

Global Histories of Race in Science and Medicine Syllabus

Instructor

Iris Clever

Quarter: Summer 2024

Start – end date: July 9th – 30th

Session day/time: Tuesday, 01:00-03:30pm

Course Code and Section: KNOW11029 24U1

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Course Overview

In this course, we will explore the ways in which government officials, doctors, and scientists have studied and theorized human variation from the 18th century onward. We will start with colonial Mexico’s casta system and Linnaeus’s racial classification, then move to the anthropological study of skulls and bones and the creation of caste hierarchies in colonial India. We will then analyze the 20th century study of genetic human variation in the Global South and end with present-day race correcting clinical algorithms. How have practices and theories of studying human diversity changed and persisted over time? How have people around the world understood “race”? Students will learn why and how “race” is a social construct but repeatedly made into something biological by medicine, science, and society.

Modality

In-person

Required texts

All readings will be provided via Canvas. However, we will be reading a good amount of two books that you might want to purchase:

Angela Saini, *Superior. The Return of Race Science* (2019) ISBN 9780807028421

Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste. The Origins of Our Discontent* (2023 edition) ISBN 9780593230275

Course readings

Week	Author	Reading Assignment
Week 1	Introduction and the Rise and Fall of Race in Science and Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angela Saini, <i>Superior</i>, prologue & chapters 1-4, pp. ix-70 Source: excerpt from Gliddon and Nott, <i>Types of Mankind</i> (1854)

Week	Author	Reading Assignment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: excerpt from Ashley Montagu, <i>Man's Most Dangerous Myth</i> (1942)
Week 2	Race and Colonialism in the Early Modern Iberian World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Fredrickson, <i>Racism</i>, chapter 1, pp. 17-47 Ilona Katzew, <i>Casta Paintings</i>, chapter 2, pp. 38-61 Source: Casta Paintings
Week 3	Caste, Class, and Race – are the US and India similar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isabel Wilkerson, <i>Caste</i>, pp. 100-140 Hazel V Carby, “<u>The Limits of Caste</u>,” <i>London Review of Books</i> Arjun Appadurai, “<u>Comparing race to caste is an interesting idea but there are crucial differences between both</u>,” <i>The Wire</i> Optional: “<u>The unexpected battle over banning case discrimination</u>,” <i>The Daily Podcast</i> (25 min).
Week 4	The Specter of Race in Medicine and Science Today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angela Saini, <i>Superior</i>, chapter 11, pp. 181-202 Hamza Shaban, “<u>How Racism Creeps Into Medicine</u>,” <i>The Atlantic</i> (interview with Dr. Lundy Braun) Dorothy E. Roberts, “Abolish Race Correction,” <i>The Lancet</i> Source: Data Table of Average Capacity of Lungs from Benjamin A. Gould, <i>Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers</i> (1869)

Accessing Graham School course information:

All Graham School courses are hosted on our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

Accessibility information

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UChicago CARES Statement:

The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.

For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out directly for services and support from the [Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support](#) by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zmel@uchicago.edu.