

Histories of Racial Capitalism

HIST 18202
The University of Chicago—Winter 2020

WED 1:30-4:20 PM
Rosenwald 329

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3-5 PM
Harper East Tower, #687

This seminar takes as its starting point the insistence that the movement, settlement, and hierarchical arrangements of indigenous communities and people of African descent is inseparable from regimes of capital accumulation. It builds on the concept of “racial capitalism,” which rejects treatments of race as external to a purely economic project and counters the idea that racism is an externality, cultural overflow, or aberration from the so-called real workings of capitalism. This course will cover topics such as racial slavery, banking in the Caribbean, black capitalism in Miami, the under-development of Africa, and the profitability of mass incarceration.

Required Readings

- Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (2019).
- Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016).
- Gerald Horne, *Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in 17th Century North America and the Caribbean* (2018).
- Manu Karuka, *Empire’s Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (2019).
- Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983, 2005).
- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (2019).

The readings listed above are on reserve at Regenstein Library and can be purchased at Seminary Co-op. Other assigned readings can be found online [eBooks] and/or through our Canvas portal [C].

Course Requirements

40%: Participation

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Being on time means arriving a few minutes before class begins. You are expected to complete all reading before class and meet all deadlines. I expect spirited, rigorous, and respectful participation. Outside of unforeseen circumstances, no extensions will be granted. All unexcused absences and tardiness will greatly deflate your grade. The breakdown of the participation grade is:

- 20% participation in and contribution to class discussions.
- 10% content: Once in the quarter, each student will identify at least two core issues and/or questions that occurred to them while doing the reading. These observations should be related to the content, theories, and concepts deployed. You will email me these questions by 5PM on the day before our class meets. You will then raise these observations during our in-class discussion.
- 10% methods: Students will be divided into groups and, once in the quarter, provide an overview of an author's research methodology. What kind of history is this? How does the archive approach the archive (whatever and wherever it may be)? What primary sources does the author use?

60% Final Paper

The final paper should be between 10-12 pages. You will meet with me no later than week 4 to discuss your final paper. You have a few options from which to choose:

Historiography¹

You'll be required to use the lens of racial capitalism to place 3-4 authors in conversation around a topic of your choice. For example, how does racial capitalism advance/challenge the story of late nineteenth century populism in the United States as told by prominent historians?

Originary Thinkers

This assignment asks you to identify 1-2 originary thinkers who theorized the links between race and capitalism. They need not be theorists in the traditional sense; the analysis of the quotidian by everyday folk, journalists, or otherwise is more than sufficient. This assignment involves locating and engaging with a primary source that seems particularly emblematic of their thought.

¹ For a useful overview of a historiographical essay, see:
http://www.uky.edu/~popkin/650%20HolocaustSyl_files/Historiographical%20Essay.htm

Annotated Exam List

First or second year doctoral students may wish to produce an annotated qualifying exam list on the field of racial capitalism however defined and arranged.

Research Paper

This assignment is designed especially for students working on their honors thesis or graduate students working on their dissertation prospectus. Provided your research is relevant to the study of racial capitalism, it offers students a chance to advance their own intellectual agendas.

Resources and Policies

Accessibility: *If you need any special accommodations or academic adjustments, please provide your professor with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) as soon as possible so that you may discuss with them how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.*

<http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

Plagiarism: *You are encouraged to consult with one another on the choice of paper topics, and you may also share library resources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, but you should ensure that the written paper you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and reflects your own approach to the topic.*

The Writing Program: <https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/>

UChicago Academic Integrity: <https://college.uchicago.edu/advising/academic-integrity-student-conduct>

Technology: Computers, tablets, and the like are permitted in class. This policy is subject to change if I find students abusing the privilege.

Schedule

I. January 8. Overview

II. January 15. Capture, Transport, Commodification

- a) Gerald Horne, *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in 17th Century North America and the Caribbean*.
- b) Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. [C]

Chapter 3: “‘The Breedings Shall Goe with Their Mothers’: Gender and Evolving Practices of Slave Ownership in the English American Colonies” (pp. 69-106).

- c) Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. [eBooks]

Chapter 2: “Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities” (pp. 33-64).

Chapter 3: “The Political Economy of the Slave Ship” (pp. 65-100).

1. “An account of the ships employed in the African trade” (1713). [C]

III. **January 22.** Colonial Conquest

- a) K-Sue Park, “Money, Mortgages, and the Conquest of America,” *Law & Social Inquiry* vol. 41, no. 4 (2016): 1-30. [C]

- b) William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. [C]

Chapter 2: “Landscape and Patchwork” (19-33).

Chapter 3: “Seasons of Want and Plenty” (34-53).

Chapter 4: “Bounding the Land” (54-81).

- c) Nancy Shoemaker, “How Indians Got to be Red,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 102, no. 3 (June 1997): 625-644. [C]

1. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XI: Aborigines, and Query XIV: Laws* (1781). [C]
2. St. John De Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, Letter IX (1782). [C]

IV. **January 29.** Antebellum Extractions

- a) Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*. [eBooks]

Chapter: “Introduction: A Person with a Price” (pp. 1-18).

- b) Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*. [eBooks]

Chapter 8: “The Carceral Landscape” (pp. 209-243).

- c) Alexandra Finley, “‘Cash to Corinna’: Domestic Labor and Sexual Economy in the ‘Fancy Trade,’” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 104, no. 2 (Sept. 2017): 410-430. [C]

- d) *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith. [eBooks]

Chapter 5: Amy Dru Stanley, “Slave Breeding and Free Love: An Antebellum Argument over Slavery, Capitalism, and Personhood” (pp. 119-144).

- e) Claudio Saunt, “Financing Dispossession: Stocks, Bonds, and the Deportation of Native Peoples in the Antebellum United States,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 106, no. 2 (Sept. 2019): 315-337.

V. February 5. Reconstructions

- a) Manu Karuka, *Empire’s Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad*.
- b) Moon Ho-Jung, “Outlawing ‘Coolies’: Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation,” *American Quarterly* vol. 57, no. 3 (Sept. 2005): 677-701. [C]
- c) Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*. [C]

Chapter 2: Scott, “Fault Lines, Color Lines, and Party Lines: Race, Labor, and Collective Action in Louisiana and Cuba, 1862-1912” (pp. 61-106).

1. Edward King, *The Great South: A Record...* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1875). [eBooks]

Chapter XX: “Railroad Pioneering—Indian Types and Character” (pp. 204-214).
Chapter XXVIII: “The “Supply” System in the Cotton Country” (pp. 270-277).

VI. February 12. Imperial Jim Crow

- a) Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016).
- b) Peter James Hudson, “The National City Bank of New York and Haiti, 1909-1922,” *Radical History Review*, issue 115 (winter 2013): 91-114. [C]
- c) Andrew Zimmerman, “Three Logics of Race: Theory and Exception in the Transnational History of Empire,” *New Global Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2010): 1-9. [C]
1. W.E.B. Du Bois, “The African Roots of War,” *The Atlantic* (1915). [C]

VII. February 19. Racial States, Racial Capitalisms

- a) Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*. [C]

Chapter 6: "White Australia Points the Way" (pp. 137-165).

Chapter 13: "Immigration Restriction in the 1920s: 'Segregation on a Large Scale'" (pp. 310-332).

- b) Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. [eBooks]

Chapter 3: "From Colonial Subject to Undesirable Alien: Filipino Migration in the Invisible Empire" (pp. 96-126).

Chapter 4: "Braceros, 'Wetbacks,' and the National Boundaries of Class" (pp. 127-166).

1. Gerhard Jacoby, *Racial State: The German Nationalities Policy in the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia* (1944). [C]

Chapter: TBD

VIII. February 26. Apartheid, Decolonization

- a) Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*.

- b) N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida*. [eBooks]

Chapter 6: "A Little Insurance" (pp. 163-198).

1. *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O'Dell*, ed. Nikhil Pal Singh. [eBooks]

Chapter: "A Colonized People" (pp. 124-144).

Chapter: "The July Rebellions and the 'Military State'" (pp. 145-159).

IX. March 4. "Predatory Inclusion"

- a) Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*.

- b) Alex Lichtenstein, “Flocatex and the Fiscal Limits of Mass Incarceration: Toward a New Political Economy of the Postwar Carceral State,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 102, no. 1, (June 2015): 113-125. [C]
- c) Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva, “Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt: The Racial Logic of Global Capitalism—An Introduction,” *American Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 3 (Sept. 2012): 361-385. [C]

X. March 11. Racial Capitalism?

- a) Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.

Chapter 1: “Racial Capitalism: The Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development” (pp. 9-28).

Chapter 2: “The English Working Class as the Mirror of Production Poverty and Industrial Capitalism” (pp. 29-43).

Chapter 3: Socialist Theory and Nationalism Socialist” (pp. 45-68).

Chapter 4: “The Process and Consequences of Africa’s Transmutation” (pp. 71-100).

- b) Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Race in the 21st Century*. [eBooks]

Chapter: “Introduction: Race, Culture, and History” (pp. 3-24).

March 12—College Reading Period

****Friday, March 20th, 2020**

✓ Final Paper Due at 5pm—No Extensions!