



# Race and Disability in American History and Literature

Drs. Steve Noll and Delia Steverson  
Spring 2021

## Course Overview

This course will examine the intersection of race and disability in American history and literature by allowing students to understand the shifting meanings of these terms throughout American history and how American literature both reflected and shaped those changes. We will examine the very meanings of “race” and “disability” and how they change (or do not change) over time. We will examine the institution of slavery as itself a disabling construct, the history of eugenic sterilization in America, and finally end by discussing contemporary issues located at the intersections between race and disability.

Dr. Noll will lecture on Mondays; Dr. Steverson on Fridays; and both professors will lead class discussion on Wednesdays.

✚ **Inclusion and Accessibility:** We are committed to making our classroom as accessible as possible for all students. We’d love to hear your input regarding how we can make online and f2f teaching more accessible for everyone. We all learn in different ways and it’s important to us that you feel supported throughout the semester. Please let us know as soon as possible if you need specific accommodations, and we will do our absolute best to make sure that

all students have multiple ways of accessing our class information. Additionally, it's a good idea to connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). We invite you to share your letter with us, so that we will be better equipped to help support your learning needs.

### **Required Texts**

- ✚ Douglass Baynton—*Defectives in the Land: Disability and Immigration in the Age of Eugenics* (2016)
- ✚ Suzan Lori Parks—*Venus* (1996)
- ✚ Susan Birch and Hannah Joyner—*Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson* (2015)
- ✚ Pamela Newkirk—*Spectacle: The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga* (2016)
- ✚ Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha—*Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (2018)
- ✚ Alondra Nelson—*The Social Life of DNA- Race, Reparations, & Reconciliation After the Genome* (2016)
- ✚ There will also be readings on course reserve.

**Required Technology:** Zoom, Adobe Reader, High-speed internet connection

### **Course Requirements and Grade Distribution**

**Discussion Groups—(30%)**

- On the Wednesdays where Drs. Noll and Steverson will not be leading discussion (every other week) you will turn in to Canvas a **full two-page double-spaced analysis** of both the historical and literary texts we have been discussing. Please see the handout on Canvas for more details.

### Leading Discussion Group (20%)

- Once throughout the semester you will be charged with being the discussion leader for your group. You will be responsible for bringing in **2-3 outside sources and 4-5 discussion questions** for your group to respond.

### Reading Journals (30%)

- You will write on everything you read. Read the **handout on Canvas** for more specific details. For each reading assignment, please include:
  - A short synopsis of what you read
  - An analysis of the reading

Please type the journal entries and upload them to Canvas.

- We will be available throughout the beginning of the semester to look at your journals to see if they are what we are looking for and to help you produce an effective, finished product.
- These reading journals should demonstrate and improve your ability to read and write critically.
- **Twice** throughout the semester we will collect reading journals.
  - **March 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm**
  - **April 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm**

### Attendance and Participation (20%)

- Attendance and participation is vital to your success in class. Participation is measured in a variety of ways so feel free to participate in multiple forms. Because the class is often discussion-based, we want to hear from you regularly throughout the semester.
- Understand that there are No Exams or Major Papers—Therefore, it is CRUCIAL that you take all of the above assignments seriously!

### **Policy on Late and Make-Up Work**

Assignment due dates will be listed on Canvas. It is your responsibility to turn in assignments on time. Late Student Discussion Group analyses, lesson plans, as well as Reading Journals will lose half a letter grade for each day they are late.

### **Grade Return Timing**

It is our goal to return your graded work to you in a timely fashion. Expect at least two weeks turn-around for most assignments.

### **Zoom and F2F etiquette:**

Camera participation is encouraged and appreciated, but we understand it may not always be accessible or wanted. We do, however, strongly request that you have your camera on when you are in student-led discussion groups.

### **UF Course Policies**

✚ **Workload:** As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact

hour. For our class, these may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing

information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.

✦ **Student Evaluations:**

Evaluations are important. We'd love your professional and respectful feedback on the quality of my instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available from [the Gatorevals website](#).

✦ **Recording Zoom Sessions:** To make our virtual classroom more accessible, our Zoom meetings will be recorded, but the chat

feature will not. Also, please know that office hours are confidential and will *not* be recorded.

✦ **Plagiarism :** Be aware of the University's policy on plagiarism. It can be found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>. The Internet has made this situation more problematic but understand that plagiarists will be caught. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask. All plagiarism will be reported on a Faculty Adjudication Form and forwarded to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

**Grading Scale**

A	93-100	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86
B-	80-82	C	73-76
C+	77-79	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	66-67
D-	64-65		
F	<64		

**College is tough! Here's a list of additional UF resources that might aid you along the way:**

- [Disability Resource Center](#) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
- [University Police](#)
- [Career Connections Center](#) connects job seekers with employers and offers guidance to enrich your collegiate experience and prepare you for life after graduation.
- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) provides counseling and support as well as crisis and wellness services including a [variety of workshops](#) throughout the semester (e.g., Yappy Hour, Relaxation and Resilience).
- [Dean of Students Office](#) provides a variety of services to students and families, including [Field and Fork](#) (UF's food pantry) and [New Student and Family programs](#).
- [Multicultural and Diversity Affairs](#) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.
- [Office of Student Veteran Services](#) assists student military veterans with access to benefits.

- [ONE.UF](https://one.ufl.edu) is the home of all the student self-service applications

### Schedule of Readings

<b>Week 1</b>	Introductions
1/11	Syllabus
1/13	#wordsmatter—What is race? What is disability?
1/15	Continuation of Wednesday’s discussion #wordsmatter—What is race? What is disability?
<b>Week 2</b>	No Class—Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
1/18	
1/20	<b>Slavery and Disability</b> Is slavery a disability in and of itself? Read- “Racial Theory & The Pre-Civil War Census” <a href="https://multiracial.com/index.php/2000/10/01/racial-theory-the-pre-civil-war-census/">https://multiracial.com/index.php/2000/10/01/racial-theory-the-pre-civil-war-census/</a>  Read- “Worse Than Useless” <a href="https://escholarship.org/content/qt79r782m7/qt79r782m7.pdf">https://escholarship.org/content/qt79r782m7/qt79r782m7.pdf</a> (Read <i>Chapter 3</i> only!!!!)
1/22	Read <i>The Autobiography of James L. Smith</i> Preface and pages 1-55 (or beginning through chapter IV) <a href="https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/smithj/smithj.html#jsmith106">https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/smithj/smithj.html#jsmith106</a>
<b>Week 3</b>	Read-“Battered Bodies, Enfeebled Minds”- in course reserves
1/25	

1/27	Instructor-Led Discussion Assign Discussion Groups and Leaders
1/29	Read Selections from William and Ellen Craft— <i>Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom</i> available on Canvas in Course Files or Course Reserves
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Eugenics and Immigration</b>
2/1	Read Baynton- <i>Defectives in the Land</i> - pages 1-78
2/3	Student Discussion Groups Make sure you review the handouts on Canvas detailing leading discussion groups and writing discussion analyses
2/5	Read Burch and Joyner-- <i>Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson</i> Introduction and Chapters 1-3
<b>Week 5</b>	Read- <i>Defectives in the Land</i> - pages 79-139
2/8	
2/10	Instructor-led Discussion
2/12	Read <i>Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson</i> Chapters 6, 8, 11
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Race &amp; Insanity in the Era of Reconstruction &amp; Jim Crow</b>
2/15	Read- "Race, Apology, and Public Memory at Maryland's Hospital for the 'Negro' Insane" <a href="http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/5392/4547">http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/5392/4547</a>



	Read- “Labeling and Treating Black Mental Illness in Alabama, 1861-1910”- in course reserves
2/17	Student Discussion Groups
2/19	Read W.E.B Du Bois—“On Being Crazy” on Canvas Read Frank Yerby—“The Homecoming” on Canvas
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Freak Shows</b>
2/22	Read Pamela Newkirk— <i>Spectacle- The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga</i> - pages 1-127
2/24	Instructor-led discussion
2/26	Read Suzan-Lori Parks— <i>Venus</i> Overture and Scenes 31-20 (pages 1-79)
<b>Week 8</b>	Read <i>Spectacle- The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga</i> - pages 128-254
3/1	Read- “Disability, Race, and Gender on the Stage in Antebellum America”- in course reserves
3/3	Student Discussion Groups
3/5	Read <i>Venus</i> Scenes 19-end (pages 80-162) <b>Turn in Reading Journals</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	Watch Tod Browning’s <i>Freaks</i>
3/8	<a href="https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4z366t">https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4z366t</a>

	(asynchronous)
3/10	Watch Tod Browning's <i>Freaks</i> (asynchronous)
3/12	In-Class discussion on <i>Freaks</i>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Civil and Disability Rights/ Disability Justice</b>
3/15	Read- "Uncle Tom & Tiny Tim: Some Reflections on the Cripple as Negro"- in course reserves
3/17	Student Discussion Groups
3/19	Watch <i>Crip Camp</i> (2020) and come to class ready to discuss
<b>Week 11</b>	Read- "Lomax's Matrix: Disability, Solidarity, and the Black Power of 504" <a href="https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1371/1539">https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1371/1539</a>
3/22	
3/24	Recharge Day—no class
3/26	Read Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha <i>Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice</i> Chapters 7, 8, 10, 16
<b>Week 12</b>	Read- "Strong Black Women: African-American Women with Disabilities, Intersecting Identities, & Inequality" <a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243218814820">https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243218814820</a>
3/29	
3/31	Student Discussion Groups
4/1	Read Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha <i>Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice</i> Chapters 1, 2, 3

<b>Week 13</b> 4/5	<b>Genetic Testing/State Sanctioned Violence</b> Read- <i>The Social Life of DNA- Race, Reparations, &amp; Reconciliation After the Genome</i> - pages 1-106
4/7	Instructor-led Discussion
4/9	David Connor, Beth Ferri, and Subini Annamma— <i>DisCrit: Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory in Education</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Chapter 2: What a Good boy: The Deployment and Distribution of “Goodness” as Ideological Property in Schools</li> <li>✚ Chapter 11: Kathleen Collins—“A DisCrit Perspective on <i>The State of Florida v. George Zimmerman</i>: Racism, Ableism, and Youth out of Place in Community and School</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b> 4/12	Read- “Keeping the Back Door to Eugenics Ajar?: Disability & the Future of Prenatal Screening” <a href="https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/keeping-backdoor-eugenics-ajar-disability-and-future-prenatal-screening/2016-04">https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/keeping-backdoor-eugenics-ajar-disability-and-future-prenatal-screening/2016-04</a>
4/14	Student Discussion Groups
4/16	Watch “In His Own Home” and come ready to discuss
<b>Week 15</b> 4/19	Final Discussion— <b>What does it all mean?</b>
4/21	Continuation of discussion— <b>What does it all mean?</b>  <b>Turn in final reading journals</b>