BR 23151: columbusday and the Christian History of Denial

columbusday as State Supported Hate Speech

A Justice and Peace Studies Seminar

Tink Tinker, Instructor

Iliff School of Theology

Tuesdays, 1:00 to 4:30 pm, March 22 to May 24, 2016

A **Tentative Draft** (as of March 16, 2016)

**Course Objectives:**

Participants in this seminar will:

* + Investigate the historical and contemporary political context of Christopher Columbus, the American heroization of Colon, the establishment of columbusday as a federal holiday by act of the US congress, and the indigenous movement of resistance and protest.
  + Apply Justice and Peace theory and methods to the analysis of columbusday as an act of state supported hate speech.
  + Begin to learn something of the history of the conquest of American Indian peoples.
  + Begin to investigate the continuing subjugation of American Indian peoples and other indigenous peoples in the contemporary political and economic system as the perpetuation of injustice and a continued threat to peace.
  + Relate the conquest and subjugation of indigenous peoples and the destruction of indigenous national sovereignty to the emergence of modern state systems and their domination of the "world system" in which all contemporary justice and peace negotiations occur.
  + Begin to name the american myth of american exceptionalism, the story that Americans tell themselves about themselves. What is the american narrative, and how does it function?
  + Begin to understand the continuing oppression of native peoples as a direct result of the systemic need to justify itself. The need, particularly is to justify the creation of a new nation state and to justify, in turn, its occupancy of the North American land base.

**Reading Assignments:**

The readings are an integral part of our mutual preparation for class discussion each week. You must keep current. The required readings for the quarter are listed in the course outline below. There may also be occasional short hand-outs that the instructor will share with the class from time to time. Please have the readings completed for each class so that our discussions will be informed and helpful for all of us. The titles listed in **bold type** are the required readings for the day. The other titles are “recommended” readings for further understanding of the issues.

**General Instructions for Seminar Preparation:**

**Student Leadership** (by particular assignment the week before):

* You will be assigned one of the readings for the following seminar session. Thus, you will prepare that reading a bit more carefully than others in the seminar. You may receive a couple of these assignments during the quarter.
* At the beginning of the seminar you will be asked to **state a THESIS** (based squarely on the text) that can be argued or debated.
* Or you will raise **a useful question or two** about the text (with text specific reference; page number; quote).

**All Students** (Every Seminar)

* Read the texts carefully.
* Come prepared to identify issues for discussion.
* Cite text by page number. Use specific rather than general references to the texts.

**Doctoral student leadership** (late in the quarter):

* Each doctoral student is expected to take leadership for a critical discussion on a special topic later in the quarter.
* The **topic will be selected** in conversation with the seminar convener. Choices need to be made early in the term to allow plenty of time for research and preparation.
* You will need to **identify suitable readings** for others to read in preparation for the discussion. Again in conversation with the convener, we will make assignments for others to prepare.
* You will then prepare **a short position paper** on the topic, trying to identify the critical issues for discussion in order to give shape to the discussion of the whole seminar. This paper needs to be circulated at least two days prior to the seminar meeting (hence, by one pm on Sunday).
* You may have opening remarks to frame the discussion. BUT YOU **MUST** **NOT LECTURE**. You will be marked, in part, by how successful you are in generating a conversation with the class.

**Required Books:**

Elise Bartosik-Velez, *The Legacy of Christopher Columbus in the Americas: New Nations and a Transatlantic Discourse of Empire*. Vanderbilt U. Press, 2014. This book is available via on-line library loan. EBSCO. Penrose: [E112 .B294 2014eb](http://bianca.penlib.du.edu/search~S3?/cE112+.B294+2014eb/ce+++112+b294+2014+eb/-3,-1,,E/browse)

Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (City Lights Press, 1995). A classic piece of Churchill writing.

Steven Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.This is the father of “new historicism.” A great (if somewhat dense) postcolonial read. Penrose: E121.G74.1991

Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2001. Penrose: E98.P99 H85 2001

**Written Assignments:**

# Each participant is to write an essay at the conclusion of our short seminar on this question: **Argue** whether or not columbusday ought to be celebrated as a governmentally appointed holiday. **Use all of our readings** and whatever other resources you choose. Make your analysis as **critical** as possible. That is, be coherent, clear, consistent, and use extensive warranting to support your argument. [Extensive warranting means plenty of annotations! Footnotes, endnotes, etc.] Is the celebration of columbusday hurtful to indigenous Americans? How so? Also, how could a change in federal policy be generated? How can the thinking of the American public be transformed?

# Master’s student essays need to be long enough to make the argument you choose to make. It must be fully annotated with a bibliography. I suspect that a useful paper will require no more than twenty pages, not counting bibliography or annotations.

# Doctoral student will be expected to write two pieces. The first will address the same question as the master’s student essays; the second will be a shorter paper outlining their critical analysis of one of our identified closely related topics of concern. This paper will form the basis for a seminar discussion session facilitated by the doctoral student sometime during the last three weeks of the seminar. The concerns of this shorter paper or critical outline should also form a basis for the longer assignment. The final assignment in the case of doctoral students should be limited to no more than thirty pages, plus bibliography and annotations.

**Class Meeting Obligations:**

You are obligated, of course, to attend class faithfully. This is a professional obligation as well as a course requirement. Please make every effort not to miss a session; every absence is ten percent of the class. And obviously, your verbal participation in these classroom sessions is also vital to the intellectual wellbeing of the whole seminar, that is, of everyone else in the class.

**Standard Syllabus Annotations**:

Students with Disabilities:

Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned adviser to initiate the process of requesting accommodations.  The advising center can be contacted at [advising@iliff.edu](mailto:advising@iliff.edu) or by phone at [303.765.1146](tel:303.765.1146).

Incompletes:

Iliff has a clearly stated “incomplete policy.” If you are in a position where you have no other choice but to request an incomplete, do look the policy up in the “Masters’ Student Handbook” or retrieve the policy from our my.iliff web-site. Because it is difficult for a teacher to read a paper and evaluate it fairly outside of the context of reading other students papers which were turned in on time, work turned in late will always suffer some lowering of the grade—depending on how late the work is submitted but regardless of the legitimacy of the excuse for the late submission. This also (necessarily) applies to work submitted to satisfy an incomplete.

Zero Tolerance for **Plagiarism**:

Please understand clearly that plagiarism is considered an academic crime. It is punishable by the issuing of a failing grade for the class in which it occurs and possible dismissal from school. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please do look the word up. Reference your academic Handbooks for an explanation. Read up on the definition on-line or in a variety of library resources.

Excessive **Absences**:

Because classroom participation is so critical, a student cannot expect to pass this seminar when absences accumulate excessively. It should be remembered that each seminar session represents a full ten percent of the course. Every effort should be made to insure faithful attendance and full participation. Even **tardiness** (both at the beginning of class and after the break) necessarily affects one’s participation in a seminar—and thus will be duly noted. Timely attendance is a **professional** obligation and responsibility.

If you need to miss one class period, please check with your instructor regarding make-up assignments. Missing two class periods will automatically result a lower grade (one letter grade lower for final grade). If you miss three class periods (and therefore 30% of the course), you are well-advised to drop the course.

**Technology and Communication**:

**Cell Phones, Instant Messaging, Text Messaging, Etc.:**

We owe each other our strict and undivided attention during a seminar session. Our process of discussion builds an intellectual intimacy that is immediately shattered by someone’s attention to other business. Please, turn off all cell phone and communications devices for the duration of the seminar time. We need to give each other our full and undivided attention during all class time discussions and lectures. Activities that would be a violation of our trust with one another in the classroom would include: receiving or sending text messages via cellphones; receiving or sending twitter messages; reading or composing and sending email messages; surfing the net; stepping outside the classroom to take a cellphone call; and all other sorts of related activities.

**Computer Usage:**

The use of laptop computers for taking notes in the classroom is acceptable, BUT they are only to be used for note-taking. Any non-classroom activities such as reading or answering emails, web-browsing, social net-working, or the like represent unprofessional behavior that would be an extreme breach of protocol showing complete disrespect for both instructor and fellow students. Do not log on to any wireless or other communications networks. Absolutely NO on-line surfing (even for seminar related issues) is acceptable. Do that work after class.

**columbusday Course Outline:**

## **1. March 22:** Conquest and Superiority: Cristobal Colon and the Quincentenary

**Reading** (***prior to our first meeting***):

* **Tinker. “Columbus and Coyote: A Comparison of Culture Heroes in Paradox.” *Apuntes* (1992): 78-88.** Posted on canvas.
* **Tinker and Freeland, “Thief, Slave-Trader, Murderer: Christopher Columbus and Caribbean Population Decline,” *Wicaza Sa Review* (2008):** Posted on canvas.
* **Bartosik-Velez**: Please read the intro and first chapter.

Recommended Reading:

* Sales. *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*. New York: Knopf, 1990. [This is a delightful and easy read for some background to our discussions this quarter.]
* Claudia Bushman, *America Discovers Columbus: How an American Explorer Became an American Hero* (University Press of New England, 1992). The book is now **out of print**. We’ll make do with library reserve or you can find it used and relatively cheap on-line. This is a useful source of historical information regarding the ups and downs of columbianism in the american narrative. It is in no way a *critical* history. Pretty straightforward non-analytical history. Penrose:  [E112.B95 1992](http://bianca.penlib.du.edu/search/cE112.B95+1992/ce+++112+b95+1992/-3,-1,,E/browse).

**2. March 29:**

**Readings:**

* **Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 1-51.**
* **Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, pp. 1-128.**
* **Samuel Eliot Morison, “Hell in Hispaniola,” in *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus* (Little, Brown and Co., 1942), pp. 481-495. It should be noted that Morrison considers himself an apologist for Colon and in no way a detractor. Yet, the historical facts of the m atter force Morrison to clearly acknowledge something of the brutal devastation that accompanied Colon’s adventure.** *Canvas*
* Giles Tremlett, “Lost Document Reveals Columbus as Tyrant of the Caribbean,” *The Guardian* (August 07, 2006). On-line at: [http://www.guardian.co.uk](http://mail.iliff.edu/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.guardian.co.uk).
* Diane Alden, “Columbus and His Judges,” Newsmax on-line (Oct. 12, 2000): No longer available; originally located at: <http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a39eaf62e4614.htm>. Neo-con analysis / columbian apologist.
* Charles C. Mann, “1491,” *Atlantic Monthly* (2002): Accessed on-line July 23, 2007 at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200203/mann>. Mann, a science writer, has also published two books, one by the same name as this article (which is an excerpt) in 2005; and a follow-up volume titled *1493*, published in 2011.

**3. April 5:** **american Exceptionalism:**

Guest: Dr. Loring Abeyta

**Readings:**

* Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism A Double Edged Sword*, Chapter One: “Ideology, Politics, and Deviance,” on-line at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/americanexceptionalism.htm>
* Vine Deloria, Jr., “Thinking in Time and Space,” Chapter 4 in *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (revised edition: Fulcrum Publishers, 1992), pp. 62-77. canvas
* U.S. Senator Albert Jeremiah Beveridge, “In Support of an American Empire,” *Record, 56* Cong., I Sess., pp. 704-712. [1900]. On-Line at: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ajb72.htm>.[[1]](#endnote-1)
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “The March of the Flag,” Campaign Speech from September 16, 1898. On-Line at: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1898beveridge.html>
* John O'Sullivan, "Annexation," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review 17,* no.1 (July-August 1845): 5-10. On-line at: <http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/HIS/f01/HIS202-01/Documents/OSullivan.html>.
* Natsu Saito, "A Manifest Destiny: Colonizing the Continent," chapter 5 in *Meeting the Enemy: American Exceptionalism and International Law* (New York University Press, 2010). Available on Google books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=Dqca6yvIsagC&pg=PA106&lpg=PA106&dq=saito+%22manifest+destiny%22&source=bl&ots=y9rzN9ilFy&sig=D12V8JDfoExd11i25esEGjubgTY&hl=en&ei=fG0pTri5MOmKsQLixPSPCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&sqi=2&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=saito%20%22manifest%20destiny%22&f=false>

Other Recommended Readings:

* Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).
* Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Harvard University Press, 1981).
* Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris. Eds., *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism* (Texas A & M University Press, 1997). This appears to be a very useful and analytical set of essays, although I have not read very deeply yet.
* Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* ( New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).
* Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).
* Gene M. Brack, *Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 1821-1846* ( Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975).
* Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 10-54, 132-72, 193-95, 261-62, 267-70. I don’t know this book. From what I’ve read, it seems a bit suspect. Page references are from someone else’s annotation.
* Kim Voss,*The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (Cornell University Press, 1993).
* Harold Hongju Koh,“Foreword: On American Exceptionalism,” *Stanford Law Review*, 55 (2003).
* Deborah L. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (University Press of Mississippi, 1998). See: Michael O’Brian’s review in *Journal of Southern History*, 66 (2000)
* Amy Kaplan, “Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture,” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Duke University Press, 1993).

**4. April 12:** **Columbus Celebrations: A U.S. History**

**Readings:**

* **Churchill, “Nits Make Lice,” in *A Little Matter of Genocide*, pp. 129-288.**
* **Bushman, *America Discovers Columbus*, pp. 98-190.** For a detailed description of the first celebration of Columbus Day, Deschamps directs us to **chapter 5, 81-97**.
* **Washington Irving**, The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus (NY: G.P. Putnam's and Sons, 1893; originally in 1828). You only need ***to read around a bit*** in this fantasy-romance. Its importance is that it has informed much of the mis-information and historical fiction that circulates for historical fact in the american narrative. There were several versions of this book published. For an on-line version see: <http://www.knowledgerush.com/paginated_txt/etext05/7col210/7col210_s1_p1_pages.html>.

Recommended Reading:

* David Stannard, *American Holocaust*, Chapter Three, pp. 57-95; notes, 297-306.

**5. April 19:**

**Readings:**

* **Glenn Morris, “Vine Deloria, Jr. and the Development of a Contemporary Critique of Indigenous Peoples and International Relations.” In Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance, edited by Grounds, Tinker, and Wilkins (University of Kansas Press, 2003), pp. .** canvas
* **Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 52-85.**
* **Anthony Anghie, “The Evolution of International Law: Colonial and Postcolonial Realities,” *Third World Quarterly*, 27 (2006): 739-753. Available on canvas or on-line at:** [**http://ptw.uchicago.edu/Anghie09.pdf**](http://ptw.uchicago.edu/Anghie09.pdf). Canvas
* Bushman, *America Discovers Columbus*, pp. 41-97. Canvas
* Morris, “Abolish Columbus Day,” Guest Commentary, *Denver Post*, April 10, 2007.
* David A. Sprecace, “Columbus Should Be Celebrated,” Guest Commentary, *Denver Post*, April 20, 2007.
* Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (as of August 24, 1994). Appendix in Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance.
* U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (adopted 13 September 2007): <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html>

**6. April 26: The Gilded Age, The White City and Columbus**

**Readings:**

* **Huhndorf, *Going Native*, pp. 1-78.**
* **Anthony J. Hall, “Looking Backwards and Forwards from the World’s Columbian Exposition,” chapter 1, *Earth into Property: Colonization, Decolonization, and Capitalism* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), pp. 37-58.** canvas
* **Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 86-118.**
* **Frederick Jackson Turner:** “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 1893. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1893turner.html>. ***Sample*** this historic essay. Turner was one of the key early american historians and is most remembered for his “Frontier Thesis” noting the closing of the frontier in 1893. The essay was read at the American Historical Association that year, meeting in Chicago in conjunction with the Chicago World’s Columbian Exhibition. Turner’s argument is that the spirit and success of the United States had been directly connected with its persistent westward expansion. As one on-line source says, “According to Turner, the forging of the unique and rugged American identity occurred at the juncture between the civilization of settlement and the savagery of wilderness. This produced a new type of citizen—one with the power to tame the wild and one upon whom the wild had conferred strength and individuality.” Thus, Turner marks the source of american exceptionalism.

Recommended Readings:

* Robert Rydell, John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the Untied States* (Smithsonian Institution Press, ): “Introduction,” pp. 1-13; and “Fairs in the Age of Industrialism’s Advance,” pp. 14-44.
* John P. Burris, Exhibiting Religion: Colonialism and Spectacle at International Expositions, 1851-1893 (The University Press of Virginia, 2001)
* Laura L. Behling, “Reification and resistance: the rhetoric of Black womanhood at the Columbian Exposition, 1893,” *Communication*, Vol. 25, 2002. Cited from on-line library Questia.com, accessed May 27, 2007.
* Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglas, et al, *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature*. Originally published 1893. Reprint ed., edited by Robert W. Rydell. (University of Illinois Press, 1999). **P: E185.53.C4 R43 1999.**
* Reed, Christopher Robert. *"All the World Is Here!" The Black Presence at White City*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. **P: e185.53.C5 R44 2000.**

**7. May 3:** **Discovery and Johnson v. M’Intosh (1823)**

**Readings:**

* **Read a brief introduction to Johnson v. M’Intosh on Wikipedia (but *never* cite Wikipedia; it is anonymous and not juried):** [**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnson\_v.\_M’Intosh**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnson_v._M'Intosh)**.**
* **Read the unanimous court decision (John Marshall) on-line at:** [**http://www.utulsa.edu/law/classes/rice/ussct\_cases/JOHNSON\_V\_MCINTOSH\_1823.HTM**](http://www.utulsa.edu/law/classes/rice/ussct_cases/JOHNSON_V_MCINTOSH_1823.HTM)**.**
* **Churchill, “The Law Stood Squarely on Its Head: U.S. Legal Doctrine, Indigenous Self-determination and the Question of World Order, *Oregon Law Review* 81 (2002): 663ff. canvas**
* **Steve Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land* (Fulcrum Publishers, 2008). Selections posted on canvas.**

Recommended:

* Peter d’Errico, “John Marshall: Indian Lover?” *Journal of the West*, 39 (2000). On-line at: <http://www.umass.edu/legal/derrico/marshall_jow.html>.
* Eric Kades, *“The Dark Side of Efficiency: Johnson v. M'Intosh and the Expropriation of American Indian Lands*.”
* Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006).

# Lindsay G. Robertson, *Conquest by Law: How the Discovery of America Dispossessed Indigenous Peoples of Their Lands* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2005).

* Robert A. Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest* (Oxford University Press, 1990).

**8. May 10: columbusday and Italian Americans**

Mark engaged in the columbusday protest in 2007. This was the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Columbus Day holiday in Colorado, was the first state in the country to adopt the holiday. Over forty participants from the Iliff community participated in the protest, and eleven students and graduates were among nearly 90 arrested. Mark made a deeply conscious decision to face arrest that day.

**Readings:**

* **B. Deschamps, "Italian Americans and Columbus Day: A Quest for Consensus Between National and Group Identities 1840–1910," in *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early Twentieth Century*, edited by Heideking, Fabre, and Kai Dreisbach, (New York: Berghahn, 2001), pp. 124-139. Posted on canvas. Penrose: GT4803.C45 2001**
* **Genevieve Fabre and Jürgen Heideking, “Introduction,” in *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation*, pp. 1-23. Posted on canvas.**
* **Huhndorf, *Going Native*, pp. 79-128.**

Other Recommended Reading:

* + - Angelo Noce, *Columbus Day in Colorado* (Nabu Press, 2010; orig., 1907-ish.
    - Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvadore Salerno, eds, *Are Italians White?: How Race is Made in America* (Routledge, 2003).[[2]](#endnote-2)
    - Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2003).[[3]](#endnote-3)

**9. May 17: Language, christian Conquest , the Social Imaginary, and Decoding Discovery**

* **Huhndorf, *Going Native*, pp. 129-161.**
* **Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 86-118.**
* **Steve Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land* (Fulcrum Publishers, 2008). Selections posted on canvas.**

**10. May 24:**

* **Huhndorf, *Going Native*, pp. 162-202.**
* **Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 119-151.**

1. See Albert Jeremiah Beveridge, The Meaning of the Times and Other Speeches (Bobbs-Merrill, 1908; reprinted by Books for Libraries Press, 1968). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Review: This book cuts to the heart of the similarities and the differences between Italian Americans and African Americans, which historically has been a volatile mix...I applaud this insightful scrutiny. -- Spike Lee  
   An outstanding collection... an all-around look at a group of people who have made a deep mark on, and been deeply marked by, the U.S. experience. -- Noel Ignatiev, author of *How the Irish Became White*  
   *Are Italians White?* works from a strong antiracist premise and follows the thread of progressive, activist Italian-American history into the present. The essays lay out a careful, nuanced account of paesani (and Afro-paesani) lives in a multiracial, regionally diverse America. Bravo! -- Micaela di Leonardo, author of *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American* *Modernity*  
   Reminds us what the study of whiteness was supposed to yield in the first place: the ultimate dismantling of racism. These thoughtful essays ought to be mandatory reading for anti-racists everywhere. -- Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical* *Imagination*  
   This exciting collection will forever change the way we think of the words 'Italian American.' Clearly provoked by the series of tragic incidents of racist violence in Italian American communities in the 1980s and 1990s, *Are* *Italians White?* is great social and cultural history. -- Robert A. Orsi, author of *The Madonna of 115th Street:* *Faith and Community in Italian Harlem*  
   This splendid collection sparkles as it surveys the myriad ways in which Italian Americans negotiated the vexed process of racial and ethnic identity formation in the twentieth century. -- Rick Halpern, author of *Down* *on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers In* *Chicago's Packinghouses*   
     
   Book Description (amazon.com): When Italian immigrants landed on American shores they were outsiders: dark in complexion, culturally different, and unable to speak English. Over time the vibrant community assimilated and moved from being ethnically suspect to being racially privileged as America divided into black and white.  
   This dazzling collection of original essays from some of the country's leading thinkers asks the rather intriguing question - *Are Italians White*? Each piece carefully explores how, when and why whiteness became important to Italian Americans, and the significance of gender, class and nation to racial identity.  
   From tales of immigration to the stormy relationship between Italians and blacks, the volume presents a dynamic, insightful look at integration, community identity, radicalism, urban politics and creative expression. The authors also explore critical moments in community conflict from the murder of Yusef Hawkins in Bensonhurst to Frank Sinatra's visit to Italian Harlem in the 1940s.  
   In the tradition of groundbreaking works like *How the Irish Became White* and *How Jews Became White Folks*, *Are Italian* *White?* is sure to become a landmark work that defines and adds to the dialogue on the distinct relationship that Italian Americans have had throughout American history to both racialized discrimination and racial privilege. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. **Review:** "White on Arrival gets here right on time. As we increasingly require histories that speak to the ways race has been made both in the U.S. and beyond its borders, Guglielmo provides a meticulous local study aware of the international flows of migrants and ideas. As we urgently need mature historical accounts providing the historical context for debates over affirmative action and reparations, he carefully and compellingly shows how Italian Americans both felt the brutalities of race and benefitted from the privileges of whiteness."--David Roediger, University of Illinois

   "How did the 'New Immigrants' of the early twentieth century become the 'White Ethnics' of the postwar era? In this exhaustively researched study of one immigrant group's encounter with race, Tom Guglielmo provides an unusual perspective on the everyday bases of racial identity, thinking, and behavior. He roots his discussion in the everyday lives of Italian immigrants and their neighbors and in the process illuminates the complex process by which Italians became 'Americans' in the racially-charged atmosphere of early twentieth century Chicago's politics, labor relations, popular culture, and residential life. An outstanding social history, White on Arrival also speaks to cultural and intellectual historians concerned with the idea of race and its implications for the cultural lives of common Americans."--James R. Barrett, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

   "Every time I think the 'whiteness studies' paradigm has crashed and burned, another careful innovative, illuminating study comes along to prove me wrong. Thomas Guglielmo's White on Arrival is just such a study. It is a deeply researched, richly textured treatment of both sides of a complicated equation: the ways in which it mattered that 'Italianness' was conceived in biologized, 'racial' terms, and the ways in which it mattered (and continues to matter) that Italian immigrants and their American-born children nonetheless shared a safe haven of legal whiteness with a number of other 'white' groups on the scene."--Matthew Frye Jacobson, Yale University

   "In this original, provocative, and theoretically sophisticated study, Thomas Guglielmo offers us the first substantive, in-depth examination of Italian immigrants, racial categorization, and racial identity in early 20th century America. Grounding his arguments and findings in extensive primary research, he successfully refutes many of the premises and conclusions advanced by the 'whiteness school,' providing an alternative and often compelling narrative and methodology for exploring the history of immigration and race."--Eric Arnesen, University of Illinois at Chicago

   "During the 1990s, a variety of studies adopted the notion of south, central, and eastern European immigrants as 'in-between people,' who were neither fully black nor white, during their early encounter with industrial America. While such studies illuminated racial formation as a historical process, Professor Guglielmo convincingly argues that such studies often oversimplified the phenomenon. Based upon a broad range of archival sources and oral interviews with Italians in Chicago, Professor Guglielmo carefully documents the white skin privileges that Italians enjoyed from the outset of their sojourn on American soil."--Joe W. Trotter, Carnegie Mellon University

   "A sophisticated and subtle analysis of how two very different notions of race, one grounded in perceptions of color and the other in nationality, shaped the experience of Italians in pre-World War II Chicago. Thomas Guglielmo's book marks an important advance in whiteness and immigration scholarship and demonstrates, once again, the value of community studies to our understanding of modern America."--Gary Gerstle, author of American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century

   "an important advance in our understanding of the racila dynamics involving early twentieth-century immigrants. A major contribution that deserves to exercise a major influence on the discussion of race in the US."-- American Historical Review

   **Book Description (amazon.com):** Immigrating to the United States, Italians, like all others arriving on America's shores, were made to fill out a standardized immigration form. In the box for race, they faced several choices: Italian, Southern Italian, Mediterranean, or Silician. On the line requesting information on color, they wrote simply "white." This identification had profound implications for Italians, as Thomas A. Guglielmo demonstrates in this prize-winning book. While many suffered from racial prejudice and discrimination, they were nonetheless viewed as white on arrival in the corridors of American power--from judges to journalists, from organized labor to politicians, from race scientists to realtors. Taking the mass Italian immigration of the late 19th century as his starting point, Guglielmo focuses on how perceptions of Italians' race and color were shaped in one of America's great centers of immigration and labor, Chicago. His account skillfully weaves the major events of Chicago immigrant history--the Chicago Color Riot of 1919, the rise of Italian organized crime, the rise of fascism, and the Italian-Ethiopian War of 1935-36--into the story of how Italians approached, learned, and lived race. By tracking their evolving position in the city's racial hierarchy, Guglielmo reveals the impact of racial classification--both formal and social--on immigrants' abilities to acquire homes and jobs, start families, and gain opportunities in America. Carefully drawing the distinction between race and color, Guglielmo argues that whiteness proved Italians' most valuable asset for making it in America. Even so, Italians were reluctant to identify themselves explicitly as white until World War II. By separating examples of discrimination against Italians from the economic and social advantages they accrued from their acceptance as whites, Guglielmo counters the claims of many ethnic Americans that hard work alone enabled their extraordinary success, especially when compared to non-white groups whose upward mobility languished. A compelling story, White on Arrival contains profound implications for our understanding of race and ethnic acculturation in the United States, as well as of the rich and nuanced relationship between immigration and urban history. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)