

History 943: RACE AND NATIONALISMS: COMPARATIVE AND THEORETICAL
PERSPECTIVES

Tues., 1:20-3:15 p.m. Spring 2021
Professor Brenda Gayle Plummer
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Zoom office hours: Thursdays 1:20-2:20 pm
Or by appointment

SYLLABUS

This graduate 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. The course meets on-line Spring 2021.

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



Women of the world hawk La Globina Cuban cigars.

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 Friday, March 12 at 4:30 p.m.

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 15 pages and is due April 30 at 4:30 p.m. More information about the papers is on page 5.

Readings. Most of the books are available digitally, as I've noted below. As of this writing, the library has only two print copies of *Racial Formation*, which we'll be pivoting from in our discussions. I'll put it on reserve. Articles and book chapters are on Canvas. The reading load for the semester is eight complete books and eight articles/book sections.

In alphabetical order:

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

Tina Campt, "Diaspora Space, Ethnographic Space: Writing History Between the Lines." in *Globalization, Race and Cultural Production*, Kamari Clarke and Deborah Thomas, eds., Duke University Press, 2006. (Argues that the situation of Afro-Germans alters how the concept of diaspora is understood)

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).

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the US*, **3rd ed.** (Routledge, 2014) – recommended purchase. Note: 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

Meredith, Roman. "Making Caucasians Black," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 18, no. 2 (2002): 1-27. (Discusses the history of racialization in the USSR and Russian Federation)

Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: an Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012) (Multigenerational study of a family over many locales and situations) 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

James Thomas, “The Racial Formation of Medieval Jews: A Challenge to the Field,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33 (November 2010): 1737-1755



Uncle Sam schools unruly Caribbean republics in this 1899 cartoon from *Puck*.

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 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.

943 PAPER GUIDE

The first paper is an essay that engages with one of the expansive themes that will have been covered to date. The paper can discuss historical literature but is not a simple book review. Instead it is historiographic in a broad sense. It will be based on your study of the required texts. The length is 10 pages, typed, and double-spaced. Standard conventions of citation apply. Bibliographies are necessary only if you are going to use the parenthetical reference system.

A historiographic paper is not generally based on primary research, although someone doing such research might look to historiography to get a handle on the sources for their topic. Instead, it examines what scholars have thought about particular historical issues and how they have presented their evidence. Such essays can do several things: 1) They can survey the scope of historical literature, i. e., how much and what kind of material is available on a particular subject. 2) They can point out the approaches that scholars have taken to historical topics. 3) They can demonstrate how perspectives on particular questions change over a period of time.

In its most formal application, historiography can simplify research by making available to the researcher what is known about the topic, what has been published about it, and what scholars have thought about it to date. This can help the researcher clarify her own thinking about the topic and separate her own perspectives from those of others. Historiography is useful to students in a variety of other humanities and social science disciplines who are interested in the temporal dimension of experience and want to include it in their work.

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, but the paper does not have to be linked to your current interests. Its aim is to have you deploy the concepts under study and relate them to your current field. You have the option of substituting a much longer seminar paper for the short papers at the end of the semester but bear in mind that such a paper will play the major role in final evaluation. Please see me if you want to undertake this. A variation would be a work in progress, such as the draft of an article you're preparing for publication, that you present to the class to critique and which you would submit as your second paper at the end of the semester.

It is sometimes more difficult to write short papers like these than lengthy, discursive ones because briefer essays require an economy of language and clearer thought. A good short paper quickly identifies the subject matter, the issue or problem being addressed, and the writer's perspective on it. It lays out the scope of the subject, and makes clear what is, and is not, being dealt with.

One matter of concern here is topic choice. Have you chosen a topic that is too comprehensive for a short paper? A small manageable area of interest will give the most bang for the buck.

CALENDAR

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

January 26 – Introduction to the course

February 2 – Theme 1 - Racial formation

Reading: Omi & Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed.

February 9 - Theme 1 – Racial formation

Reading: “On the Specificities of Racial Formation; Kandaswamy, “Gendering Racial Formation; Smith, “Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy,” Roderick Ferguson, “On the Specificities of Racial Formation: Gender and Sexuality in Historiographies of Race,” in HoSang et al, *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*

February 16 - Theme 1 – Racial formation

Reading: James Thomas, “The Racial Formation of Medieval Jews: A Challenge to the Field,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33 (November 2010): 1737-1755; Scott & Hebrard, *Freedom Papers*

February 23 - Theme 4 – Gendered nationalism

Reading: Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*

March 2– Theme 5- Culture

Reading: Renda, *Taking Haiti*

March 9 – Theme 3 – Diaspora

Reading: Camp, “Diaspora Space

1st paper due this week by Friday, 4:30 p.m.

March 16 - Theme 2 – Power

Reading: Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*

March 23- Theme 3 - Diaspora

Reading: Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*

March 30 – Theme 4 – Gendered nationalism

Reading: Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*

Optional: Check out “La operación” on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3RPScdod6E>



Poster for the 1906 colonial exposition in Marseille, France.

April 6 - Theme 2 – Power

Reading: Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties; Roman, “Making Caucasians Black”

April 13– Theme 1 – Racial formation

Reading: Bow, *Partly Colored*, through chapter 3. **Visit from author Leslie Bow.**

April 20 – Theme 5 – Culture

Reading: Feldman, *Shadow Over Palestine*

April 20 – Summary meeting

April 27 – No class meeting
Second paper due April 30



Some Asian nations sit at the table of Japan's World War II-era "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" conference. The Indian and Melanesian (?) peering in are under European colonial rule and their status is unclear.