

# Library Lesson Plan

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## Overview

### Learning objectives

- Understand how individuals acted to counter the misuse of genetics research to further racist and sexist ideologies
- Connect historical examples of ethical problems to the modern-day case studies presented in this course
- Analyze how scientists' ideologies impacted their interpretation of science

### Pre-class readings

- Behavioral genetics and criminality
  - Genetic basis for criminality:  
[https://www.ashg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Facing\\_Our\\_History-Building\\_an\\_Equitable\\_Future\\_Final\\_Report\\_January\\_2023.pdf](https://www.ashg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Facing_Our_History-Building_an_Equitable_Future_Final_Report_January_2023.pdf)
- Forced sterilization
  - Sterilization laws:  
[https://www.ashg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Facing\\_Our\\_History-Building\\_an\\_Equitable\\_Future\\_Final\\_Report\\_January\\_2023.pdf](https://www.ashg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Facing_Our_History-Building_an_Equitable_Future_Final_Report_January_2023.pdf)
- Race, Genetics, and IQ
  - Genetic basis for intelligence differences between racialized groups:  
[https://www.ashg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Facing\\_Our\\_History-Building\\_an\\_Equitable\\_Future\\_Final\\_Report\\_January\\_2023.pdf](https://www.ashg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Facing_Our_History-Building_an_Equitable_Future_Final_Report_January_2023.pdf)
- Scientific activism and social responsibility
  - Paragraph starting with “Wilson’s Sociobiology reignited a century-old debate in America about the...”
  - Middle of the paragraph starting with “Then, in 1975, in order to counter the favorable press”
  - <https://link-springer-com.stanford.idm.oclc.org/article/10.1023/A:1021190227056>

- Will highlight passages from here (only through page 574)
- Eugenics and anti-miscegenation
  - <https://unidosus.org/blog/2021/12/16/the-long-history-of-forced-sterilization-of-latinas/>

## Runsheets

1:30-1:40	arrive at Green Library
1:40-1:45	Regina introduces Special Collections
1:45-1:50	Rachel and Roshni give overview of activity
1:50-2:10	rotation 1 – long discussion
2:10-2:30	rotation 2 – long discussion
2:30-2:50	rotation 3 – long discussion
2:50-2:57	rotation 4 – lightning round
2:57-3:05	rotation 5 – lightning round
3:05-3:20	large group wrap-up discussion
3:20	end of class

## Full material list

- Herbert Aptheker M1032 Box 182 Folder 5
- Herbert Aptheker M1032 Box 145 Folder 45
- Castañeda Box 10 M0353 Folder 10
- I-S Karkan Shockley SC 595 Box 1 Folder 9
- David Starr Jordan SC 58 Box 9 Miscellaneous
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 761 Folder 2
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 888 Folder 1
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 875 Folder 14, 16
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Series III manuscripts Box 148 Folder 32
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 774 Folder 8, 18
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 877 Folder 5
- Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 754 Folder 8
- Corona M0248 box 31 papers 1923-1948 Folder 5
- Corona M0248 flat box 52 Folder 4
- Sánchez M562 box 57 folder 7
- Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3

## Discussion groups

# Behavioral genetics, differences of sexual development, and criminality

Led by: Alvina

## Background

In January 1973 the Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, announced that the proposed Center for the Study and Reduction of Violence at UCLA was close to fruition. This program was staunchly opposed by many civil rights organizations, including the NAACP, the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Mexican-American Political Association, and the California Prisoners' Union. Part of the opposition to the Center was that it would focus on biological causes for aggressive behavior, rather than taking into account the social context/environment, and would attempt to falsely prove damaging stereotypes of marginalized individuals. For example, one proposed research focus of the center was understanding how XYY males might be more aggressive through mass screening programs. There were also fears around [psychosurgery](#), or using surgical procedures to "correct" aggressive behavior, which had already gained a reputation for ethical abuses and exploitation of already-vulnerable populations. Thanks to a slew of public activism against the Center, the proposed state funding was eventually blocked, and the Center was never opened.

## Documents

- Newspaper cutting: "Gene's May Tell One's Potential to Commit Crimes"
  - Short, showcases the genetic determinism perspective of criminality
  - Gould M1437 box 774 Folder 8
- Newspaper article: "Proposed violence center 'swirling in controversy'"
  - Good (+ lengthy) overview of the entire situation
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3
- Newspaper article: "Merits of Center for the Study of Violence Debated"
  - Proposal to do mass male screening of sex chromosomes for XYY to prevent violence
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3
- Daily Bruin article: "Vote YES against the Violence Center"
  - Example of student activism
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3
- LA Times article: "A Strife-Torn Violence Center"
  - Follow-up to Daily Bruin article above: outcome of student referendum
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3
- Letter from special interest groups representing marginalized communities
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3
- Flyer asking people to write to their state representative
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3
- Letter thanking Willie Brown for preventing state funding of Violence Center
  - Follow-up to flyer above: outcome of writing to representatives
  - Shapiro M0928 Box 25 Folder 3

## Themes

Genetic determinism, scientific activism, sex and gender, stakeholderism and community engagement, race and genetics

## Discussion questions

- What were the reasons the UCLA Center for Study and Reduction against Violence was initially created?
- Who were the stakeholders in this research? Who opposed the Center, and why?
- What actions did activists take to work against the Center and what was the result?
- What do you think the broader impacts on society would have been if the Center had been funded?
- What connections do you see between this case example and other topics we've discussed in class?

# Forced sterilization

Led by: Alanna

## Background

The eugenics movement of the 20th century had a global reach, with forced sterilization programs implemented in countries around the world. The movement reflected a belief in the genetic superiority of certain groups and the desire to eliminate those deemed "unfit" or "undesirable." These policies were deeply connected to racism, classism, ableism, and xenophobia, and resulted in the forced sterilization of thousands, if not millions, of people. The legacy of forced sterilization continues to impact marginalized communities, particularly women of color, who were disproportionately affected by these practices. Chicano-focused journalism informed their community about these sterilization efforts, and highlighted efforts of activists fighting against it. The documents in this section are written in both English and Spanish, and they discuss forced sterilization across multiple locations, including Los Angeles, California; Puerto Rico; and India.

## Documents

- Spanish newspaper: "Esterilizaciones forzadas"
  - Good overview about the state of sterilizations across LA and the world at the time
  - Corona M0248 box 31 papers 1923-1948 Folder 5
- Newspaper article "The struggle against forced sterilization"
  - Describes some activism against forced sterilization
  - Corona M0248 flat box 52 Folder 4
- Newspaper article "Forced sterilization of third world women"
  - Specifically pertains to Puerto Rican women and the coercion they experienced – 1 in 3 Puerto Rican women were sterilized by the year 1956
  - Corona M0248 flat box 52 Folder 4
- Newsletter "Sterilization: US Alternative to Liberation in the 3rd World"
  - Connects sterilization to imperialism, capitalism, globalization, etc
  - Sánchez M562 box 57 folder 7

## Themes

Reproductive genetics, eugenics, scientific activism

## Discussion questions

- What efforts did activists take against sterilization efforts?
- How do the global sterilization efforts discussed in these documents connect to the following concepts:
  - Race
  - Class
  - Colonialism/imperialism

- What is your reaction to seeing the discussion of sterilizations in these community-driven newspapers? What can we learn from this today?

# Race, genetics, and IQ

Led by: Justin

## Background

In 1916, [Lewis Terman](#), a professor of psychology at Stanford, developed the Stanford-Binet intelligence test, forming the basis for modern-day IQ testing. Terman's work played a huge role in the eugenics movement in the early 20th century. Following the Holocaust, eugenics concepts fell out of favor for some time, but saw a resurgence in the mid 20th century thanks to [William Shockley](#). Shockley was a Nobel laureate in physics and Stanford professor who spoke against improvements in education for African Americans, arguing that they were genetically less capable of education. Shockley later funded the work of [Arthur Jensen](#), who would go on to be an educational psychologist at UC Berkeley and whose research claimed that genetic variation drove racial differences in IQ. Jensen was a major player in the rise of genetic determinism and scientific racism towards the end of the 20th century.

The materials in this section reference a variety of perspectives from key academics in this history – both those supporting racial essentialism and genetic determinism of IQ (Lewis Terman, William Shockley, Arthur Jensen) and those opposed ([Stephen J Gould](#), [Richard Lewontin](#), Leon Kamin, Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Herbert Aptheker).

## Documents

- Paper by Leon Kamin (psychologist; 1927-2017): “Heredity, Intelligence, Politics, and Psychology”
  - Kamin's perspective on intelligence testing and its relationship to eugenics and immigration and other sociopolitical implications (references Terman)
  - Castañeda Box 10 M0353 Folder 10
- Article on “Intelligence of Negro recruits”
  - Essentially argues that educating Black recruits is useless because of biological differences in IQ between races; fun hand-written note on first page (potentially by WEB DuBois or Herbert Aptheker) referring to article's author as a “jackass”
  - Herbert Aptheker M1032 Box 182 Folder 5
- Stanford Daily article on Shockley v Cavalli Debate
  - Reports outcome of debate between Shockley (Stanford electrical engineering professor and Nobel laureate; pro-racial essentialism) and Cavalli-Sforza (Stanford population geneticist; anti-racial essentialism)
  - I S Karkan Shockley Collection SC 595, Box 1, Folder 9, 1973
- Gould essay critiquing Jensen
  - Excellent quotes debunking scientific racism and the “objectivity” of science
  - Stephen J Gould M1437 Series III manuscripts box 148 Folder 32
- Letter from John Cirace to Gould
  - Contradictory views on genetic determinism; conflating race and ancestry – demonstrates the complexity of “getting it right”
  - Gould M1437 box 774 Folder 18

## Themes

Racial essentialism, genetic determinism, scientific activism

## Discussion questions

- Can you summarize the positions held by the pro-racial essentialism, pro-genetic determinism crowd (in these documents: Terman, Shockley, Jensen) and their opponents?
- What mechanisms did scientists use to push back against racist interpretations of science?
- Based on these documents, which social structures, norms, or values have influenced academics' interpretation of scientific results, and how have they done so?
- What connections do you see between the disagreements outlined in these documents and what we discussed in Session 5 about modern-day debates regarding genetic research on educational attainment?
- What is your perspective on modern-day genetic research on educational attainment? Has it changed after viewing these documents – and if so, how?



# Scientific activism and social responsibility

Led by: Naomi

## Background

In the 1970s and 80s, in response to a divisive political climate and the resurgence of racism and sexism – both within the academic realm of evolutionary biology, as well as the Boston community and U.S. more broadly – two important left-wing organizations were formed at Harvard. The Committee Against Racism (CAR) was an organization dedicated to anti-racism and was one chapter of what would eventually become an [international organization](#). CAR was active in protesting racist rallies by the KKK and other white supremacist groups, as well as promoting racial integration of the Boston public school system via “busing”. In parallel, the [Sociobiology Study Group](#) was an academic organization that focused on countering what they saw as the inherent racism and sexism in [sociobiology](#), a sub-field that sought to explain various features of human society using the principles of evolutionary biology.

Prominent members of CAR and the Sociobiology Study Group included [Stephen Jay Gould](#) and [Richard Lewontin](#) (who wrote the iconic 1972 paper on “The Apportionment of Human Diversity”, declaring race to be of “virtually no genetic or taxonomic significance”).

## Documents

- Harvard Crimson article: “Laying the Foundation for a Racist Synthesis”
  - Overview of Committee Against Racism and Sociobiology Study Group and why they were formed
  - Gould M1437 Box 888 Folder 1
- CAR statement (and pamphlets) for busing
  - Illustrates CAR activism not strictly within the scientific realm
  - Stephen J Gould M1437 box 761 Folder 2
- Meeting notes for Sociobiology Study Group
  - Good example of meeting notes
- Workshop agenda: “A Critique of Biological Determinism”
  - Illustrates Sociobiology Study Group activism – organizing against biological determinism of sex/gender
  - Gould M1437 Box 888 Folder 1
- Snippet of Charles Coulston Gillespie’s writing
  - Essay on the relationship between the scientist and the state; good fodder for discussion
  - Gould M1437 Box 875 Folder 14

## Themes

Scientific activism, social responsibility, racial essentialism, genetic determinism

## Discussion questions

- What were the Sociobiology Study Group and Committee Against Racism working to fight? What actions did they take?
- How does this connect to contemporary issues? How might they be different or similar to modern efforts?
- Do you think these groups were successful? Why or why not?
- Stephen J Gould, a member of the Sociobiology Study Group and Committee Against Racism, wrote: “What have we a right to expect of a scientist?” What do you think we should expect of scientists in regards to:
  - personal biases and prejudices
  - relationship with the government/state
  - relationship with society

# Eugenics and anti-miscegenation

Led by: Anjali

## Background

The American eugenics movement emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, largely in response to Darwin's theory of evolution and driven by the idea of improving the human species through selective breeding and the suppression of traits deemed undesirable. One of the key focuses of the movement was opposition to interracial marriage, as eugenicists believed that such unions would result in the "degeneration" of the white race. Many eugenicists were influential geneticists who argued that certain races were genetically inferior to others – in particular that Black people who were believed to be less intelligent than white people. They used their scientific authority to promote various laws and policies, including “anti-miscegenation” laws that criminalized interracial marriage. Materials in this section include views from both eugenicists, as well as those who opposed eugenics.

## Documents

1. David Starr Jordan, "Chart of Fitness"
  - a. Rolled hand-drawn tree capturing Jordan's genealogy
  - b. David Starr Jordan SC 58, Box 9, Miscellaneous
2. 1950s pamphlet "The Races of Mankind"
  - a. Illustrated explanation of how the races are actually not that different. Useful to know people were saying these things in the 1950s.
  - b. Stephen J Gould M1437 box 877 Folder 5
3. [optionally remove] Booklet "The New Family and Race Improvement"
  - a. Article opposing interracial marriage titled "Shall America Head for Race Suicide or Race Improvement?"
  - b. Stephen J Gould M1437 box 754 Folder 8
4. Agendas from the second and third international eugenics congresses
  - a. Examples of how scientific conferences legitimized eugenics ideas
  - b. Stephen J Gould M1437 box 754 Folder 8
5. "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race'"
  - a. First two pages are transcript of 1922 court case on miscegenation where it becomes obvious that nobody has a clue what "race" is
  - b. Herbert Aptheker M1032 Box 145 Folder 45
6. Article "I do not believe there is a superior race"
  - a. Interview with mixed professor at Howard pushing back against the racist eugenics perspectives on education
  - b. Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 875 Folder 16
7. Article "Intermarriage and the race problem"
  - a. Interview with psychologist who opposes interracial marriage; connects this eugenics perspective to the implementation of segregation policies as well
  - b. Stephen J Gould M1437 Box 875 Folder 16

## Themes

Eugenics, race and ancestry, racial essentialism

## Discussion questions

- Who is included on David Starr Jordan's family tree? Who might be excluded? Why do you think he created this document?
- What beliefs or assumptions about race, ancestry, and genetics can you identify in the arguments presented in the miscegenation law court case? How are they similar or different to how these concepts are perceived by society in the modern day?
- What topics were discussed at the eugenics congresses? What influence or impact do you think these "pseudo-academic" conferences had on society more broadly?
- What social or societal factors influenced individuals who supported eugenics and/or opposed interracial marriage? How were scientific ideas/concepts used to defend or justify their positions?