CLARK UNIVERSITY
HIST 234/334

Racial Thought and Body Politics in Modern Europe

Spring 2012

Time: Tuesday 2:50-5:50 pm
Place: Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Kent Seminar Room
Instructor: Professor Thomas Kühne
Office Hours: Tues 12:30-1:00 pm Jeff 316, 1:00-1:30 pm Cohen-Lasry House
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Sarah Baartman, called Hottentot Venus, on stage in Paris, 1814.
Description

The category of race has been used since the 18th century, when more and more Europeans encountered “other” people in different continents. Addressing ideas and images of the bodies of various human beings, the category “race” has served to rationalize difference and to naturalize inequality. The confrontation between Europeans and non-Europeans had deep impacts on identity construction in Europe itself. Interested in the relation between different notions of race and the social construction of the body, the seminar explores the three major types of racism in modern Europe: anti-black racism, anti-Jewish racism, and anti-Muslim racism. The course deals with the scientific foundation of modern racism in the Enlightenment, with Social Darwinism and the hygienic movements in the 19th century, pays particular attention to racist body politics before, during, and after the Nazi Era, and covers also post-1945 tendencies of racism, xenophobia, and, most recently, Islamophobia in Europe.

Requirements

This course will be taught in the spirit of a tutorial: once you decided to take the class, you are expected to stick to it, come to the sessions and be well prepared.

- In order to facilitate informed discussion, you are required to formulate three questions, in conjunction with the reading assignments, to each session, which you want to have discussed in class. Write them down and include some thoughts on possible answers on no more than one page, single-spaced, 12 pt font size. Papers that do not match these requirements will not be graded. The papers are due in class and must be handed in to the instructor at its end.

- Second, each student takes minutes of one session and presents them at the beginning of the following session. Please type them out and provide photocopies for the class. These minutes summarize the contents of our discussion, its findings and controversies in a readable, well organized and non-partisan fashion so that somebody who has not attended the class is yet able to grasp the basics of our proceedings; bullet points or other abbreviations are not appropriate.

- Finally, a research paper of 20 pages (undergraduates) or 40 pages (graduates) text, including title and bibliography, double-spaced, on one of the following topics is due in last session:
  1. Anti-Black Racism and Aesthetics in Europe’s Long 19th Century
  2. Disputes on the Jewish Body in Europe, 1892-1945
  3. Racism, Exotism, and Cosmopolitanism: Concepts and Historical Examples
  4. New Racism in Post-1990 Europe

You are allowed and in fact invited to narrow down the topic of your choice. Feel free to discuss your choice with the instructor. If you are not familiar with how to
write and submit such a paper, you may wish to consult J. R. Benjamin, *A Student’s Guide to History* (10th ed., Boston, 2007) or Ch. Lipson, *How to Write a BA Thesis* (Chicago, 2005). They offer valuable assistance, not least regarding the formal shape of your paper.

Undergraduate research papers are based on at least two scholarly books and four scholarly articles. Graduate papers include at least four scholarly books and six scholarly articles. Instead of a book you can choose three articles. Start searching for this literature early in the semester and submit a preliminary bibliography including the preliminary title of your paper electronically to tkuehne@clarku.edu by the end of the spring break.

**Grading and Practical Arrangements**

A maximum of 100 points can be achieved with

- 4 points for each short paper, 40 in total: only the ten best papers will count for your grade. Late papers cannot receive more than 2 points
- 10 points for the protocol: 5 points for content, 5 points for organization
- 10 points for the outline of the final paper (due April 24)
- 30 points for the final paper: 15 points for the content, 4 points for the range of consulted literature, 4 for the writing style, 4 for the organization, 3 for quotation and citation style (due May 1, noon, Main Office of Strassler Center or via email to tkuehne@clarku.edu; electronic submission counts as accepted only if you receive a confirmation within 24 hours)
- 10 points for continuous participation in class discussion.

You are supposed to attend class on a regularly basis. One absence will not inflict your grade. (You still have to submit the related paper). Further absences without sufficient documentation will result in a deduction of five points each.

100-95 points=A, 94-90 points=A-, 89-85 points=B+, 84-80=B, 79-75 points=B-, etc.

All readings are to be completed on the day assigned, before you come to class. Please bring both the readings and the notes you take from the readings to class to be able to follow and participate in class discussions.

Apart from inquiring in the history of racism and body politics in modern Europe, this course serves to introduce students more generally to techniques of historical scholarship and practices of academic communication. Great importance is attached to develop or strengthen skills of analyzing both primary and secondary sources critically. The required readings are carefully chosen. However, none of them should be mistaken as comprising a final truth. Consider them as one of many options to look at a certain topic. Try to understand the basic assumptions, the main arguments, and the limitations of any text you read. Critique is the oil of knowledge. In class, you are invited to speak up and to articulate your thoughts and ideas, whether or not they comply with those of your classmates and the professor.
Checking emails on a regular basis and staying connected with friends and the rest of the world is very important. Do not do it in class, though. Laptops, cell phones, iPods, gameboys, DVD players and other electronic devices are inclined to distract you or others from class discussions. They are to be switched off during class.

Required Books


Course Outline

1) Jan 17

**Introduction**

No reading

2) Jan 24

**Hottentot Venus: Racist Aesthetics around 1800**


3) Jan 31

**Enlightenment into Darwinism: Science and Racism in the Long 19th Century**


4) Feb 7

**Exotism and Cosmopolitanism: Josephine Baker in Paris**


5) Feb 14

**White Images of Black Bodies: Advertising Racism in the Long 20th Century**


6) Feb 21

**Antijudaism into Antisemitism: Ritual Murder around 1900**


7) Feb 28

**The Rise of the Body Beautiful: Race and Class in the Early 20th Century**


8) March 13

**In the Shadow of Nordau: Talmud Jews and Muscle Jews**

9) March 20

**From Galton to Hitler: Eugenics into Euthanasia**


Movie: *Nazi Medicine* (1997)


10) March 27

**The Aryan Body and the Jewish Body in Nazi Propaganda**


Movies: *Olympia* (1936) and *The Eternal Jew* (1940), selections.

11) April 3

**Antisemitism in Post-Holocaust Poland**


12) April 10

**Decolonization, Immigration, and New Racism**


Additional sources are included in or can be identified through the above mentioned books.

13) April 17

**Why the French Don’t Like Head Scarves: Islamophobia in Europe Today**


14) April 24

**Conclusion**

Outlines of the final papers (max 2 pp, single-spaced, bullet points allowed) are due and will be discussed in class. Please provide photocopies for the class.