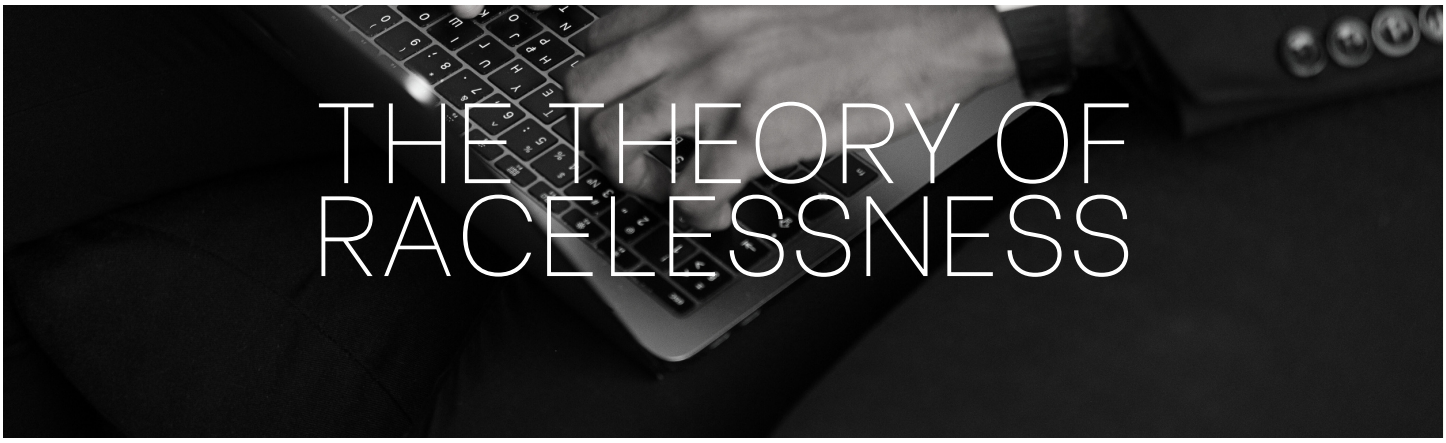


The Theory of Racelessness: A Foundation for JEDI Facilitators

As emerging JEDI facilitators committed to addressing systemic racism, understanding the theory of racelessness is pivotal. This theory scrutinizes and challenges the very concept of "race," the pervasive practice of racialization, and the resultant power dynamics entrenched in the belief and practice of these constructs. It represents a transformative shift in perspective, urging a move away from conventional racial categories towards a more intricate and inclusive understanding of human diversity, aiming to dismantle the root causes of racism.

At the heart of racelessness lies the critical view that "race" is neither biologically inherent nor a mere social construct. Instead, it highlights that racism itself is a constructed system of oppression, fueled by the belief in "race" and the act of racialization. This system is sustained by historical and cultural influences, not by any fundamental attributes of human identity. By deconstructing the notion that "race" is the problem rather than racism itself and challenging the process of racialization used to oppress or privilege, we begin to untangle the complex web of power imbalances sustained by racism.

Key tenets of raceless anti-racism for JEDI facilitators include:

Understanding Race/ism: Recognizing racism as a socially constructed system that thrives on the belief in "race" and the practice of racialization, reinforcing power imbalances.

Rejecting "Race" as Reality: Viewing "race" as a fictional component of the larger construct of racism, which is the actual issue at hand.

Examining Racialization: Acknowledging racialization as a process that imposes an inescapable hierarchy on humans, perpetuating power disparities.

Navigating Differential Impacts: Understanding that beliefs in "race" and practices of racialization have varied impacts, which serve to maintain the structure of racism and hinder unity, healing, and reconciliation.

Employing the Racelessness Translator: Utilizing this tool to reframe conversations about "race" into discussions about the impacts of racism, culture, ethnicity, social or economic

class, or a combination thereof, fostering understanding and connection.

Recognizing the Variability of Race/ism: Accepting that racism does not manifest uniformly across all contexts and can be eradicated.

The essence of racelessness for JEDI facilitators is the rejection of essentialist views of human division. It posits that to dismantle racism, we must first eliminate the deep-seated belief in distinct human "races." This theory introduces critical tools like the racelessness translator to rearticulate discussions about "race" into terms that more accurately describe reality, such as culture, ethnicity, or the structures of racism itself.

Furthermore, the theory presents philosophical tools to aid in dissecting and addressing the multifaceted nature of racism and its extensive consequences, with the ultimate goal of fostering unity, healing, and reconciliation.

By understanding racism as a systemic issue rather than an innate characteristic of individuals or groups, JEDI facilitators are better equipped to challenge the dehumanizing effects of racialization and advocate for a more equitable society. This theory calls for a radical departure from conventional anti-racist efforts bound by "racial" ideologies, urging us to transcend these limitations and envision a society free from the confines of race.

The Philosophy of Race

The discourse surrounding race can be broadly categorized into two main domains: the **Philosophies of Race**, which explore the nature and reality of race, and the **Approaches to Race**, which concern what should be done with the concept of race. Below, we break down these domains into three key philosophies and three distinct approaches:

Philosophies of Race

Naturalism

- Naturalism posits that race has a biological basis, with genetic differences among human populations that can be categorized meaningfully. This perspective often intersects with discussions on population genetics and evolutionary biology, emphasizing genetic variations due to geographical and environmental factors.

Social Constructivism

- Social Constructivism argues that race is a social construct with no inherent biological basis. It acknowledges that while race may not be "real" in a biological sense, the social realities and implications of racial categorizations have profound effects on individuals' lives, shaping their experiences, identities, and the systemic inequities they face.

Skepticism

- Skepticism challenges the very existence or utility of race as a category, questioning its validity and the possibility of defining race in a consistent and meaningful way. Skeptics often engage with anti-essentialist arguments, highlighting the fluidity and intersectionality of human identities beyond rigid racial classifications.

Approaches to Race

Conservatism

- Conservatism in the context of race suggests maintaining the current racial categorizations, focusing on improving conditions within the existing framework. This approach does not seek to dismantle or fundamentally alter the concept of race but rather to work within its confines to address racial injustices and disparities.

Reconstructionism

- Reconstructionism advocates for redefining and reshaping the concept of race, aiming to reconstruct racial identities and categories in a way that is more just and equitable. This approach seeks to redefine how race is understood and employed in societal contexts, often emphasizing the social and cultural dimensions of race.

Eliminativism

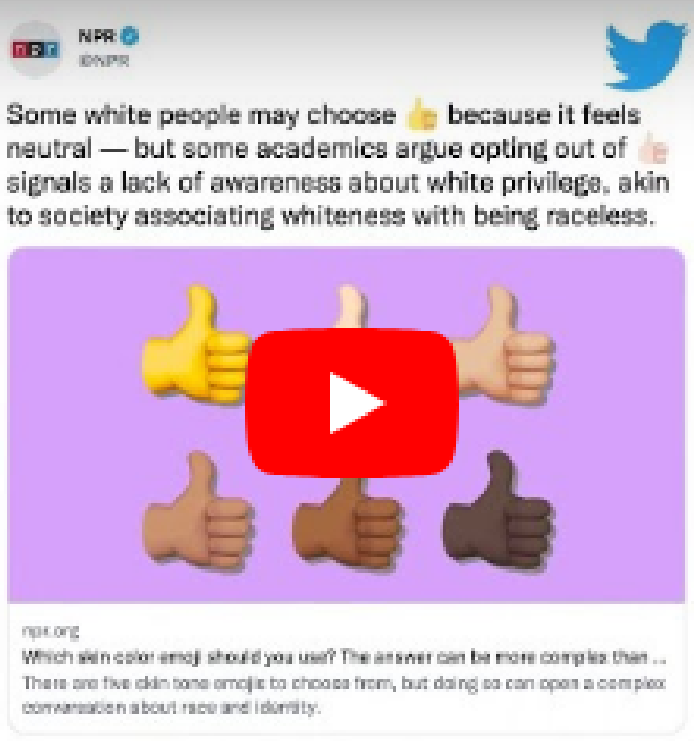
- Eliminativism calls for the complete abolition of racial categories, arguing that the concept of race is inherently divisive and unhelpful. Proponents of eliminativism believe that society should move beyond racial distinctions altogether, focusing instead on individual characteristics and universal human experiences.

These six facets offer a structured framework for understanding the complex landscape of racial discourse. By examining the **Philosophies of Race** (Naturalism, Social Constructivism, Skepticism) alongside the **Approaches to Race** (Conservatism, Reconstructionism, Eliminativism), we can navigate the nuanced debates surrounding race, its implications, and its future in society.

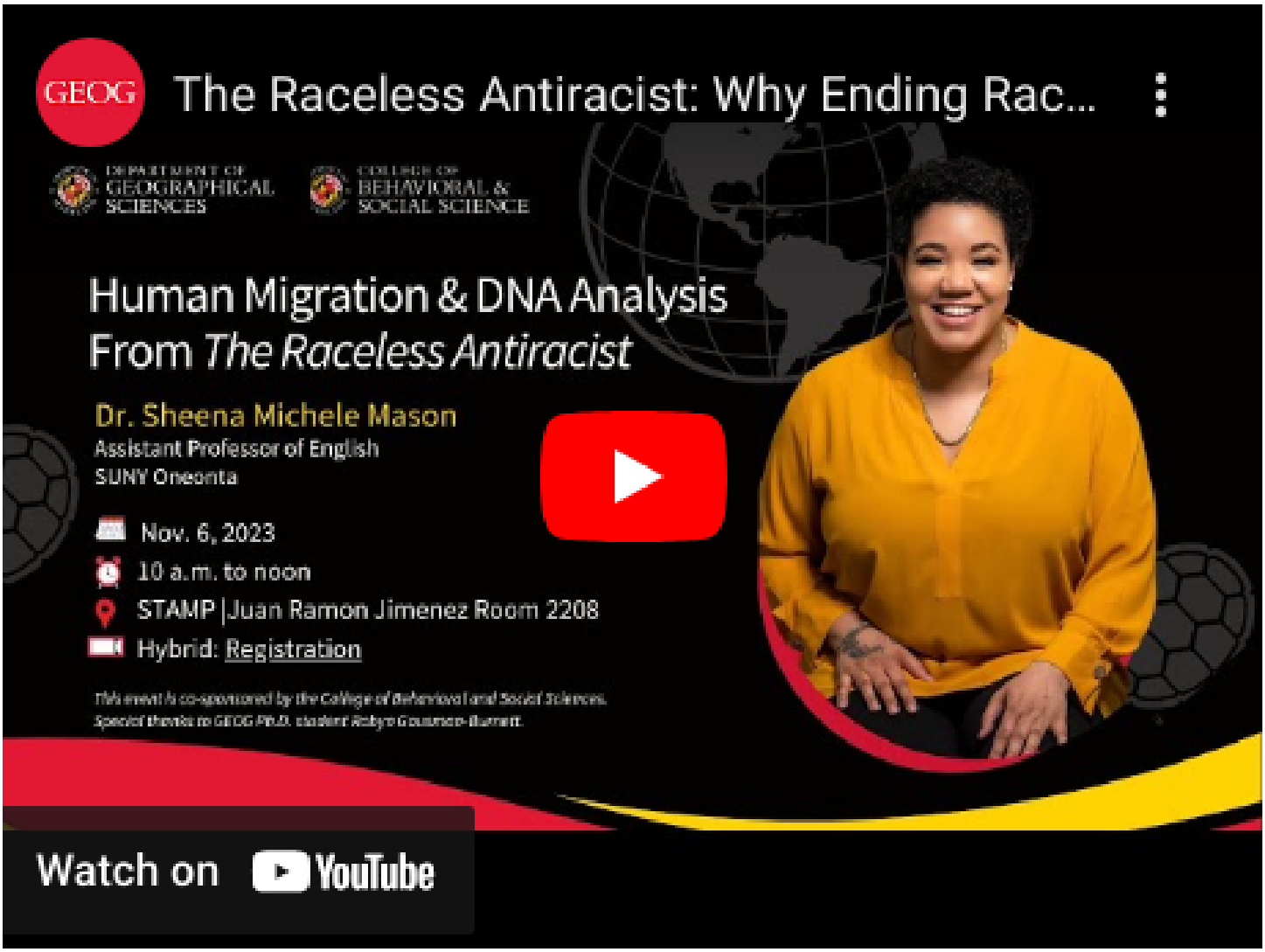
Sources

Theory of Racelessness

Dr. Sheena Mason Discusses 'Theory of ...



Watch on YouTube


GEOG
The Raceless Antiracist: Why Ending Rac...
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL & SOCIAL SCIENCE
Human Migration & DNA Analysis
From The Raceless Antiracist
Dr. Sheena Michele Mason
Assistant Professor of English
SUNY Oneonta
Nov. 6, 2023
10 a.m. to noon
STAMP | Juan Ramon Jimenez Room 2208
Hybrid: Registration
This event is co-sponsored by the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences.
Special thanks to GEOG Ph.D. student Robyn Gousman-Burnett.
Watch on YouTube

Imagine a World Without Race | Highlight
AN
ALTERNATIVE
TO CRT
WITH MONIQUE & KRISTA
UNITY
Watch on YouTube