

WOMENSST 290A – Introduction to Biology of Difference (#36392)

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m., Tobin 304

Sarah Richardson

Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00 p.m. and by appointment, Bartlett 387

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Course Description

This course examines biological and medical conceptions of human difference from the age of Darwin to the present. While humans have many similarities and differences, certain axes of bodily “difference” – such as gender, race, and sexuality – have profound consequences in social life and are prominent categories in biological research. Conceptions of biological difference influence group affiliation and identity, as well as social policy, access to medical care, and beliefs about intellectual and behavioral capacities. This course will explore popular claims, critiques and understandings of human biological “difference” as well as academic research, its claims, debates and critiques. This is an interdisciplinary course that will draw from the biological and social sciences and the humanities. We will explore principles of human biology – anatomy, physiology, sex/gender/sexuality, reproductive biology, genetics, as well as the scientific method(s) and experimental designs. The course will give students the tools to analyze scientific studies and to explore the relationships between nature and culture, science and society, and biology and politics. Gen Ed U, SI

Required Books

Required books are marked [T] on syllabus, available for purchase at Food for Thought Books in Amherst and on reserve at DuBois Library.

- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body: gender politics and the construction of sexuality*. New York, NY, Basic Books.
- Gould, S. J. (1996). *The mismeasure of man*. New York, Norton.
- Koenig, B. A., S. S.-J. Lee, et al. (2008). *Revisiting race in a genomic age*. New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press.
- Paul, D. B. (1995). *Controlling human heredity, 1865 to the present*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J., Humanities Press.
- Russett, C. E. (1989). *Sexual science: the Victorian construction of womanhood*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

Additional required readings are available on E-Reserves (marked [E] on schedule, password WOST290A). Readings marked "recommended" are optional but will be discussed in class.

Assignments

Readings: Reading assignments for this course average 100 pages/week. In-class exercises, quizzes, and discussions require your knowledge of the readings assigned for each date, so be sure to keep up and come to class prepared. Take detailed notes and bring assigned texts to class. There will be extra credit opportunities for strong performance on reading comprehension exercises.

Short papers: You will write 3 short analytical papers (2-3 pages double-spaced). There will be 5 paper assignments, corresponding to the 5 topical units of the course. Pick the 3 that most interest you and turn them in by the required dates.

Quizzes: There will be 6 short in-class quizzes; the lowest score will be dropped. Quizzes are scheduled on the syllabus and will be in-class only. No make-ups. I will briefly review and answer questions during the class prior to the quiz.

Exams: There will be an in-class midterm and a final on the scheduled day for this class, consisting of matching, fill-in-the-blank, short-answer, and essay questions. I will briefly review and answer questions in the class prior to each exam.

Participation: Regular on-time attendance will earn you extra credit. Full participation in class exercises, evidence of class preparation, and contributions to discussion are expected and may provide additional extra credit opportunities.

Student-selected topic: For the last class of the semester, I will prepare a 1-hour lecture on a topic of your choice. Students, as individuals or in pairs, will nominate a topic related to the themes and questions of this course, which we have not covered, and provide a lecture title and a 1-paragraph rationale for the topic. These will be circulated to the class for an online vote. The authors of the top two topics will then have the opportunity to briefly present their topic to the class, after which there will be a final vote. Those who submit topics meeting the guidelines will receive 3 points of extra credit; the finalists receive 5 points of extra credit.

Grading

3 papers = 30%
5 quizzes = 30%
Midterm = 20%
Final = 20%

A+ = 97.5 and above
A = 93.5 - 97.4
A- = 90.0 - 93.4
B+ = 87.5 - 89.9
B = 83.5 - 87.4
B- = 80.0 - 83.4
(and so on)

Papers and quizzes will be returned promptly.

Extra credit may be applied to the assignment, quiz, or exam of the student's choice.

Course Policies

SPARK:

Up-to-date syllabus, readings, assignments, handouts, web links, and course announcements will be posted on SPARK. You should log on to SPARK regularly. There is also an optional discussion forum on SPARK where you may share news items, discuss readings, and find study partners. I encourage you to use it. Direct link:
<https://spark.oit.umass.edu/webct/logon/969578060031>

Class announcements:

Assignments, additional readings, schedule changes, and other announcements will be posted on SPARK. Urgent announcements will be sent to your UMail account. You are responsible for checking SPARK and your UMail regularly.

Class attendance:

Attendance is expected and you will need to sign in at each class session. Perfect attendance will earn you 10 extra credit points.. Fewer than three absences will earn you 3 extra credit points. Please be aware that a substantial amount of the course material that you need to know for quizzes and exams will only be available in class lectures and in-class handouts. All quizzes are in-class only and cannot be made up. Papers are collected at the beginning of class and considered late if received at any other time.

Late assignments:

Papers are collected in class. They are to be turned in prior to class on the day that they are due. For each day that a paper is late, the starting grade for the paper goes down 10%. One day late = maximum grade of 90%; two days late = maximum of 80%, and so on.

Office hours:

Office hours for this semester are posted at the top of the syllabus. I recommend that you visit me at least once during the semester. I am always interested to learn about you, your interests, and your experience in the course. I have an "open door" policy, so if my office door is open, you are welcome to stop in, even if it is not office hours. If you are absolutely unable to attend the scheduled office hours, email me to set up a time to meet.

Email:

Please visit me in office hours if you have questions about the assignments or readings. You may contact me by email if you have questions about coursework that cannot be answered in class or in office hours. Please do not rely on email for last minute questions about assignments, however, as I have limited time for email each day. You should assume I will not answer emails in the evenings or on weekends.

Technology policy:

As the airlines say, anything with an on/off switch needs to be off. Please turn off your technology when you enter the classroom. No emailing, texting, or phone calls in class. Please contact me if special needs require use of a laptop or other assistive technology during class.

Statement on disabilities:

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS) or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Statement on academic honesty:

The integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research. Academic honesty is therefore required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty) is prohibited in all programs of the university. Evidence of academic dishonesty will earn you a "0" for the assignment and referral to university disciplinary procedures. When indicated, your instructor reserves the right to use plagiarism checking software provided by the University.

Class Schedule**I. Body Politics: Overview, Methods, Theories and Frameworks**

Sept. 8	Course Overview and Introductory Lecture
Sept. 10	<p>The Biopolitics of Race, Gender, and Sexuality</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexing the Body</i>, Chapter 1-3</p> <p>[E] Foucault, Michel. Selections from <i>Discipline and Punish</i>. In <i>The Foucault Reader</i>. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 170-213. SKIM</p> <p>[E] Epstein, Steven. (2007) "How to Study a Biopolitical Paradigm." In <i>Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 17-29 RECOMMENDED</p>
Sept. 15	<p>Conceptualizing Human Differences</p> <p>[E] Young, I. M. (1990). "The Scaling of Bodies and the Politics of Identity." <i>Justice and the politics of difference</i>. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, pp. 122-155.</p> <p>[E] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation," In <i>Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to 1990s</i> (Routledge, 1994), 53-76.</p> <p>[E] Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism" In <i>Through the Prism of Difference</i>, (Allyn and Bacon, 1997), 23-29. RECOMMENDED</p>

	[E] Patricia Hill Collins, "Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection," In <i>Women's voices, Feminist Visions</i> , Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee, eds. (Mayfield, 2001), 119-121. RECOMMENDED
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II. Rise of Biology of Difference: Racial and Sexual Science prior to the 20th Century

Sept. 17	<p>Introducing 18th & 19th Century Scientific Conceptions of Gender First short paper due</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Introduction and Chapter 5 [T] <i>Sexing the Body</i>, Chapter 2 SKIM [E] Schiebinger, Londa. (1993) "The Anatomy of Difference." In <i>Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science</i> Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 115-142. RECOMMENDED</p>
Sept. 22	<p>Biometrics and Craniometry</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Chapter 1 [T] <i>Mismeasure of Man</i>, Chapters 2-3</p>
Sept. 24	<p>Darwin on Sex and Race <i>Quiz review</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Chapter 3 Additional reading to be distributed.</p>
Sept. 29	<p>Phylogeny and Taxonomy: Ranking and Ordering Bodies First quiz</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Chapter 2 [T] <i>Mismeasure of Man</i>, Chapter 4 [E] Schiebinger, Londa. (1993) "Theories of Gender and Race." In <i>Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science</i> Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 143-183.</p>
Oct. 1	<p>Discussion: The Legacy of Darwinism in Contemporary Concepts of Race and Sex</p> <p>[E] George W. Stocking, "The Turn-of-the-Century Concept of Race," <i>Modernism/Modernity</i> 1.1, 1994, 4-16. RECOMMENDED Additional reading to be distributed.</p>

III. Race and Sex in the Eugenic Age

Oct. 6	<p>The Rise of Eugenics and the Sciences of Heredity Second short paper due</p>
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	<p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapters 1-3</p> <p>[W] Survey the Cold Spring Harbor Eugenics Archives: http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics RECOMMENDED</p> <p>[E] Galton's "Hereditary Talent and Character" (1865) and Pearson's "On Breeding Good Stock" (1903), excerpted in Jacoby, R., N. Glauberman, et al. (1995). <i>The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions</i>. New York, Times Books. RECOMMENDED</p>
Oct. 8	<p>Normal and Subnormal: Defining the Degenerate <i>Quiz review</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapters 4-5</p>
Oct. 15	<p>Race, Gender, and Control of Reproduction Second quiz</p> <p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapter 6</p>
Oct. 20	<p>Nazi Racial Science <i>Nominations due for student-selected topic</i></p> <p>[E] Proctor, R. (1988). "Political Biology: Doctors in the Nazi Cause" and "The Destruction of 'Lives Not Worth Living.'" In <i>Racial hygiene: medicine under the Nazis</i>. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, pp. 64-94 and 177-222.</p>
Oct. 22	<p>Discussion: Debating the Legacy of Eugenics <i>Midterm review</i> <i>Vote on student-selected topic</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapter 7</p> <p>[E] Duster, T. 1990. "The Genetic Screening of 'Target' Populations," and "Eugenics by the Back Door." In <i>Backdoor to Eugenics</i>. New York: Routledge, pp. 37-57, 112-129.</p> <p>[E] Dorothy Roberts, "Introduction," In <i>Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty</i> (Pantheon Books, 1997). RECOMMENDED</p> <p>[W] Ruth Hubbard and Stuart Newman, "Yuppie Eugenics," <i>Z Mag</i>, March 2002, http://www.zmag.org/zmag/viewArticle/18020 RECOMMENDED</p> <p>[E] Buchanan, A. E. (2000). "Policy Implications." In <i>From chance to choice: genetics and justice</i>. New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 304-345. RECOMMENDED</p>

Oct. 27

MIDTERM

IV. Race, Gender, and the 20th Century Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Oct. 29

The "Science of Man" and the Rise of the Empirical Human Behavioral Sciences

	<p>Third short paper due <i>In-class midterm evaluation</i></p> <p>[E] Kay, L. E. (1993). "Social Control': Rockefeller Foundation's Agenda in the Human Sciences, 1913-1933." <i>The molecular vision of life: Caltech, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the rise of the new biology</i>. New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 22-57. Additional reading to be distributed.</p>
Nov. 3	<p>IQ Testing <i>Quiz review</i> <i>Presentations on student-selected topic</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Mismeasure of Man</i>, Chapter 5 [E] Kamin, Leon. "The Pioneers of IQ Testing." In Jacoby, R., N. Glauberman, et al. (1995). <i>The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions</i>. New York, Times Books, pp. 476-509.</p>
Nov. 5	<p>Is Intelligence Hereditary?: Controversies Third quiz <i>Final vote on student-selected topic</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Mismeasure of Man</i>, Chapter 6 and "Critique of the <i>Bell Curve</i>" [E] Kamin, Leon. "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics," In Jacoby, R., N. Glauberman, et al. (1995). <i>The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions</i>. New York, Times Books, pp. 81-105.</p>
Nov. 10	<p>Evolutionary, Anatomical, and Physiological Models of Human Sex Differences in Cognition and Behavior</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexing the Body</i>, Chapter 5-6 [E] Longino, H. E. (1990). "Research on Sex Differences." In <i>Science as social knowledge: values and objectivity in scientific inquiry</i>. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, pp. 103-132. [E] Gerald Tortora and Sandra Grabowski, "Brain," In <i>Principles of Anatomy and Physiology</i>, 10th ed. (John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 452-457. RECOMMENDED</p>
Nov. 12	<p>Neuroendocrinological Theories of Sex Differences in Cognition and Behavior <i>Quiz review</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Sexing the Body</i>, Chapter 7-8 [E] Fausto-Sterling, A. (1985). "Hormonal Hurricanes: Menstruation, Menopause, and Female Behavior" In <i>Myths of gender: biological theories about women and men</i>. New York, Basic Books, pp. 90-122. [E] Gerard Tortora and Sandra Grabowski, "Reproductive System," <i>Principles of Anatomy and Physiology</i>, Wiley, 2003: 1028-1046. RECOMMENDED</p>

Nov. 17	<p>Debating Aggression: Controversies Fourth quiz <i>Vote on student-selected topic</i></p> <p>[E] Fausto-Sterling, A. (1985). "Hormones and Aggression: An Explanation of Power?" In <i>Myths of gender: biological theories about women and men</i>. New York, Basic Books, pp. 123-155. [E] Longino, H. E. (1990). "Explanatory Models in the Biology of Behavior." In <i>Science as social knowledge: values and objectivity in scientific inquiry</i>. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, pp. 133-161.</p>
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V. Biology of Difference in a Genomic Age

Nov. 19	<p>The Human Genome Project and the Reckoning of Difference Fourth short paper due</p> <p>[T] <i>Revisiting Race</i>, Introduction (pp. 1-5) and Chapter 15 [W] Survey the AAA website on contemporary race and genetics research: http://www.understandingrace.org</p>
Nov. 24	<p>Race, Population Genetics, and Bioanthropology in the 20th Century <i>Quiz review</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Revisiting Race</i>, Chapters 1, 2, and 4</p>
Dec. 1	<p>Health Disparities and Pharmacogenomics Fifth quiz</p> <p>[T] <i>Revisiting Race</i>, Chapters 5-7; Chapter 18</p>
Dec. 3	<p>Genetic ancestry tests, purity, and admixture <i>Quiz review</i></p> <p>[T] <i>Revisiting Race</i>, Chapters 10-13 [W] http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aalives/ (Henry Louis Gates' "African-American Lives") RECOMMENDED [W] http://www.dnaancestryproject.com/ (DNA Ancestry Project) RECOMMENDED</p>
Dec. 8	<p>Genomic constructions of sex and gender Sixth quiz</p> <p>[E] Epstein, Steven. (2007) "Sex Differences and the New Politics of Women's Health." In <i>Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 233-257. [E] Tavis, Carol. (1992) "The 70 Kilogram Man and the Pregnant Person." <i>The</i></p>

	Mismeasure of Woman. New York: Touchstone,pp. 92-130. RECOMMENDED [E] Richardson, Sarah. (forthcoming) "Are males and females as different as humans and chimpanzees?" SKIM
Dec. 10	Final lecture and discussion: Student-selected topic Fifth short paper due <i>Final exam review</i> Reading for this class to be distributed.

Scheduled date & time Dec. 14-19	FINAL
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