Faculty of Human, Social and Political Sciences  
HSPS PART II B Tripos  
Part II 2021-22

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 will also be able to 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 Dr Rachell Sanchez Rivera (rs871@cam.ac.uk) who is supporting with supervisor’s allocation or the course organiser, Dr Moreno Figueroa (mm2051@cam.ac.uk). 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.

**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.
### Michaelmas (8 Lectures): Weeks 1-8
*(This term lectures will be on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Oct 2021</td>
<td>1. The Emergence of ‘Race’ and Racism, Enlightenment, Capitalism and the Colonial Enterprise (MMF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Oct 2021</td>
<td>2. The Science Fiction of ‘Race’ (RSR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Nov 2021</td>
<td>4. Racialised Capitalism from enslavement to antisemitism: Decoding the Race-Class Nexus (AM)</td>
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#### Key Perspectives on Racism

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>9 Nov 2021</td>
<td>5. Critical Race Theory (AM)</td>
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<td>16 Nov 2021</td>
<td>6. Orientalism (MMF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Nov 2021</td>
<td>7. Problematising Whiteness (MMF)</td>
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### Lent (8 Lectures: Weeks 1-8)
*(This term lectures will be on Tuesdays 2-4 pm)*

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 Jan 2022</td>
<td>8. Globalised White Hegemony and the Black middle Classes (AM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Feb 2022</td>
<td>9. Seeing 'Race', Visualising Otherness (MMF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Feb 2022</td>
<td>10. Seeing ‘Race’ and the Lure of Beauty (MMF)</td>
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#### Anti-racism

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>22 Feb 2022</td>
<td>12. Anti-Racist Activism, Struggles for Liberation and the Possibilities of Freedom (CR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 March 2022</td>
<td>13. Antiracism and colonialism in the academy (AM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 March 2022</td>
<td>14. The Aesthetics of Anti-racism (SN)</td>
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#### Easter – revision sessions (4-5 pm)

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 May 2022</td>
<td>15. Revision Session MMF, RSR, AM,</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 May 2022</td>
<td>16. Revision Session MMF, AM, IH, CR, SN</td>
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### Online version of this paper for this academic year 2021-22

This year all lectures of this paper will be online, according to the paper’s timetable, as follows:

- Lectures will take place in two-hour sessions.
• During the first hour of each scheduled session, students will be provided with a pre-recorded lecture to watch via Panopto.

• The second hour of the lectures slot will be synchronous and interactive, that is, an online live session using the Zoom platform, which might include Q&A and other online activities. Students can write their questions in the chat, and the lecturers will answer them live.

• For this second hour you can join a live seminar via Zoom – Links are available on Moodle.
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.

Essential readings


Additional Readings


Supervision questions

- Why is it vital to have a historical perspective on racism?
- What, if any, is the relationship between Enlightenment philosophy and the emergence of notions
of race?
- What, if any, is the historical relationship between the development of capitalism and racism?
2. The Science Fiction of ‘Race’ (RSR)

This lecture will explore the nineteenth and early-twentieth century project of racial understanding that developed into what is called now “scientific racism”. This involves forms of racial measurement (i.e. anthropometrics) and taxonomy. Here, we will examine how historically specific ideas of “race” became “scientific truths”. We will also examine the legacies and contemporary implications of having the “respectability” and “objectivity” of science behind racist beliefs.

Essential readings


Additional Readings


(Introduction and chapters 1 to 3)

**Supervision questions**

- What are the ableist or gendered consequences of scientific racism?
- Why is eugenics so important to the history of scientific racism?
- How do different acts of resistance against mainstream scientific racism set the bases for post-racialism after the 1960s?
3. Legacies of Scientific Racism: Racial Projects, Assimilation/Segregation (RSR)

This lecture will explore the legacies of what we know now as scientific racism, during the second-half of the twentieth and twenty-first century. It will examine how these seemingly or assumed scientific truths slip in contemporary academic, cultural, social, and nationalistic understandings of science, medicine, and politics.

Essential readings


Additional readings


Supervision questions

- Why is it important to talk about the legacies of scientific racism? (Mention two relevant examples)
- What is the link between scientific racism and contemporary forms of segregation practices?
4. Racialised Capitalism from enslavement to antisemitism: Decoding the Race-Class Nexus (AM)

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.

**Essential readings**


**Additional readings**


Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2011. ‘Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity , Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality’. TRANSMODERNITY:
Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World 1 (1).
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/21k6t3fq.


Supervision questions

- Are there links between capitalism, racism, and the climate crisis?
- What is the relationship between racism and capitalism?
- Would capitalism work without racialization?
Key Perspectives on Racism

5. Critical Race Theory (AM)

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.

Essential readings


Additional Readings


**Supervision questions**

- Is critical race theory US-centric?
- Consider the possibilities of a global critical race theory.
- Is critical race theory a social theory?
- Critically assess the relation between early critical race theory in legal studies with its more recent iterations.
6. Orientalism (MMF)

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.

**Essential readings**


**Additional readings**


**Supervision question**

- What is the Orient? How it is actively produced? Answer with reference to at least two specific examples.
- Why representation matters? Discuss in reference to critiques and examples of orientalism.
7. 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.

Essential readings


Additional readings


**Supervision questions**

- Is there a difference between whiteness and white identity?
- How is a perspective on whiteness both a hindrance and a help for anti-racist action?
- To what extent is whiteness an organising principle of late modernity?
- How is white privilege exercised? Discuss in relation to at least two different national contexts.
Lent

Topics on Racism

8. The Black middle classes and globalised white hegemony (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.

Essential Readings

Additional readings


**Supervision questions**

- What is the relationship between whiteness and Black middle class identities?
- To what extent can we understand middle class spaces as ‘white spaces’?
- Does strategic assimilation offer a convincing account of Black middle class identity?

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.

**Essential readings**


**Additional readings**


**Supervision topics**

- Is seeing ‘race’ a cultural practice?
- How is the process of racialised othering impacted by seeing and visibility?
- “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.
- What is the relationship between the visibility of race and the experience of racism?
10. ‘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.

**Essential readings**


**Additional readings**


**Supervision topics**

- Why beauty matters to the study of racism?
- ‘Beauty is a gendered, racialised and contested symbolic resource’ (Craig 2007:160) Discuss with reference to specific case studies.
- What is the relationship between race and beauty?
- How do concerns with femininity and masculinity relate to racism?
11. ‘Race’, digital technology and everyday life (IH)

This lecture provides a broad introduction to some of the ways in which the design and use of everyday digital technology creates and reproduces racism and racialisation. We will begin by thinking materially about the contexts in which our digital devices are built before turning to examine the design of the digital software which we use in everyday life. We’ll think particularly about the internet, considering, amongst other things, the racialised function and effects of AI, big data, apps, search engines and social media sites. Finally, we’ll consider social media sites in more detail: exploring them as a location in which racism can be both perpetuated and resisted by users.

Essential Readings:


Additional Readings:


**Supervision questions:**

- How does everyday digital technology use reproduce or challenge structural racism?
- What can studies of digital technology teach us about the effects of ‘race’ and racism on everyday life?
Anti-racism

12. Anti-Racist Activism, Struggles for Liberation and the Possibilities of Freedom (CR)
This lecture seeks to provide an overview on a variety of dissident social movements and struggles for liberation, with particular attention to anti-racism. It intends to illustrate the historical anchorages and contemporary manifestations of movements and struggles against racism and racist oppressions, focusing specifically on Indigenous and Black struggles from across the Americas (although with connection to and in conversation with those in the Caribbean, the Pacific, throughout the African continent, Asia and Europe). Drawing from and building on both scholarly texts and activist works, this lecture is anchored by an attention to the particularities of power addressed in the course as they relate to anti-racist activism, and hopes to attend to questions, queries and curiosities around anti-racist organizing, constructions of solidarity, and possibilities for a liberatory (present/)future. Ultimately, we will be asking, to paraphrase the words of Rinaldo Walcott, “what constitutes freedom?”.

Essential Readings:

Moreno Figueroa, Monica and Viveros Vigoya, Mara, (2021) “Antiracism, intersectionality and the struggle for dignity” Forthcoming chapter in book ‘Against Racism” edited by Moreno Figueroa, Monica and Wade, Peter. (PDF in Moodle – not for distribution nor citing)

Additional Readings:

Alagraa, B. (2020). Now is the Time: Black struggle from Sudan to the US. [online] ROAR Magazine. Available at: https://roarmag.org/essays/now-is-the-time-black-struggle-from-sudan-to-the-us/


**Activist Writings:**


Estes, N. and Dhillon, J. (2019). *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement*. Minneapolis; London University of Minnesota Press. Available at: https://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/t9gok8/44CAM_ALMA51635223610003606


**Visual and Audio Sources:**

Haymarket Books (2020). *Indigenous Resistance Against Oil Pipelines During a Pandemic*. [online] www.youtube.com. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5zp8S0nR8o&t=107s


- [Rinaldo Walcott On Black Freedom And The Abolition Of Property](https://millennialsarekillingcapitalism.libsyn.com)
- "We Charge Genocide, Again" - Jalil Muntaqim on The Spirit of Mandela Tribunal, Political Prisoners, and a Life in Struggle
- [Decolonize Palestine and #SaveSheikhJarrah with Rawan Eid and Fathi Nemer](https://millennialsarekillingcapitalism.libsyn.com)
- "A Really Deep-Seated Notion of Love" - The Red Nation on The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save Our Earth


**Supervision Questions:**
• Are struggles against racial oppression also struggles against capitalism? Consider at least ONE (1) example from the Global North and at least ONE (1) from the Global South.
• In what ways have anti-racist social movements accomplished change? Discuss in relation to examples from at least TWO (2) different national contexts.
• “What we manage to do each time we win a victory is not so much to secure change once and for all, but rather to create new terrains for struggle” (Davis, 2005:17). Analyze in relation to TWO (2) case struggles from different national contexts.
13. Colonialism and racism in sociology (AM)

This topic will explore the ‘decolonial imperative’, and its applicability in sociology. We will look at the importance of epistemic, temporal, and spatial links in decolonial thought, as well as the larger struggle for cognitive justice against the colonial matrix of power.

**Essential readings**


**Additional Readings**


**Supervision questions**

- What does it mean to ‘decolonize’ sociology?
- To what extent does the decolonial option transform the sociological imagination?
- Can universities in the Global North ‘delink’?
14. The aesthetics of anti-racism (SMN)

This topic will encourage students to conduct original research into anti-racist aesthetics, the ties between aesthetics and activism, and the role of cultural production in anti-racist struggle. The lecture will use the case study of late 2010s rap music in the UK and France to think about these questions, but the aim will be to equip students with critical tools to analyse the links between anti-racism and other forms of cultural production (film & TV shows, visual arts, literature, etc.) as well.

Essential readings and resources


Additional readings and resources


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOvHghBZ1Yw


**Supervision questions**

- «Far from needing theory’s help, music today is already more conceptual than at any point this century, pregnant with thought probes waiting to be activated, switched on, misused.» (Eshun (1998), -003). Discuss with reference to two case studies.
- To what extent can cultural production be considered social theory?
- Using at least two case studies, critically discuss the mobilisation of anti-racist aesthetics in popular culture?