History of Science 909: Seminar in History of Biology and Medicine
Fall 2017: Nationalism, Internationalism, Transnationalism in the History of Modern Biology
Wednesdays 2:25-5:25 pm, 7121 Helen C. White Hall

Prof. Lynn K. Nyhart Office Hours: M 1:30-2:45 pm (207 University Club)
lknyhart@wisc.edu (best way) T 1:30-3 pm (5118 Humanities)
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This graduate seminar has a twofold task: to examine episodes in the history of biology that reflect movements of nationalism, internationalism, and transnationalism (primarily since the French Revolution); and to reflect historiographically on how historians have worked with these concepts. Case studies will be drawn from the history of evolutionary theory, systematics, genetics/eugenics, paleontology, public health, and nutrition science. Geographical emphasis will range the globe but will focus primarily on “Western” science.

Learning Goals: The goals of the seminar are for you to learn leading themes in and approaches to nationalism, internationalism, and transnationalism through the lens of the history of biology; to gain practice in analytical and comparative reading, and thereby to develop your critical understanding of history of science as a scholarly discipline and its relations to broader themes in history and the humanities more generally; and to become comfortable with seminar-style discussions at the graduate level.

Requirements:
Reading and Discussion: This is primarily a reading seminar. We will be reading a book or 4-5 articles or book sections per week; you should come to each week’s meeting prepared to talk about them.

Discussion-launchers and Think-pieces: Each student will be the discussion-launcher for three sessions: two between Sept. 20 and Nov. 8 (excluding Sept. 27), and one between Nov. 15 and Dec. 6. To facilitate this, each discussion-launcher is asked to produce a think-piece of 500 words or less, to be circulated by 7 a.m. the day of your discussion. The aim of a think-piece is to raise questions and points for analysis by the group as a whole. What are the historiographic or methodological takeaways from these readings? You should address broader issues that go beyond a single reading, but you aren’t required to synthesize all the readings. For you “Student choice” session (Nov. 15-Dec. 6), you will set your own topic (in consultation with me; most efficiently, one related to your final paper) and lead a discussion of a book or 3-5 articles. Readings must be made available at least 7 days in advance of the session. For Sept. 27, each student will be reading and reporting on a single book (in addition to reading one overview article). For this session, you will provide a critical summary of the book of no longer than 600 words, to be turned in by 7 a.m. the day of your session.

Formal Writing: Students may choose a writing assignment of approximately 15 pages (double-spaced) that is suited to their interests and stage of graduate career. Generally this would be either a) a historiographic essay that develops a theme of interest to you, covering a body of work that includes readings from within and beyond the reading list; or b) a detailed proposal for a research project using primary and secondary sources related to the history of nationalism, internationalism, or transnationalism in the history of biology. Students who wish instead to write a primary-source based research paper (e.g. to fulfill a requirement) should consult me early in the course. Dates: proposal 10/4; preliminary bibliography 11/1; draft 12/1 (Friday!); Final 12/15.
OVERVIEW

Introductory:
9/6: Denationalizing History and History of Science
9/13: Ideology, Discourse, and the (Bio)Political Imaginary

Topics:
9/20: Classification
9/27: Evolution
10/4: Eugenics
10/11: Paleoanthropology
10/18: Biomedicine and Public Health
10/25: Green Revolution to GMOs
11/1: Ecology
11/8: Lysenko (and After)

Student Choice:
11/15: student-run student choice
11/22: Check-in/Troubleshooting on final paper
11/29: student-run student choice
12/6: student-run student choice
12/13: last class: Oral Reports on Final Paper and Wrap-up

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

9/6: Introduction: Denationalizing History and History of Science

Supplementary:

9/13: Ideology, Discourse, and the (Bio)Political Imaginary
themes: political imaginaries of states and empires, political uses of biological language


Supplementary:

**9/20: Classification**

*themes: forms of circulation: objects, writings, knowledge*


**Supplementary:**

**9/27: Evolution**

*themes: national styles, comparison, circulation, translation*

Divide up and report on:

Supplementary:

10/4: Eugenics
themes: comparison, transnationalism, national identity in Europe

Mark B. Adams, “Chapter 1: Eugenics in the History of Biology” and “Chapter 6: Towards a Comparative History of Eugenics,” in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 3-7 and PAGES

Supplementary:
10/11: Paleoanthropology
themes: a single locus of transnational attention; popular science


Supplementary:

10/18: Biomedicine and Public Health
themes: the Rockefeller Foundation as paradigmatic international health NGO; transfer, transnational exchange


Jean-Francois Picard and William H. Schneider, “From the Art of Medicine to Biomedical Science in France: Modernization or Americanization?” in William H. Schneider, ed., Rockefeller Philanthropy and Modern Biomedicine: International Initiatives from World War I to the Cold War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 106-124

Supplementary:
10/25: Plant Breeding: Green Revolutions to GMOs
themes: international regulation, governance and governmentality, globalization


Supplementary:


11/1: Ecology
Themes: changing constructions of “international;” institutionalizing global-scale research


Supplementary:


11/8: Lysenkoism (and after)
themes: internationalism, national history

Supplementary:

11/15: student choice

11/22: [day before Thanksgiving] Individual meetings re: papers

11/29: student choice

12/6: student choice

12/13: last class: Wrap-up