

September 20)

September 23 to review your essays.

# RACE AS BIOLOGICAL MYTH (?)

SOC/AFRS 1010: DECONSTRUCTING RACISM FALL 2019

Diagnostic Essay (uploaded to your folder via OneDrive by **5 pm** on **Friday**,

> Schedule a 30-minute meeting with Professor Greene during the week of

> Schedule through the link on the course website.

# **BUSINESS MATTERS**

| PREVIOUSLY  |  |
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| Race and Identity   |  |
| ▶ The Looking Glass Self  |  |
| ▶ The Self (George Herbert Mead)  |  |
| *The Iconic Ghetto" (Anderson)  |  |
| ▶ Intersectionality   |  |
| "trading on" privileged identities  |  |
| ▶ The Sociological Imagination (C. Wright Mills)  |  |
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| RACIAL FORMATION   |  |
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| "The effort must be made to understand race as an unstable and                               |  |
| "decentered" complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle." |  |
| (Omi and Winant, p. 68)  |  |
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| DEFINING "RACE" AS A MODERN PROJECT  |  |
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| <ul> <li>Contemporary understandings of race derived from England and Spain.</li> </ul>  |  |
| ▶ England – Irish Spain – Jews, Muslims  |  |
| Age of Exploration – Colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia help   |  |
| foster understandings of "native peoples" as inferior to European settlers.  • A justification of their exploitation (and later enslavement) for economic  |  |
| gain.  |  |
| • "Indian"   |  |
| <ul><li>"Irish" (indentured servants); European immigrants</li></ul>   |  |
| African "slave" creates "black"  |  |
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- Sytema Naturae (twelve editions, published between 1735 and 1778)
  - first classification system that included human beings (published in the tenth edition)
    - Homo sapiens (man) vs. Homo troglodyte (ape)
      - H. sapiens americanus (red) "Ill-tempered, impassive. Thick straight black hair; wide nostrils; hars face; beardless. Stubborn, contended, free. Paints himself with red lines. Ruled by custom."
      - H. sapiens europaeus (white) "Vigorous, muscular. Flowing blond hair. Very smart. Inventive. Covered by tight clothing. Ruled by law."
      - H. sapiens asiaticus (yellow) "Melancholy, stern. Black hair; dark eyes. Strict, haughty, greedy. Covered by loose garments. Ruled by opinion."
      - H. sapiens afer (black) "Sluggish, lazy. Black kinky hair; silky skin; flat nose; thick lips; females with genital flap and elongated breasts. Crafty, slow, careless. Covered by grease. Ruled by caprice."



### **RACIAL LOGICS**

JOHANN FRIEDRICH BLUMENBACH (1752 - 1840)

- On the Natural Varieties of Mankind (1795)
  - classified human beings into five races, based largely on aesthetic grounds:
    - Caucasian: descended from the Caucasus Mountain Region; most beautiful; the closest representing God's image (the original humans)
      - Remaining races "degenerated" from the Caucasian race:
        - Mongolian
        - ▶ Ethiopian
        - American
        - Malay.





• used the scientific method to study racial difference and validate polygenism.

- $_{\mbox{\scriptsize p}}$  hypothesized that racial rankings could be established empirically through studying brain size.
  - ightarrow amassed more than 1,000 human skulls from around the globe.
  - measured cranial volume of skulls by putting bird seed or lead pellets in them, and pouring the contents in a cylinder.
    - Crania Americana (1839):
      - whites "highest intellectual endowments"
      - Mongolians of Asia "ingenious, imitative, and highly susceptible to cultivation"
      - American Indians "averse to cultivation, and slow in acquiring knowledge; restless, revengeful, and fond of war"
      - Ethiopians "joyous, flexible, and indolent"; "the lowest grade of humanity"

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### **RACIAL LOGICS**

CHARLES DARWIN (1809 - 1882)

- > famous for his theory of evolution
  - ▶ The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex (1871)
    - › All humans and apes descend from a common ancestor.
    - Human evolution had not produced essential types, but was driven by individual variation of organisms within the species.
- ▶ LEGACIES:
  - > fortified the racial hierarchy
  - natural selection validated a racist perspective on political struggles ("survival of the fittest"; Social Darwinism)

## **RACIAL LOGICS**



SIR FRANCIS GALTON (1822 - 1911)

father of <u>Eugenics</u>: the theory of controlling the fertility of the populations to influence inheritable traits passed one from one generation to the next.

- Backers of eugenics claimed that traits could be traced through bloodlines and bred into populations (for positive traits) or out of them (for negative traits).
  - "inferior races" were often subject to institutionalization and sterilization to prevent diluting bloodlines (continued in many places through the 1970s!)

# LEGACIES OF RACIAL "PSEUDO-SCIENCE"

- While disproven, these racial classifications still pervade our understanding of racial categories and hierarchies.
  - Athletics
    - ▶ Are black people naturally better athletes?
- I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient)
  - The Bell Curve (1994)
    - ▶ Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray
      - Whites have higher IQs than blacks; these differences are genetic.
      - These differences can explain social ills and inequalities.