

International History

Academic year 2020-2021

Histories beyond Nation

HI019 – Autumn – 6 ECTS

Tuesday 14h15 -16h (P3#506)

Our seminar this year aims to examine conventional liberal narratives of freedom and progress through intersecting frames mainly of race and colonial subjecthood, and with an accent on slavery and emancipation. Neither slavery nor colonialism commands ethical legitimacy among historians, yet they still cast a long shadow on how we think about the past. Have dominant white/settler/colonizer subjectivities been more enduring in the historiography than our assumptions about diversity and inclusion allow? If yes, how can we explain their dominance? What might it mean to hear other voices and subjectivities on their own terms? How may this be possible within the discipline of history?

> PROFESSOR

G. Balachandran
gopalan.balachandran@graduateinstitute.ch

[Office hours](#)

> ASSISTANT

Michele Sollai
michele.sollai@graduateinstitute.ch

[Office hours](#)

Evaluation

Evaluation comprises three main elements:

1. **Three reading responses (30%): maximum 750-words each**, reviewing and reflecting on the class readings of the preceding weeks. **All submissions on Moodle by midnight, 13 October (covering readings for Weeks 1-4), 3 November (Weeks 5-7), and 1 December (Weeks 9-11)**
2. **One 3000-word essay (50%)** responding to the following prompt: 'Liberal freedoms are a racial construct in which life, liberty, and property, remain enmeshed with whiteness'. **Deadline: 18 December/midnight**
3. **Class participation (20%)**: this will be based on two components: (a) contribution to the **class discussion (8 December)**, and (b) attendance, reading, and classroom engagement

Schedule and Readings

Week 1, 15 September

Introduction: Inclusion, Omission, Diversion

- Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2016, 'Prologue: Kindling'
- Nikole Hannah-Jones, 'Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true', *New York Times*, 14 Aug. 2019
- 'Tom Cotton calls slavery "necessary evil"', *Guardian*, 27 July 2020
- Editor's communications and letters, *American Historical Review*, 125: 1 & 125: 2, 2020
- *New York Times* letters on the 1619 project

Week 2, 22 September

Regimes of racial domination

- W.E.B. Du Bois, 'Souls of White Folk' in W.E.B. Du Bois *Darkwater*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920, reprinted in the *Monthly Review*, Nov. 2003
- Charles W. Mills, *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The critique of racial liberalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, ch. 4 'White Ignorance'
- Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary structures of race*, London: Verso, 2016, Introduction, pp. 11-28
- Cheryl Harris, 'Whiteness as Property', *Harvard Law Review*, 106: 8, 1993, pp. 1710-15; 1721-1737

Week 3, 29 September

Erasures

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the production of history*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1995, ch. 2
- Susan Buck-Morss, 'Hegel and Haiti', *Critical Inquiry*, 26: 4, 2000, pp. 821-65
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played In the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935, chapter 17
- Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: United Daughters of the Confederacy*, Miami: University of Florida Press, 2004, ch. 8

Week 4, 6 October

Thinking through Silence

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, ch. 3
- George Ciccariello-Maher, "'So Much the Worse for the Whites": Dialectics of the Haitian Revolution', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy - Revue de la philosophie française et de langue française*, 22: 1, 2014, pp. 19-39

Week 5, 13 October

Slavery, Enslavement, Capitalism

- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944, ch. 5
- Nicholas Draper, 'Helping to make Britain Great: The Commercial Legacies of Slave-Ownership in Britain', in Catherine Hall, *et al*, *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership: Colonial slavery and the formation of Victorian Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, ch. 3
- Sylvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*, New York: Autonomedia, 2004, 'The Accumulation of Labour and the Degradation of Women'

Week 6, 20 October

Race, Republicanism, Representation

- Edmund Morgan, *American Freedom, American Slavery: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2003, ch. 18
- Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-government and Imperial Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, ch. 6

Week 7, 27 October

Race, Coercion, Dispossession

- Moon Ho-Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, ch. 2
- Kris Manjappa, 'Plantation Dispossession: The Global Travel of Agricultural Racial Capitalism', in Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, ed. *American Capitalism: New Histories*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2020
- 'The Great Land Robbery: The shameful story of how 1 million black families have been ripped from their farms', *The Atlantic*, September 2019

Week 8, 3 November

Reading and Writing Break

Week 9, 10 November

Paths to (Un)Freedom

- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, ch 4
- David Roediger, *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All*, London: Verso, 2014, Introduction and ch. 1

Week 10, 17 November

Limits to Emancipation

- Anderson, *White Rage*, chapter 1
- Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-Century America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, ch. 5
- James Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992, ch. 8

Week 11, 24 November

The Limits of Freedom

- Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, ch 4
- Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2015, chs 1 and 4

Week 12, 1 December

Michele Sollai (TBA)

Week 13, 8 December

Class discussion based on the essay prompt

Week 14, 15 December

Feedback and Wrap-up