

**RACE AND HUMAN VARIATION**  
**ANTHROPOLOGY 214 – Spring, 2009**

**Instructor:**

Professor: **Adam Van Arsdale**

Office: PNE 348

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**Description:**

This course is about the relationship between human biological variation, the forces which have shaped our evolutionary history, and ideas of race. The course is divided into two primary units. The first of these will discuss the basic outlines of evolutionary theory and review how the forces of evolution act to shape and structure human biological variation. In addition, the origins of the race concept in the context of physical anthropology and human origins will be examined. This unit will review how the field of anthropology has worked to create and deconstruct biological ideas of race. At the conclusion of this unit, the validity of race as a biological concept will be examined in light of modern evolutionary theory. The second half of the course will explore how modern understandings of biological variation become intertwined with race and broader societal issues. This will include discussions of human intelligence, the genetics of health and disease, and racial classification. Throughout the semester the connections between the reality of biological variation, the challenge of categorizing human variation, and the implication of such categorizations will be emphasized.

**Grading:**

Grades for the course will be based on material presented in the lecture and assigned readings, as well as involvement in class discussions. A major fraction of the grade will be derived from a midterm exam covering the first unit of the course and a term paper focusing on issues raised during the second half of the course. In addition, several short assignments and response papers will be administered throughout the semester.

The grade breakdown will be as follows:

Mid-term Exam	30%	<b>March 19, in class</b>
Final Paper	30%	due by <b>May 20</b>
Assignments (4)	20%	
-Response papers (3)		5% each
-Evolution quiz (1)		5%
Participation	20%	

Active participation in class and/or via the FirstClass site for the course is expected of all students. Each student's contribution to the development of the course discussion over the course of the semester is an important component of the final grade. The content of this course at times delves into areas that are sensitive and charged with much emotion. During class discussions and on the FirstClass forum all students are required to be respectful of other students opinions and ideas.

**Late Policy:** Late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions will be made for appropriate circumstances, but only with approval from Professor Van Arsdale.

**Texts:** All reading material for the course will be posted in .pdf form on the FirstClass site. In addition, several important texts will be on permanent reserve at the library. These include:

- J. Relethford, 2005. The Human Species, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw Hill, New York
- Caspari, R. & M. Wolpoff, 1997. Race and Human Evolution. Simon & Schuster, New York.
- S.J. Gould, 1996. The Mismeasure of Man, (revised & expanded edition). W.W. Norton & Company, New York.

***COURSE SCHEDULE*** (subject to change)

**UNIT 1**

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**Week 1: INTRODUCTION**

- Feb 2: Course overview, introduction to race
- Feb 5: Is Barack Obama black?

- Readings:
- \*Kottak (2006). Anthropology, Chapter 14, Ethnicity and Race. (289-300)
  - \*Race, Ethnicity, and Genetics Working Group (2005). *The use of racial, ethnic, and ancestral categories in human genetics research*. American Journal of Human Genetics, vol 77:(519-532) \*\*
  - \*Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Barack Obama isn’t black.” The Atlantic Montly (blog), 11/30/08: [http://ta-nehisicoates.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/11/barack\\_obama\\_isnt\\_black.php](http://ta-nehisicoates.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/11/barack_obama_isnt_black.php)
  - \*Brent Staples, “Decoding the debate over the blackness of Barack Obama.” NY Times, 2/11/07.

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**Week 2: INTRO TO EVOLUTIONARY THEORY**

- Feb 9: What is science? Introduction to evolution and DNA
- Feb 12: Origins of variation, Causes of evolutionary change

- Readings:
- \*Relethford (2006). The Human Species, Chapters 1-3 (1-99)
  - \*Blakey (1999). *Scientific racism and the biological concept of race*. Literature and Psychology 45:(29-43)\*\*

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**Week 3: SELECTION & ADAPTATION**

- Feb 16: NO CLASS
- Feb 19: Natural Selection and Adaptation

- Readings:
- \*Relethford (2002). *Apportionment of Global Human Genetic Diversity Based on Craniometrics and Skin Color*, AJPA 118:393-398.

\*Jablonski & Chaplin (2000). *The evolution of human skin coloration*, JHE 39:57-84.

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#### **Week 4: ENVIRONMENTAL VARIATION & POPULATION GENETICS**

Feb 23: Environmental Variation

Feb 26: Population Genetics

- Readings:
- \*Gravlee et al. (2003). *Boas's Changes in Bodily Form: The Immigrant Study, Cranial Plasticity, and Boas's Physical Anthropology*, Amer. Anthro. 105:326-332.
  - \*Sparks & Jantz (2003). *Changing Times, Changing Faces: Franz Boas's Immigrant Study in Modern Perspective*, Amer. Anthro. 105:333-337.
  - \* Relethford (2003). Reflections of Our Past: How Human History is Revealed in Our Genes. Boulder: Westview Press. Ch. 5.
  - \*Gootman, August 9, 2006, NY Times. "Proposal Adds Options for Students to Specify Race"
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#### **Week 5: HISTORY OF RACE CONCEPT AND PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

Mar 2: Origins of the Race Concept

Mar 5: American School of Anthropology

- Readings:
- \*Caspari & Wolpoff (1997). Race and human evolution. Chapters 3-5 (57-136).
  - \*Gould (1996) The mismeasure of man. Chapter 2 (30-72).

*Evolution Quiz, handed out March 5, due in class March 9*

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#### **Week 6: 20TH CENTURY BIOLOGY AND RACE**

Mar 9: Modern Synthesis and Race

Mar 12: Race as a Biological Concept

- Readings:
- \*Wilson et al. (1953) *The subspecies concept and its taxonomic implications*, Systematic Zoology 2:97-111.
  - \*Livingstone (1962) *On the non-existence of human races*, Current Anthropology. 3:279-281.
  - \*Caspari & Wolpoff (1997). Race and human evolution. Chapter 6 (137-172).
  - \*Caspari (2003). *From Types to Populations: A Century of Race, Physical Anthropology, and the American Anthropological Association*. Amer. Anthro. 105:65-76.
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#### **Week 7: GENETICS, RACE AND HUMAN VARIATION**

Mar 16: What is Race?

Mar 19: EXAM (in class)

- Readings:
- \*Templeton (1998). *Human races, a genetic and evolutionary*

*perspective, Amer. Anthro.* 100:632-650.  
Caspari & Wolpoff, chapter 11 (314-360)

**NO CLASS MAR 20-29 (SPRING BREAK)**

**UNIT 2**

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**Week 8: INTRO TO RACE AND SOCIETY**

Mar 30: Why do we think in racial terms?

Apr 2: (away at AAPAs)

Readings: \*Hirschfield (1998). *Natural assumptions: Race, essences, and taxonomies of human kinds*, Soc. Res. 65:331-349.  
\*Hirschfield (2001). *On a folk theory of society*, Pers. Soc. Psych. Rev. 5(2):107-117.

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**Week 9: COUNTING RACE**

Apr 6: Census categories and race

Apr 9: Consequences and necessity of categorization

Readings: \* Wright, Lawrence (1994) *One Drop of Blood*. The New Yorker July 25, 1994:46-55  
\*Readings from D. I. Kertzer & D. Arel, eds. (2001). Census and Identity : The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses (New Perspectives on Anthropological and Social Demography). New York: Cambridge University Press.

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**Week 10: RACE AND IQ**

Apr 13: What is IQ?

Apr 16: Relationship between phenotype and heritability

Readings: \*Gould, Ch. 5 & Epilogue (177-263, 367-390).

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**Week 11: EUGENICS**

Apr 21: (CLASS TUESDAY) American Eugenics Movement

Apr 23: Film (Nazi Medicine)

Readings: \* Proctor (1988) *From Anthropologie to Rassenkunde in the German Anthropological Tradition*. In (G. Stocking, ed.) Bones, Bodies, and Behavior: Essays on Biological Anthropology. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.  
\* Allen, G. (1986) *The eugenics record office at Cold Springs Harbor, 1910-1940: An essay in institutional history*. Osiris vol. 2, 225-264.

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**Week 12: RACE AND HEALTH**

Apr 27: Use of race in medical studies

Apr 30: Disparities in health

- Readings:     \*\* Murray, C. et al. (2006) *Eight Americas: Investigating mortality disparities across races, counties and race-counties in the United States*. *PLOS Medicine* 3(9):1513-1524.
- \*\* Schwartz, R. (2001) *Racial profiling in medical research*. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 344:1392-1393.
- \*\*Risch et al. (2002) *Categorizations of humans in biomedical research* *Genome Biology* 3:1-12.

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**Week 13: RACE IN SCIENCE AND SOCIETY**

May 4: Science, race and social policy?

May 7: Movie (AAA Meetings)

- Readings:     \*Duster, T. (2005) Race and reification in science. *Science* 307: 1050-1051.
- \*\* King, P. (1992) *The past as prologue: race, class and gene discrimination*. In *Gene Mapping: Using law and ethics as guides*. G. Annas and S. Elias (eds) New York: Oxford University Press pp. 94-114

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**Week 14: CONCLUSIONS**

May 11: How do we talk about race?