**FL 8113 Capstone Seminar:**

**Race Theory in Classical German Thought**

**Spring 2022, T Th 5:00 – 6:15 pm, Lee 1702 and Online**

Dr. Sally Hatch Gray, Associate Professor of German

Office Hours: 12 – 3 pm Wednesdays and by appointment

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In this course, students will read excerpts from a travel narrative, philosophical treatises on culture, natural science, aesthetics, and anthropology alongside fictional expressions and poetry revealing an emergence of a very controversial, “scientific” race theory in the late 18th century. The readings are selected to demonstrate the context of this race theory during an age of globalization and include powerful arguments and reactions against it. We will begin with excerpts from Georg Forster’s famous travel narrative, *Voyage ‘round the Wo*rld (1777), which documented his experience aboard Captain James Cook’s second circumnavigation (1772-1775). Travel narratives, such as that of Georg Forster, were used as evidence to inform discussions in a newly identified field of anthropology. What would this field look like in the late 18th century, at a time when the disciplines of the modern research university were created? Investigating the intricate connections of natural science, anthropology, and aesthetics, discussions will turn to work by Immanuel Kant and his invention of the modern concept of race based on skin color. Controversial and not widely accepted at the time, Kant’s race theory will be placed in context with opposing views expressed in many forms, such as a debate with Georg Forster, who rejected it, scientific treatises and literary expressions by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who demonstrated the limitations of the modern scientific method, and alternate concepts of anthropology by Johann Gottfried von Herder and Friedrich Schiller, as well as a short story depicting the violence of race categorization set during the Haitian Revolution by Heinrich von Kleist. In our discussions, we will investigate the role of race theory in the development of the modern scientific theory and consider the ramifications of this phenomenon, questioning whether the foundation of natural science in a late 18th-century concept of distanced objectivity remains, in part, a barrier to an understanding of nature, including humans in nature, today. Students will gain an appreciation for the power of fantasy found in systematic philosophy and scientific theory as well as an understanding for empirical reality and phenomenology to be found in poetry and in narrative. This course will be offered in English.

**Required Materials:**

1. Bernasconi, Robert and Lott, Tommy L, Eds. *The Idea of Race*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000. ISBN: 978-0-87220-458-4
2. Mikkelsen, Jon M., Trans. and Ed. *Kant and the Concept of Race: Late 18th Century Writings*. Albany NY: SUNY, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-4364-4362-1
3. Additional readings will be posted on Canvas

*Students working online need to have a computer with an internet connection and powerful enough for video capabilities, including a camera, a microphone, and speakers for sound, to join our class virtually.*

**Semester Plan**

Jan. 18 Introduction to the course: Globalization, Natural History, Anthropology, and Aesthetics

Jan. 20 Topic: Globalization and Natural History

Reading: Preface to *Voyage ‘round the World* (1777), Georg Forster (pp. 5-12) &

Chapter VIII “Anchorage in O’Aitepeha Harbour, on the lesser Peninsula of O’Tahietee” (pp. 143 – 177).

Jan. 25 Topic: Travel Writing and Anthropology

Readings: “Towards a prehistory of ethnography: Early modern German travel writing as traditions of knowledge,” Michael Harbsmeier & “Aesthetics, Anthropology, and the Limits of Enlightenment Cosmopolitanism in Georg Forster’s *Reise um die Welt*,” Sally Hatch Gray (on Canvas)

Jan. 27 Topic: Enlightenment and Race

Readings: “What is Enlightenment” (1785) Kant (on Canvas)

“Of the Different Human Races” (1775), Kant (Mikkelsen, 41-54)

Feb. 1 Topic: Kant’s Race Theory in Context of his Critical Project

Reading: “The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant’s Anthropology,” Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (on Canvas)

Feb. 3 Topic: Kant the Geographer

Readings: “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race” (1785), Kant, (Mikkelsen, 125-141)

& “Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of the Races,” Mark Larrimore (on Canvas)

Feb. 8 Topic: The Invention of Scientific Race Theory

Reading: “Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant’s Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race,” Robert Bernasconi (on Canvas)

Feb. 10 Topic: Forster’s Counter to Kant’s Race Theory

Reading: “Something More About the Human Races” (1786), Georg Forster (Mikkelsen, 143-168)

Feb. 15 Topic: Kant’s Defense of his Race Theory

Reading: “On the Use of Teleological Principles of Philosophy” (1788), Kant (Mikkelsen, 169-194)

Feb. 17 Topic: The Kant and Forster Race Debate: On Science, Aesthetics, and Race

Reading: “Kant’s Race Theory, Forster’s Counter, and the Metaphysics of Color,” Sally Hatch Gray (on Canvas)

Feb. 22 Topic: Aesthetics in Anthropology in Kant and Forster

Readings: “Disinterested Pleasure and Aesthetic Autonomy in Georg Forster’s *Voyage ‘round the World,*” Sally Hatch Gray

Kant, First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* (selections)

Feb. 24 Topic: Kant’s Symbols of Nature, Ideal Beauty, and Teleology of the Organism

Reading: Selections from the *Critique of Judgment* (1790)(on Canvas)

Mar. 3 Topic: Blumenbach on Race

Readings: excerpts from *On the Natural Variety of Humankind,* Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1795) (Bernasconi & Lott, 27-37) & “Johann Friedrich Blumenbach names White People ‘Caucasian’,” Nell Irvin Painter (on Canvas)

Mar. 8 Topic: A View from the Slavers and their Far-reaching Implications

Readings: “Of the Varieties and Deviate Forms of Negroes” (1790), Christoph Meiners (Mikkelsen, 195-208), & “Jewish Emancipation and the Politics of Race,” Jonathan Hess (on Canvas)

Mar. 10 Topic: Herder on the Human Species

Readings: “No Matter How Different the Forms in Which Humankind Appears on earth: It is Still Everywhere One and the Same Human Species” (1784), Herder (Bernasconi & Lott, 23-26)

“Herder and the Birth of Modern Anthropology,” Michael Forster (on Canvas)

Mar. 14 – 18 Spring Break

Mar. 22 Topic: Kant on Herder, Herder on Kant

Readings: Review of Herder’s *Ideas* (1785), Kant (on Canvas)

*Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-7), Herder (on Canvas)

Mar. 24 Topic: Hegel’s Anthropology

Readings: “Anthropology,” from the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830) (Bernasconi & Lott, 38-44), Hegel & “Hegel and Haiti,” Susan Bick-Morss (on Canvas)

Mar. 28 Topic: Kleist’s Literary Depiction of Kant’s Race Theory

Reading: “Engagement in St. Domingo” (1811), Kleist (on Canvas)

Mar. 30 Topic: Kleist on Kant’s Race Theory

Reading: “On Specialization and the Dead Eye: Kant’s Race Theory and the Problem of Perception Illustrated in Kleist’s “Betrothal in Santo Domingo,” Gray (on Canvas)

Apr. 5 Topic: Goethe’s Critique of the Modern Scientific Method

Readings: “A Study Based on Spinoza,” “The Experiment as Mediator between Object and Subject,” “Fortunate Encounter,” “The Extent to Which the Idea ‘Beauty is Perfection in Combination with Freedom’ May Be Applied to Living Organisms,” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (on Canvas)

Apr. 7 Topic: Goethean Science: Critiquing Kant

Readings: “The Influence of Modern Philosophy,” “Judgment through Intuitive Perception,” “Doubt and Resignation,” “The Formative Impulse,” Goethe (on Canvas)

Apr. 12 Topic: Goethe’s Way of Science

Readings: “The Metamorphosis of Plants,” Goethe (on Canvas) &

“The Metamorphosis of the Scientist,” Frederick Amrine (on Canvas)

Apr. 14 Topic: Against Specialization: Schiller’s critique of Kant’s Aesthetics

Reading: *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), Schiller (excerpts on Canvas)

Apr. 19 Topic: On Race and Political Identity in the early 20th Century in the U.S.A.

“The Conservation of Races” (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois (Bernasconi & Lott, 108-117)

Apr. 21 Topic: The Negritude Movement in 1920s Paris

“What is ‘Negritude’?” (1961), Leopold Senghor (Bernasconi & Lott, 136-8)

“The Revolution of 1889 and Leo Frobenius,” Leopold Senghor (on Canvas)

“Senghor’s other Europe,” Michael Saman (on Canvas)

Apr. 26 Topic: Student Presentations

Apr. 28 Topic: Student Presentations

May 9 Final Paper Due

**Grading:**

Active participation 10%

Quotes and Reflections: 10%

Class discussions (2) 10%

Project bibliography 10%

Project presentation 20%

Final essay 40%

**\*Grading Scale: A =** 90-100%, **B =** 80-89%, **C =** 70-79%, **D =** 60-69%, **F =** 59% or below

*\*Grades will be calculated using one decimal point such that an 89.4 is a B and an 89.5 is an A*

**Active participation:** Consistent and active participation is expected of all students.

Attendance is not the same as active participation, though it is a necessary component of it.

For this reason, students are expected to attend all class meetings and to obtain approval for

any unplanned absences following the class meeting that is missed, or prior to any planned,

excusable absences. Students enrolled in the class face-to-face are expected to attend in person. Students enrolled in the class online are expected to attend virtually. To participate actively, students must carefully prepare the readings before class and then demonstrate their familiarity with the material during the class discussion. The course is to be taught in a seminar-style, which assumes the active involvement of all students.

**Quotes and Reflections:** Students must read each assignment carefully. To encourage active and careful reading, students will be required to pull a meaningful quote from the text for 20 of the 24 class periods in which readings are assigned and give a close reading of the quote in the context of the larger work. They will post these in our discussion boards on Canvas. Students are to cite the quote, typing it up, giving the author, work, and page number, and then describe, analyze, and reflect on it, writing at least five sentences per quote. In the reflection, students are encouraged to say why they chose the quote and what is puzzling or interesting to discuss. Students are encouraged to keep their own notes and to do this work in Word or another word-processing program of their choice and then copy and paste it into Canvas. Once they post their quotes, students should read the entries of their classmates as well and are encouraged to respond to others. Quote reflections are due by 4 p.m. on each class day. Students must have at least 8 entries by the end of the first progress grade reporting period on Feb. 28.

**Class discussions:** Each student will be responsible for preparing questions for discussion

for two of the course meetings. Students should prepare a list of 8-10 thematic questions

that they feel touch on the major issues from the readings, raise pertinent questions on the

general content of the course. Students are welcome to ask questions about what they do not understand too. Students are to submit these in Canvas by 4 pm on the day of the discussion. The student is not responsible for lecturing the class on the readings, but rather for presenting questions that will spark discussion among the other students.

**Annotated Bibliography:** The annotated bibliography should contain a list of 5-10 sources

to be included in the final research project, with a brief description (3-4 sentences) of the

argument of 5 of these texts, as well as a short description of the project. The annotated

bibliography is due during the week of April 10. Students should bring a copy of

their topic and bibliography to the professor’s office during that week, to review their topic

and sources and to work out any potential problems. Online students should schedule a virtual meeting with me to discuss their projects. They should submit their bibliographies online in Canvas.

**Final Essays:** The final essay will concern a topic of each student’s

choosing. It should be 12-15 pages in length, and include a bibliography of at least 10

secondary sources. Students are allowed to change their sources or topic after turning in

their bibliography during the week of April 10th, but it is recommended that they speak

with the professor in the case of making a substantial change to the topic. Final essays are to be turned in online by mid-night on May 9 using the Ouriginal plagiarism software program in Canvas. When uploading the file for the assignment, students must click on the box next to “This assignment submission is my own, original work.” In addition, face-to-face students are required to submit a paper copy to me in my box in 1500 Lee the next morning, by 12 p.m. on May 10.

**Final Presentation**: Each student will give a 15-20-minute final presentation of their essay on one of two agreed-upon days (see the semester plan). For this assignment, students are required to both give and receive presentations. Active discussion, as always, is also required, and thus students must be in class for both days. Students with an unexcused absence on the presentation day when they are not themselves presenting will receive 15% grade reduction penalty on their own presentation.

**Note on Late Work:** Students are required to turn their work in on time. Assignments turned in late will have a penalty of 20% the first late day, and 10% each day after. After a week, the instructor reserves her right to accept the work. Students must give the presentation on the date set, unless they can trade with someone. Final papers are due one week before final grades are due, the latest possible date, and may not be turned in late. *For information regarding excused absences and late work, please see the university attendance policy listed below*.

**Note on Plagiarism**: Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s words or ideas as your own. This can include using the ideas of others, *even when rephrased by you*, the lifting of passages from other sources without accreditation or placing your name on work written by anyone else. This practice is strictly forbidden at Mississippi State and can result in an F for the course grade and

disciplinary action through the Student Honor Code Council. (See the Student Honor Code

Council website: <http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/> ) If you are uncertain about proper

referencing or use of outside materials please see me during my office hours.

**Course Communication:** Announcements may be made in Canvas and via email. Email is the best way to reach me. Students may expect to receive a response within the next business day. Online students can meet with me in person via WebEx.

**Netiquette**: Communication within, and outside of, this course, including via email, personal interaction, discussion boards, etc. should be conducted with respect to and for both the instructor and the other classmates. For essential info about the rules of netiquette, see <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html>

**University Policies**

**Attendance policy:** Per [Academic Operating Policy 12.09](https://www.policies.msstate.edu/sites/www.policies.msstate.edu/files/1209.pdf), students enrolled in the course face-to-face are expected to attend all of these class meetings in person. Students enrolled online are expected to be in class virtually and synchronously with us. Please read the policy carefully to understand what constitutes an excused absence and what documentation is required for one.

**Statements as to Safety Policies due to the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The university has published requirements for the use of face coverings for everyone on campus, including specific requirements for their use in all classrooms, labs, and shared office spaces regardless of physical distancing. In order to mutually protect the students’ freedom to learn and the instructor’s ability to teach in a safe classroom environment, everyone in this classroom is required to wear a face covering in the classroom in accordance with MSU policy. If a student cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition, they should request an accommodation via the Office of Disability Support Services. If a student simply doesn’t want to wear a face covering, they will not be permitted to remain in the classroom or lab.

**Continuity of Instruction**: In the event that face-to-face classes are suspended *due to extenuating circumstances, such as weather*, the instructor will continue instruction in a manner that best supports the course content and student engagement. In this event, all instructors will notify students of the change via their university email address (the official vehicle for communication with students). At that time, they will provide details about how instruction and communication will continue, how academic integrity will be ensured, and what students may expect during the time that face-to-face classes are suspended. If a student becomes unable to continue class participation due to extenuating circumstances*, (e.g., health and safety, loss of power, etc.)*  the student should contact their instructor and advisor for guidance. For additional guidance, please refer to [Academic Operating Policy 12.09](https://www.policies.msstate.edu/sites/www.policies.msstate.edu/files/1209.pdf).

**Mississippi State Academic Integrity Policy:** Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code: "As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.” Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information please visit: <http://honorcode.msstate.edu/policy>.

**Title IX:** MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU’s educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU’s Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325- 8124 or by e-mail to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources are available at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/title9-12.pdf>, or at <http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/>.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy:** Students who have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office of Student Support Services in Room 01 Montgomery Hall via 662-325-3335. For more information, please visit [http://www.sss.msstate.edu](http://www.sss.msstate.edu/).

**University Safety Statement:**  Mississippi State University values the safety of all campus community members. Students are encouraged to register for Maroon Alert texts and to download the Everbridge App. Visit the Personal Information section in Banner on your mystate portal to register. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort via Safe Walk, call University Police at 662-325-2121, or in case of emergency, call 911. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [ready.msstate.edu](http://ready.msstate.edu/).

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