

# HI2H5-15 Race and Science: Histories and Legacies

**21/22**

**Department**

History

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

James Poskett

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

## Description

### Introductory description

Why do many European and American museums contain large collections of human skulls? Why are some diseases associated with particular ethnic groups? And why does facial recognition software perform significantly worse when trying to identify people of African descent? In this course, we explore these questions through the long history of the relationship between race and science. We begin in the seventeenth century, with the rise of Atlantic slavery, and move right through to the present. In the process, we explore the historical development of various racial sciences, from anatomy and psychology through to anthropology and genetics. Throughout the course, there is an emphasis on exploring the relationship between race and science as part of a global history. We cover the history of racial science, not just in Europe and the United States, but also in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. Reflecting recent developments in the field, this course emphasises the agency of colonised, enslaved, and indigenous people in resisting and reworking the relationship between science and race, both in the past and present. This course also confronts the legacies of racial science, questioning how society could better respond to these histories today. Finally, this course draws on best practices in terms of anti-racist pedagogy, both in teaching and assessment. Please note: 'race' in this course is treated as a social construction, not a biological fact. Indeed, in this course we explore the very history of how race came to be seen as first biological and then social.

## **Module aims**

This course will introduce students to the scholarship on the history of racial science. The module is designed to engage students by getting them to reflect on the legacies of these histories, both in the teaching and assessment. Each week, the lecture and seminar readings will explore how the history of racial science still has an impact on the present. This is also reflected in the assessment, which includes an applied policy task.

The principal modules aims are therefore: to introduce students to the history of racial science, to introduce this history through anti-racist pedagogy, ensuring material is treated with sensitivity, to highlight the role that enslaved, colonised and indigenous people have played in challenging racial science, and to explore the legacies of these histories today for policy and politics.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Weeks:

1. Medicalising Blackness
2. Skull Collectors
3. People on Display
4. Colonial Anthropology
5. Sciences of Settler Colonialism
6. Reading Week
7. Eugenic Empires
8. Racial Science and the End of Empire
9. Genetic Nationalism
10. Algorithms of Oppression

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the methods of the history of race and science, and to understand the connections between the history of race and the history of science
- Communicate ideas and findings, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Generate ideas through the analysis of a broad range of primary and secondary source material related to the history of racial science.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing scholarship.
- Act with limited supervision and direction within defined guidelines, accepting responsibility for achieving deadlines.

## **Indicative reading list**

Anderson, Clare. *Legible Bodies: Race, Criminality and Colonialism in South Asia*. Berg, 2004.

Anderson, Warwick. 'Racial Conceptions in the Global South'. *Isis* 105, no. 4 (1 December 2014)

Augstein, Hannah Franziska. *Race: The Origins of an Idea, 1760-1850*. Thoemmes Press, 1996.

Ballantyne, Tony. *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*. Springer, 2016.

Barkan, Elazar. *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the World Wars*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Bashford, Alison, and Philippa Levine, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Blanchard, Pascal, Nicolas Bancel, Gilles Boëtsch, Sandrine Lemaire, and Eric Deroo. *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*. Liverpool University Press, 2008.

Burton, Elise K. *Genetic Crossroads: The Middle East and the Science of Human Heredity*. Stanford University Press, 2021.

Conklin, Alice L. *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850–1950*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Curran, Andrew S. *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*. JHU Press, 2011.

Delbourgo, James. 'The Newtonian Slave Body: Racial Enlightenment in the Atlantic World'. *Atlantic Studies* 9, no. 2 (1 June 2012)

Desmond, Adrian, and James Moore. *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution*. HMH, 2014.

Dubow, Saul. *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

El-Haj, Nadia Abu. *The Genealogical Science: The Search for Jewish Origins and the Politics of Epistemology*. University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Farland, Maria. 'W. E. B. DuBois, Anthropometric Science, and the Limits of Racial Uplift'. *American Quarterly* 58 (2006)

Gil-Riaño, Sebastián. 'Relocating Anti-Racist Science: The 1950 UNESCO Statement on Race and Economic Development in the Global South'. *The British Journal for the History of Science* 51, no. 2 (June 2018)

Heaton, Matthew M. *Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry*. Ohio University Press, 2013.

Hogarth, Rana A. *Medicalizing Blackness: Making Racial Difference in the Atlantic World, 1780-1840*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Kishimoto, Kyoko. 'Anti-racist pedagogy: from faculty's self-reflection to organizing within and beyond the classroom,' *Race Ethnicity and Education* (2018): 540-554

Linstrum, Erik. *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire*. 1 edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Lockley, Tim. *Military Medicine and the Making of Race: Life and Death in the West India Regiments, 1795–1874*. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Lorcin, Patricia M. E. *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria*. I.B.Tauris, 1995.

Majeed, Javed. *Nation and Region in Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India*. Taylor & Francis, 2018.

Mukharji, Projit Bihari. 'The Bengali Pharaoh: Upper-Caste Aryanism, Pan-Egyptianism, and the Contested History of Biometric Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Bengal'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2 (April 2017)

Nelson, Alondra. *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation After the Genome*. Beacon Press, 2017.

Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. NYU Press, 2018.

- Poskett, James. *Materials of the Mind: Phrenology, Race, and the Global History of Science, 1815–1920*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.
- Qureshi, Sadiah. *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. University of Chicago Press, 2011
- Redman, Samuel J. *Bone Rooms*. Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Robb, Peter, ed. *The Concept of Race in South Asia*. New Delhi: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998.
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New Press/ORIM, 2011.
- Roque, Ricardo. *Headhunting and Colonialism: Anthropology and the Circulation of Human Skulls in the Portuguese Empire, 1870-1930*. Springer, 2010.
- Rusert, Britt. *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture*. NYU Press, 2017.
- Saini, Angela. *Superior: The Return of Race Science*. Beacon Press, 2019.
- Seth, Suman. *Difference and Disease: Medicine, Race, and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Staum, Martin S. *Labeling People: French Scholars on Society, Race, and Empire, 1815–1848*. McGill-Queen's Press, 2003.
- Stepan, Nancy. 'The Hour of Eugenics': Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America. Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Sysling, Fenneke. *Racial Science and Human Diversity in Colonial Indonesia*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.
- TallBear, Kim. *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Thomas, Nicholas. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Tilley, Helen. *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Wade, Peter, Carlos López López Beltrán, Eduardo Restrepo, and Ricardo Ventura Santos. *Mestizo Genomics: Race Mixture, Nation, and Science in Latin America*. Duke University Press, 2014.
- Wagner, Anne E., 'Unsettling the academy: working through the challenges of anti-racist pedagogy,' *Race Ethnicity and Education* (2005): 261-275
- Wagner, Kim. 'Confessions of a Skull: Phrenology and Colonial Knowledge in Early Nineteenth-Century India'. *History Workshop Journal* 69 (2010): 27–51.
- Selected primary sources related to the history of anthropology, psychology, medicine, genetics, and sociology of race. Such as:
- Douglass, Frederick. *The Claims of the 'Negro' Ethnologically Considered*. Lee, Mann and Co, 1854.
- Morton, Samuel George. *Crania Americana*. J. Dobson, 1839.
- Mourant, Arthur. *The Genetics of the Jews*. Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Risley, Herbert. *The People of India*. Thacker, Spink, and Co. 1909.
- Roy, Sarat Chandra. *The Bihors*. Ranchi, 1925.
- Carothers, J. C. *The Psychology of Mau Mau*. Government Printer, 1955.
- Mead, Margaret. *Coming of Age in Samoa*. William Morrow, 1928.
- Mitchell, John. 'An Essay upon the Causes of the Different Colours of People in Different Climates.' *Philosophical Transactions* 43 (1745).

de Garay, Alfonso. Genetic and Anthropological Studies of Olympic Athletes. Academic Press, 1974.

The Race Question. UNESCO, 1950.

### **Subject specific skills**

See learning outcomes.

### **Transferable skills**

See learning outcomes.

---

## **Study**

### **Study time**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Required</b>
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Tutorials	1 session of 1 hour (1%)
Private study	131 hours (87%)
Total	150 hours

### **Private study description**

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

### **Costs**

No further costs have been identified for this module.

---

## **Assessment**

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### **Assessment group A**

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>
Seminar contribution	10%	
1500 word applied task (policy document)	40%	
<p>The applied task will be to write a policy document on the legacies of a particular racial science or collection or institution, suggesting how these legacies should be addressed alongside the historical detail to make the case. The model will be that of a History &amp; Policy website piece. Examples that I will point students to as a model in terms of structure:  <a href="http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/policing-the-windrush-generation">http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/policing-the-windrush-generation</a>   <a href="http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/unequal-britain-equalities-in-britain-since-1945">http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/unequal-britain-equalities-in-britain-since-1945</a></p> <p>(I will give students a list of current issues and topics to choose from, such as the collection of the Edinburgh Anatomy Museum, or the report of the Royal Society on race and racism in scientific institutions. Students will also be allowed and encouraged to pick their own case studies for a policy report.)</p>		
3000 word essay	50%	
<p>A historical essay based on both secondary and primary sources. Students will be given a list of essay titles or allowed to pick their own in consultation with the convenor (if confirmed in writing in advance).</p>		

## **Feedback on assessment**

- written feedback on essay and exam cover sheets- student/tutor dialogues in one-to-one tutorials

## **Availability**

### **Courses**

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list B for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
  - Year 2 of V100 History
  - Year 2 of V100 History