Topics in Africana Studies: Di colore: race, difference & resistance in Italy

Course Number
SCA-UA 9180 F01

Brightspace course site [URL]

Fall 2022

Please contact florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: [8/25/22]

Lecturer Contact Information
Mackda Ghebremariam Tesfau’
[NYU Email]
[Monday 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm]

Units earned
4

Course Details

● Monday 1.30pm – 4.15 pm

● All times are Central European Time (CET). Please note that in Europe, Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, October 30th 2022 and clocks will be set one hour earlier.

● Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.

● COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Florence community, we are closely following CDC and local guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being are our top priority.

Course Description

The course aims at introducing students into contemporary academic debates on race and racism in Italy. Issues of race, ethnicity and belonging will be explored through a sociological
approach and intersectional lens. Gender and class, as well as other oppressions, will be taken into account in order to define how they interlock with each other in 2022 Italy. The course will offer a historical introduction of race and racism in Italy. In doing so importance will be given to the inward/outward double colonial drive, challenging the idea of a racially and culturally homogeneous Italy. As we move into contemporaneity, bibliographical references will be integrated with different cultural productions such as documentaries and movies, song lyrics and music videos, poetry, etc.. The materials will constitute a peculiar archive on race and racialization in the country. The *pars destruens*, where specific Italian racial regimes will be uncovered, will be balanced by a *pars construens*, where we will focus on how racialized subjects negotiate, challenge, and defy the racial symbolic and material order.

**Course Objectives**

Learning outcomes: by the end of the course, students will have developed

- A general knowledge of Italian history of ethno-racial discriminations from 1800 to contemporaneity.
- Familiarity with the contemporary academic debate on racism in Italy.
- An understanding of the key concepts and dichotomy that inform the debate on diversity worldwide, such as race & racialization, postcoloniality & decoloniality, episodic and everyday racism, structural and global racism, institutional racism, intersectionality (etc.).
- Traverse tools that enable them to understand theirs and others positioning and positionality in the debate as well as in their own lived experiences.

**Assessment Components**

**Grading:** Class Attendance and Participation 20%; Midterm Paper 40%; Final Paper 40%

**Midterm paper:** The midterm is a 1,500 words paper in which you discuss a topic of choice that falls within the themes of the course. It could be based on a personal experience or something you observed during your stay in Florence (i.e. auto-ethnography and/or participant observation), as well as on a specific topic of interest related to the course (i.e. analysis of a racial phenomenon or of cultural production through specific literature). More information will be shared during the course.

**Final Paper:** The final project will be a 3,000 words paper. It will be a formal paper; hence it will include footnotes and a short bibliography. The final paper may be a continuation of the midterm, supplemented by feedback received, or a new paper. Either way, the instructions remain the same as in the midterm.

**Attendance Policy**

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. Since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting.
Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction on the participation component of the final grade for every week’s worth of classes missed. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. For two or more consecutive days of absences due to health reasons, a doctor’s note must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team.

*Please note that remote attendance will only be considered by the Office of Academic Support if for health reasons you are unable to attend class in person after two consecutive days of absence.*

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student’s responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed by getting notes from a classmate or meeting with your faculty member during office hours.

Exams, tests and quizzes, oral presentations, and/or important deadlines that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation.

For a detailed explanation of the global attendance policy, see the NYU Florence Attendance Policy Flowchart.

The Global Attendance Policy is posted in the Academic Policies tab in Brightspace, on the NYU Florence Student Portal website, and is posted around campus. After you have read and reviewed the policies, if there is anything that still needs further clarification or raises a question, please reach out to florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu.

**Final exams**

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

**Late Submission of Work**

Please refer to Academic Policies in Brightspace.

**Required Text(s)**

All readings are available online on the NYU Brightspace course site. Hard copies of some textbooks are available for consultation and semester-long loans in the Villa Ulivi Library. Please email florence.library@nyu.edu to reserve a copy. To request scans from books on reserve please fill out the Ulivi Library Book Scan Form.

**Session 1 – 9/5**

Introduction to the course
Introduction to the study of diversity in a specific context. Italy as a case study. Positioning and positionality. What it means to study discriminations in a foreign country: understanding one’s gaze.

A brief summary of the course path and contents. Discussion about key concepts. The problem with translating ethno-racial definitions.

References
- Slides and excerpts translated by Prof. Ghebremariam Tesfau'

Session 2 – 9/12

Italian Inward Colonialism: The Southern Question – Part I

Italy’s unification process as inward colonialism. Lombroso racial pseudo-science and its heritage. Stereotypes and discriminations on southern people. The “sunny and friendly South” as a dispositive aimed at concealing racism.

References

Optional readings

Session 3 – 9/19

An Italian Decolonial Standpoint: The Southern Question – Part II

Political Theorist Antonio Gramsci and anthropologist Ernesto De Martino view of the Southern Question will help frame it from a southern perspective. The comparison of the authors’ gazes and methods will highlight how differently anticolonial stances can operate.

References

Optional readings

Session 4 – 9/26

“La grande proletaria si è mossa”: Italian outward colonialism – Part I
Italy’s colonialism in Africa – a hystorical overview from liberal to fascist colonialism; the 1935 racial laws; the reminiscence of colonialism in Italian urban culture; postcolonial and decolonial debates on Italian colonialism.

References


Optional readings

- Barrera, G. et al., A place in the sun: Africa in Italian colonial culture from post-unification to the present. Univ of California Press, 2003

Session 5 – 10/3

*If only I were that warrior: Italian outward colonialism – Part II*

Italian colonial heritage. Gendered colonial constructions.
- Screening and discussion of the documentary: *If only I were that warrior* (Ciriaci, V., 2015, 1h12’)

References


Session 6 – 10/10

*Colonial Amnesia and the disappearing of race*

Italian colonial amnesia. The post-fascist concealing of race. Colorblindness in Italy.
- Screening and discussion of the video-essay: Negotiating Amnesia (Ferrini, A., 2015, 30’)

References


Optional readings


Session 7 - *Date and time has yet to be defined*

*Site visit: Looking into the “openly hidden” (“nascosto in bella vista”) colonial heritage in Florence*

Session 8 – 10/24

*If only I were that warrior: Italian outward colonialism – Part II*
Migrations as key element to understand colonial transformations. Representation of migrants’ otherness: the “helpless victim-alien invader” dichotomy.

References

Session 9 – 10/31
Intersectional struggles and gendered racism
Gender erasure and intersectional migrants struggles.

References
• Oliveri, F., Racialization and counter-racialization in times of crisis: taking migrant struggles in Italy as a critical standpoint on race, in: Ethnic and Racial Studies 41(10): 1855-1873, 2018

Session 10 – 11/7
Structural racism and the Southern question
Global racism and forced migration from a Southern European perspective; agricultural South and black and migrant labor
- Screening and discussion of the documentary The green blood – Il sangue Verde (Segre, A., 2010, 57’)

References

Session 11 – 11/14
Migrations and institutional racism in Italy and Europe
Xenoracism and the criminalization of the migrant body. European and Italian migration policies; the externalization of the borders; the reception system as a model of segregation; Italian visa and citizenship policies: from the Bossi Fini Law to Salvini’s Security Law

References
• Terlizzi, A., Border management and migration controls in Italy, 2019

Optional readings

Session 12 – 11/21
Everyday racism in Italy
What is everyday racism. Lunaria and Cronache di Ordinario Razzismo’s reports: what equality data shows us. Paola Tabet nineties seminal research on racial representations among young Italians (La pelle giusta 1997)

References
• Slides and excerpts translated by Prof. Ghebremariam Tesfau’

Session 13 – 11/28

Counternarratives and changing gazes
The self-representation against and the hetero-representation
- Screening and debate of music videos and other black and racialized cultural productions

References
• Slides and excerpts translated by Prof. Ghebremariam Tesfau’

Optional Readings

Session 14 – 12/5

Italia di colore? Europa di colore? A new wave of antiracism in the continent
Afropeannes, postcolonial and Europe of color in the wake of a renewed antiracist movement. Italy’s cultural production and grassroots decolonial claims.

References
• Slides and excerpts translated by Prof. Ghebremariam Tesfau’

12/12 _ Final Paper Submission

19/12 _ Feedbacks and online evaluation

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
In Florence, there is an art space and research center on Afrodescendance and Blackness in Italy and around the world. It is called The Recovery Plan. The space was created by the Black History Month Florence Association, and its curated by Justin Randall Thompson. Interested students can visit the space and create possible collaborations. The instructor will be happy to introduce students to the facility and think with them about possible extracurricular activities.

Your Lecturer
Mackda Ghebremariam Tesfau’ is PhD in Social Sciences, research fellow at UniPD, and adjunct professor at IUAV, Stanford Florence, NYU Florence and UniPD. In her research she crosses post- and decolonial themes with reflections relevant to Critical Race Studies from an Italian and Southern European perspective. Mackda is also an antiracist activist and she advocates for asylum and mobility rights.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism
As the University's policy on "Academic Integrity for Students at NYU" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offenses against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines
NYU Library Guides

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU’s Office of Global Programs and NYU’s global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer and Office of Academic Support in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns
viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website.

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the Personalizing Zoom Display Names website.

Moses Accommodations Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescscd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Florence.

Bias Response
The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the Web Form (link)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- Local Telephone: 055 5007277