Instructor:
Professor: Adam Van Arsdale
Office: PNE 348
Office hours: Tue 2:40-4:00, Fri 11:10-12:20
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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, genomics, 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. The grade will be derived from a quiz on evolutionary theory, an assigned essay on race and biological anthropology, a final term paper dealing with issues of race and biological variation, and student contributions towards the course content throughout the second half of the semester.

The grade breakdown will be as follows:

- Evolution Quiz 15% due Feb. 22, in class
- Race and Anthropology Essay 15% due March 16, via Sakai
- Final Paper 30% due May 16, via Sakai
- Weekly response papers (5) 25% weeks 9-13, via Sakai
- Participation 15%

Active participation in class and/or via the Sakai 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 Sakai forums all students are expected 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 Website:**
Our class will be using the new Sakai course conference platform. The website includes several features, including a calendar that will contain information on assignment due dates and relevant campus events for the course, a copy of the course syllabus, links to outside resources, class documents, a drop-box for class assignments, and a forum for class discussion. We will use the forum tool extensively during the course. In addition to an area to carry on class-related discussions outside of class, the forums will be used throughout the second half of the course to post course response assignments. More details on this will come later in the semester.

**Concerns:**
If you have any concerns regarding your ability to complete the assignments of the course or trouble understanding specific concepts, I am always available for consultation. In addition to my office hours I can be reached with regularity via e-mail. Assistance is also available for students through the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center. All work in this class is subject to the Wellesley Honor Code. While students are encouraged to discuss the course materials and assignments both in and out of class, all of your work must reflect your own independent efforts. All assignments must be turned in on time. Unless approval is granted from Prof. Van Arsdale, no late assignments will be accepted. No extra credit will be available for this course.
COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

UNIT 1

Week 1: Introduction
Jan. 25: Course overview, introduction to race
Jan. 28: Is Barack Obama black?

Readings:
• Kottak (2006). Anthropology, Chapter 14, Ethnicity and Race. (289-300)

Week 2: Evolutionary Theory
Feb 1: What is science? Introduction to evolution and DNA
Feb 4: Origins of variation, Causes of evolutionary change

Readings:
• Relethford (2006). The Human Species, Chapters 1-3 (1-99)

Week 3: Population Differentiation
Feb 8: Skin color, skull shape, and adaptation
Feb 11: High altitude adaptation and acclimatization

Readings:
Week 4: Environmental Variation and Population Genetics
Feb 15: Environmental Variation
Feb 18: Population Genetics

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

*Evolution Quiz (Weeks 1-4), handed out Feb. 18, due in class Feb. 22*

Week 5: The race concept in physical anthropology
Feb 22: Origins of the Race Concept
Feb 25: American School of Anthropology

Readings:

Week 6: 20th century biology and race
March 1: Modern Synthesis and Race
March 4: Race as a Biological Concept

Readings:
Week 7: Race in the 21st century
March 8: What is Race?
March 11: Genomics and race

Readings:

Race and physical anthropology essay prompts distributed March 8, due March 16, 5pm

UNIT 2
Week 8: Race and society
March 15: Why do we think in racial terms?
March 18: Spring Break – NO CLASS

Readings:

NO CLASS MARCH 17-27 (SPRING BREAK)

Week 9: Counting race
March 29: Census categories and race
April 1: Consequences and necessity of categorization

Readings:
- 2010 U.S. Census (http://2010.census.gov/2010census/)

Week 10: Race and intelligence
April 5: What is IQ?
April 8: Relationship between phenotype and heritability

Readings:
- Gould, Ch. 5 & Epilogue (177-263, 367-390).
**Week 11: Eugenics**

April 12: American Eugenics Movement
April 15: Film (Nazi Medicine)

Readings:

**Week 12: Race and health**

April 19: (NO CLASS – Monday Schedule)
April 22: Disparities in health

Readings:

**Week 13: Race in science and society**

April 26: Use of race in medical studies
April 29: Science, race and social policy

Readings:

**Week 14: Conclusions**

May 5: How do we talk about race?