Thought about race has a complex history in modern intellectual culture; crucial paradigms regarding culture, identity, and biology have roots in the philosophy, science, and arts of eighteenth-century Germany. This course will give in-depth consideration to ideas and paradigms from classical German intellectual culture, and will trace their resonances within African, Francophone, French, and North American race theory in the twentieth century. **All readings in English.**
Required Texts:


Grading:

Take-home midterm: 30%
Final paper (10-12 pages): 40%
Presentation and leading of class discussion: 15%
Overall participation in class discussion: 15%

Course Schedule:

Wednesday, September 11
introductory session: course overview

1. *The Concept of Race in the German Enlightenment*

   Monday, September 16
   • Peter Fenves: “Imagining an Inundation of Australians, or Leibniz on the Principles of Grace and Race”
   • William E. Abraham: “Anton Wilhelm Amo”

   Wednesday, September 18
   • Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze: “The Color of Reason: The Idea of ‘Race’ in Kant’s Anthropology”
   • Immanuel Kant: “What Is Enlightenment?”

   Monday, September 23
II. 
German Post-Enlightenment: Identity, Culture, and Science 
Wednesday, September 25
• Johann Gottfried von Herder: “Organization of the Peoples of Africa” and “No Matter How Different the Forms in Which Humankind Appears...,” from Ideas Toward a Philosophy of the History of Humankind
• Michael Forster: “Herder and the Birth of Modern Anthropology”

Monday, September 30
• Immanuel Kant: reviews of Herder’s Ideas
• Johann Gottfried von Herder: Letters for the Advancement of Humanity, pp. 384-86; 393-99; 410-24

Wednesday, October 2
• Johann Friedrich Blumenbach: from On the Natural Variety of Humankind
• Nell Irvin Painter: “Johann Friedrich Blumenbach Names White People ‘Caucasian’”

III. 
Hegel, Africa, and the Caribbean
Monday, October 7
• G. W. F. Hegel: Reason in History

Wednesday, October 9
• G. W. F. Hegel: “Africa,” from Lectures on the Philosophy of History

Monday, October 14
• Susan Buck-Morss: “Hegel and Haiti”

Wednesday, October 16
• G. W. F. Hegel: “Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness – Lordship and Bondage,” from Phenomenology of Spirit

Monday, October 21
• Heinrich von Kleist: “The Betrothal in Santo Domingo”

IV. 
Alexander von Humboldt and the Americas
Wednesday, October 23
• Alexander von Humboldt: from Political Essay on the Island of Cuba
• Laura Dassow Walls: “‘All Are Alike Designed for Freedom’: Humboldt on Race and Slavery”
Fall recess

VI.
Du Bois, Black Culture, and German Historicism
Monday, November 4
• W. E. B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk

Wednesday, November 6
• W. E. B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk; columns from Pittsburgh Courier

Monday, November 11
• Alain L. Locke: “The Negro Spirituals” and “The New Negro,” from The New Negro

Take-home midterm due

VII.
Francophone Poetry and Négritude Thought
Wednesday, November 13
• Aimé Césaire: Return to My Native Land

Monday, November 18
• Léon Laleau: “Betrayal”
• Birago Diop: “Breath”

Wednesday, November 20
• Wole Soyinka: from Myth, Literature, and the African World
• Léopold Sédar Senghor: “The Revolution of 1889 and Leo Frobenius”

VIII.
Race and Dialectic in French and Francophone Thought
Monday, November 25
• Jean-Paul Sartre: “Black Orpheus”; preface to Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth

Thanksgiving recess

Monday, December 2
• Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks, introduction and chapters 1, 5, 7, and 8
IX.
Structure and Decentering in Post-War France
Wednesday, December 4
• Claude Lévi-Strauss: “The Science of the Concrete,” from The Savage Mind, pp. 1-22; “Politics and Race” (interview with Didier Eribon)

Monday, December 9
• Simon Gikandi: “Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse,” pp. 97-113
• Jacques Derrida: “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”

X.
European Thought and African Thought
Wednesday, December 11
• Kwasi Wiredu: “How Not To Compare African Traditional Thought With Western Thought”
• Kwame Anthony Appiah: “Ethnophilosophy and Its Critics”

For further exploration…

Eigen, Sara and Mark Larrimore (eds.). The German Invention of Race. SUNY Press, 2006.