DESCRIPTION: This seminar explores how notions of race (jins or `unsur and similar terms in Turkish, Persian, and other Middle Eastern languages) have been examined, experienced, and deployed in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In particular, and in dialogue with scholarship on the United States, the Americas, and the Atlantic, the course addresses practices, policies, and beliefs of hierarchy and power, “blood,” biology, and marriage, appearance and regulation, exclusion and inclusion. Rather than presuming either the stability of the notion of “race” or its “irrelevance” (as it is often argued) for the MENA region, this seminar highlights the specific, differing, and changing ways that race has been understood, used, and reproduced in the Middle East and North Africa.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS: A seminar is a collaborative endeavor. We expect all students to contribute actively to our conversations and to foster an atmosphere of open and constructive debate and discussion. We recognize that some students may already be familiar with some of these works, while others will be encountering them for the first time. A willingness to grapple with ideas openly in a collaborative spirit is more highly valued than a virtuosic performance of mastery. Critical perspectives are welcome, but we ask you to try to meet each piece on its own terms. This means approaching the readings with curiosity and a genuine effort to understand the stakes, concerns, and influences that shaped them at the time of their writing.

RESPONSE COMMENTARIES: Over the course of the semester each student will submit 10 brief commentaries on the Discussion forum of Blackboard. Commentaries are short informal responses to the readings assigned for that week intended to facilitate class discussions. Please use them for initial, exploratory reflections on the readings: you may raise questions, draw connections between readings, or point out a passage, quote, or argument that you find productive, significant, or problematic. While brief, these statements should be well written. They will form an important part of your grade, and should help you as well as develop your own thinking and preparation for your papers. Comments should be 1 page long and should be posted on Blackboard no later than 12 a.m. the night before class.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: This paper will be an opportunity to reflect on how the readings for class are incorporated into your own research projects. Deadlines: Abstract of 150 words maximum (Sept.30); Annotated bibliography (Oct.21); Outline (Nov.4); First draft (Nov. 18); and Final paper, circa 15-20 pages (Dec.16).
August 26. Opening reading.


Sept 2. Coming to Terms


Recommended:

Sept 9. Colonialism


Recommended:

**Sept 16 (GC closed)**

**Sept 23. Race, Contracts, and Legal Kinship**

**Sept 30. Narrating Enslavement**

**Recommended:**

**Oct 7. Zaylaʿ (Somaliland)**
Loiseau, Julien. 2019. “*Abyssinia at al-Azhar: Muslim Students from the Horn of Africa in Late Medieval Cairo*” *Northeast African Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1: 61-84.

**Oct 14. Plantation Slavery and Racial Capitalism**

**Recommended:**

**Oct 21. Indian Ocean slave trade**

**Oct 28. TBD.**

**Nov 4. Nationalism and Race in Morocco. Moyagaye Leverett**


**Recommended:**


**Nov 11. Borderlands and Erasures: Nubia**


**Nov 18. Science, Genes, Nations**


The book conversation is on MEMEAC’s YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HwWW6vxDpA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HwWW6vxDpA)
Recommended:

Nov 25. (GC closed)

Dec 2. Oil and the world of company towns

Dec 9. Concluding Conversation