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**Course: Theories of Race**

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*“He who fears facing his own past, must necessarily fear what lies before him.” – Vavlac Havel*

**General Purpose:** The purpose of the lecture is to sketch the ideas and philosophies behind the two main visions informing proposed solutions to the conundrum of race in America. We will follow their historic trajectory and briefly discuss their assumptions and recommendations.

**Outline:** What is race? The determinants of racial self‐identity, when explored systematically, show us that race is a complex social construct with biological elements connected to it. Racial identity is historically and contextually influenced. These findings challenge the hegemonic and static biological view of race that is prevalent in classical social science literature. But how can we outline this complexity usefully?

It is important to briefly touch on the historical roots of the concept of race as it developed and as it gave way to various theories. As important is how race has been treated in America by those purporting to desire a solution to the social, political, economic and relational problems associated with race.

The sociology of race and ethnic relations is the study of social, political, and economic relations between races and/or ethnicities at all levels of society. This area encompasses the study of racism and other complex social processes between different racial and/or ethnic groups. We must go beyond the question of racism to the question of anthropology, which lies at the base of the question of race. What does it mean to be human is prior and it is essential.

A sociology is parasitic to an anthropology, a vision of the human person that is the methodological matrix for the understanding of social processes. The main purpose of the lecture is to outline two main lines of thought (intertwining ones at times as they are).

The first is the vision of personalism that gave way to the idea of integration (and assimilationism). The second is the corporatist or collectivist that gave way to separatism. Both lines of thought will be examined and briefly outlined for the primary purpose of understanding them—not of defending or rejecting either. There are various other ways to outline theories of race—in fact, dozens--but this one will be based on two distinct anthropologies, not on latter sociological or political agglomerations.

**Recommended Reading: (These are recommended for further study. The short talk is not an attempt to summarize the ideas in these works)**

Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character; A New Vision of Race in America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990); *A Dream Deferred: The Second Betrayal of Black Freedom in America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990)

Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Race Experts: How Racial Etiquette, Sensitivity Training, and New Age Therapy Hijacked the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001)

Thomas Sowell, *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005); *Race & Culture: A World View* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); *A Conflict of Visions* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001)

Orlando Patterson, *The Ordeal of Integration* (New York: Basic Books, 1997)

Stephan & Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black & White (New York: Touchstone, 1997)*

John McWhorter, *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America* (New York: Perennial, 2000)

Opposing Views:

Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (New York: Basics, 1992)

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* ( New York, One World, 2019)

Joe Feagin & Hernán Vera, *White Racism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 1995)

Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993)

Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations*(N Y: Scribner’s, 1992)

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018)