



## Course syllabus

Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Department of Cultural Sciences

4AE451 Ras och rasism – ett postkolonialt perspektiv, 7,5  
högskolepoäng

Race and racism – a postcolonial perspective, 7.5 credits

### **Main field of study**

Archaeology  
Colonial and postcolonial studies

### **Subject**

Cultural Studies

### **Level**

Second cycle

### **Progression**

A1N

### **Date of Ratification**

Approved 2020-05-07.

Revised 2026-03-03. The prerequisite requirement has been supplemented with subjects according to GY25.

The course syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2026.

### **Prerequisites**

90 credits including an independent project of 15 credits in a subject in the humanities or the social sciences or the equivalent. You also need English 6 or English, level 2.

### **Objectives**

After completing the course, the student should be able to:

- account for how the concept of race has arisen in the intersection of colonial expansions, the modern nation state and modern science,

- reflect on contemporary scholarly discussions of why human races do not exist,
- define and use central theoretical concepts in the humanities and the social sciences concerning race in relation to political strategies for using and controlling the human body,
- critically analyse how the race concept is involved in processes of identity and politics at different social and geographical scales, from local to national and transnational contexts,
- critically analyse current issues and discussions on science and race, focusing especially on research on genetics and biological variation.

## Content

This course discusses the origin of the modern concept of race, and how it has changed in the tension between politics and research, from the Enlightenment until today. Themes discussed include race as a symbolic system and as a personified identity. Historical and contemporary examples are compared to allow for reflections on how the concept of race has influenced processes of identity in various parts of the world. This entails an interdisciplinary perspective, focusing on the intersection of research in biological human osteology and humanistic critical analysis. A general theme discussed in the course is how the race concept has caused and continues to cause political tension, violence and inequality in a postcolonial world.

## Type of Instruction

Teaching is delivered in the form of lectures, discussion seminars and supervision. Teaching is delivered in English.

## Examination

The course is assessed with the grades A, B, C, D, E or F.

The course is examined through oral presentations, written assignments and an individual project. Retake examination takes the form of a written assignment or other assignment decided by the examiner. The grade A is the highest grade and the grade E is the lowest grade for passing the course. The grade F means that the student's performance is assessed as failed. Grading criteria for the A–F scale are communicated to the student in a separate document when the course starts, at the latest.

If the university has decided that a student is entitled to special educational support due to a disability, the examiner may offer an adapted exam, or allow the student to conduct the exam in an alternative way.

## Course Evaluation

During or shortly after the course, a course evaluation is conducted. Results and analysis of the course evaluation are communicated to the students who have taken the course. Students who are taking the course when it is offered the next time are informed of the results at the start of the course. The evaluation is anonymous.

## Required Reading and Additional Study Material

Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)*. 1 edition. Translated by D. Heller-Roazen. Stanford University Press. pp. 126-159 (Chapters 2-5). ISBN-13: 978-0804732185. (33 p)

Crawley, H. and Skleparis, D. (2018) 'Refugees, migrants, neither, both: categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's "migration crisis"', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(1), pp. 48–64. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2017.1348224. ISSN 14699451, 1369183X (16 p)

Gould, S. J. (1996) "American polygeny and craniometry before Darwin." In *The Mismeasure of Man. Revised & Expanded*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. pp. 62–104. ISBN-13: 978-0393314250 (42 p)

Gravlee, C. C. (2009) 'How race becomes biology: Embodiment of social inequality', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 139(1), pp. 47–57. doi: 10.1002/ajpa.20983. ISSN:1096-8644 (10 p)

Hosbey, J. (2016) 'Refusing Unliveable Destinies: Toward a Future for Black Life in New Orleans', *Fire!!!*, 5(1), pp. 35–47. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5323/fire.5.1.0001> (12 p)

Jablonski, N. G. and Chaplin, G. (2002) 'Skin Deep', *Scientific American*, 287(4), pp. 74–81. ISSN 0036-8733 (7 p)

Lewis, J. E. et al. (2011) 'The Mismeasure of Science: Stephen Jay Gould versus Samuel George Morton on Skulls and Bias', *PLOS Biology*, 9(6), p. e1001071. doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.1001071. ISSN 1544-9173

Osanami Törngren, S., Jonsson Malm, C. and Hübinette, T. (2018) 'Transracial Families, Race, and Whiteness in Sweden', *Genealogy*, 2(4), p. 54. doi: 10.3390/genealogy2040054. ISSN 2313-5778

Relethford, J. H. (2018) "Five: Palimpsests of our Past." *Reflections of Our Past: How Human History Is Revealed In Our Genes*. Routledge. pp. 101–122, 167–185. ISBN-13: 978-0813342597 (39 p)

Stein, G. J. (1988) 'Biological Science and the Roots of Nazism', *American Scientist*, 76(1), pp. 50–58. ISSN 0003-0996 (8 p)

Trouillot, M.-R. (2003) 'Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness', in Trouillot, M.-R. (ed.) *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 7–28. doi: 10.1007/978-1-137-04144-9\_2. ISBN-13: 978-0312295219 (21 p)

Wolpoff, M. H. and Caspari, R. (1997) "Polygenism, racism and the rise of Anthropology." *Race and Human Evolution*. New York: Simon and Schuster. pp. 57–76. ISBN-13: 978-1416577966 (19 p)

### **Additional study material**

Dahlgren, E. F. (2003) *Farfar var rasbiolog*. Stockholm: Wahlström och Widstrand. ISBN 91-7588-419-4 (379 p)

Hartigan, J. (2010) *Race in the 21st century: ethnographic approaches*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0199374373 (272 p)

Ifekwunigwe, J. O. et al. (2017) 'A Qualitative Analysis of How Anthropologists Interpret the Race Construct', *American Anthropologist*, 119(3), pp. 422–434. doi:

10.1111/aman.12890. ISSN:1548-1433 (12 p)

Jablonski, N. G. (2012) *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520251533 (288 p)

Race, Ethnicity, and Genetics Working Group (2005) 'The Use of Racial, Ethnic, and Ancestral Categories in Human Genetics Research', *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 77(4), pp. 519–532. ISSN 0002-9297 (13 p)

Wagner, J. K. et al. (2017) 'Anthropologists' views on race, ancestry, and genetics', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 162(2), pp. 318-327. doi: 10.1002/ajpa.23120. ISSN:1096-8644 (9 p)