

Pol. 438H-S/2321 TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS I

Eugenics, Forced Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in the 20th Century

**Department of Political Science
University of Toronto**

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Seminar Room: UC, 67

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 2-4pm

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Course Content & Aims

Eugenics, or the science of social engineering through better breeding, captured the imagination of generations of policymakers on the left and the right. The John Maynard Keynes, Winston Churchill, and Sydney and Beatrice Webb were only some of those who accepted and endorsed eugenic arguments. Tens of thousands of mentally handicapped people in North America, and hundreds of thousands in Germany, were sterilized in the name of eugenics. Taking this history as its starting point, the course will have three aims: (i) understanding the content of eugenic ideas, (ii) exploring their influence on immigration and sterilization policy in democratic states, as well as genocide in non-democratic ones, and (iii) the evolution of eugenic ideas in the postwar period. In the last, we will consider the influence of eugenic ideas on the reproductive rights movement, above all in North America.

Prerequisites and Required texts: There are no formal prerequisites for this course, though a strong background in history (including the history of science) and/or political science would be useful. There is one book for purchase, available at the U of T bookstore:

Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation*

Several readings are also drawn from Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (OUP, 2010), cited hereafter as *Handbook*. These readings, as well as the others required, can be downloaded from a gmail account:

Username: uofteugenics@gmail.com. Password: hansen2011.

Course Requirements:

The course has 3 requirements:

1. Mid-term (short answer/multiple choice): March 3, 2011 (20%)
2. 2000-word research paper: March 24, 2010 (50%)
3. A take-home exam, handed out at the end of the last day of class and due within 24 hours: (2000 words): (20%)
4. Participation (10%)

JANUARY 13: INTRODUCTION: EUGENIC IDEAS I: THE EUGENICISTS

Hansen and King, introduction

Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, chapters 1-3.

Gillham, *Sir Francis Galton: A Life*, prologue

Marius Turda, 'Race, Science, and Eugenics in the 20th Century,' *Handbook*

Alexandra Minna Stern, 'Gender and Sexuality,' *Handbook*.

JANUARY 20: EUGENIC IDEAS II: EUGENIC FEARS

Hansen and King, chapters 2-3

Richard Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration*, chapters 1-3

Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, chapter 5

G. K. Chesterton, *Eugenics and other Evils*, appendix A

JANUARY 27: THE CAMPAIGN FOR FORCED STERILIZATION I: WHERE IT SUCCEEDED

Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, chapter 3

Elof Alex Carlson, *The Unfit: A History of a Bad Idea*, chapter 2

Véronique Mottier, 'Eugenics and the State: Policy-Making in Comparative Perspective,' in *Handbook*.

FEBRUARY 3: THE CAMPAIGN FOR FORCED STERILIZATION II: WHERE IT FAILED:

BUCK V. BELL

Paul Lombardo, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck v. Bell*, TBA

FEBRUARY 10: EUGENIC STERILIZATION IN NAZI GERMANY

Hansen and King, chapter 6

Proctor, *Racial Hygiene under the Nazis*, chapter 4

Paul Weindling, 'German Eugenics and the Wider World,' *Handbook*.

FEBRUARY 17: EUGENICISTS IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

Hansen and King, chapter 7

Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race*, chapters 4-5 & epilogue

Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, chapter 5

FEBRUARY 24: READING WEEK

MARCH 3: FORCED STERILIZATION: THE VICTIMS

Hansen and King, chapter 8

MARCH 10: FORCED STERILIZATION: THE INSTITUTIONS

Hansen and King, chapter 9

Ian Dowbiggen, *Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada*, chapters 1 & 2

J.W. Trent, *Inventing the Feeble-minded: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States*, chapters 2-5

Roy Porter, *Madness: A brief History*, introduction.

MARCH 17: EUGENICS & THE PRO-CHOICE MOVEMENT

Hansen and King, chapter 11

Ian Dowbiggen, *A Merciful End: The Euthanasia Movement in Modern America*, chapters 3 & 4

MARCH 24: ESSAYS DUE

APRIL 7: EUGENICS, IMMIGRATION & THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Eugenic Nation, chapters 3-4

King, *In the Name of Liberalism*, chapter 4.