EUGENICS AND ETHICS

Philosophy 457 and 757

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this course is to examine four eugenics programs of the 20th century and to explore their implications for human genetics and for relationships among people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. If the course succeeds, students will emerge from the course with a clearer concept of eugenics, with detailed knowledge of four historical eugenics programs, and with the capacity to recognize and critically evaluate eugenic theses and arguments.

TEXTBOOKS

Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: 'Euthanasia' in Germany c. 1900-1945* (1994) [cited as Burleigh, *DD*]

Martha A. Field and Valerie A. Sanchez, *Equal Treatment for People with Mental Retardation: Having and Raising Children* [cited as Field-Sanchez, *ETPMR*]

Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (1985) [cited as Kevles, *INE*]


OVERVIEW

January 10: Introduction to the course

   Video: The Lynchburg Story

Part I: Eugenics in the United States, 1900-1950

January 17: Arguments in favor of eugenic sterilization; legislation and judicial review

   Two-page critique due

January 24: Arguments against eugenic sterilization

January 31: Comparative perspectives – the United States and Great Britain: I

   Video: The Black Stork, or Are You Fit to Marry? (excerpts)

February 7: Comparative perspectives – the United States and Great Britain: II

Part II: Eugenics in Germany under National Socialism

February 14: Racial hygiene: I

   Video: In the Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine

February 21: Racial hygiene: II

February 28: The 'euthanasia' program in Nazi Germany: I

   Short paper due

   Video: Selling Murder: The Killing Films of the Third Reich

Spring Break

March 14: The 'euthanasia' program in Nazi Germany: II

March 21: Site visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Passover and Easter Break

Part III: Eugenics in Japan and China
April 4: Eugenics in Imperial and Post-Imperial Japan and in China

**Part IV: Current Issues in Eugenics**

April 11: Reproduction and child-rearing for people with intellectual disabilities

April 18: Controversies in "racial research": I

April 25: Controversies in "racial research": II

May 3: Final term paper due

**REQUIRED READINGS**

January 10: Introduction to the course

No advance readings

Video: *The Lynchburg Story*

**Part I: Eugenics in the United States, 1900-1950**

January 17: Arguments in favor of eugenic sterilization; legislation and judicial review


Please write a two-page (double-spaced) critique of one of these four documents.

January 24: Arguments against eugenic sterilization

Abraham Myerson, *The Inheritance of Mental Diseases* (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1925), excerpts.


January 31: Comparative perspectives – the United States and Great Britain: I

Video: *The Black Stork*, or *Are You Fit to Marry?* (excerpts)


February 7: Comparative perspectives – the United States and Great Britain: II


**Part II: Eugenics in Germany under National Socialism**

February 14: Racial hygiene: I

Video: *In the Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine*


Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*, encyclical issued on December 31, 1930; English translation (excerpts).


German Reich, "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring," July

Austrian Catholic Episcopate, Pastoral Letter Issued December 21, 1933; originally published in Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht, Mainz, 1934.


February 21: Racial hygiene: II

Proctor, RH, pp. 177-312.


February 28: The 'euthanasia' program in Nazi Germany: I

Short paper due

Video: Selling Murder: The Killing Films of the Third Reich


Spring Break

March 14: The 'euthanasia' program in Nazi Germany: II


Letter of Cardinal Bertram of Breslau to Reichs-Minister Lammers (August 11, 1940) and letter of Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich to Justice Minister Gürtner (November 6, 1940); reprinted in "Correspondence: German Catholic Bishops' Protest," *Thought* 20(79): 751-760; December 1945.

Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen, sermon preached in Münster, August 3, 1941 (English translation).

For extensive original sources from the 'euthanasia' program, see also Noakes and Pridham, eds., *Nazism*, Volume 3, pp. 997-1048.

March 21: Site visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Background materials on the Museum

Passover and Easter Break
Part III: Eugenics in Japan and China

April 4: Eugenics in Imperial and Post-Imperial Japan and in China


Part IV: Current Issues in Eugenics

April 11: Reproduction and child-rearing for people with intellectual disabilities


April 18: Controversies in "racial research": I


April 25: Controversies in "racial research": II


Please find, copy, and distribute to your classmates one example of racist propaganda found on the World Wide Web.

May 3: Final term paper due
REQUIREMENTS

The primary requirement for this course is the completion of all assigned readings in advance of the class session in which they will be discussed, as well as active participation in seminar discussions.

Each student will be asked to open a session of the seminar by summarizing and critiquing an article or a chapter in a book. This introduction to a reading should be crisp and concise and should be limited to ten minutes.

A two-page critique and a short paper (5-8 double-spaced pages) will be due on January 17th and February 28th, respectively. The short paper should discuss some aspect of the eugenics program in the United States or in Germany under National Socialism.

All seminar members will be expected to participate in the class visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum on March 21st.

A final term paper will be due on Friday, May 3rd, eight days after the final seminar session. The final paper can be devoted to any eugenics topic past or present. Undergraduate-student papers will have a page limit of 12 to 15 pages. Graduate-student papers will have a page limit of 25 to 30 pages.

Papers should be analytical and critical rather than purely descriptive. That is, they should be philosophical papers.

The components of the final grade are as follows:

- Regular attendance, class participation 30%
- Two-page critique 10%
- Short paper 15%
- Introduction to class session 15%
- Final term paper 30%

Please submit papers on time or call or e-mail in advance of the deadline date with a request for and a justification of an extension.
**Eugenics in Comparative Perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lauglin, USA, 1922</th>
<th>Germany, 1933</th>
<th>Japan, 1940</th>
<th>Japan, 1948</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Insane (including the psychopathic)</td>
<td>2. Schizophrenia</td>
<td>2. Hereditary mental deficiency</td>
<td>2. Hereditary mental deficiency -Idiocy -Imbecility -Debility</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Criminalistic (including the delinquent and wayward)</td>
<td>3. Manic depression</td>
<td>3. Intense and malignant hereditary morbid character (or psychopathia) -Congenital criminals -Impulsive character</td>
<td>3. Intense and malignant hereditary psychopathia -Intense abnormal sexual desire -Habitual malignant criminal [tendencies]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Epileptic</td>
<td>4. Hereditary epilepsy</td>
<td>4. Intense and malignant hereditary physical disease (or bodily illness)</td>
<td>4. Intense and malignant abnormal character -Schizophrenic constitution...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inebriate (including drug- habitués)</td>
<td>5. Huntington's chorea</td>
<td>5. Intense hereditary deformity</td>
<td>5. Intense and malignant bodily illness -Hereditary chorea progressiva ... -Congenital cataract ... -Congenital deafness ... -Hemophilia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Diseased (including the tuberculous, the syphilitic, the leprous, and others with chronic, infectious and legally segregable diseases)</td>
<td>6. Hereditary blindness</td>
<td>6. Intense hereditary malformation -Rupture of hand ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Blind (including those with seriously impaired vision)</td>
<td>7. Hereditary deafness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8. Deaf (including those with seriously impaired hearing)  
8. Serious physical deformities

9. Deformed (including the crippled)  
("In addition, anyone who suffers from chronic alcoholism can be sterilized.")

10. Dependent (including orphans, ne'er-do-wells, the homeless, tramps and paupers)

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**China, 1994**

The primary focus of this law in Articles 10 and 16 is on “genetic diseases of a serious nature.” These diseases are defined as “diseases that are caused by genetic factors congenitally, that may totally or partially deprive the victim of the ability to live independently, that are highly [likely] to recur in generations to come, and that are considered medically inappropriate for reproduction” (Law, Article 38, United Nations version). Article 9 of the law focuses on “relevant mental diseases” and “target infectious diseases.” “Relevant mental diseases” are defined as “schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis and other mental diseases of a serious nature” (Law, Article 38). “Target infectious diseases are “AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, and leprosy” (Law, Article 38).

According to Article 9, at the time of a premarital examination, anyone found by a physician to be in the infective stage of a target infectious disease or in the morbid period of any relevant mental disease shall postpone the marriage “for the time being.” According to Article 10, anyone found by a physician to have a genetic disease of a serious nature at the time of the premarital examination shall be counseled to take long-term contraceptive measures or to undergo surgical sterilization. When it is assured, “with the consent of both the male and the female,” that the couple cannot have children, then the man and the woman may get married. Article 16 applies the same counseling requirements to the situation of an already-married couple in cases where “a physician detects or suspects that a married couple in their child-bearing age suffer from [a] genetic disease of a serious nature.”

Article 18 of the Law on Infant and Maternal Care deals with a circumstance not covered by the previous laws from Germany and Japan, namely, prenatal diagnosis. Two possible findings of prenatal diagnosis are (1) that “the fetus is suffering from a genetic disease of a serious nature” or (2) that “the fetus is [afflicted] with a defect of a serious nature.” In either case, “the physician shall explain the [situation] to the married couple and give them medical advice on a termination of gestation” (Law, Article 18).

Compiled by LeRoy Walters  
Eugenics and Ethics  
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