Race, Resistance, and Modernity

Module Code: SO342
Spring 2015

Convenors:
Professor Gurminder K Bhambra
Room: E0.18, Social Sciences
Email: g.k.bhambra@warwick.ac.uk

Dr John Narayan
Room: E0.10, Social Sciences
Email: j.c.narayan@warwick.ac.uk
‘The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line’ - W. E. B. Du Bois

To understand race in the twenty-first century, we have to understand its historical expressions and the ways in which it has been used to contest the establishment of inequalities on this basis.

This module enables students to understand the ways in which race has been used as a mode of resistance to various inequalities generated by the modern world. It critically engages with key historical moments in the shaping of ‘modernity’ from the Haitian Revolution to the Civil Rights movements and beyond. Equally importantly, it examines the modes of resistance to particular European forms of ‘being modern’, that is, it focuses on the resistance to the European trade in human beings and to other forms of imperialism and colonialism. It also addresses key moments in the reconstruction of the global order, on the basis of universal values such as equality and justice, as exemplified by the movements of decolonisation, the Third World Project, and Black Power movements.

The module uses historical sources as well as critical Black scholarship to examine these issues in global context and welcomes students bringing their own knowledge and expertise to bear on the discussions. It should be noted that this module is not a straightforward sociology of race and race-relations module. Rather it examines the racialized ordering of the world and of the ways of knowing that world.

The module is assessed by a final 3000 word essay on a topic of the student’s choosing within the parameters of the module. It is taught by lecture and seminar and students will also be required to submit one formative essay during the module.

Module Outline

1. Race, Resistance, and Modernity (GKB)
2. Haiti: The First Modern Revolution (GKB)
3. Contesting the Colour Line: From Emancipation to Equality (GKB)
4. Concerning Violence: Fanon, Decolonization and the New World Order (JN)
5. The Third World Project: Peace, Bread and Justice (JN)
6. Reading Week
7. Beyond the Third World: The Global South from Above and Below (JN)
8. Citizenship against Empire (GKB)
9. Black Power: From Oakland to New Zealand to Ferguson? (JN)
Teaching:
The lecture slides will be made available to you in advance of the lecture and you are welcome to record the lectures if you wish. You are, however, required to attend the lectures in person, make notes during the lectures, and ask questions. In seminars, you are required to participate by listening, responding, contributing ideas and comments, providing constructive criticisms, agreeing, disagreeing, putting forward alternative explanations and so forth ... in order to do this well you will need to read broadly. The more you put into the seminars, the more you’ll get out of them. For seminars you need to:

(i) read selectively from the key and further seminar readings (available electronically via the library or journal archives)
(ii) write short paragraphs answering the seminar questions
(iii) contribute to class discussions and activities

Reading:
The reading list contains a range of key seminar readings for each week and further readings for each topic. You are expected to read and take notes on the key readings for each seminar. There are seminar questions to help you structure your reading and the further reading will also be useful in helping you answer the questions and for further research for your essay.

To access JSTOR – the electronic repository which contains many of the journal articles listed here – you need to be on campus or then to have sorted out an ATHENS login which will enable you to access the JSTOR archive from any location. You can organise an ATHENS login via the University Library by following this link:
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/electronicresources/passwords/

General Reading
The following books will all be useful to you in thinking through the issues of this module:

- Glissant, E. *Caribbean Discourses*.
Class Essays and Assessment:

Deadlines for Formative Assessment:
1500 word essay: In seminar in week 7, spring term

Deadlines for Summative Assessment
3000 word Assessed Essay: Tuesday, 26th April 2016

Class Essay: Formative Assessment
You are required to write a 1500 word class essay on the broad theme of ‘race, resistance, and modernity’. You can decide on the particular emphasis of the question in consultation with your seminar tutor. Further details on the class essay will be made available in the seminars and you should also attend any essay writing workshops that are made available by the department and the university. Submission of class work is compulsory.

Assessed Essay: Summative Assessment
Titles are to be determined by you, in consultation with the seminar tutor, and have to be agreed BEFORE you start work on your essay. Your class essay can be on the same question.

General
Feedback on essays is provided in two ways: written feedback and the opportunity to discuss that feedback in office hours. Formative essays handed in by the due date will normally be returned within two weeks, with a mark and written feedback.

**Late submission of assessed work where no formal extension has been granted will incur a penalty as set out in the Undergraduate Handbook and on the Departmental website**

Essay deadlines are not coordinated across modules and so you might find that you have to submit 3 or 4 essays in the same week. It is up to you to organise your work and prioritise so that you hand in work on time. If you have a problem meeting a particular deadline, go to see your seminar tutor and discuss it. Don’t leave it; don’t ignore it – learn to deal with it effectively. Extensions to assessed work deadlines may be granted in exceptional circumstances (such as ill-health and/or personal problems); they are not routine. The procedure for applying for an extension is available in the Undergraduate Handbook and on the Departmental website.

All summatively assessed work must be submitted within the set length. This word-length includes the referencing and any footnotes/endnotes, but excludes the title and any appendices (where permitted). The penalties for over-length work are set out in the Undergraduate Handbook and on the Departmental website.

ALL students are required to submit a copy of their assessed coursework electronically. Information on electronic submission will be circulated to all students prior to the submission dates for assessed coursework. Students should be aware that under the terms of their university registration, any coursework submitted by electronic means may be subject to scrutiny by anti-plagiarism software.
Academic Integrity
Reproducing the work of another person or persons without proper acknowledgement is known as plagiarism and is a breach of academic integrity. Do not copy, transcribe or present as your own the sentences, paragraphs, and ideas of other people. Be sure to cite and reference your sources, using your method of citation consistently and comprehensively. Further information on referencing and plagiarism can be found in the Undergraduate Handbook and on the Departmental and University websites. It is very important that any piece of work you submit is your own work. Cheating in exams or in submitted work is not tolerated by the Department or the University and offenders will be subject to sanctions under University Regulations, which can reduce the mark to 0%. It is very important that you understand what constitutes cheating and know how to avoid it. If you are in any doubt about your work, ask for advice. The usual form of referencing in Sociology is the ‘Harvard system’. Some examples of this are given below. For more extensive information, please see the Undergraduate Handbook.

1. The social scientists of the nineteenth century mostly operated with an idea of modernization that endowed historical development with coherence (Iggers 1997).
   a. This sentence uses the ideas of Iggers but in different words. As the sentence is not word for word what Iggers wrote and is a general insight drawn from his work, there is no need to use quote marks, but a reference at the end of the sentence is needed to demonstrate that the ideas contained in this sentence do not come from me, but are in fact derived from the work of Iggers.

2. The general understanding of the modern world was thus premised on the idea of modernization as ‘a process of the global diffusion of Western civilisation and its key institutions’ (Wittrock 1998: 19).
   a. This sentence uses a direct quote from Wittrock and so the date and page number for the quote is needed.

3. According to Bendix (1967), modernization theory rested on three related assumptions.
   a. I’m using a general insight from Bendix and so the date of the publication from which this insight is drawn is needed.

Office Hours
Professor Gurminder K Bhambra
Spring Term: Wednesdays 10am-11am

Dr John Narayan
Spring Term: Tuesday 11am-12pm
**Week 1: Race, Resistance, and Modernity (GKB)**
The introductory session to the module will go over the key themes and questions to be covered and provide students with the opportunity to ask questions about the structure and content of the module. It will also focus on a key reading that, through discussion, will provide the general framing for the themes of the module.

**Essential Reading:**
Bhabha, Homi 1994. ‘‘Race’, Time and the Revision of Modernity’ *The Location of Culture*. Routledge
  - Available as an e-book through the university library

**Seminar Questions:**
1. ‘What is this “now” of modernity? Who defines this present from which we speak?’
2. And why does this matter?

**Week 2: Haiti: The First Modern Revolution (GKB)**
The French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence are seen as revolutions that inaugurated the modern world. While both events opened up the political process to increasing proportions of their populations and established general or universal understandings of citizenship, these have come to be regarded as problematic. For example, citizenship was only available to white males over a particular age who held property. Women were denied the vote, as were black people and white men without property. One of the few constitutions of the time that did not make colour a bar to political participation was that of the Haitian Revolution. In this session, we consider the significance of the Haitian Revolution and its silence within academic discourses of modernity.

**Essential Readings:**
  - Available through the University Library e-journals collection

The 1805 Constitution of Haiti
  - Available at this link: [http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/history/earlyhaiti/1805-const.htm](http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/history/earlyhaiti/1805-const.htm)

**Seminar Questions:**
1. What is the significance of the Haitian Revolution to our understandings of modernity?
2. How does the Haitian Revolution, and the idea of Black Citizenship, extend our understandings of citizenship more generally?
3. What explains the silence around the events of the Haitian Revolution in standard social science understandings of modernity and citizenship?

**Further Readings:**


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**Week 3: Contesting the Colour Line: From Emancipation to Equality (GKB)**

Emancipation emerges as a key theme within European Enlightenment thought in the Old World at precisely the time that slavery is being instituted in the New. Articulated notions of freedom in European societies existed alongside continued practices of colonial domination, enslavement of populations, trade in human beings, and a belief that some had a greater right to be free than others. Freedom, while espoused abstractly as a *universal* freedom was, in practice, more *circumscribed* – its full enjoyment restricted to white, propertied men of some distinction. Alongside this tradition, however, there has been another tradition which developed a more expansive understanding of the concept. As Nikhil Pal Singh argues, ‘the modern black freedom struggle is as old as the Atlantic slave trade and encompasses a history of resistance, refusal, revolts, and runaways’ (2004: 49). It is this tradition that is the focus of this seminar.

**Essential Reading:**

- Available at this link: [http://www.webdubois.org/dbEvolOfRaceProb.html](http://www.webdubois.org/dbEvolOfRaceProb.html)

- Available open access here: [http://csi.sagepub.com/content/62/4/472.full](http://csi.sagepub.com/content/62/4/472.full)

**Seminar Questions:**
1. What are the contours of ‘emancipation’ within African American thought?
2. How does the ‘colour line’ shape understandings of freedom?

**Further Readings:**


Du Bois, WEB 1903. The Souls of Black Folk. Various imprints

**Week 4: Concerning Violence: Fanon, Decolonization and the Neo-Imperialism (JN)**
The link between decolonization and revolutionary violence has divided many for over half a century. For some violence had no place in the decolonization process and for others revolutionary violence was a necessary means to achieving liberation. In this session we will examine Frantz Fanon’s work and his belief that revolutionary violence and national independence was key to negating colonial violence. We shall also examine how Fanon believed that a form of neo-imperial violence, which could not simply be addressed with revolutionary violence, was readily supplanting the violence of colonialism. The end of the session will focus on how Fanon attempted to transcend the violence of decolonization and neo-imperialism with an idea of liberation that not only offered a new vision for the post-colonial world but the whole of humanity.

**Essential Readings:**

**Seminar Questions:**
1. Why does Fanon believe that revolutionary violence must be a ‘greater violence’?
2. How does Fanon link the politics of race to capitalism and imperialism? What does this suggest about the politics of race and its relationship to class?
3. How does Fanon link the project of liberation in the Third World with the failed project of European humanism? And what does this reveal about the politics of race and decolonization?

**Further Readings:**
Memmi, A, 1965 [1957]. The Colonizer and the Colonized. Beacon

Week 5: The Third World Project: Peace, Bread and Justice (JN)
Over the next two lectures we shall examine the history of the rise and fall of the Third World Project that Fanon believed could help liberate humanity. In this session, we will trace the emergence of the Third World Project and the idea of Coloured Cosmopolitanism that ran through the anti-colonial movements of the twentieth century. This will firstly centre on tracing the rise of Third World Project from the first Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955 and examining how Third World leaders utilised the architecture of global governance to advance their agenda. This will include examining the rise of the Non-aligned Movement and the Third World’s use of the United Nations to advance its agenda during the Cold War. We will then examine how both internal and external pressures from neo-imperial forces destroyed the Third World Project. The aim of this session is to bring to fore the global nature of racial resistance in twentieth century and how the politics of race and class was a global endeavour.

Essential Readings:

Seminar Questions:
1. How did Che Guervara narrate the politics of revolutionary unity between socialist and Third World nations? And how do his words on neo-colonialism echo the words of Fanon?
2. How did the Third World utilise the cold war architecture of global governance? What does this tell you about the Third World project’s politics and the politics of race at this time?

Further Readings:
Bhagavan, M. 2013. India and the Quest for One World. London: Palgrave

**Week 6: Reading Week**

**Week 7: Beyond the Third World: The Global South from Above and Below (JN)**

After the collapse of the Third World project in the 1980s it is generally taken that Neo-Liberalism in the advanced countries was readily exported to the Third World through the power of the IMF, World Bank and latterly World Trade Organisation. Whilst this is largely true, it also the case that the movement towards Neo-Liberalism in the Global South was about elites recovering from the collapse of the Third World Project. The story of neo-liberalism in the global south, what we can call neo-liberalism with Southern Characteristics, is therefore more complicated than first thought. In this session we firstly will examine the rise of neo-liberalism in the Global South and how the rise of the BRICS is both an acceptance of and challenge to Western hegemony. We then move onto to examining the rise of the Global South from below and events in Latin America over the last decade. This will entail examining both the hopes of liberation in the Global South and how this idea of liberation holds important questions for those of us in the Global North.
Essential Readings:

Seminar Questions:
1. How do both Prashad and Roy narrate the rise of neo-liberalism in the Global South as a disarming of the Third World’s revolutionary ideals?
2. Why does Prashad believe the BRICS offer both an acceptance of and challenge to Western hegemony?
3. How does linking neo-liberalism in the global south and global north help us to appreciate the facets of neo-imperialism?

Further Readings:
Week 8: Citizenship against Empire (GKB)

Citizenship is one of the defining social and political categories of modernity. Its conceptualization is strongly tied to the emergence of nation-states and the structuring of international relations in terms of the sovereignty of nation-states. However, it is also predicated upon a deeper, racialized structuring of the social world – as we saw in the session on Haiti – a structuring which rarely informs debates about its constitution. In this session, we examine the development of ideas of citizenship within India and within Britain during the period of decolonization.

Essential Reading:

• Course Extracts

Seminar Questions:
1. Discuss the different modes of citizenship present in India and Britain at the moment of decolonization. What implications do these have for contemporary debates on belonging?
2. What is the relationship between questions of identity and questions of citizenship?

Further Reading:
Gordon, Andrew and Trevor Stack 2007. ‘Citizenship Beyond the State: Thinking with Early Modern Citizenship in the Contemporary World,’ Citizenship Studies 11 (2):

Week 9: The Black Panthers and Coloured Cosmopolitanism: From Oakland to New Zealand to Ferguson? (JN)

The US Black Power movement and its constituent groups such as the Black Panther Party have recently gone through a process of historical reappraisal, which challenges the characterisation of Black Power as the violent, misogynist and negative counterpart to the Civil Rights movement. This lecture will focus on this historical reappraisal by highlighting how the idea of black empowerment
was simultaneously local, national, and international in scope. We will examine how Black Power should be seen as part of the ‘coloured cosmopolitanism’ of decolonization, which created forms of transnational unity between disparate groups of people in the ‘coloured’ world. This will centre on examining the legacy of the Black Panther Party as its influence stretched from its home Oakland to places as far flung as the UK, India and New Zealand. In the final part of the session we will also examine how the history of Black Panthers holds lessons for contemporary social movements such as the #BlackLivesMatter campaign and struggle against neo-imperialism in the 21st century.

**Essential Readings:**


**Seminar Questions:**

1. How did the ideas and practices of Black Power challenge the sovereignty of state politics?
2. Why do you think Black Power became a global movement?
3. How have movements such as #Blacklivesmatter borrowed from the history of the Black Panthers? What could they possibly learn from the history of the Black Panthers?

**Further Readings:**


Week 10: Post-Race in the 21st Century? (GKB)
For the final session of the module, please read James Baldwin’s letter to his nephew written in 1962 and then read Ta-Nehisi Coates’ article making the case for reparations. Discuss the possibilities of being post-race in the context of these two texts.

Essential Reading:
Baldwin, James 1962. ‘A Letter to my Nephew’
Coates, Ta-Nehisi 2014. ‘The Case for Reparations’ The Atlantic
- Available at: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/
Rankine, Claudia 2015. Citizen: An American Lyric. Penguin – read any and as many of the poems within this collection
- Excerpts from the poems are available here

Seminar Questions:
1. Is the US post-race? What examples can you use to illustrate your answer?
2. Is post-race a specifically US issue? Does it make sense to talk of other places being post-race?
   Can you provide examples?

Further Reading:
Coates, Ta-Nehisi 2015. Between the World and Me. Spiegel & Grau
Vision, Race, and Modernity is a fascinating attempt to study the changing terrain of racial theory as part of a broader reorganization of vision in European society and culture. Awards and Recognition. One of Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles for 1997. Deborah Poole is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York. Resistance to Modernity. Download 10.88 Kb. Date conversion. The day of unalloyed welcome to all peoples, the day of indiscriminate acceptance of all races, has definitely ended. Paraphrase the above quote and restate the message and meaning of the quote. 2. Political Cartoon. What is the message of this cartoon?