Faculty of Human, Social and Political Sciences
HSPS PART II B Tripos
Part II 2019-20

Paper SOC11: Racism, ‘Race’ and Ethnicity

Course Organiser
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Lecturers
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Supervisors
The paper has a large group of supervisors available to supervise all topics of this paper. You will receive by email a document with a list of supervisors with an indication of the topics they are willing to supervise. You can also find this document in Moodle. Please contact them directly to check availability and arrange your own supervision. If you find yourself with no options or availability or any other problem do get in touch with the course organiser, Dr Moreno Figueroa (mm2051@cam.ac.uk) or with Dr Rachell Sanchez Rivera (rs871@cam.ac.uk) who is supporting with supervisor’s allocation. You should aim to do this in the first two weeks of the paper if not earlier.

Outline of the Paper

Aims and Objectives

• To introduce the key theoretical debates and analytical approaches to the study of racism, ‘race’ and ethnicity.
• To develop a critical understanding of the historical development and transformations of forms of racism and processes of racialization alongside ideas of ‘race’ and ethnicity.
• To provide knowledge and understanding of the racial and ethnic divisions that are prevalent in Britain and beyond.
• To develop an understanding of the interplay between key cultural, social and political forces and the rise of racism, racialization, ethnic division and violence.
• To develop key intellectual and analytical skills in exploring issues of racism, ‘race’, and ethnicity in different areas of the world and with reference to their intersection with gender and class.

Brief description of the paper
This paper explores the emergence of contemporary forms of racism, modern notions of ‘race’ and ethnicity and the social and political forces that have shaped them. A critical approach to the understanding of ‘race’ will be developed and you will be encouraged to assess the social implications of contemporary practices of racism and persistent racial and racist ideas. As well as examining theoretical approaches to notions of ‘race’, the module will explore empirical analyses of the impact of racism in contemporary society. Key questions will include: How are racial ideas conceptualized and justified through a variety of biological, social and cultural discourses? How did ‘race’ and ethnicity come to be defined and embedded in the context of colonial and post-colonial rule? What are the, often complex, relations between ideas of ‘race’, the production of difference and identity, and the pervasiveness of social exclusion? Why does ‘race’ remain such a powerful determinant of individual and collective identities? What is the specificity of ethnicity in contemporary society? Why and how does ‘race’ and ethnicity matter?
Mode of teaching
The course is taught by means of 15 two-hour lectures, 6 supervisions and two revision sessions. Lectures are central to this paper and students are strongly advised to attend all of them. Students are advised to write at least four short essays over the year addressing the supervision questions listed in this paper guide. Students will be expected to produce a minimum of 4 essays instead of being required to write 6 essays. While still holding the stipulated 6 supervisions, individual supervisors can decide to use some supervision sessions to read and discuss an article, ask students to present on a topic, or find other ways to address the topic in ways that are stimulating and provide a learning experience for students.

The reading lists and supervision topics below are meant to provide guidance for students and supervisors. Students are not expected to cover all of the topics, but to make a balanced selection in consultation with their supervisors. In general, lecturers will give supervisions on their course.

Mode of assessment
The paper will be examined by a three-hour paper at the end of the year. Students taking the examination must answer three questions from an undivided paper.

Outline of Lectures - Lectures Schedule
The paper is taught in 2-hour lecture blocks throughout 15 weeks.

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<th>Michaelmas (8 Lectures): Weeks 1-8</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday 15-Oct-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduction. The Emergence of 'Race' and Racism, Enlightenment, Capitalism and the Colonial Enterprise (MMF)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 22-Oct-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>2. The Science Fiction of 'Race' (MMF)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 29-Oct-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>3. Problematising Whiteness (MMF)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 5-Nov-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>4. Postcolonialism and the Sociology of Race: Convergences and Divergences (AM)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 12-Nov-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>Guest lecture: Slavery and the University</td>
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<td>Prof. Manuel Barcia, University of Leeds</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 19-Nov-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>5. Seeing 'Race'; Visualising Otherness (MMF)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 26-Nov-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>6. Seeing 'Race' and the Lure of Beauty (MMF)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 3-Dec-19, 11-1</strong></td>
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<td>7. Critical Race Theory: Post-Racialism and the United States of Trumpamerica (AM)</td>
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<th>Lent (8 Lectures: Weeks 1-8)</th>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 21-Jan-20, 2-4</strong></td>
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<td>8. Racialised Capitalism: Decoding the Race-Class Nexus (AM)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 28-Jan-20, 2-4</strong></td>
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<td>9. Globalised White Hegemony and the Black middle Classes (AM)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 4-Feb-20, 2-4</strong></td>
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<td>10. Orientalism and Islamophobia (MMF)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 11-Feb-20, 2-4</strong></td>
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<td>11. Cyber racism: the Alt-right, White Supremacists, and Challenges for Anti-Racism (AM)</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 18-Feb-20, 2-4</strong></td>
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<td>12. Sexual Harassment, Intersectionality, Racism and the University (TP)</td>
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Outline of Topics and Reading Lists

Michaelmas

1. The Emergence of 'Race' and Racism, Enlightenment, Capitalism and the Colonial Enterprise (MMF)

After an introduction to the course, this lecture considers the emergence and development of modern ideas of race within a period of developing capitalism, slavery, and scientific and social fascination with classification, explanation and description of human difference. Such ideas created opportunities for Europeans to appear superior to others, opportunities which were particularly poignant in colonial enterprises.


Supervision topics:
1. What, if any, is the relationship between Enlightenment philosophy and the emergence of notions of race?
2. What, if any, is the historical relationship between the development of capitalism and racism?
2. The Science Fiction of ‘Race’ (MMF)

This lecture will explore the nineteenth century project of racial understanding that developed into what has been called scientific racism, involving forms of racial measurement and taxonomy. It will examine how historically specific ideas of race became ‘scientific truths’, and the implications of having the ‘respectability’ of science behind racist beliefs.


Supervision topics:
1. To what extent do debates around eugenics reinvigorate scientific racism?
2. What are the gendered consequences of scientific racism?
3. What, if any, is the correlation between disability, eugenics and racism?

3. Problematising Whiteness (MMF)

To what extent is whiteness the social location of privilege? Whiteness has often been treated as a norm against which ‘abnormal’ races/ethnicities are measured. This lecture will consider ideas and depictions of whiteness as invisible, ‘normal’, ‘human’ and ‘universal’. It will assess critiques of attaching whiteness to the white body, and the implications this has for understanding privilege and racism.


Supervision topics:
1. To what extent is whiteness an organising principle of late modernity?
2. How is white privilege exercised? Discuss in relation to at least two different national contexts.

4. Postcolonialism and the sociology of race: convergences and divergences (AM)

In this lecture we will consider the central differences between the sociology of race and postcolonial sociology. We will consider postcolonial sociology’s critique of the production of knowledge, its global focus, and its explicit focus on the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power. We will then consider potential synergies between the sociology of race and postcolonial sociology.


**Supervision topics:**

1. Can decolonial sociology be reduced to the sociology of race?
2. What, if any, are the central differences between the sociology of race and decolonial sociology?

| Tuesday 12-Nov-19, 11-1 | Guest lecture: Slavery and the University  
| | Prof. Manuel Barcia, University of Leeds |

SOC 11
5. The Racialised Body I: Seeing 'Race', Visibilising Otherness (MMF)

Is race marked on the body in the form of physical and visible characteristics? This lecture will interrogate relationships between visibility and racial identification. It will explore the relationship of the emergence of photography and visual culture to racist thinking, and reflect on how constructions of ‘otherness’ affect how bodies are inhabited as well as represented. Since ‘race’ and ethnicity are open to visual exploration we will draw on the history and social theories of photography to consider its development alongside racist thinking.


**Supervision topics:**
1. “The visual field is not neutral to the question of race: it is itself a racial formation, a system of understanding, hegemonic and forceful” (Butler 1993, 17). Discuss with reference to TWO case studies.
2. What is the relationship between the visibility of race and racism?
3. How is the process of othering impacted by seeing and visibility?

6. The Racialised Body II: ‘Race’ and the Lure of Beauty (MMF)

In this lecture we will continue with the exploration of how ‘race’ is often considered to be ‘marked’ on the body in the form of physical characteristics. Now we will focus on the relation between parameters of beauty, appearance, physical features and racialised perceptions of skin colour. We will reflect on beauty and its impact and materialisation in female and male racialised bodies, bodies where the skin is both witness and bearer of history.


Supervision topics:
1. 'Beauty is a gendered, racialised and contested symbolic resource' (Craig 2007:160) Discuss with reference to specific case studies.
2. What is the relationship between race and beauty?
3. How do concerns with femininity and masculinity relate to racism?

7. Critical race theory: post-racialism and the United States of Trumpamerica

In this lecture we will examine critical race theory, and assess its usefulness in analysing contemporary US society. We will question what is theoretical about critical race theory, and whether its focus on post-racialism means that is outdated—or in need of revision—in Trumpamerica. We will also question to US-centricity of critical race theory, and whether—as a theoretical paradigm—it can be deployed elsewhere.


**Supervision topics**

1. To what extent was Trump’s electoral success a result of White identity politics?
2. Analyse the claim that Trump’s electoral success was the result of a White working class backlash.
3. Does critical race theory offer a convincing apparatus for the study of racism?
Lent

8. Racialised capitalism: decoding the race-class nexus

This lecture will focus on racialised capitalism. We will examine the relationship between capitalism and racism both historically and in the present. Beyond a focus on simply the economic component of capitalism, we will also consider processes of stigmatisation and devaluation. Our case studies will range from European modernity, through to protests against immigrant labour in the Windrush generation, stigmatisation of ‘welfare queens’, and the current politics of austerity and Grenfell.


Jones, Claudia ‘We Seek Full Equality for All Women’, 1949. https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/02/21/we-seek-full-equality-for-women/

**Supervision topics**

1. Does ‘racialised capitalism’ theory provide a convincing account of contemporary inequalities?
2. What is the relationship between racism and capitalism?
9. Globalised white hegemony and the Black middle classes (AM)

This lecture will analyse race and class by focusing on the Black middle classes in a comparative perspective. We will discuss how dominant middle class identity, cultural practices, and cultural membership, are all expressions of hegemonic whiteness (even in countries where Whites are not a majority demographic group). We will then consider Black middle class strategies used to respond to this ongoing structural racism.


Supervision topics:

1. *What is the relationship between whiteness and Black middle class identities?*

2. *To what extent can we understand middle class spaces as ‘white spaces’?*

3. *Does strategic assimilation offer a convincing account of Black middle class identity?*
In this session, we examine Edward Said’s influential notion of Orientalism and explore the invention and fixity of ‘the Orient’ and the consequences this has had for ‘West-East’ relations in terms of culture and power. We will consider the ways in which the gendered and racialised construction of knowledge about the East contributed to the development of Western imperial ideologies and colonial expansion. We will then link this to the notion and phenomena of Islamophobia as a contemporary form of racism in relation to the notion of ‘the Orient’ and ‘West-East’ power relations.


1. Is islamophobia a form of racism?
2. What is the Orient? How it is actively produced? Answer with reference to at least two specific examples.
3. How are sexism and orientalism interlinked?

11. Cyber racism: the alt-right, White supremacists, and challenges for anti-racism (AM)

This lecture looks at how the digital sphere allows for the reproduction of structural racism. We will therefore look at the rise (transformation) of White supremacist news outlets, forums, and webpages online, and the significance they have for contemporary racism. We will also consider how the internet supposedly allows for a further blurring of the line between hate speech and free speech, thus providing a resource for the mainstreaming of far-right discourse and arguments.


Supervision topics:
1. How has the digital changed the way that racism works?
2. Are algorithms colourblind?
3. Discuss the relationship between racism and the internet.
12. Sexual Harassment, Intersectionality, Racism and the University (TP)

This lecture will consider the activities and changes resulting from #MeToo, the social media phenomenon that began in October 2017 and has drawn public attention to experiences and cultures of sexual violence. We will consider this in the context of MeToo, the movement established by Tarana Burke in 2006, and the criticisms directed at the voices and experiences that have been privileged in #MeToo: white, ‘western’, middle class, cis-gendered, abled-bodied, heterosexual women. We will also look at the context of the university as a site of discussions of gender and racial inequalities, and why these remain separate issues.

Content Note: Some of these readings deal with discussions and themes relating to racial and sexual violence.


Burke, T. 2018. MeToo is a movement, not a moment. TED Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/tarana_burke_me_too_is_a_movement_not_a_moment?language=en


Supervision topics:

1. What, if anything, has changed since #MeToo became a hashtag?
2. How has race been addressed in MeToo discussions?
3. Is #MeToo a global or even national movement? Discuss the voices and silences with reference to particular examples.

13. Locating vulnerability and vulnerable knowledge for the understanding of the workings of racism (TP)

This lecture will consider the concept of vulnerability and how it might be understood as a sociological phenomenon. It will unpack definitions of vulnerability as both a universal condition and as being socially distributed. We will discuss how a study of vulnerability, through lived experience, as well as the role of policy, access to and withdrawal of infrastructure and resources, can help to begin to address connections between the political, cultural and social forces of vulnerability and racial inequalities.


Puar, Jasbir, Hands Up, Don’t Shoot! https://thenewinquiry.com/hands-up-dont-shoot/

Supervision topics:
1. What is vulnerability? Discuss its applicability as a concept to address particular social issues.

2. What is the relationship between vulnerability and race?

3. What can vulnerability tell us about the climate crisis?

14. Environmental Racism and Anti-racist Practice (MMF)

Environmental racism is the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on people of the global majority and Indigenous people and their communities. In this lecture we will discuss how environmental racism, in combination with public policies and industry practices, primarily benefits corporations while the cost of industry (including huge health costs) are shifted to disadvantaged communities.


Klein, N. (2015). This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate, Simon and Schuster.


Supervision topics:

1. What is the relationship between white supremacy and climate change?

2. In what ways racialised notions of cleanliness and dirtiness relate to the climate crisis?

3. To what extent has racism contributed to the Anthropocene?
15. The aesthetics of anti-racism (AM)

This topic will encourage students to conduct original research into anti-racist aesthetics, and the role of the cultural realm for anti-racist activity. The lecture will examine how artists, writers, and musicians outside of the academy have formed their own critiques of White supremacy and racism through cultural production. There is no required reading for this topic, but the two suggested books may be a useful frame for students new to thinking about this topic.


(especially One nation under a groove; Art of darkness: black art and the problem of belonging to England; Diaspora identities, diaspora aesthetics; Cruciality and the frog’s perspective: an agenda of difficulties for the black arts movement in Britain; Wearing your art on your sleeve: notes towards a diaspora history of black ephemera).

[Ali’s selection]:


[Monica’s selection]:

*Novels*


*Photographers:*

*Carru Mae Weems:*

The kitchen table series: http://carriemaeweems.net/galleries/kitchen-table.html


*Zanele Muholi:*

http://www.yanceyrichardson.com/exhibitions/zanele-muholi4

https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/zanele-muholi

Rotimi Fani Kayode:
https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/rotimi-fani-kayode
https://www.lightwork.org/archive/rotimi-fani-kayode/

Liliana Angulo Cortes:
https://www.thenomadcreativeprojects.com/liliana-angulo/
https://www.artsy.net/artist/liliana-angulo-cortes

Eduardo Añorve Zapata:
Proyecto Zola: https://www.facebook.com/zola.cuaji/

Supervision Topics:

1. Critically analyse the use of music and/or art in anti-racist practice.
2. Is cultural production social theory?
3. Can academic texts alone teach us enough about the sociology of race and racism?

Optional: Please submit sample selections of 4–7 songs and/or artists’ works that you would like us to include in a moodle document for future students taking this paper (your creation of the ‘playlist’ will be noted, unless you prefer anonymity).