

Race: History, Biology, Psychology, Philosophy

(HPS 1602)

Fall 2020

Monday, Wednesday 4:30PM–5:45PM

121 Alumni Hall

Instructor: Dana Matthiessen

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Office hours: Online by Zoom, Monday and Wednesday, 3PM–4PM

Claim a 15 minute slot using “Find Appointments” on Canvas calendar

Or drop in (you may have to wait), or email for alternate time

Office hours will be held using Zoom: <https://pitt.zoom.us/j/7784657942>

As recent events make clear, race has played a highly consequential part in American society. This course aims to provide you with the tools and concepts to think about race and racism in a nuanced and reflective way. Such understanding can only be gained by bringing together several disciplines in an interdisciplinary manner. Thus, the course will move from philosophical reflection on the reality of race, to historical accounts of the rise of modern race concepts, to the psychology and ethics of race and race discourse. In particular, we will examine the following questions: What are races? What is racism? Does genetics show that races are real? Where does the concept of race come from? Is it a recent historical invention? How has it influenced the sciences? Should we be color-blind? How does race contribute to one’s identity? How do racial categories and attitudes affect our cognition and our institutions? How should they? Students with a variety of views on the topics are equally welcome. The course aims to encourage the critical assessment of your prior understanding of ‘race’ and ‘racism’ as well as engaged and respectful discussion of issues relevant to everyday life.

Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to...

- Identify and analyze different philosophical theories of race.
- Have gained insight into how to read and critically interpret philosophical arguments.
- Have developed skills, alongside historical and empirical knowledge, that will enable them to think clearly about and critically assess social issues involving race.

This course is part of a core sequence leading to certification in the Conceptual Foundations of Medicine Certificate Program and is a companion course to HPS 0612 (Mind and Medicine) but may be taken independently. The course is of particular interest to pre-medical and pre-health care students.

Readings

All course readings will be made available on Canvas or from links in this syllabus.

Please note that this is a reading-focused course. Students will be expected to arrive at class having digested the assigned readings enough that they can contribute to possible discussion and ask

informed questions. Do not despair! Do your best to grasp the gist of the texts, bring your notes and readings to class, and we will work together in class to clarify and synthesize the material for that week. You are strongly encouraged to consult some of the guides on reading history and philosophy available online, such as...

W. Caleb McDaniel, “How to Read for History” <https://wcm1.web.rice.edu/howtoread.html>

Hugh Wilder, “How to Read Philosophy” myweb.facstaff.wvu.edu/wasserr/114/how_to_read.pdf

Russo, “Reading a philosophical text” sophia-project.org/uploads/1/3/9/5/13955288/russo_reading.pdf

Operational postures and COVID-related classroom adjustments

The university has defined the following “operational postures” as guides for how students and faculty are to conduct themselves during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. You can find which posture is currently adopted at the Pittsburgh campus at www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/operational-postures. Below are the instructions for each posture and a brief explanation of how classes will be conducted.

During any of these phases, virtual attendance and participation will be available for all students who are not able to attend in person via the following Zoom link:

<https://pitt.zoom.us/j/99264588917>

Meeting ID: 992 6458 8917

Password: race2021

All materials will be available in the “Files” folder for each week on the Canvas page. Any in-class hand-outs will also be available as editable documents in the corresponding “Assignments” folder.

Operational Posture	STUDENTS	FACULTY AND STAFF
GUARDED RISK <small>Meets Minimum Standards of PA Green</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most instruction is in person, except large lectures • Housing open with virus mitigation and isolation interventions in place • Shared spaces open • Gatherings capped at 250 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home encouraged wherever possible • Those who need to support permitted activities allowed on campus • Research staff on campus based on Principal Investigator determination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most activities are in person, with virtual options and limited restriction 	
ELEVATED RISK <small>Meets Minimum Standards of PA Yellow</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction primarily virtual; some in-person learning occurring • Housing open with virus mitigation and isolation interventions in place • Some shared spaces open • Gatherings capped at 25 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home encouraged wherever possible • Those who need to support permitted activities allowed on campus • Virtual work encouraged for research personnel; some permitted on campus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some activities are in person, but most are virtual 	

Class will be conducted with the option that all students who are able can attend the class in person. Lecturing or guidance of class discussion will be primarily done in person, but virtual access will be made available.

Office hours/contact: as above.

Lecturing and discussion will be entirely virtual.

Office hours/contact: as above.

HIGH RISK <small>Meets Minimum Standards of PA Red</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction nearly all virtual, except select clinicals and labs • Housing open with virus mitigation and isolation interventions in place • Shared spaces open only to support on-campus students and staff • Campus life activities not permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home encouraged wherever possible • Those who need to support permitted activities allowed on campus • Research as permitted by senior leadership
	• Pitt is open, but activities are heavily restricted	

Lecturing and discussion will be entirely virtual.

Office hours/contact: as above.

See the grading and assignment schedule section below to note how participation and assessment may change under different operating postures.

NOTE: If I am not able to instruct the class in person during the “guarded” or “elevated” posture, say, due to a need to self-quarantine, then I will either (1) appear on a screen in the room and conduct the class, or (2) team teach with another instructor who will be present.

A (pretty long) note on classroom discussion and the general topic

All students are encouraged to ask questions, raise points of concern, and contribute their own knowledge and reflections whenever they can. We will be surveying a wide range of material, much of which I am not an expert in, and I expect there is a great deal we can learn by hearing what each other thinks and picks up from the readings. Ample space will be given for discussions of this sort.

The overarching topic of this class has been central to many deeply violent and inhumane episodes in our history, as well as many uplifting, unifying experiences. As with any area of academic inquiry, the classroom is meant to provide a space in which we can collectively work out thoughts and ideas that may not at first be fully formed or clear to us. In ideal circumstances we could treat this as an experimental and creative endeavor, where every reasonable claim is regarded as provisional and up for debate and no one is targeted for volunteering fresh intuitions or inklings that may further discussion—even if many of us, speaker included, find them mistaken...

But all of that comes with an expectation that we approach such discussions with the maturity and care that the topics of race and racial identity demand. Especially in a class like this, **it is paramount that everyone maintain a respectful attitude toward one another, and those of whom we speak, during these discussions.** It may be that certain topics will grip you and generate enthusiasm that can lead to heightened emotions, but this is absolutely no excuse to disparage, dismiss, talk over, or otherwise disrespect your fellow classmates. Any abusive, bigoted, or harassing behavior or language will not be tolerated. Any students who are experiencing behavior that is affecting their ability to concentrate and learn or otherwise have concerns about social dynamics of the class are strongly encouraged to contact me privately, and we will figure out how to best resolve the issue.

Be aware that some of the reading covers factual matters and historically influential points of view that are likely to offend, disturb, astonish, appall, or otherwise provoke strong emotional

responses—all perfectly warranted. This material has been chosen for its educational value. It is the aim of the course to grapple with these facts and views, and convert our reactions into meaningful discussion. But please contact me—the sooner the better—if you anticipate any difficulty being able to participate as expected and we will figure out how to proceed.

NOTE: in order to make the class maximally accessible to those who can't attend due to illness, time zone differences, and the like, I am encouraged to record the Zoom component of each class. That means any participation will be recorded. If you do not want to be recorded, you can choose to be silent (if attending in person) or mute your video and mic (if attending virtually), but it is strongly preferred that you remain visible and participate in class. We will decide together whether recording is necessary early on.

Grading and assignment schedule (more info in “Assignments” folder on Canvas)

- **Week three active reading assignment: 5% (submit by the beginning of class Feb 1)**
 - o For the third week of class, students are required to either print the reading assignment by Quayshawn Spencer and bring in notes taken while actively reading the text, or submit photographs or a digital version of notes via email (5%).
 - Note-taking should strive to identify and label the main thesis of the paper, identify components of the argument supporting this thesis—supporting claims for the thesis and the primary lines of evidence/argumentation meant to back them up—and record any points of confusion or critical comments the student has in response to specific points or terminology in the paper (e.g., written in the margins).
 - The note-taking may be on the reading assignment itself (encouraged), or on a separate piece of paper, which identifies the parts each note refers to.
- **Reading responses: 30% (every week starting Jan 25)**
 - o Starting on August 25, I will ask students to prepare and submit (via email) a brief *analytical or reflective comment* each week. This should isolate what the student considers a central or especially interesting part of one assigned text. In response to this claim the student will (1) provide a very brief contextualization of this claim and what makes it significant, and (2) provide a brief but reasoned personal commentary, criticism, or question that this paper provoked. *Consult the hand-out for this assignment for further guidance.*
 - Except for special circumstances, students are required to submit these before class via email. Since I will not be taking attendance, they serve as a proxy for their being “in” class.
 - These will be given a grade of either 3 (fully complete), 2 (part incomplete), or 1 (significantly incomplete). Ten responses will be graded. Students can hand in more if they like and the ten best scores will be counted. If fewer than ten are submitted, the remainder will be given a score of 0.
- **Class participation: 20%**
 - o Being able to engage in reasoned interpersonal discourse is crucial to skillful reflection on the kind of complex issues we will encounter in class. With that in mind, I have

arranged the course to emphasize discussion. While I will provide some framing and moderation, my aim is for a good portion of the class content to be generated by the questions and interests that come from student participants, either through in-class discussion or through use of the course's online discussion board.

- 20 participation points will be given in ½ point increments based on substantive contributions to in-person or online discussion, attendance of office hours, and other clear signs of engagement with the content of the course. *Note: to enhance discussion it may be useful to have a way to access the papers during class time.*
 - To enable online discussion, I will create a new topic for each reading assignment every week in the “Discussions” section of the course Canvas page. Students are encouraged to respond to the article by posting comments, questions, or criticisms, or by responding to other students' posts.
 - A substantive contribution is on topic, does not simply repeat previous remarks or your reading response, and is something that gives some supporting reasons or context, rather than a single sentence or utterance. A few more guidelines will be provided in a pinned post on the discussion board.
 - If these forms of participation are difficult for you, please contact me and we can work out an alternative way to earn credit, including the following:
 - Additional active reading assignments.
 - Sending me an email with an article that is relevant to our weekly reading, along with your thoughts on its contents.
 - A more detailed version of the analytical comment assignment, that includes additional criticisms or raises a “big picture” question or comment with respect to the reading.
 - Directly emailing me with questions or comments regarding the ideas and debates discussed in class.
 - Something else.
- **Film response project: 5% (submit via email by the end of the day Friday, March 26)**
 - Students will watch a film of their choosing (or alternatively recommended by me), narrative or documentary, and submit a reasoned reflection on how it speaks to a significant aspect of race or racism along lines that we have been considering. The reflection can be a commentary, interpretation, or critique of the film's content.
- **Short quizzes: 10% (complete one for units 1-2 and 3-4, by the beginning of the following unit)**
 - These will be a mixture of short answer questions or multiple choice questions meant to demonstrate basic understanding of the material covered in each unit.
 - Tests will be made available in the “Quizzes” section on Canvas after the last class of each unit. They will be open book, but time constrained, so some prep is important.
- **Question Bridge response: 5% (submit via email by class April 19)**
 - Students will browse question videos on <http://questionbridge.com/conversations>
 - And choose two to listen to, including all of the answers, and then write a reflection on how it relates to the topic of racial experience and identity.
- **Semester creative project: 25% (email by 5:00pm May 1, with earlier progress deadlines)**

- As the course progresses, each student will develop a creative project that examines a specific theory or aspect of race in terms that align with the focus of the course.
- This may be an essay (2500–3000 words), a podcast, a video, a concept map, a historical survey, a community project, a set of structured interviews, or a similar kind of work that manifests research into a specific topic of your choosing. The goal is for you to investigate a question or problem that you find especially interesting (perhaps related to your personal experiences, social group, political endeavors, or other non-academic pursuits) and connect it to material we encounter in the course. Further instructions will be provided after the first segment of the course. The final project will be due on the final day of the term **May 1**.

NOTE: If you find yourself struggling with the course material or are concerned about your grade, please act sooner than later. Come to office hours and we will work to identify the source of your difficulties and improve your understanding of tricky subjects.

Health and Safety Statement

In the midst of this pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. While in class, at a minimum this means that you must wear a face covering and comply with physical distancing requirements; other requirements may be added by the University during the semester. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in you not being permitted to attend class in person and could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit coronavirus.pitt.edu and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

Writing center

I encourage all of you to take advantage of the Writing Center, located at 317B O'Hara Student Center. For information about the center, visit: www.writingcenter.pitt.edu
You can easily make an appointment with a writing consultant online.

Academic integrity

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Disability services

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

Email communication policy

Each student is issued a University e-mail (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The university provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, please go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)

Copyright notice

Course materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See Library of Congress Copyright Office and the University Copyright Policy.

Statement on additional classroom recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

A note on Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at <https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/resources> (Please note that faculty and staff are considered required reporters—this means that if you disclose to me, or another employee of Pitt, that you have been a victim of sexual violence we have the obligation to report the situation. My report does not mean that you are officially reporting the incident – rather, this process is in place so that our schools can make sure you are able to receive the support and resources you need. Additional information may be found at the following website (including confidential sources on and off campus): <https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/resources/university-and-community-resources>

Course schedule

Note: readings for each day are marked with a bullet point. Readings marked *Recommended* are not required, but help round out a topic if you have time for them. All readings without links are available Canvas. If there are multiple assignments, I've chosen them so they do not take up more reading time than a single long one. In general, journalism articles do not need to be read as closely.

Unit One: Philosophical Theories of Race

Wednesday 1/20: Introduction

Monday 1/25: Race eliminativism (plus a short intro to argument analysis)

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, “The uncompleted argument: Du Bois and the illusion of race”

Wednesday 1/27: Social constructionism

- Sally Haslanger, “A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race”

Monday 2/1: A case for realism (**active reading due by email!**)

- Quayshawn Spencer, “A Radical Solution to the Race Problem”

Wednesday: 2/3: Race and ethnicity

- Lawrence Blum, “Latinos on Race and Ethnicity: Alcoff, Corlett, and Gracia”

Unit Two: History of Race in Science and Societies

Monday 2/8: From ancient to modern times

- Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Antiquity*, pp. 55-64, 74-78, 101-112, 123-129
- Adam Hochman, "Is 'race' modern?" <https://aeon.co/essays/fact-check-the-idea-of-race-is-not-modern-but-late-medieval>

Wednesday 2/10: Social context – European expansionism

- Eric Wolf, "Iberians in America", "The Fur Trade", "The Slave Trade" from *Europe and the People Without History*
 - o **Choose one chapter to focus on, skim the others**
- *Recommended:* Cedric Robinson, "Historical Archaeology of the Black Radical Tradition" from *Black Marxism*
 - o **Read up to p. 120, then choose one following section to focus on, skim the rest**

Monday 2/15: Social history of race in America

- Barbara Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America"
- *Recommended:* Theodore Allen, "The Invention of the White Race"

Wednesday 2/17: Scientific racism

- Blumenbach, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (excerpt)
- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Chapter 2

Monday 2/22: Scientific racism, cont.

- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Chapter 3
- *Choose at least one to watch:* Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine, "Perspectives on Race Science and Scientific Racism" (follow links to four YouTube videos): <https://www.chstm.org/video/101>

Wednesday 2/24: Scientific racism today(?)

- Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve*, pp. 269-282, 295-311, 340
- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, "Critique of the Bell Curve", pp. 367-378

- **Complete Units 1 and 2 Quiz on Canvas by 11:59PM on Sunday 2/28!**

Unit Three: Race in Modern Biology and Medicine

Monday 3/1: Genetic diversity and race, reconsidered

- Lewontin, “The Apportionment of Human Diversity”
- Edwards, “Human genetic diversity: Lewontin’s fallacy”

Wednesday 3/3: Genetic diversity and race, further reconsidered

- Deborah Bolnick, “Individual Ancestry Inference and the Reification of Race as a Biological Phenomenon”
- *Recommended:* Ian Tattersall and Rob DeSalle, *Race? Debunking a Scientific Myth*, pp. 130-143

Monday 3/8: Race and medicine

- Esteban Burchard et al., “The importance of race and ethnic background in medical diagnosis”
- Michael Root, “The Use of Race in Medicine as a Proxy for Genetic Differences”

Wednesday 3/10: Race and medicine, cont.

- Richard Garcia, “The Misuse of Race in Medical Diagnosis”
- Dorothy Roberts, “Debating the Cause of Health Disparities: Implications for Bioethics and Racial Equality”

Unit Four: Racial Categorization and Racism

Monday 3/15: Racial categorization

- Lawrence Hirschfeld, *Race in the Making*, Chapter 4

Wednesday 3/17: Racism

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Racisms”

Monday: 3/22: Implicit racism

- Brian Nosek et al., “Implicit social cognition: From measures to mechanisms”
- Diana Burgess et al., “Why Do Providers Contribute to Disparities and What Can Be Done About It?”

Wednesday 3/24: Combating racism at the psychological level

- Daniel Kelly et al., “Getting Rid of Racism: Assessing Three Proposals in Light of Psychological Evidence”

- Film response due by email on 3/26!

Monday 3/29: Racism, culture, and colonialism

- Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture" <https://tamilnation.org/ideology/racism.htm>
- David Livingstone Smith, "Human atrocities and unnatural beings" <https://iai.tv/articles/human-atrocities-and-unnatural-beings-auid-1649>
- *Recommended:* Ashis Nandy, "The Psychology of Colonialism" (excerpt) from *The Intimate Enemy*

Wednesday 3/31: Racism as system or structure

- Charles Mills, "White supremacy"
- *Recommended:* Brandon Vaidyanathan, "Systemic Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System is Not a Myth" <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/06/65585/>

- Complete Units 3 and 4 Quiz on Canvas by 11:59PM on Sunday 4/4!

Unit Five: Racial Identity and Politics

Monday 4/5: Identity movements, case study: Black nationalism and Black Power

- Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" (also available with annotations on YouTube) <https://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/mx.html>
- Stokely Carmichael (aka Kwame Ture), "Black Power" (also available on YouTube) <https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/carmichael-black-power-speech-text/>
- *Recommended:* Kwame Anthony Appiah, "What Can We Learn from the Rise and Fall of 'Political Blackness'?" <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/opinion/political-blackness-race.html>

Wednesday 4/7: Standpoint theory and intersectionality

- Patricia Hill Collins, "Intersectionality, Situated Standpoints, and Black Feminist Thought"
- Kenneth Taylor, "Transcending intersectionality" <https://www.philosophytalk.org/blog/transcending-intersectionality>

Monday 4/12: Anti-racism

- Robin DiAngelo, "White Fragility"
- Ibram Kendi, "Definitions", "Dueling Consciousness" from *How to Be an Anti-Racist*

Wednesday 4/14: Academic critiques of race discourse: liberal, conservative, socialist

- Joseph Heath, "Redefining racism" <http://induecourse.ca/redefining-racism/>
- John McWhorter, "The Better of the Two Big Antiracism Bestsellers" <https://www.educationnext.org/better-of-two-big-antiracism-bestsellers-kendi-how-to-be-an-antiracist-book-review/>

- Adolph Reed Jr., “The limits of anti-racism” <https://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Antiracism.html>

Monday 4/19: Privilege and experience (Question Bridge response due by email!)

- Peggie McIntosh, “White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
- Kenan Malik, “White privilege and class” <https://crookedtimber.org/2020/08/30/white-privilege-and-class-a-reply-to-chris-bertram-by-kenan-malik/>
- Olúfemi Táíwò, “Being-in-the-Room Privilege: Elite Capture and Epistemic Deference” <https://www.thephilosopher1923.org/essay-taiwo>
- *Recommended:* Kwame Appiah, “Why are politicians suddenly talking about their ‘lived experience?’” <https://amp.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/14/lived-experience-kamala-harris>

Wednesday 4/21: Prisons and police

- Devon Carbado and L. Song Richardson, “The Black Police: Policing Our Own”
- *Recommended:* Christian Parenti, “The Surprising Geography of Police Killings: Back-of-the-Napkin Calculations on Race, Region, and Violence” <https://nonsite.org/the-surprising-geography-of-police-killings-back-of-the-napkin-calculations-on-race-region-and-violence/>
- *Recommended:* Review Vaidyanathan article from 3/31