Eugenics

- The science of improving a human population by controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable heritable characteristics. Developed largely by Francis Galton as a method of improving the human race, it fell into disfavor only after the perversion of its doctrines by the Nazis. (OED)
- Huge impact on American science in the early 20th century
  - By 1928 there were 376 separate university courses in some of the United States' leading schools (Stanford, Harvard, Michigan, etc.), enrolling more than 20,000 students, which included eugenics in the curriculum

Francis Galton

(1822-1911)

- Much taken by his cousin's (Charles Darwin) work evolution
- Fascinated by quantification of inheritance
  - “A man’s natural abilities are derived by inheritance, under exactly the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic world”
  - “The men who achieve eminence, and those who are naturally capable are, to a large extent, identical”

Galton’s Hereditary Genius

(1869)

- System of racial ranking in his chapter “The Comparative Worth of Different Races”
- The original Bell Curve
  - X denotes the highest grade, x denotes the lowest grade, his scale progresses from lowest to highest:
  - Between a and A is the average natural ability
  - Everything in lower case denotes below average natural ability, while upper case denotes above average
  - Because of racial differences, an "A" ranking in one race is not the same as an "A" ranking in another

Galton’s Rankings

Athenian  x g f e d c b a ABCDEFGX
Lowland Scots x g f e d c b a ABCDEFGX
English     x g f e d c b a ABCDEFGX
Negro      x g f e d c b a ABCDEFGX
Australian x g f e d c b a ABCDEFGX

- In other words, an Athenian A would be the same as a Scot B+, and English C, a Negro E and an Australian F!
Galton on Race

Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development (New York: Macmillan, 1883)

- Uses a concept like that of Buffon—confused and confusing
  - The absence of a criterion to distinguish between races and sub-races...makes it impossible to offer more than a very off-hand estimate of the average variety of races in the different countries of the world (page 305)
  - At least three different recognised races were to be found in every moderately-sized district [country] on the earth’s surface (page 305)
  - The very foundation and outcome of the human mind is dependent on race, and that the qualities of races vary, and therefore that humanity taken as a whole is not fixed but variable, compels us to reconsider what may be the true place and function of man in the order of the world (page 332)
- He uses whatever criteria or classification suits his argument of the moment all the while assuming that important behavioral traits are inherited along racial lines

Eugenics and Race

- Galton coined the term eugenics in 1883 in *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*
  - That is, with questions bearing on what is termed in Greek, eugenes, namely, good in stock, hereditarily endowed with noble qualities...We greatly want a brief word to express the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had. The word eugenics would sufficiently express the idea. (footnote 1, page 24-25)
  - The fact of an individual being naturally gifted with high qualities, may be due either to his being an exceptionally *good specimen of a poor race, or an average specimen of a high one*. (page 305)

Nathaniel Southgate Shaler

(1841 – 1906)

- One of the most influential racists in American history
- Legacy of the American School of Anthropology
  - Trained by Agassiz, then taught at Harvard 1868-1906
  - Dean of School of Science at Harvard
  - Published in popular media like *Atlantic Monthly* 1890: Science and the African Problem
  - Maintain stereotypes about African-American inferiority and their need for supervision

1890 Revival of Gobineau, Continue Galtonism

Houston Stewart Chamberlain

(1855–1927)

- English-born German author
- *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* brought anti-Semitic racism to German public
- Believed nonwhite races were links between apes and Europeans
- Claimed superiority of the Aryan race
- Fervently anti-Semitic

Ernst Haeckel (1834 – 1919)

- Respected German Scientist
- *The Riddle of the Universe: At the Close of the Nineteenth Century*
- Gobineau translated into English for U.S. audience
- 3 races, Teutonic (Aryan) on top, Alpine, Mediterranean

William Z. Ripley (1867-1941)

- American economist and racial theorist
- *The Races of Europe*
"We can see how English, Irish, French, Germans, and Italians may, after time of trouble, mingle their blood and their motives in a common race, which may be as strong, or even stronger, for the blending to these diversities. We cannot hope for such a result with the negro, for an overwhelming body of experience shows that the third something which comes from the union of the European with the African is not as good material as either of the original stocks; that it has not the vital energy and the character required for the uses of the state. The African and European races must remain distinct in blood."

Racism and Eugenics exploded in two countries in the 20th Century

- Gobineau
- Chamberlain
- Germans
- Galton
- Haeckel
- Agassiz
- Shaler
- Nott
- Ripley
- Americans

Shaler’s legacy

- **Immigration Restriction League** founded in 1894 by three wealthy graduates of the Harvard class of 1889
  - Named Shaler an inaugural vice president of the League
- President **Theodore Roosevelt** (Harvard class of 1880)
  - Imperialist view of Philippines based on race
  - Anti-immigrant and eugenicist fan of Madison Grant
- Senator **Henry Cabot Lodge** (class of 1871)
  - Sought to restrict undesirable Southern and Eastern European migrants and favor Western and Northern (Nordic) Europeans

Jim Crow

- The segregation and disenfranchisement laws known as "Jim Crow" represented a formal, codified system of racial apartheid that dominated the American South for three quarters of a century beginning in the 1890s
- The laws affected almost every aspect of daily life, mandating segregation of schools, parks, libraries, drinking fountains, restrooms, buses, trains, and restaurants. "Whites Only" and "Colored" signs were constant reminders of the enforced racial order

**Plessy v. Ferguson**  
*(1896)*

- Established the constitutionality of segregation and created a climate for *Jim Crow* legislation and disfranchisement
  - Established the “separate but equal” principle based on scientific and public writings about race including those of Brinton and Shaler
- Found that the object of the 14th Amendment was to enforce equality between the races before the law—majority opinion:
  “But in the nature of things [the amendment] could not have intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality”

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**Slavery by Another Name**  
*(Link to documentary in this week’s content on BlackBoard)*

- Industrial slavery ramps up during Civil War
- After emancipation, Jim Crow laws passed to regulate, imprison freed slaves in the South
  - Spitting on sidewalk, vagrancy (i.e., Walking while Black)
- Prisoners leased to companies and farms to work as unpaid labor
  - Brutal treatment, many died before serving time

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**Convict Leasing**  
*(Douglas A. Blackmon, author of “Slavery by Name”)*

“It was…distinctly different from [pre-emancipation slavery]…as this slavery did not last a lifetime and did not automatically extend from one generation to the next. But it was nonetheless slavery – a system in which armies of free men, guilty of no crimes and entitled by law to freedom, were compelled to labor without compensation, were repeatedly bought and sold, and were forced to do the bidding of white masters through the regular application of extraordinary physical coercion”

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**Convict Leasing**

- A system of penal labor practiced in the South
  - In 1866, Alabama's first convict lease was for 374 state prisoners to a railroad company for a total of $5
  - The practice peaked around 1880
  - Alabama was the last state to legally abolish it in 1928
- The use of chain gangs to perform menial tasks continued until the 1950s
  - Revived briefly in the 1990s, first by Alabama
Extra-legal intimidation

- The Ku Klux Klan first flourished in the Southern United States in the late 1860s
  - Adopted white costumes designed to be terrifying and to hide their identities
- In the teens and 1920s, they introduced cross burnings
- After World War II the group resurfaced in opposition to the Civil Rights Movement and progress among minorities

19th Century Influences In the 20th Century: American Racism, Polygenism, Eugenics

- Gobineau
- Galton
- Shaler
- Agassiz
- Ripley
- Davenport
- Nott
- Grant

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Charles Davenport

(1866-1944)

- 1911 Heredity in Relation to Eugenics
- Leading American exponent of eugenics—"America’s Galton"
- Harvard-trained Zoologist
- Went from U Chicago to Station for Experimental Evolution at Cold Spring Harbor in 1904
  - Well funded by Carnegie Institution and railroad widow, Mrs. E.H. Harriman
- Founded the Eugenics Record Office as a clearinghouse for human genetics
Davenport’s Goals

• The general program of the eugenicist is clear--it is to improve the race by inducing young people to make a more reasonable selection of marriage mates; to fall in love intelligently
• It also includes the control by the state of the propagation of the mentally incompetent
• It does not imply the destruction of the unfit either before or after birth
  • I.e., sterilization is OK, but abortion and execution aren’t

Davenport on disease

• Abhorred venereal diseases and argued for uniform testing before issuing marriage license
  – Venereal diseases are dysgenic agents of the first magnitude...Society might well demand that before a marriage license is issued the man should present a certificate, from a reputable physician, of freedom from them...
  – Nature protects most of her best blood from these diseases; for the acts that lead to them are repugnant to strictly normal persons; and the sober-minded young women who have had a fair opportunity to make a selection of a consort are not attracted by the kind of men who are most prone to sex-immorality
• The Hereditary Factor in Pellagra (1916)
  – Argues for a genetic basis to the Niacin deficiency condition
  – Pellegra symptoms include delusions and confusion (feeble-minded?)

Davenport on Feeble-mindedness

“...It appears probable, from extensive pedigrees that have been analyzed, that feeble-mindedness of the middle and higher grades is inherited as a simple recessive, or approximately so. It follows that two parents who are feeble-minded shall have only feeble-minded children and this is what is empirically found.”

• Published in Science (1921)--key basis for later sterilization laws

Madison Grant

(1865 – 1937)

• Eldest son of rich family whose forbears were Puritans who had settled New England
• Lawyer, amateur anthropologist
• Racial Hygiene screed The Passing of the Great Race touting Nordic Theory (Gobineau’s Aryan superiority)
• Vice President of the Immigration Restriction League, 1922-1937
• Founding member (along with Davenport) of the Eugenics Committee of the United States of America, 1922
The Passing of the Great Race
(1916)

- Eugenics aimed primarily at non-Nordic Europeans
  - Migration restriction and forced sterilization of "socially worthless" like poor white trash typified by the Southern White and Europeans from south and eastern Europe

- **A rigid system of selection through the elimination of those who are weak or unfit—in other words, social failures**—would solve the whole question in one hundred years, as well as enable us to get rid of the undesirables who crowd our jails, hospitals, and insane asylums... This... can be applied to an ever widening circle of **social discards**, beginning always with the criminal, the diseased, and the insane, and extending gradually to types which may be called weaklings rather than defectives, and perhaps ultimately to worthless race types.

Harry Laughlin
(1880 – 1943)

- Assistant Director of the Eugenics Record Office, from its start in 1910
- Important testimony to congress on immigration restriction, 1922
- One of the strongest advocates of Eugenic sterilization

The Conquest of a Continent, or the Expansion of Races in America

- Madison Grant made one final attempt to restart the eugenics movement and revitalize polygenics with his last book in 1933
  - Forward by notorious Nazi Eugen Fischer
  - Book argued that after the great Nordic race conquered the United States, it made three major mistakes
    - Lazy southerners brought in African slaves to do their work for them
    - Greedy northerners brought Mediterraneans to work for low wages
    - Misguided humanitarians had allowed Jewish victims of persecution to take refuge in America

Laughlin on Sterilization

- Wrote Eugenical Sterilization in the U.S. in 1922
  - Comprehensive study arguing for sterilization and enforcement of existing laws (only CA performed)
- Proposed model sterilization law for the eugenical sterilization of “socially inadequate persons”
  - A **socially inadequate person** is one who by his or her own effort, regardless of etiology or prognosis, fails chronically in comparison with normal persons, to maintain himself or herself as a useful member of the organized social life of the state
Eugenical Sterilization

The **socially inadequate classes**, regardless of etiology or prognosis, are the following: (1) Feeble-minded; (2) Insane, (including the psychopathic) ; (3) Criminalistic (including the delinquent and wayward); (4) Epileptic; (5) Inebriate (including drug habitues); (6) Diseased (including the tuberculous, the syphilitic, the leprous, and others with chronic infections and legally segregable diseases); (7) Blind (including those with seriously impaired vision) ; (8) Deaf (including those with seriously impaired hearing); (9) Deformed (including the crippled) ; and (10) Dependent (including orphans, ne'er-do-wells, the homeless, tramps and paupers)

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**Buck v. Bell**

1927

- U.S. Supreme Court ruled that compulsory sterilization of the “unfit” was constitutional  
- Carrie Buck was committed to a Virginia state facility for the “feebleminded”  
  - Court ruled that Carrie, her mother, and her infant daughter were feebleminded and promiscuous and should be sterilized  
- Oliver Wendell Holmes concluded “three generations of imbeciles is enough!”

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**Involuntary Sterilizations by State, 1907-1983**

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<td>Iowa</td>
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<td>Other states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin, North Dakota, Delaware, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Maine, South Carolina, Montana, Vermont, Alabama, West Virginia, New York, Idaho, Arizona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, all states</td>
<td>63,966</td>
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**Nazi Sterilization Policy**

- American eugenicists were proud of their impact on the 1933 legislation in Nazi Germany  
- The German Law was influenced by the “success” of the California law and based on the Model Eugenic Sterilization Law by Harry Laughlin  
  - The German law was slightly more moderate  
    - It demanded sterilization in cases of mental retardation, schizophrenia, manic-depressive insanity, inherited epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, hereditary blindness, deafness, and malformation  
  - The *Eugenical News* (published by the ERO) commented that “to one versed in the history of eugenic sterilization in America, the text of the German statute reads almost like the American model sterilization law”
Nazi Rassenhygiene

- In Germany, the other country buying into eugenics, the practice took on a much more sinister shape than just the involuntary sterilization in the U.S.
- Foundations of the Holocaust
  - In 1941, the German geneticist and eugenicist von Verschuer wrote that a “complete solution to the Jewish Question” was necessary and boasted that the “National Socialist state had broken new ground” in solving this problem
  - He praised Hitler as the savior of the Nordic race and linked genetics to anti-Semitism and the eradication of hereditary diseases

Where Else Did Eugenics Go?

- Paul Popenoe proponent of sterilization in California, made case for its effectiveness, co-authored primary Eugenics text used in colleges: *Applied Eugenics* (1918)
  - Enamored of German marriage-consultation services, Popenoe opened the first U.S. marriage clinic in Los Angeles in 1930, the American Institute of Family Relations to pursue eugenic matings
- After the war:
  - 1947 – Newspaper Column “Modern Marriage”
  - 1953 – “Can This Marriage Be Saved?” most popular serial ever in Ladies Home Journal
  - Emphasis on submissive women pumping out babies

Where Did Eugenics Go After WWII?

- Eugenicists who strongly supported sterilization and Nazi Rassenhygiene relabeled themselves as geneticists, family planners
  - Including the masterminds of Nazi sterilization
- Mary Harriman, the Rockefeller family, and the Carnegie Institution funded the Eugenic Records Office until 1939
  - 1944 ERO closed
  - Records transferred to the Charles Fremont Dight Institute for the Promotion of Human Genetics at the University of Minnesota
- Margaret Sanger, ardent eugenicist founded Planned Parenthood in 1946

But Did Eugenics Go Away?

- Immigration arguments today echo very closely the eugenic arguments against immigrants made 100 years ago
- 2013 became a large issue because of forced sterilizations in California prisons
  - Doctors sterilized nearly 150 female inmates from 2006 to 2010 without required state approvals, with frequent complaints of coercion
- Today it’s all about genetics/genomics
  - “The larger question then is: with the emergence of gene editing during an era of self-interested free-market individualism will eugenics become acceptable and widespread again?”
  - The Nation, Aug 3-10, 2015
Were all early 20th century biologists, sociologists, and anthropologists racist a**holes?

Not Everyone:
Franz Boas, Thomas Hunt Morgan, Lester Frank Ward, and a few others

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**Franz Boas**

*(1858 - 1942)*

- German Physicist
- Founding father of American anthropology
  - Focus on environmental / historical influences
- Challenged scientific racism
  - Tried to reverse depiction of savagery, barbarism, civilization in exhibits

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**Boas and Immigration**

- President Theodore Roosevelt established the U.S. Immigration Commission in 1907
  - 3 senators, 3 house members, 3 scientists
  - Boas was one of the scientists named to committee—only non-eugenicist!
- Boas questioned the underlying assumption that there was a qualitative difference in the “new” migrants when compared to earlier migrants from England, Holland, Germany
  - Attempted to counter Eugenics material with the careful statistical study of measurements of migrants

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**Boas’s migrant studies**

- Undertook studies of children of Eastern European migrants to the U.S.
- Summary publication in 1912
  - Differences between foreign- and American-born children documented *plasticity* in growth and development including traits that had long been viewed as quintessential unchanging *components of race like skull measurements*
Boas and Race

- One of the first anthropologists to firmly disentangle culture and biology
- 1911 The Mind of Primitive Man
  - There is no such thing as racial purity
  - The differences between “races” are small compared to the differences within them
  - There is no evidence that an individual of any race is incapable of participating in any culture
  - Groups are “primitive” by virtue of their *life circumstances*, not because of hereditary “racial” factors

The Legacy of Franz Boas

- Published scientific findings that disputed the tenets of eugenic racism in popular magazines
- Supported the NAACP and its leaders during its early years
- Trained many Anthropologists at Columbia who continued to push for a scientific separation between race and culture
  - Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish: “The Races of Mankind” pamphlet for American troops during WWII which explained, in simple language and cartoons, the scientific case against racist beliefs
  - Margaret Mead: Importance of environment to biology and behavior
  - Ashley Montagu: *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth*

Earnest Albert Hooton, the anti-Boas

- Ran Harvard Physical Anthropology Program from 1913-1954
  - Trained almost all academic physical anthropologists in U.S.
  - Favored a 3 race system and endorsed eugenics
  - Looked for correspondences between physique and temperament
  - “In general, the behavior which arises from the Negro organism differs from that emanating from the Whites, either subtly or crassly, and there is nothing invidious in the distinction” (1939)

Immigration Restriction

- The issue of immigration of increasing numbers of Eastern and Southern Europeans was perceived to be a problem in the post-WW I world
- These newcomers were seen as polluting the WASPish stock already in the country
- The Immigration Restriction League ramped up its work early in the 20th century
- Politicians and scientists jumped on board as part of a Eugenic fervor
U.S. Immigration Act of 1924

- Limited the number of immigrants who could be admitted from any country to 2% of the number of people from that country who were already living in the United States in 1890
  - Chinese already prohibited, but this act added Japanese to this exclusion
  - Primarily aimed at restricting the Southern and Eastern Europeans who were immigrating in large numbers starting in the 1890s, as well as prohibiting the immigration of East Asians and Asian Indians

Ozawa vs. U.S.

- Takao Ozawa was born in Japan but moved to the United States as a young man
  - Attended the UC Berkeley, became a businessman, married, had a family
  - Converted to Christianity, raised his children to speak English only, and had no contact with Japan
- Wrote in his brief that in Kyoto, Japan, those not exposed to the heat of summer are particularly white-skinned, whiter than the average Italian, Spaniard or Portuguese

Relative proportions of immigrants from Northwestern Europe (red) and Southeastern Europe (blue) in the decades before and after the immigration restriction legislation

Ozawa vs. U.S.

- SCOTUS’ unanimous decision on Nov. 13, 1922 held:
  - Federal and state courts, in an almost unbroken line, have held that the words "white person" were meant to indicate only a person of what is popularly known as the Caucasian race
  - The effect of the conclusion that the words "white person" mean a Caucasian is [to establish] a zone of . . . those clearly eligible, and . . . those clearly ineligible for citizenship
  - [Ozawa] . . . is clearly of a race which is not Caucasian and therefore belongs entirely outside the zone on the negative side
U.S. v. Thind

- Bhagat Singh Thind, a Sikh, was born in India
  - Moved to US in 1912--inspired by reading Emerson and Thoreau
  - Served in the US Army during WWI, honorably discharged
  - Thind applied for citizenship and was granted 1918
    - Citizenship was rescinded 4 days later
    - Applied and was granted again in May 1919
  - INS appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which sent the case to SCOTUS for ruling
  - Thind argued that he was classified as Caucasian by scientists therefore based on the Ozawa decision he should be naturalized

U.S. v. Thind

- SCOTUS’ unanimous decision on Feb. 19, 1923 held
  - Mere ability on the part of an applicant for naturalization to establish a line of descent from a Caucasian ancestor will not *ipso facto* and necessarily [meet criterion to grant naturalization]
  - We must not fail to keep in mind that [the naturalization law] does not employ the word "Caucasian" but the words "white persons," and these are words of common speech and not of scientific origin
    - The word "Caucasian" not only was not employed in the law but was probably wholly unfamiliar to the original framers of the statute in 1790

- What we now hold is that the words "free white persons" are words of common speech, to be interpreted in accordance with the understanding of the common man, synonymous with the word "Caucasian" only as that word is popularly understood
  - As so understood and used, whatever may be the speculations of the ethnologist, [“free white person”] does not include the body of people to whom [Thind] belongs
  - I would also note that throughout the decision SCOTUS refers to Thind, a Sikh, as a Hindu
    - “Is a high caste Hindu of full Indian blood, born at Amrit Sar, Punjab, India, a white person?”