

History 943: RACE AND NATIONALISMS: COMPARATIVE AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

R 1:20-3:15 p.m. Spring 2020
Professor Brenda Gayle Plummer
bplummer@wisc.edu

SYLLABUS

This seminar examines race and nationalism as they interact in several different geographic settings over time. It aims to cultivate a nuanced understanding of how race and nationalism have not only been “factors” in national histories, but also how they have shaped the past in the societies we will study. Our readings and discussions will prompt us to probe how race and nationalism inflect colonialism, racial orders, gender, cultural politics, and foreign relations. Most of our authors are historians but we will also sample selected work in the humanities and social sciences to achieve an enhanced understanding of the many ways that scholars have studied the race and nationalisms nexus.

Learning outcomes: Through comparative study and engagement with ideas, students will leave the course with a nuanced understanding of how concepts of race and nation have influenced the development of multiple societies in the modern world. They will augment their own specialized subfields by examining how selected historians and social scientists have addressed these subjects.

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

There are five broad and overlapping themes in the course: 1) racial formation; 2) power; 3) diaspora; 4) gendered nationalism; 5) culture. These themes are approximate categories; there are good reasons for classifying many of these works in several of them. The purpose of the themes is to anchor discussion for the readings which, except for the more theoretical, are organized in rough chronological order.

Class requirements are the following:

Attendance and participation – 40 percent (including leading class discussion on assigned days)

First paper – 25 percent

Second paper – 35 percent

Each student will proctor at least two discussions during the course of the semester, which entails introducing the assigned reading, summarizing its main points and leading discussion on it. *Everyone* is responsible for the readings and discussion, including any days when there is no

principal presenter. An excerpt from Wilbert J. McKeachie's *Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher* is attached below. It lays out some helpful advice for organizing discussion that works just as well for students as for professors.

The first paper is an essay in which you engage with one of the five broad themes above that will have been covered to date. It will be based on your study of the required texts pertaining to that theme. The length is 10 pages. It will be due March 12.

The second paper is an essay in which you explore a topic of interest to you, drawing on the themes, readings, and discussions that take place in the course of the semester. You may link the paper to a research issue that you are working on if you wish. The aim of the assignment is to have you deploy the concepts under study and relate them to your current field interests. The length is 10-15 pages and is due in my mailbox April 30.

Readings. Many of the materials are available digitally. I am putting hard copies on reserve. Articles and book chapters are on Canvas.

In alphabetical order:

Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History* 15 (Mar 2004): 31-63 – posted to Canvas

Leslie Bow, *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregated South* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) – through chapter 3 only. Online - Proquest E-Book

Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) Online - Proquest E-Book

Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) Online - Project Muse eBook

Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011) Online - Proquest E-Book

Keith P. Feldman, *Shadow over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015) – Online - Proquest E-Book

Roderick Ferguson, "On the Specificities of Racial Formation: Gender and Sexuality in Historiographies of Race," in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Daniel Martinez HoSang, Oneka LaBennett, Laura Pulido (University of California Press, 2012) – posted to Canvas

Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999) Online - Proquest E-Book

Priya Kandaswamy, "Gendering Racial Formation," al., Daniel HoSang et, ed. *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). – posted to Canvas

Melani McAlister, "One Black Allah: The Middle East in the Cultural Politics of African American Liberation, 1955-1970," *American Quarterly* 51.3 (1999) 622-656) – posted to Canvas

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the US*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2014) – recommended purchase. UW has only two print copies of this edition. I'll have one put on reserve.

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U. S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) Online Proquest E-Book

Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: an Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012) Online JSTOR eBook

Andrea Smith, "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy," in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Daniel Martinez HoSang, Oneka LaBennett, Laura Pulido (University of California Press, 2012) Posted to Canvas

Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *Journal of American History* (December 2001) Posted to Canvas

* * * * *

CALENDAR

Note: As this seminar focuses on comparative and theoretical perspectives, calendar entries are topical and don't always follow a chronological course.

January 23 – Introduction to the course

January 30 – Theme 1 - Racial formation

Reading: *Racial Formation in the United States*

February 6 - Theme 1 – Racial formation

Reading: "On the Specificities of Racial Formation; Kandaswamy, "Gendering Racial Formation; Smith, "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy," in HoSang et al, *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*. Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties."

February 13 - Theme 3 – Diaspora

Reading: *Freedom Papers*

February 20 - Theme 4 – Gendered nationalism

Reading: *Insurgent Cuba*

February 27– Theme 5- Culture

Reading: Adas, “Contested Hegemony”; McAlister, “One Black Allah”

March 5 – Theme 4 – Gendered nationalism

Reading: *Taking Haiti*

1st paper due

March 12 - Theme 1 – Racial formation

Reading: *Partly Colored*

March 19 Spring Break

March 26 - Theme 2 - Power

Reading: *Cold War Civil Rights*

April 2 – Theme 4 – Gendered Nationalism

Reading: *Reproducing Empire*

April 9 – Theme 3 – Diaspora

Reading: *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*

April 16 - No class meeting

April 23 - Theme 3 – Diaspora

Reading: *Lose Your Mother*

April 30 – Theme 1 – Power

Reading: *Shadow Over Palestine*

Second paper due

ORGANIZING EFFECTIVE DISCUSSIONS

The material below is excerpted from Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher*. It is not intended as the last word in structuring class discussions, but rather, as a set of useful suggestions for you to think about as you organize your presentations. Note that it is written from the standpoint of the instructor, which you will effectively be when you take charge of the conversation.

Skills in Leading Discussion

Types of questions. *Critical questions* examine the validity of an author’s arguments or discussion. Being so critical that students feel that their reading has been a waste of time is not helpful, but presenting an alternative argument or conclusion may start students analyzing their reading more carefully, and eventually you will want students to become critical readers who themselves challenge assumptions and conclusions.

Comparative questions, as the name suggests, ask for comparisons between one theory and another, one author and another, one research study and another, etc. Such questions help students determine important dimensions of comparison.

Connective questions involve attempts to link material or concepts that otherwise might not seem related. One might, for example, cut across disciplines to link literature, music, and historical events.

Starting discussion with a controversy. A...technique of stimulating discussion is to cause disagreement. Experimental evidence is accumulating to indicate that a certain degree of surprise or uncertainty arouses curiosity, a basic motive for learning.

Learning through discussion. I have already implied that classes don't automatically carry on effective discussions. To a large extent students have to learn from discussions just as they have to learn from reading. How can this occur?

One of the skills in learning through discussion is developing sensitivity to confusion about what the group is working on and asking for clarification. For teachers this implies presenting their own goals for the discussion and encouraging students to participate in formulating the group's goals.

A second attribute is the students' development of a willingness to talk about their own ideas openly and to listen and respond to others' ideas...

A third skill is planning. Discussions are sometimes frustrating because they are only getting under way when the end of the class period comes. If this results in continuation of the discussion outside the class, so much the better, but often learning is facilitated if students learn to formulate the issues and determine what out-of-class study or follow-up is necessary before the group breaks up.

A fourth skill is building on others' ideas in such a way as to increase their motivation rather than make them feel punished or forgotten. Often students see discussion as a competitive situation in which they win by tearing down other students' ideas....cooperative discussion methods encourage more effective work and better morale than competitive methods.

A fifth attribute is sensitivity to feelings of other group members. Students need to become aware of the possibility that [negative] feelings...may influence group members' participation in discussion. Sometimes it is more productive to recognize the underlying feeling than to focus on the content of an individual's statement.