

COURSE DETAIL

FROM RACIAL TO PERSONAL: NOTIONS OF CHANGE IN LATE-NINETEENTH-CENTURY DISCOURSES OF EVOLUTION

Country

Germany

Host Institution

Free University of Berlin

Program(s)

Free University Berlin

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Sociology Anthropology American Studies

UCEAP Course Number

137

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

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UCEAP Transcript Title

19C DISCRS EVOLUTN

UCEAP Quarter Units

4.50

UCEAP Semester Units

3.00

Course Description

After the publication of the Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, American society came to be understood as a product of evolution. This class focuses on how Darwin's ideas advanced two different views of change that had a tremendous impact on American culture and cultural history. One view, a racial notion of change, presented larger entities, such as species or "human races," as the driving forces behind societal development. In contrast, a different view located evolutionary change in the lives of individuals. These views had different implications: the racial view reified biological notions of races and emphasized a struggle for existence as a key dynamic of social life. The individual view, on the other hand, drew attention to the dynamics of the human psyche, the importance of (involuntary) memories and subjective perception of the world. In order to study these two dimensions of turn-of-the-century evolutionary thinking, students read texts by Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William James and others.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

32102

Host Institution Course Title

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Host Institution Course Details

<https://www.fu-berlin.de/vv/en/lv/1048526?m=361347&pc=701222&sm=965826>

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

John-F.-Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien

Course Last Reviewed

2025-2026

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