How Race is Made (Part 1)

This course introduces students to the historical origins and construction of race with particular attention to how race has helped to shape Latin America from colonial times to the present. This will be a broad analysis of the place that racial and ethnic ideologies have played in national political structures, economic formations, and social movements. We will examine the formation of individual and collective identity in Latin America among Europeans, indigenous groups, blacks, as well as Asians across a variety of historical and geographical settings. Particular attention will focus on the forces that have shaped the context and perceptions of race over time, including nation-building, science, miscegenation (racial mixing), indigenismo, resistance, etc. We will also see how racial ideas relate to class, gender, and even the arts. These issues will be covered through lectures, discussions, videos, and primary/secondary readings.

Apart from its academic content, the class will develop practical skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing. It will stress how to analyze assigned readings for arguments, identify evidence, and to understand structure. It will also help students refine their writing and communication skills by way of assignments that will emphasize developing strong arguments, organizing and presenting evidence, and utilizing effective styles. These skills will be applied to a variety of materials.

Required books:


Stepan, Nancy. The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America (Cornell Univ., 1996)

Articles on library course reserve (listed under Uni Stu 16A):


Lesser, Jeffrey. “Jews are Turks Who Sell on Credit,” in Ignacio Klich and Jeffrey Lesser, eds., Arab and Jewish Immigrants in Latin America (Frank Cass: 1998), pp. 38-56.


**Course requirements and grading:**

Students must attend lectures and discussion sections, finish all readings and assignments by the due dates, and be prepared for discussion in sections. Students are strongly encouraged to link the readings to personal experiences and current events. Since this is a writing intensive course, grading will be based on:

1) **three short writing assignments between 1 to 3 pages each** (35%) due on Oct. 18, Nov. 1, and Nov. 15.

2) **one longer essay of 4 to 5 pages** (25%) due Nov. 27.

3) **one take-home final of 4 to 5 pages** (25%) due December 11.

4) **attendance as well as participation in weekly discussion sections** (15%)
Course Schedule

Week 1:

Sept. 27) Introduction: Themes, Definitions, & Parameters
Oct. 2) The Evolution of an Idea: Western Thoughts on Race & Ethnicity
Oct. 4) First Encounters: Creating the “Indio” in Latin America

Readings:

- Brace, “Race” is a Four-Letter Word, pp. 17-43.

Week 2:

Oct. 9) Caste or Class? Examining Colonial Society in Latin America
Oct. 11) Blacks in Latin America: Slavery & Resistance

Readings:


Week 3:

Oct. 16) Barbarism or Civilization? Independence & Nation-building
Oct. 18) Slaves to Citizens: Race & Nation in 19th Century Brazil & Cuba (first assignment due)

Readings:

- Sarmiento, “Facundo or, Civilization and Barbarism,” pp. 9-27.
- Earle, The Return of the Native, pp. 100-132.

Week 4:

Oct. 23) Scientific Racism Part I: Inventing Biological “Types"
Oct. 25) Scientific Racism Part II: The Eugenics Movement

**Readings:**
- *Stepan, Hour of Eugenics*

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**Week 5:**

Oct. 30) Celebrating the Indian: Indigenismo in Mexico & the Andes

Nov. 1) The Forgotten Race: Asians in Latin America *(second assignment due)*

**Readings:**
- *Lesser, Searching for Home Abroad,* pp. 5-20.

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**Week 6:**

Nov. 6) European Immigration to Argentina: Ethnicity Becomes Racial

Nov. 8) Middle Eastern and Jewish Diaspora in Latin America

**Readings:**
- *Lesser, “Jews are Turks Who Sell on Credit,”* pp. 38-56.

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**Week 7:**

Nov. 13) Brazil: The Myth of Racial Democracy I

Nov. 15) Brazil: The Myth of Racial Democracy II *(third assignment due)*

**Readings:**
- *Castillo Bueno, Reyita (begin reading)*
Week 8:

Nov. 20) Race & Politics: Legislating a “Raceless” Society in Cuba

Nov. 22) Thanksgiving

Readings:
- Castillo Bueno, Reyita (finish reading)

Week 9:

Nov. 27) Race & Gender (fourth assignment due)

Nov. 29) Race & Culture: Religion, Music, & Art

Readings:

Week 10:

Dec. 4) Indigenous Rights Today: Embracing Collective Identity

Dec. 6) Conclusions: Race in a Global Age

Readings:

Take home final due Dec. 11