HISTORY 270: TOPICS IN AMERICAN HISTORY
MIXED-RACE IDENTITY IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Spring 2012
TuTh 9:30AM - 10:45AM
HLT G90

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Through most of the United States’ history, laws have been in place to prevent interracial intimacy and the production of mixed-race offspring, and the Tragic Mulatto figure, victim of confusion and isolation, has remained in the popular imaginary since the nineteenth century, reappearing in novels, movies, and even social science writing that addresses the challenges of multicultural societies. At the same time, writers have equated American identity with the creation of new, hybrid men since Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur asked “What then is the American, this new man?” in 1782. While less prevalent than ideas that disparage racial mixing, fascination with it has always gone hand in hand with ideas of citizenship, American identity, and progress. Why has there been a combination of appeal with mixed-race Americans along with an antipathy towards them as “half-breeds,” “intermediary,” or “marginal”? Have stereotypes of them altered through the past two hundred years? Do they reflect how mixed-race people identify themselves? Lastly, how have these issues changed in the decades since the Supreme Court invalidated anti-miscegenation laws in 1967? This course aims to answer these questions through a variety of interdisciplinary sources. We will be reading fiction, essays, newspaper articles, and texts from the behavioral and social sciences that address a number of topics, including: the one-drop rule, abolition, assimilation, racial passing, the proposed “Multiracial” category for the Census, and representations in popular culture.

GER AREAS:
This course counts towards the fulfillment of two areas of the university’s general education requirements (GER): The humanities area and the minority cultural diversity in America area. Following are the definitions of each area and the criteria courses within those areas expected to satisfy:

Humanities
1. Definition: The academic disciplines that investigate human constructs and values, as opposed to those that investigate natural and physical processes, and those concerned with the development of basic or professional skills. The humanistic disciplines—such as art history, history, language and literature, philosophy—are concerned with questions, issues and concepts basic to the formation of character and the establishment of values in a human context; they induce an organic study of letters and knowledge; they provide literary, aesthetic and intellectual experiences which enrich and enlighten human life.

2. Criteria: To satisfy GER distribution requirements for the Humanities, a course must meet Criteria a and one other:
   a. approach its subject using humanistic means of inquiry, such as: the critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, the exercise of judgment and expression of ideas, the organization, logical analysis, and creative use of substantial bodies of knowledge;
   b. increase the student’s capacities for making informed and independent evaluation pertaining to the nature of knowledge, language, and representation, and concerning the formation of ethical or aesthetic concepts, or the ways in which values are manifested within diverse theoretical or conceptual frameworks;
c. introduce the student to substantial and coherent bodies of historical, cultural, literary or philosophical knowledge, as a means of increasing an understanding of the complexities and varieties of human events;
d. enhance and extend the student’s response to literature and/or other arts by introducing the process of thoughtful and systematic analysis, or by fostering an appreciation of distinctive cultures and traditions, or by increasing the student’s sensitivity to language and its nuances; or
e. foster the application of humanistic perspective to other branches of knowledge or to issues of universal human concern.

Minority Cultural Diversity in America

1. Definition: This area pertains to the study of life experiences either of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, or Asian Americans.

2. Criteria: Courses satisfying this requirement shall:
a. have primary focus on African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, or Asian Americans;
b. introduce students to significant elements that ground the life histories and life prospects of one or more of the groups listed above;
c. scrutinize perspectives, world views, methodologies, and philosophic constructs which the group(s) use(s) to describe, explain and evaluate its/their life experiences over historical time; and
d. enhance and extend the student’s ability to conceive and perceive transcultural similarities and dissimilarities, and make sound empirical as well as normative generalizations.

LEARNING GOALS:
The historical study of mixed-race identity presents a nexus of race, class, and gender in the United States. Meanwhile, it unveils patterns of behavior acquisition and change. However, by covering the breadth of United States history, this class interrogates the notion that racially mixed people are a new phenomenon indicating progressive social change. The quizzes, tests, and other assignments keep these principles in mind in each unit of the course. Specifically, this course satisfies the criteria of the humanities area of the GER by having as a major learning goal that of understanding how the concept of race has shaped identity in the United States, thus increasing your capacity for making informed and independent evaluation pertaining to the nature of knowledge, language, and representation (Criteria 2.b). Since our focus will be on ideas in a historical context, this course will also satisfy Criteria 2.a, since we will be approaching the subject of mixed-race identity using humanistic means of inquiry, such as: the critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, the exercise of judgment and expression of ideas, the organization, logical analysis, and creative use of substantial bodies of knowledge. This course satisfies the criteria of the minority cultural diversity in America area of the GER by having as a major learning goal that of understanding the important role of racial identity in the construction of American citizenship. A major goal is to enhance your understanding of the significant elements that have grounded the life histories and life prospects of racial minorities (Criteria 2.b.).

Other specific learning goals are:
* to discern positive and negative stereotypes of mixed-race Americans throughout U.S. history;
* to compare these with the ways people of mixed heritage identify themselves, whether publicly, privately, officially, or among their kin; and
• to apply this knowledge to contemporary issues, and imagine how issues of race and identity may change in the coming years.

GER ASSESSMENT:
The essay section of the final exam will allow the instructor to gather data on the students’ ability to discern positive and negative stereotypes of mixed-race Americans throughout U.S. history. These essays will be evaluated on a five-point scale. A five-point essay will identify three specific positive and three negative stereotypes of at least two racial minority groups in at least three different eras of American history, explain how racial minorities responded to these stereotypes, and compare their experiences to one of the other minority groups discussed. A four-point essay may identify fewer stereotypes or may analyze two rather than three eras in American history or may not offer a meaningful analysis of the responses of one of the racial minorities to those stereotypes. A three-point essay may show weaknesses in two of these elements. A two-point essay will demonstrate deficiency in all of these elements or will exhibit poor grammar and syntax. A one-point essay will demonstrate deficiency in all of these elements and will exhibit poor grammar and syntax. An average of the students’ essay scores will provide a numeric measure of the success of the course in reaching these learning goals and will illustrate the extent to which the course needs to be altered to improve it. An examination of the specific areas of weakness in students’ essay will point to the topics that need to be communicated better or emphasized more.

REQUIRED BOOKS & VIDEOS:
The bulk of the course readings will come via email a week in advance. But you will also read these books and view these videos in their entirety, in this order, outside of class:


It is up to you to secure copies of Broyard, Nunez, and Kramer. I will help with Medak and Leroy.

¹ Also available at http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL289DD8D29EA3B7F7&feature=plcp, Parts 1-10.
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Attend class regularly and punctually:** More than three unexcused absences will result in losing 10% from one’s final grade. Because of its ability to disrupt class, lateness by more than 15 minutes may result in an unexcused absence.
- **Read all assigned texts:** You have around 50-75 pages of reading a week. I will give guidance on how to approach them, but it is up to you to manage your time and come to class familiar with the material.
- **Participate actively in discussions:** Your preparations should help with this. But your perspectives will add unique flavor to our conversations. Laptop use is acceptable, but conspicuous surfing may result in a penalty to your participation and attendance grade. Stow all other devices for the duration of the class.
- **Complete all assignments on time:** Unexcused late assignments will lose 10% for missing the initial deadline, and another 10% for every twenty-four hours after that. Assignments with 72 hours of unexcused lateness will receive an “F.”

**Tumblr blogs:** Instead of D2L, we will rely on the blogging site, Tumblr.com, for online discussions. Each student will be responsible for creating a blog dedicated to this class. Everyone will “follow” everyone else. (I will give detailed instructions in our first session.) There are three primary requirements in regard to your blog:

1. By the beginning of class on the Tuesdays of weeks II-VIII, you will post a short essay reflecting mostly on the out of class materials of the previous week. These should be between 400-500 words, combining summary, analysis, and personal reflection.
2. During these eight weeks (II-VIII), I also expect a secondary post to your blog in the form of a link to something relevant to the course, plus a comment introducing its significance to your classmates. The link may be a newspaper/magazine/journal article, a blog post, or even a de-deployment of a civil rights figure in popular culture.
3. Lastly, each week, you should post at least 2-3 thoughtful comments on your classmates’ blogs. As with the other blog components, I will grade these before class on Monday. Highest grades will go to students who engage intellectually, demonstrate more than minimal effort, and treat their peers with respect. Occasionally, I will participate, clarifying historical points, connecting discussions with the other course work, and playing devil’s advocate.

My own Tumblr blog is at this address: [http://professorcarter.tumblr.com/](http://professorcarter.tumblr.com/). Follow me! Here I will make secondary posts much like yours. Feel free to comment, ask questions, etc. (Important announcements will come by email, though. And you should send important class matters to my email: cartergt@uwm.edu.)

**Quizzes:** There will be five twenty-minute quizzes, each covering the material from three earlier sessions. Most likely, these will consist of five short answer questions.

**GRADING:**

- Quizzes: 30%
- Tumblr blogs: 30%
- Attendance: 20%
- Participation: 20%
**Academic misconduct:** CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM ARE UNACCEPTABLE, AND WILL RESULT IN COURSE FAILURE. If requirements are unclear, or if you find an assignment overwhelming, it is best to consult me beforehand so we can work out something.

UWM expects each student to be honest in academic performance. Failure to do so may result in discipline under rules published by the Board of Regents (UWS 14). The most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating includes:
- Submitting material that is not yours as part of your course performance, such as copying from another student’s exam, allowing a student to copy from your exam; or,
- Using information or devices that are not allowed by the faculty; such as using formulas or data from a computer program, or using unauthorized materials for a take-home exam; or,
- Obtaining and using unauthorized material, such as a copy of an examination before it is given; or,
- Fabricating information, such as data for a lab report; or,
- Violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of an assignment, test, or other evaluation; or,
- Collaborating with others on assignments without the faculty’s consent; or;
- Cooperating with or helping another student to cheat; or,
- Other forms of dishonest behavior, such as having another person take an examination in your place; or, altering exam answers and requesting the exam be re-graded; or, communicating with any person during an exam, other than the exam proctor or faculty.

Plagiarism includes:
- Directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them; or,
- Using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them; or,
- Paraphrasing materials or ideas of others without identifying the sources.

Academic integrity means honesty concerning all aspects of academic work. Students are encouraged to consult with faculty to develop:
- Correct procedures for citing sources of information, words and ideas.
- Ways to properly credit collaborative work with project team or study group members.
- Strategies for planning and preparing for exams, papers, projects and presentations.
- Alternative procedures for quiz/exam conditions in classroom environment where cheating has been observed.

If a student is charged with academic misconduct, there are specific procedures, including the right of appeal, which must be followed by UWM. Sanctions imposed by the university in response to academic misconduct range from reprimands to expulsion. COURSE FAILURE IS LIKELY.

If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please read the pages at the following URL:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html

Students with disabilities: Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate materials and test accommodations can be found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SAC1tr.pdf

Religious observances: Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm

Students called to active military duty: Details on accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are at:
http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm

Incompletes: The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students are at this web page:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf

Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment): Definitions of discrimination. Harassment, abuse of power, and the reporting requirements of discriminatory conduct are found at:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf

Complaint procedures: Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

Grade appeal procedures: Procedures for student grade appeal appear here:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm

Final examination policy: Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S22.htm
CLASS SCHEDULE

Week I (January 24, 26) – Introduction
Besides making introductions and covering class policies, we will “unpack” what we mean when we use terms like race, ethnicity, and culture. We will explore what it means if you identify with more than one of any of these, and question whether one can separate them from each other. Gary Nash’s essay will show us how prevalent race mixing has been in United States history.

TU: Introduction.
TH: Nash, Gary B. “The Hidden History of Mestizo America.”

Week II (January 31, February 2) – The Upper South, the Lower South, and the One-Drop Rule
There have been laws against interracial marriage since the seventeenth century. Why do they exist? What stake does government have in dictating who can marry whom? How did past laws support slavery in the United States?
TU: Moran, Rachel F. Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race & Romance.
TH: QUIZ 1
TH: Nott, Josiah Clark, and George R. Gliddon. Types of Mankind.

Week III (February 7, 9) – The Tragic Mulatto/Creoles of Color
This week, we will discuss various positive and negative stereotypes regarding mixed-race people and focus on Louisiana’s Creoles of Color in particular.
TU (in class): Stahl, John M. “Imitation of Life.”
PLUS: Medak, Peter. “Feast of All Saints” (Episode 1 of 2).

Week IV (February 14, 16) – Passing/Yellowface Vaudeville
This week, we will introduce the idea of racial passing, and read a short play that touch on interracial intimacy with Chinese men. Although a comedy, it says a lot about Asian immigration, increasingly diverse cities, and sex in the 1890s.
TU: QUIZ 2
Week V (February 21, 23) – The Melting-Pot, Intermarriage, and Twentieth Century Sociology
We will read part of the play that gave us the famous term, “the Melting Pot,” and explore how it has become a popular, national symbol. While it celebrates national diversity, does it assume certain values? Does it reflect what we’ve discussed about race, ethnicity, and culture? How applicable is it to different kinds of racially mixed people?

TU: Stonequist, Everett V. “The Problem of the Marginal Man.”

TH: QUIZ 3
TH: Gleason, Philip. “The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?”
TH (in class): Zangwill, Israel. The Melting-Pot, Drama in Four Acts.
PLUS: Nunez, Sigrid. A Feather on the Breath of God : A Novel.

Week VI (February 28, March 1) – The New Face of America: Race Mixing on the Coffee Table
Many have noted that Time magazine’s Fall 1993 cover star, whom they created by combining the features of 17 ethnic groups, stands as a symbol of American diversity, the growing presence of mixed-race people, and racial progress. What can we say about the brave new world that this special issue offers us?

TU: Nakashima, Cynthia L. “Servants of Culture.”
TH: Loving v. Virginia (388 U.S. 1).
TH: “Rebirth of a Nation, Computer Style.”
TH: Gaines, James R. “From the Managing Editor.”
THU: Smolowe, Jill. “Intermarried… with Children.”
PLUS: Kramer, Stanley. “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner.”

Week VII (March 6, 8) – The Multiracial Movement and Census 2000
The Census has always been a barometer of the racial climate in the United States, shaping and reflecting how we think about race. In the 1990s, a new, “Multiracial” category became a possibility that many embraced. Continuing themes we covered during the first week of class, we will discuss how self-identification, a supposedly private matter, enters into the public sphere. Using personal experiences, we will also critique the positions of parents who spoke for their mixed-race children.

TU: QUIZ 4
TU: Root, Maria P. P. “A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People.”
TU: Fernández. “Government Classification of Multiracial/Multiethnic People.”
TU: Graham, Susan R. “The Real World.”
TH: Schmitt, Eric. “For 7 Million People in Census, One Race Category Isn’t Enough.”
PLUS: Leroy, Justin. “Chasing Daybreak.”
Advertising, fashion, and the news media would have us believe that racial ambiguity is the “in” thing, and that young people want to be (at least partly) something they are not. Is this true? Are Americans obsessed with racial mixing and the exotic? (What does “exotic” mean, anyway?) Is the obsession generational? Does it reflect improved race relations?

TU: Daly, Emma. “DNA Tells Students They Aren’t Who They Thought.”
TU: (in class): Diesel, Vin. “Multi-Facial.”

TH: QUIZ 5
TH: Rodriguez, Richard. “See the Brown in Us.”
TH: Lum, Lydia. “The Obama Era: A Post-racial Society?”