We are interested in studies of race, racialization, and racist practices comparatively and globally, in the past and present, at the micro- and macro- social scale, and across disciplines. By global raciality we mean multiple and differential, intersecting and co-constituting, constructions of race, processes of racialization, and practices of racism in distinct sites across the planet. We understand that across the globe, race is constructed according to widely variable criteria. To what extent are global systems of rule racially oriented today as they were in the past? How are they different today?

Raciality is produced not in isolation but also in connection with other relations of power such as gender, sexuality, class, caste, queerphobia, religion, indigeneity, ageism, disability, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and global capitalism. Raciality does not exist without racism. In turn, racism -- including its most disavowed components -- is part of the very formation of subjects. We are interested in questions about how racialized identities and experiences are assigned and adopted in the global context.

Empire has always been a racially inflected term. Race, racialization, and racism are constructed in diverse ways in distinct colonial and neo-colonial formations such as settler, administrative, economic, or deterritorialized colonial regimes. Consider the example of the United States: its influence and intervention is flexible and amorphous, sometimes implicit, at other times quite explicit. There is substantial debate over the nature and extent of its empire itself: do US-sponsored neoliberal capitalism, warfare, occupation, and repression constitute an empire? How are new forms of racialization and racism operating within these US practices, for example in the global economy, in war and "low-intensity conflict," in surveillance, in immigration policies, or in Islamophobia and Orientalism?

PostColoniality, a concept elaborated in work from South Asia and Africa, applies in different ways to different places and also extends across historical time: before and during colonial rule as well as after it.
DeColoniality is a concept from Latin American Studies and Chicana Studies that now circulates across the globe. It emphasizes indigenous knowledge and links to subalternity. We are interested in ways that discourses and practices of race, racialization, and racism are challenged from "outside" and "below." How are alternative and dissident forms of knowledge production appropriated and contained by the imperial, multicultural state? How do they undermine it? How are Decoloniality and subalternity racialized?

Discursively, in the global “war on terror” and dominant “security” politics, multiple racialized frameworks are merged and reassembled into familiar binaries: human vs. inhuman, civilized vs. uncivilized, modern vs. traditional, and fit vs. unfit for global capitalism and neoliberal democracy.

To summarize: How do new racialized categories and practices emerge in any global context, or across contexts? How do they link to imperialism, coloniality, and other relations of power including superexploitation, misogyny, homonormativity, and homonationalism? In what ways are race, racialization, and racism global projects?

UCCNRS Steering Committee

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Meet our Steering Committee on the UCCNRS website!

www.uccnrs.ucsb.edu
2014-2015 Grant Recipients

FACULTY AWARDED

Stefan Bargheer, Los Angeles, “Race into Culture: Military Intelligence and the Remaking of the Social Sciences during World War II”

Catherine Bliss, San Francisco, “Postcolonial Idioms of Race and Identity in the Genomic Age”

Mitchell Chang, Los Angeles, “An Examination of Native Hawaiian Migration to the Continental United States”


Grace Kyungwon Hong, Los Angeles, “Against Domestication: Audre Lorde’s Anti-Imperialist Vision”

Bettina Ng’weno, Davis, & Lok Siu, Berkeley, “Comparative Raciality of Afro and Asian Latin Americans”

Emiko Saldivar, Santa Barbara, “Racial Formations at the End of the Multicultural Turn: The Case of Mexico”

Xiaojian Zhao, Santa Barbara, “New Racial Dimensions in Global Migration: Wenzhou Migrants in Americas, Europe, and Africa”

GRADUATE STUDENTS AWARDED

David Baillargeon, Santa Barbara, “Slaving on the Eastern Frontier: Britain, Burma, and the Political Economy of Empire, 1795-1900”

Devin Beaulieu, San Diego, “Savages” in an Indigenous State: Internal Colonialism, Race, and Indigenous Territory in the Bolivian Amazon”

Gregory Burris, Santa Barbara, “Media Intifada: The Globalization of Palestine in Film, Culture, and Consciousness”

Alfred Flores, Los Angeles, “Little Island into Mighty Base”: Land, Labor, and U.S. Empire in Guam, 1941-1972”

Maryam Griffin, Santa Barbara, “Bus Stations and State Formations: The Politics of Public Transportation in Israel/Palestine”

Kyung Hee Ha, San Diego, “Zainichi Koreans in the Era of Globalized ‘War on Terror’”

Hareem Khan, Santa Barbara, “Modern Skins: Racialized Subjectivities in Postcolonial Mumbai”

Nadeen Kharputly, San Diego, “Institutional Representations of Arab Culture in the United States and France”


Victoria Massie, Berkeley, “Reconceptualizing Race Through the Transnational Circulation of Genetic Ancestry Testing Information”


Caroline Ritter, Berkeley, “The Cultural Project of the Late British Empire in Africa”

Chandra Russo, Santa Barbara, “Solidarity Witness: Disrupting the Racial Logistics of the U.S. Security State”

Winter Schneider, Los Angeles, “Black Liberty: Race Making in 19th Century Haiti”
The UC as a Racial Institution

John S.W. Park, Associate Director

Throughout the University of California’s history, its administrators, faculty members, staff, and students have confronted issues of racial identity, racial exclusion, and racial inequality. For better and for worse, race has always played an important part in shaping the core mission of the University. To trace just one thread of that history: before World War II, the University was one of the first public systems that admitted students of color, including those of Asian and African American descent. Such persons were largely regarded as inadmissible at other elite institutions of higher education during the first half of the 20th century. Then on Feb. 19, 1942, FDR issued his infamous Executive Order 9066, calling for the interment of persons of Japanese descent on the West Coast. The University expelled its students of Japanese ancestry, acceding to their internment. So many Japanese and Japanese American students had matriculated at the UC that their incarceration in prison camps during World War II was a well-documented episode in American history.

Social scientists and humanists at the UC have always maintained a great deal of influence over studies of race, ethnicity, and minority cultures in the US. They have determined broad directions in the disciplines, though not necessarily in the most progressive ways. For example, Professor Alfred Kroeber researched Native Americans in California, and his work helped to shape cultural anthropology; Professor David Barrows served as the Secretary of Education in the American Philippines, thus bringing the US empire’s “civilizing mission” to Asia. Many prominent UC professors developed theories of race and empirical approaches to ethnic studies that helped make the United States the dominant power in the post-WWII world.

Take a moment to contemplate that concept: ”ethnic studies.”

We tend to understand that phrase as a euphemistic descriptor for the African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latin@ academic departments and programs on our campuses. These were created after the 1960s upsurge of civil rights and anti-racist social movements forced universities and colleges to acknowledge at long last the presence of discrimination and prejudice against students of color — at the UC and across the nation — and to respond to their demands (and those of their white allies) for greater intellectual and curricular attention to issues of race and racism. But of course, there have ALWAYS been ethnic studies in our institutions of higher education. This is the United States of America, a society that was built on European colonialism and displacement of the original inhabitants, on the enslavement of Africans, and on mass migrations of racially-identified ”others” from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe too (the Irish were once racialized, as were Jews, Muslims, Italians, and Slavs, among others). How can we understand the genealogy of ”ethnic studies” in the US without recalling Dr. Morton’s research on the cranial capacity of different racially-identified groups, the impact of Social Darwinism, the racial origins of IQ testing, or the long career of eugenics? That was ethnic studies too. For centuries the field of ethnic studies was itself exclusive, discriminatory, and deeply prejudiced: indeed it was restricted to a conversation among whites about race.

So at the major research universities, white university professors dominated research and teaching about race and racial groups for a very long time. But after World War II, and particularly in the 1960s and 1970s,
anti-racist social movements radically challenged institutions of higher education, just as they did government agencies, corporations, and public attitudes. At the University of California the influence of the civil rights movement was quite pervasive. Students demanded ethnic studies course, faculty, majors, and departments. Rather than always being the objects of study within academic debates carried out mainly by white scholars, students of color demanded more critical attention to white supremacy and to white domination. Largely for the first time, they made voices of color audible in Sproul Plaza and on Bruin Walk. These students suddenly mattered in a new way. At the UC students of color were finally recognized as intellectuals and community-oriented activists, as they were in colleges and universities across the country. Their demands were often accepted and reforms were instituted, although unevenly and slowly. Academic spaces were created for scholars of color, although the institutions that that made these reforms did not totally cease their white supremacism.

In the years since these movement upsurges, the development of ethnic studies departments at the University of California and the progress of critical points of view toward American and European practices of white supremacy have so profoundly shifted race discourse and race-based research that we cannot imagine the University without them. Since 1970, leading professors at the UC have proposed some of the most novel and critical theories of race. These range from launching the study of internal colonialism to describe the subordination and exploitation of domestic communities of color to developing racial formation theory to address the multiple social and political dimensions of race and racial categories. UC law faculty have contributed greatly to the development of critical race theory, which underscores the persistence of white supremacist practices even in the face of race-neutral public laws. Some of these same legal scholars have developed intersectionality approaches to understand the interaction of race, class, and gender-based experience and social structures of domination and resistance. Other UC scholars in the social sciences, using economic and historical methods, have explained the persistent legacy of slavery, segregation, and racial discrimination. White wealth far exceeds black wealth, they argue, because of generations of legally sanctioned theft and exploitation: these were the racial projects that constituted white supremacy. Still other scholars at the UC have proposed that European domination of the world since the 15th century was something of a fluke: an unusual confluence of advantages that no single European could have seen or described, a unique mixture of “guns, germs, and steel” that gave European imperial projects tremendous advantages in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. All of this research, emanating from the UC system over the past four decades, will continue to shape our understanding of race for the foreseeable future.

From about 1970 onward, racial conditions in the UC moved quickly. Scholars who had established new approaches to race and "ethnic studies" were no longer marginal. They didn’t just question the establishment; on some campuses, they BECAME the establishment. The reforms of the post-civil rights era swept across the UC as well. By 1990 scholars and activists at every UC campus had developed new programs and established new departments, all devoted to the study and teaching of race and ethnic studies. By 1990 the UC campuses were among the first elite universities to require all students to fulfill an ethnic studies requirement prior to graduation—indeed the UC now has thousands of courses on race and inequality, more than any other system in the world. Affirmative action programs changed the complexion of the UC student body. Hundreds of faculty members were now teaching courses on race and racism in all the divisions and schools, and in nearly every department in the social sciences and in the humanities, not just in the newly-established ethnic studies departments and programs. In many professional schools as well – law, public health, education, and elsewhere – race became a central topic in the curriculum.
Yet race remains contentious in other important areas. For example, the UC’s most important postwar president, Clark Kerr, promised a new era in which the University would truly serve all sectors of California’s population. Under his presidency, the University campuses increased their outreach to communities of color. They committed resources to developing a pipeline for students of color to matriculate into the University. The adoption of affirmative action policies was in many ways pioneered at the UC, and the backlash against it also took shape there. A turning-point was reached at UC in the late 1970s, when Allan Bakke sued the medical school at the University of California at Davis for using racial quotas in admissions decisions. The medical school’s practice of setting aside sixteen spots in its entering classes for students of color -- on the theory that the University should train physicians of color to serve profoundly underserved communities of color -- was thrown out by the US Supreme Court.

The 1978 Bakke case shaped an emergent law of affirmative action, where racial quotas were ruled constitutionally impermissible but race and racial background could still be a factor in admissions decisions. Bakke’s case did not settle the issue, nor did Proposition 209, a rule proposed by a University regent to end all race-conscious decisions in all of California’s public institutions. UC Regent Ward Connerly and Governor Pete Wilson argued in favor of “colorblindness”; all the UC chancellors argued against Proposition 209, saying that it would undermine the public universities’ fragile commitments to racial diversity and access. But the measure was approved by California votes in 1996. Affirmative action policies have eroded ever since.

Indeed the chancellors were right to worry: in the two years after 209, African American and Latin@ enrollment plummeted. The number of African Americans newly enrolling as freshmen/freshwomen at UCLA and at Berkeley fell below one hundred students at each campus; by 2000 African American students were less than one percent of the student population at UC San Diego. During that year, progressive faculty members at the University proposed and implemented “comprehensive review” in undergraduate admissions, first at UC Santa Barbara, and then at the other UC campuses over the next eight years. Comprehensive review was more holistic, less dependent on standardized test scores or high school grade point averages. It was an admissions strategy that took “local context” into account, thus recognizing the inequalities of educational opportunity that prevailed throughout the K-12 system in California. Though access to a UC education has improved somewhat from the steep declines that followed the Passage of Prop 209, African American enrollment rebounded much more slowly—on some campuses (notably UCLA) it has never recovered. Excellence and diversity remain mutually reinforcing, rather than opposing, goals, or so all the chancellors say, but in the supposedly post-racial period, does the University serve all of the sectors of California’s population? This remains an open question, perhaps also an open wound.

Asian American enrollment in the UC system has skyrocketed in the past three decades, and yet that trend has also been met with some resistance. By the 1980s, some faculty members worried that there were “too many Asians” at UCLA or at Berkeley, both campuses where Asian American enrollment had by then passed 25% of the student population. The Berkeley campus agreed to settle a lawsuit in which the original Asian American plaintiffs had alleged that Berkeley, Brown, Harvard, and other elite universities were tacitly setting “ceilings” on Asian American enrollment. It did seem suspicious that these campuses all had the exact same percentages of Asians on their campuses despite tremendous increases in Asian American applications. Was there a ceiling? Were they behaving as though there were “too many Asians”? In popular discourse, even the jokes revealed anxieties: according to one of them, UCLA stood for the University of Caucasians Living among Asians. California was once the
birthplace of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Asiatic Exclusion League; one had to appreciate that history to grasp the irony that Asians did seem to be “taking over” the University of California. The steady influx of immigrating Asian professionals, people who almost always brought with them their young children—all made possible by the Immigration Act of 1965—produced a surprising and seemingly permanent increase in the number of Asian students within the UC system, such that even the whitest campuses, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara, by 2010 had Asian student enrollments that were over a third of all students.

Asian professionals tended to concentrate in the sciences and in the engineering fields, and in those areas Asian American faculty of color were also much more common in 1990 compared to 1950. Outside those disciplines, however, faculty of color were much fewer: in the humanities and in the social sciences, the advance of diversity among faculty was in fact much slower. Overall, faculty of color—including all those Asian American faculty members in the sciences and in engineering—constituted less than ten percent of all faculty on the UC campuses in 1990. By 2010, if we subtracted faculty of color in the ethnic studies departments, the UC Academic Senate was not quite a white supremacist institution, but it did look like the Republican National Convention—older, whiter, and more male than the national average. California’s population had become irrevocably Asian and Latino: it became the first “majority-minority” state by 1990. Yet the UC system still had a faculty that didn’t reflect that shift at all. An outside study conducted at UCLA in 2013 found that the campus climate for faculty of color was atrocious: white faculty members were still telling racist jokes, they were rude to job candidates, and they disparaged academic work in race and ethnic studies. UCLA administrators seemed clueless and confused as to what to do about the situation.

The other campuses faced similar issues, all of them depressing. Racist graffiti was so common that few bothered to report it any more. In the UC system, insensitive and destructive racist incidents were commonplace: blackface parties, anti-Asian and anti-immigrant expressions of hostility, the noose discovered in the library..., this could seem like an ongoing refrain. For two decades, the UC system and the individual campuses have attempted to produce comprehensive reports on the campus climate vis-a-vis race, but these reports almost always yield the same depressing conclusions: even as the system professes to value “diversity,” many students and faculty who have been marinated in white supremacist points of view cannot turn off those tendencies when they are on campus. Overall, studying these trends might offer valuable insights into the efficacy of broad scale institutional and social change. Is it possible for a society and its core institutions, so long committed to white supremacy both implicitly and explicitly, to become so devoted to multiracial realities that they will be able to provide environments that are respectful of people of color in their day-to-day professional lives? This remains an open question, and one worthy of further investigation.

We would like to invite our collaborators—faculty, students, and staff—to join us in researching these topics. Many members of the broad UCCNRS network have already published research in these areas, and we wish to build upon their fine work. In other ways, the field remains wide open: thus far, no one seems to have catalogued or analyzed the teaching of race-based topics at the premier public university system in the world, for example. Nor has anyone taken a complete inventory of how the campuses have promoted or even understood “diversity.” The institution itself is beset by fundamental contradictions—public laws require it not to notice race, to be “colorblind,” and yet a large fraction of the faculty is devoted to studies of race and racism. In terms of service to the citizens of
the State, and in terms of proportional access of the citizens of California to the educational opportunities provided by the UC system, issues of race remain vexing. At the UCCNRS we will be proposing a set of studies focused on this massive institution, aimed at helping all Californians, including the leadership of the UC, to grasp these contradictions, and to address them in a mutually beneficial manner. We appreciate the cooperation and support we have received from so many of our colleagues.

For updates on the UC as a Racial Institution project, please visit our website: www.uccnrs.ucsb.edu

Steering Committee Accomplishments & Publications

Paola Bacchetta


Selected member of Scientific Committee of TERRA (network for research and publications in France). http://www.reseau-terra.eu/article431.html

Tanya Golash-Boza


Continued...

Osagie K. Obasogie

Blinded by Sight, 2014, Stanford University Press

Colorblindness has become an integral part of the national conversation on race in America. Given the assumptions behind this influential metaphor—that being blind to race will lead to racial equality—it’s curious that, until now, we have not considered if or how the blind “see” race. Most sighted people assume that the answer is obvious: they don’t, and are therefore incapable of racial bias—an example that the sighted community should presumably follow. In Blinded by Sight, Osagie K. Obasogie shares a startling observation made during discussions with people from all walks of life who have been blind since birth: even the blind aren’t colorblind—blind people understand race visually, just like everyone else. Ask a blind person what race is, and they will more than likely refer to visual cues such as skin color. Obasogie finds that, because blind people think about race visually, they orient their lives around these understandings in terms of who they are friends with, who they date, and much more.

In Blinded by Sight, Obasogie argues that rather than being visually obvious, both blind and sighted people are socialized to see race in particular ways, even to a point where blind people “see” race. So what does this mean for how we live and the laws that govern our society? Obasogie delves into these questions and

Michael Omi & Howard Winant


Twenty years since the publication of the Second Edition and more than thirty years since the publication of the original book, Racial Formation in the United States now arrives with each chapter radically revised and rewritten by authors Michael Omi and Howard Winant, but the overall purpose and vision of this classic remains the same: Omi and Winant provide an account of how concepts of race are created and transformed, how they become the focus of political conflict, and how they come to shape and permeate both identities and institutions. The steady journey of the U.S. toward a majority nonwhite population, the ongoing evisceration of the political legacy of the early post-World War II civil rights movement, the initiation of the ‘war on terror’ with its attendant Islamophobia, the rise of a mass immigrants rights movement, the formation of race/class/gender ‘intersectionality’ theories, and the election and reelection of a black President of the United States are some of the many new racial conditions Racial Formation now covers.
UCCNRS Anthology Series: Volume 1

The Nation and Its Peoples: Citizens, Denizens, Migrants

Edited by John S.W. Park and Shannon Gleeson

With this volume, The University of California Center for New Racial Studies inaugurates a new book series with Routledge. Focusing on the shifting and contradictory meaning of race, The Nation and Its Peoples underscores the persistence of structural discrimination, and the ways in which “race” has formally disappeared in the law and yet remains one of the most powerful, underlying, unacknowledged, and often unspoken aspects of debates about citizenship, about membership and national belonging, within immigration politics and policy. This collection of original essays also emphasizes the need for race scholars to be more attentive to the processes and consequences of migration across multiple boundaries, as surely there is no place that can stay fixed—racially or otherwise—when so many people have been moving. This book is ideal as required reading in courses, as well as a vital new resource for researchers throughout the social sciences.

Meet Our New UCCNRS Postdoctoral Scholar!

Jean-Paul deGuzman

Jean-Paul deGuzman earned a Ph.D. in American History at UCLA where he recently completed his dissertation, "'And Make the San Fernando Valley My Home:' Contested Spaces, Identities, and Activism on the Edge of Los Angeles." JP also holds a BA (CSUN) and and MA (UCLA) in Asian American Studies. He has published on topics that range from Black and Japanese American civil rights activism, to the 1992 Los Angeles Uprisings, to the genesis of boba cafes in Southern California and is very excited to join the UCCNRS.

JP will begin working with UCCNRS starting in July. Welcome, JP!
Stay in touch with the UCCNRS!

UC faculty and graduate students may affiliate with us through our website: click on the “People” tab. We also invite affiliates to make use of our (moderated) networked virtual publications program: submit research papers and other appropriate publications.

Upcoming EVENTS

Please visit our website for upcoming events

www.uccnrs.ucsb.edu

Thank you to everyone who attended our 4th Annual Conference, “The Racial State: Democratic & Despotic Dimensions” at UC Hastings!