

History 410: Historical Perspectives on Diversity

Spring 2009

Professors John McCole, James Mohr, Ellen Herman, and Jeff Ostler

Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:00-3:20 | 175 Lillis

McCole office hours: W 3:30-5:00 and by appointment

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Course Description

How has diversity become an issue that has risen to the top of the agenda in so many contexts, and how has the historical emergence of this issue shaped the way we think about it, consciously and unconsciously? How have issues posed by racial, cultural, religious, and other forms of difference been understood and approached in the past? How does the issue of diversity in the United States compare to related issues and controversies in other societies? What can we learn from these comparisons?

This will be a collaboratively-taught course, developed by members of the History Department as one part of our effort to promote the goals of the University of Oregon's diversity plan. We will be examining four case studies in order to think about the issue of diversity in historical and comparative terms. Please be sure to understand that we will *not* be giving a survey of the topic. Each of the faculty involved will teach a two-week module in his or her area of expertise. McCole will attend all sessions and coordinate the course in addition to teaching his own module.

Course Requirements

1. Four short papers, either 2-3 or 3-4 pages each, one for each of the four modules in the course. Papers will be assigned by the faculty member teaching each module.
2. A final examination on Tuesday, June 9 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in Lillis 175.

Academic Honesty

All work that you submit for this course, including papers and exams, must be your own, and it must have been produced for this course. Please be sure that you are familiar with the University's policies regarding academic honesty. When you submit work for the course, you are certifying that you have complied with these guidelines.

Readings

For purchase at the UO Bookstore:

- Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*
- John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*
- Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*
- a course packet with readings for Prof. Ostler's module

Readings available online:

Please go to the course website for links to all of the readings for Prof. Herman's module and some of those for Ostler's and McCole's: <http://uoregon.edu/~mccole/homepage/diversity.html>

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction (McCole)

March 31: Presentation of the course

April 2: Thinking about diversity issues and asking historical questions: a first look

FIRST, READ Jane Kramer, "Taking the Veil," *The New Yorker* (November 22, 2004)

THEN, SKIM *What Do We Do With a Difference? France and the Debate over Headscarves in Schools*, pp. 8-47

MODULE ONE: JAMES MOHR

A Look at the Most Massive Effort in US History to Address the Issue of *Racial Diversity*: Reconstruction and Its Many Legacies

April 7: Trying to Settle on a Structural Solution (lecture and discussion)

Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, 228-280.

April 9: Trying to Implement the Solution (lecture and discussion)

Foner, *Reconstruction*, 281-345.

April 14: Successes and Failures, Part 1 (lecture and discussion)

Foner, *Reconstruction*, 346-411.

April 16: Successes and Failures, Part 2 (lecture and discussion)

Foner, *Reconstruction*, 412-459.

MODULE TWO: ELLEN HERMAN

A Genealogy of "Diversity": Changing Concepts of Culture

Week 1: From Assimilation to Pluralism, 1890-1940

April 21: What is culture? What have cultural difference and diversity meant over time?

Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 1911, [chapter 1, "Racial Prejudices"](#)

Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: a Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilisation*, 1928, [Introduction](#)

listen: Margaret Mead essay for 1950s radio series, *This I Believe*: ["A New Control Over Human Destiny"](#)

Clifford Geertz, ["Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,"](#) in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973

James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 1988, [Introduction](#), ["The Pure Products Go Crazy"](#)

April 23: Pluralism

Jane Addams, ["Why Women Should Vote,"](#) 1915

Randolph Bourne, ["Trans-National America,"](#) *The Atlantic*, July 1916

[The Immigration Act of 1924](#)

Alain Locke, *The New Negro*, 1925, [Forward](#)

Zora Neale Hurston, ["How It Feels to Be Colored Me,"](#) 1927

W.E.B. DuBois, ["Shall the Negro Be Encouraged to Seek Cultural Equality?,"](#) 1929

Week 2: From Species to Ethnos, 1940-2009

April 28: Universalism and its critics

FDR, ["The Four Freedoms,"](#) address to Congress, January 6, 1941

Eleanor Roosevelt, ["Race, Religion and Prejudice,"](#) *New Republic*, (May 11, 1942)

Gunnar Myrdal, *The American Dilemma*, 1948, [chapter 1, "American Ideals and the American Conscience"](#)

Helen Doss, *The Family Nobody Wanted*, 1954, [excerpt](#)