. Revolution

Fanon, chapters 7 and 8, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-232.

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

Alain Badiou, prologue and chapters 1 and 7-11, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-15 and 75-111.

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.

Eve Fox Keller, *The Century of the Gene*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

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.

Richard Lewontin, *Human Diversity*. New York: Scientific American Library, 1982.

Richard Levins and Richard Lewontin, *The Dialectical Biologist*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

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.

Linda Stone and Paul Lurquin. *Genes, Culture and Human Evolution: A Synthesis*. Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2007.

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

Loïc Wacquant, *Deadly Symbiosis: Race and the Rise of Neoliberal Penalty*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.

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

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.

Bernard Wood. *Human Evolution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

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

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