

## Honors 3053: “Biology, Race, & Gender”

Instructor: Doren Recker 266 Murray  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 and by Appt.

Texts: **Course Packet** (available from bookstore); **Stephen Crane:** *Maggie a Girl of the Streets and Other Tales of New York*; Occasional **Handouts** and **Readings placed on D2L**, to supplement assigned Readings.

Description: This course critically investigates ways in which the relationship(s) between biological theory (especially Darwinism) and social and ethical issues have been construed over the past two centuries. The first part of the course investigates the development of Darwinian evolution during the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century as it applied to human beings, and how racial and gender issues entered this discussion. The second part of the course analyzes the *uses* of aspects of this biological work to justify racist and sexist ideas and policies (particularly in the United States) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century → WWII. The third part of the course investigates the recent resurrection of attempts to apply Darwinian evolution to human behavior (Sociobiology, Evolutionary Psychology), and the relationship (if any) between these new theories and the racist and sexist uses of Darwinian evolution discussed in the second section.

Ultimately, students will be exposed to a wide range of materials concerning views on the alleged biological aspects of perceived racial and gender differences, as well as how these views were implemented socially, legally, and medically in the United States and elsewhere in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This information will then be used to carefully analyze more recent attempts to understand aspects of human behavior in terms of Darwinian evolution, and to critically assess claims that these, too, are directly or indirectly motivated by (or may intentionally or unintentionally result in) racist and/or sexist ideas and policies.

Requirements: This is an upper-level course, and it is assumed that students will come to class prepared to discuss the assignments, and to be engaged in these discussions. Each of the three sections will be followed by a 5-8 pp. paper (*assigned papers*) on the student’s choice of specific topics, covering major currents within the areas covered in that section. The student will be given 1 week to complete these papers after the topic choices have been distributed. An additional *exploration-paper* (also 5 - 8 pp.), developing a theme related to the class and based on an additional text will be due shortly before the end of the semester.

Detailed feedback will be provided for each paper, as well as on the paper topics (due on **March 9th**).

<b>Dates:</b> Questions, Paper # 1 Distributed (02/27)	<b>Due (03/06)</b>
Explor. Paper Topics Due	(03/09)
Questions, Paper # 2 Distributed (04/03)	<b>Due (04/10)</b>
Explor. Paper Due	(04/20)
Questions, Paper # 3 Distributed (05/01)	<b>Due (05/08)</b>

Grading: Each *Assigned Paper* is worth 100 points, as is the *Exploration Paper* (total of 400 pts.). The student's grade will be based on the total number of points scored (90 – 100% = A; 80 – 89% = B, etc.). Borderline cases (79%, 89%, etc.) will be determined by the student's attendance and participation in class discussions.

Academic Integrity: See University Policy (Check Website). Academic integrity is essential in a community of scholars, and violations will not be tolerated. I will ask for *maximum* sanctions should you find yourself on the wrong side of such issues ... YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!!