



AFR 317/JUS 317: Genes, Race, and Society

Instructor: Dr. T. Chester (they/them)

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Office Hours: Fridays 11am – Noon MST or by appointment. Please use this [link](#) or email me with three possible times and your time zone to schedule an appointment.

Course information

Course description

An in-depth examination of the biological and social construction of race in western societies. Special emphasis is placed on examining these constructs from a historical perspective, and the biomedical and social implications of genetics and genomics.

We shall ask such questions as: How have biologists and other life scientists theorized and explained human difference along axes of race? How have concepts of 'genes,' genetics, and more recently genomics created or continued conversations and theorizations about evolution, fueled eugenicist movements, and supported specious theories about racial difference?

This course fulfills University General Studies SB, C and H, and CLAS Science and Society requirements.

Credits: 3

Prerequisites or enrollment requirements: AFR 200 or minimum 30 hours

Course learning outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the socio-cultural context and historical development of the idea of race
- Assess how definitions of race, science, and genetics have informed our understanding of identity and group difference
- Consider the implications of developments in the life sciences for politics, social identity, and cultural belonging
- Evaluate the ways in which cultural beliefs about race have influenced scientific research and the development of knowledge, and the efforts by individuals and social movements to challenge scientific institutions to assert new claims about identity, difference, and inequality.

Textbooks and required purchases

- Skloot, Rebecca. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. NY: Crown, 2011. (Available through ASU Library as an eBook)
- Krismaky, Sheldon and Kathleen Sloan, eds. *Race and the Genetic Revolution: Science, Myth, and Culture*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2011. (available through ASU Library as eBook)
- Articles and other materials are available on Canvas

Library resources

Please see this comment on the Library Resource Service and Library Resource Organizer.

Course access in Canvas

Access your ASU courses in Canvas via canvas.asu.edu, my.asu.edu, and myasucourses.asu.edu; bookmark all if one site is down.

Communicating with the instructor

Most students' concerns can be answered via the syllabus, announcements, FAQ videos or Yellowdig Engage. Please make sure you consult those resources before contacting the TA or the professor.

Please allow 36 hours for responses to emails. I will do my best to get back to you at my earliest convenience. Please include your course number in your emails. All emails must refer to me by my name and/or title (Professor Chester or Dr. Chester). Do NOT use gendered terms in reference to your instructor; Use this [document](#) as a guide on how to email your professors.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account. ASU email is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon messages in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

Assignments and exams

Quizzes:

Students will be given 4 quizzes on course material throughout the semester. The quizzes will be multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank-style questions. There may be a few short/answer/essay questions on occasion. Students will also be given an Introduction Quiz and an Academic Integrity Quiz. In total quizzes will be worth **75 points**.

VoiceThread Assignments:

Students can access VoiceThread via Canvas or via www.voicethread.com

- Introduction Assignment- Students will create a post Introducing themselves to the class. **15 points**
- Overviews- Students will receive 5 points for watching each Module's Overview videos. **40 points**
- Interactive Lectures- Students will receive 15 points for watching and commenting on the lectures. **105 points**
- Module Prompts- Students will be given a prompt for each Module. The prompt will require the students to create a VoiceThread and discuss specific aspects of the course material. Students are encouraged to watch and comment on their peer's posts. The first 5 assignments are required. The remaining 2 assignments are optional and can be used to make up points lost in previous modules or for extra credit. Module prompt assignments will not be reopened once closed. **125 points**
 - Examples:
 - You completed all 5 assignments and earned 125 points, you also completed the 2 optional assignments for 50 points. You will now have 175 out of a possible 125 points.
 - You completed 3 of the 5 required assignments and earned 75 points, you also completed 1 of the optional assignments for 25 points. You will now have 100 points out of a possible 125 points.

Final Exam:

Students will use their course knowledge to respond to issues discussed in the course and to analyze the treatment of Henrietta Lacks. The exam will be made available 5 days before the end of the semester and is open book/notes. **80 points**

Absence policies

If you will be absent from class or cannot log into your Canvas course to submit required assignments, make arrangements with your instructor in advance.

Excused absences related to university-sanctioned events/activities must adhere to [ACD 304-02](#), "Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities."

Assignment policies

Submitting assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise prearranged with your instructor, **MUST** be submitted via the associated assignment submission feature in Canvas. You can use [Assignment Comments](#) to submit questions and documents. **Do not submit assignments via email.**

Late or missed assignments

Notify the instructor **BEFORE** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and your assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates (Arizona Mountain Standard time) are firm. Follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment due to [University-sanctioned activities](#).

Instructor's Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy

No Generative AI Use Permitted

In this course, all assignments must be completed by the student. Artificial Intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT and other related tools used for creating of text, images, computer code, audio, or other media, are not permitted for use in any work in this class. Use of these generative AI tools will be considered a violation of the [ASU Academic Integrity Policy](#), and students may be sanctioned for confirmed, non-allowable use in this course.

Grading procedure

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Graded assignments will be available within 72 hours of the due date via Canvas Grades.

Tips for success in this course

To be successful in this course, do the following:

- check the Canvas course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates
- engage with your peer's VoiceThread
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track

Course time commitment

This three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 18 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course. New modules will open on Fridays.

Course evaluation

Students are expected to complete the course evaluation. The feedback provides valuable information to the instructor and the college and is used to improve student learning. Students are notified when the online evaluation form is available.

ASU Student Services, Resources, and Support

Tech support

For technical support, use the Help icon in the black global navigation menu in your Canvas course or visit <https://tech.asu.edu/services/ec>. ASU support representatives are available to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Suspect a service outage? Monitor the status of ASU networks and services at the System Health Portal: <http://syshealth.asu.edu/>.

Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS)

ASU Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS) provides support and access to students with disabilities for programs and services. Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to register with SAILS. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from SAILS is required. Disability information is confidential.

Inquire about learning accommodations at <https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility>.

Tutoring and academic support

ASU's Academic Support Network (ASN) provides a variety of free services in-person and online to help currently enrolled ASU students succeed academically: <https://tutoring.asu.edu/>, 480-965-9072, tutoring@asu.edu

Educational Outreach and Student Services (EOSS)

ASU provides a wealth of services to foster the academic success of our diverse student population, such as counseling, health services, student advocacy and assistance, bookstores, libraries, and

communities. See <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/supportservices>, <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/resources>, and <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>.

Computer requirements

This course requires a computer with Internet access and the following:

- Web browsers ([Chrome](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#), or [Safari](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office or Google Drive ([Microsoft 365](#) and Google Drive are free for all currently enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Note: A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. may not be sufficient for completing your work in ASU courses. While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes and exams, and virtual labs, as they may require the use of third-party tools and the hardware and software listed above.

Student conduct and appropriate behavior

Additionally, required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures](#), [Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy](#), [SSM 104–02](#) policy against threatening behavior, per the Student Services Manual, “Handling Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Individuals on Campus”, and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions.

[Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference](#) by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per [Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#).

Netiquette—appropriate online behavior—is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion posts may be deleted by the instructor.

If you deem content shared by an instructor or student offensive, bring it to the attention of the instructor or the school chair or director.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Prohibition against discrimination, harassment, and retaliation (Title VII and IX)

Policy on Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), and [retaliation](#) by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status.

Title VII

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a federal law that provides that no person be discriminated against based on certain specified characteristics: sex, race, color, national origin and religion, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information. Inappropriate conduct need not rise to the level of a violation of federal or state law to constitute a violation of this policy and to warrant disciplinary action/sanctions.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded based on sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex are prohibited.

Reporting Title VII and IX violations

Your instructor is a mandated reporter and therefore obligated to report any information regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence.

[An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed based on sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed based on sex, or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <http://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.](#)

Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employees or expulsion of students. Students are encouraged to report harassment to instructors and the [Dean of Students Office](#).

ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Accessibility statement

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADA) of 2008, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Student

Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

[Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations](#). Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual needs. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are [responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation](#) to SAILS. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

COVID-19

We are learning, teaching and living during an unprecedented time. We are in a global pandemic. You have no idea how crises are showing up in the lives of your peers or instructor. Throughout the semester, I ask that we practice something like grace – a willingness to show up, be in community with each other, to give a benefit of the doubt when trust has been earned. Grace is not an excuse for ‘bad’ or offensive behavior. Instead, it is an invitation to think and be in possibility together. I encourage you to communicate your needs and situation with me as conditions are constantly changing. My goal in teaching this class is to reduce harm during this period as much as possible, please communicate any needed accommodations. I will try my best to work with you.

Inclusion statement

Arizona State University is deeply committed to positioning itself as one of the great new universities by seeking to build excellence, enhance access, and have an impact on our community, state, nation, and the world. To do that requires our faculty and staff to reflect the intellectual, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our nation and world so that our students learn from the broadest perspectives, and we engage in the advancement of knowledge with the most inclusive understanding possible of the issues we are addressing through our scholarly activities. We recognize that race and gender historically have been markers of diversity in institutions of higher education. However, at ASU, we believe that diversity includes additional categories such as socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status, nationality, and intellectual perspective.

Land acknowledgement

ASU acknowledges the twenty-two Native Nations that have inhabited this land for centuries. Arizona State University's four campuses are located in the Salt River Valley on ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples, including the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) native communities. We acknowledge the sovereignty of these nations and seek to foster an environment of success and possibility for Native American students and patrons.

Mental health

Students may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These emotional health concerns or stressful events may diminish academic performance

and/or reduce the ability to participate in daily activities. [ASU Counseling Services](#) provides counseling and crisis services for students who are experiencing mental health concerns. Any student may call or visit any ASU counseling center for a same-day or future appointment to discuss any personal concern. ASU's dedicated crisis line is available 24/7 for crisis consultation by calling 480-921-1006. The new telehealth counseling system MySSP provides "Open Call and Open Chat" which allows students to talk to counselors immediately, 24/7, and 365 days a year. Students can also schedule continued counseling through MySSP. Counseling is available in 50 languages and services are available anywhere in the world.

Student Privacy: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) affords students certain privacy rights regarding their education records. Those rights are summarized below. For more detailed information about FERPA, consult [SSM 107-01: Release of Student Information](#) [1] or contact [University Registrar Services](#) [2]. See <https://students.asu.edu/print/12951> for details about your rights including The Right to Inspect, The Right to Amend, The Right to Consent, and The Right to File a Complaint.

Syllabus disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course material, assignments, and expectations, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the Canvas shell often, in case updates are necessary.