Instructor:
Professor: Adam Van Arsdale
Office: PNE 348
Office hours: Tue 3-4, Wed 10-12
Contact: avanarsd@wellesley.edu, office phone 781-283-2935

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%  
  March 19, in class
- Final Paper 30%  
  due by May 20
- 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:


COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

UNIT 1

Week 1: INTRODUCTION

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

Readings:
* Brent Staples, “Decoding the debate over the blackness of Barack Obama.” NY Times, 2/11/07.

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)

Week 3: SELECTION & ADAPTATION

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

Readings:

**Week 4: ENVIRONMENTAL VARIATION & POPULATION GENETICS**
Feb 23: Environmental Variation
Feb 26: Population Genetics

Readings:
*Gootman, August 9, 2006, NY Times. “Proposal Adds Options for Students to Specify Race”

**Week 5: HISTORY OF RACE CONCEPT AND PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**
Mar 2: Origins of the Race Concept
Mar 5: American School of Anthropology

Readings:

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

**Week 6: 20TH CENTURY BIOLOGY AND RACE**
Mar 9: Modern Synthesis and Race
Mar 12: Race as a Biological Concept

Readings:

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

UNIT 2

Week 8: INTRO TO RACE AND SOCIETY
   Mar 30: Why do we think in racial terms?
   Apr 2: (away at AAPAs)


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

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).

Week 11: EUGENICS
   Apr 21: (CLASS TUESDAY) American Eugenics Movement
   Apr 23: Film (Nazi Medicine)

**Week 12: RACE AND HEALTH**

Apr 27: Use of race in medical studies
Apr 30: Disparities in health

Readings:


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

May 4: Science, race and social policy?
May 7: Movie (AAA Meetings)

Readings:


**Week 14: CONCLUSIONS**

May 11: How do we talk about race?