PHIL 291, Section 01, "Advanced Seminar on Epistemology or Metaphysics: Classifying People"

T 18:00-20:45

SH 241

Spring 2023
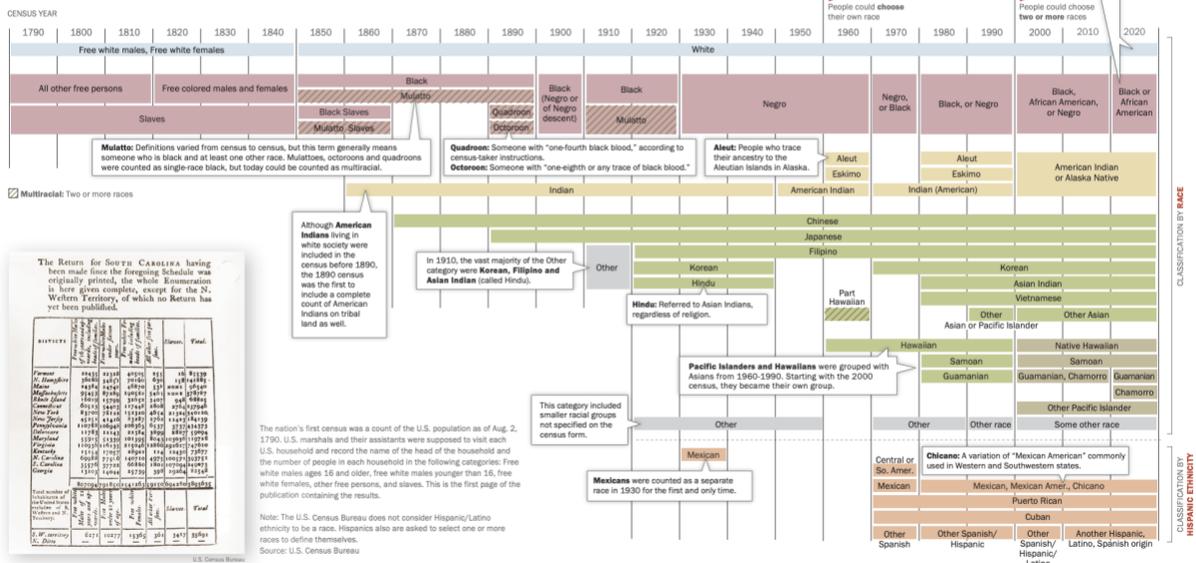
Riana Betzler

riana.betzler@sjsu.edu

Credit: Pew Research Center

This course is about efforts to classify people—to divide them up into groups that are presumed to be reflective of fundamental characteristics. Efforts to classify people occur perhaps most prominently in the sciences—social, human, biological, medical—and in public policy. But they are also widespread in everyday life, such that some psychologists have suggested that this tendency to classify is part of our cognitive machinery.

In this course, we will consider the impact that classificatory projects—especially those that claim scientific expertise and authority—have on the world. We'll think about how categories of gender, race, ethnicity, mental disorder, and disability shape the way we see others and ourselves.

Prerequisites: At least one upper division course in epistemology or metaphysics, or instructor consent.