

MAHG COURSE DESCRIPTIONS – FALL 2023

MAHG 5014: INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDIES

Dr. Christina Morus

Designed to prepare students for the experience of graduate study, this course orients students to the culture and expectations both of the MAHG program and of graduate school more broadly. Emphasis is placed on developing and strengthening the skills necessary for success in an interdisciplinary graduate program.

MAHG 5043: PSEUDOSCIENCE AND EUGENICS

Dr. Ethan Levine

Eugenics, or efforts to encourage reproduction among human beings considered “fit” and discourage reproduction among those considered “unfit,” is often regarded as outdated practice that began and ended with Nazi Germany. However, the United States has its own legacy of eugenics. Indeed, eugenicist scientists and activists in the United States had a strong influence on Nazi-era policies and propaganda. This course will explore that legacy, as well as contemporary examples of eugenicist policies. We will examine a range of eugenicist and forced assimilation tactics (forced sterilization, boarding schools, immigration restrictions to discourage those deemed “unfit” from reproducing/immigrating; fitter family competitions and reward systems to encourage those deemed “fit” to reproduce). We will also address efforts to manipulate a wide range of population characteristics, such as disability status, race, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality. Throughout the course, we will pay close attention to the role of scientists in promoting and opposing eugenicist ideas and practices.

MAHG 5064: INTRODUCTION TO HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

Dr. Christina Morus

This course will introduce students to using a variety of primary sources and data to explore key issues and debates in scholarship on modern mass violence. The course will address racism, colonialism, destruction of indigenous societies, slavery, nationalism, social relation in extremism, and state violence. Students will also consider how global Holocaust memory has shaped the scholarly use of key concepts such as genocide, memory, reparations, justice, bystanders, security, and human security.

MAHG 5355: ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND MASS VIOLENCE

This course addresses a central question in Holocaust and Genocide Studies: what defines mass violence in the last 150 years as particularly modern? The course traces how the emergence of nation-states, together with technology and scientific knowledge to alter the environment, created the conditions for distinctly modern violence that has destroyed diversity in societies and in the environment. The course will focus, in four units, on a number of case studies, past and present, dealing with the impact of mega-dam construction in the Amazon area in South America and in the Omo Valley in Ethiopia on indigenous groups and their lands; uranium mining in the Navajo homeland in the southwest US; climate change and water wars in the Middle East; and the Green Revolution and food policies in the era of global warming. Each unit will include readings, discussions, and assignments that will explore relevant economic, social, political, agricultural, and scientific contexts and elements, the crucial agency of state authorities in creating policies and initiating actions related to climate change, and the various responses of indigenous groups and other people—with attention to issues of culture, gender, and age—who have faced or are facing the intersections of climate change, environmental destruction, and state violence, linking them to key questions in Holocaust and Genocide Studies on truth, justice, memory politics, reparations, and possibilities for different kinds of futures.

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