

HIS 345-01: The 'Unfit': 'Race' Cleansing in the US

Professor Cheryl Logan
Office: MHRA, Rm 2116
E mail: calogan@uncg.edu

TR: 2:00, Spring, 2011

Office Hours: Wed. 3:30-5pm: Friday 3:30-4:30

COURSE CONTENT: Eugenics was a branch of the life sciences that drove much of American social policy in the early twentieth century. Its goal was to promote morality and progress by cleansing the 'superior races' of biological contamination by 'inferior types', such as the poor, the mentally and physically disabled, and what were considered tainted "races", such as Blacks, Jews, and immigrants. Invented in England, pioneered in America and perfected in Nazi Germany, the movement drew on science to structure American society from the 1880s to the 1960s. The course examines the social and scientific trends that supported the movement to categorize people as more or less fit, and breed a better humanity based on eliminating the 'unfit.' In the process, we will explore how and why we categorize people and how context affects the ways in which science shapes American society in a system that is open to diversity, but often deeply threatened by it.

COURSE CREDIT: HIS Elective (Field II); GR Core: GHP; CAR: GMO

EVALUATION AND GRADING: Your grade in the course will be based on exam scores, in-class writing and participation:

75% 3 exam grades

25% assignments, in class writing and participation (15% for the written assignment; 10% participation)

Each exam, including the final, will be 25% of your final grade. The final exam will be cumulative and it will occur during the scheduled final exam period. I will evaluate your work based on:

- Your written explanation of concepts, theories and historical trends gleaned from the readings
- Your effective explanations of the problems raised by application of biology to society
- Your understanding and synthesis of historical trends larger historical trends

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:

Texts:

Wendy Kline. Building a Better Race. Gender, Sexuality and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom. Berkeley: UC Press, 2001. (ISBN 978-0-520-24674-4)

Elof Carlson. The Unfit. History of a Bad Idea. Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2001. (ISBN 978-087969587-3)

Reserve readings:

Gail Bederman, "Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and "Civilization", Chapter 5, Manliness and Civilization, Univ. Chicago Press, 1995. pp. 170-215.

Alexandra Stern, "Instituting Eugenics in California," Chapter 3, from Eugenic Nation. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, pp. 82-114.

Henry Goddard. "The data." Chapter II. from The Kallikak Family. New York, Arno Press, 1973 [c1912], Pp. 15-37.

Required Website:

"Against their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program"
<http://againsttheirwill.journalnow.com/>

Other Web Sources:

Eugenics Record Office Records: American Philosophical Society
<http://www.amphilsoc.org/library/mole/e/ero.htm>

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is required because we will discuss the main concepts and readings in class. **Please come to class having read the assignment, and be prepared answer questions about it in class.** Your exams will cover the topics discussed, and we will use discussion of the readings to practice writing good answers and describe historical trends on the exams. Short in class writing exercises will occur about every other week; sometimes you will turn them in, and they will add to your participation grade.

I do not give late exams without a documented medical or family emergency. So, please contact me immediately via email if you have an emergency. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, if you contact me later (by a few days or more) you will not be permitted to take a make up.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: You will be required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work that you submit for this course. Please check the UNCG *Undergraduate Bulletin* for a full statement of that policy at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>

BEHAVIOR IN CLASS: Please be courteous and turn *off your cell phones* in class. If you bring a *laptop to class*, use it for class work. If you use to check email, surf the web, etc., during class, I will ask you to leave because your behavior can very distracting for students sitting near you who are trying to pay attention.

Topics and Tentative Schedule:

Week: January 10: Carlson, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2, Chapter 16;
Eugenics, modern society, and biology:

Week: January 18: Cultural foundations of human hierarchies; The Enlightenment;
Why masturbation? Sex, Race and the authority of science; 1850-1900

Week: January 24: Carlson, Chapters 4-6;
Degeneracy, Degeneration, and Social Darwinism
Constructing Pathology: Race and Class, the Poor

Week: January 31: Carlson, Chapters 7-9; Thomas Malthus.

Weismann, Mendel, and the new genetics
Feeble-mindedness and criminality: Unit Characters

First Exam: Feb. 8

Week: February 14: Bederman “Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and ‘Civilization’”;
Darwinism, and the Progressive Era
An ‘American Race’—Madison Grant
Social Fears of Race Mixing: Nationalism and Manhood

Week: February 21: Carlson, Chapter 10, Stern, “Instituting Eugenics in California”;
Degenerate families and “parasites”
Institutionalizing Eugenics

Week: February 28: Carlson, Chapters 11-13;
World War I and the rise of “negative” Eugenics
Legalizing Eugenics: Harry Laughlin, Charles Davenport

Spring Break, March 7-13

Week: March 14: Kline “Better Race”, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2;
Changing views of women: Threats from the ‘New Woman’
Prostitution, insanity and ‘feeble-mindedness’: Progressive California

Week: March 21, **Second Exam, March 22**
March 24: Film: The Lynchburg Story

Week: March 28: Carlson, Chapters 14 & 15; Goddard, “The Data” *The Kallikak Family*,
Measuring the mind: IQ tests and the new “moron”

Week: April 4: Kline, Chapter 4
“Reproductive Morality”: Motherhood and Female Sexuality
Changing Definitions of Eugenics: 1930-1960
Saving the family: The Cooper Hewitt Trial

April 11: Kline, Chapter 5 and Epilogue
Motherhood and Pronatalism in the 1950s
Paul Popenoe, eugenic marriage counseling

Written Assignment on Eugenics in North Carolina, **due April 12**

April 18: Carlson, Chapters 17-18
America’s connection to Nazi Germany
Antisemitism and eugenic murder

Week: April 25: “Newgenics” and “backdoor eugenics” in biotechnology today
Genetics and Epigenetics

Reading Day, April 27

Final Exam: *Thursday, April 28, 3:30-6:30* (cumulative)

Course Grading Scale: (for assigning exam grades and final course grades)

99-100%	A+
92-98%	A
90-91%	A-
88.5-89.5%	B+
82-88	B
80-81.5%	B-
78.5-79.5%	C+
72-78%	C
70-71.5%	C-
68-69.5	D+
62-67%	D
59-61.5%	D-
58% and below	F

By remaining in this course, I confirm that I will agree to the conditions stated in the syllabus and to abiding by UNCG's academic integrity policy.