

Spring 2022

## Debunking Misconceptions

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Semester taught assignment (if applicable): Spring 2022  
Course Title (if applicable): American Civilization I (AMS 1A)  
Assignment Title: Debunking Misconceptions

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Context: Provide approximately 100-400 words to contextualize this assignment.

Students will have spent much of the semester learning about the history of race in American culture from its beginnings up until 1877. This not only includes the history of slavery, but also the racialization of indigenous peoples and various groups of immigrants (including those today deemed “white”). Students will also have studied key concepts and theories central to racial studies, such as proto-racism, racial formation, racial justice, biological racism, etc. We encourage them to interrogate the concept of race as natural and to consider how race is ideological and how it evolves over time. We also explore how we behave, practice, and enact our lives according to these ideologies and consequently experience race as something that is real. Through this foundational historical and ideological context, they will have a vantage point to reflect back on how their notions about race have evolved throughout the semester.

**AMS 1A Final**

**Spring 2022**

**Debunking Misconceptions**

**Due Thursday, May 23<sup>th</sup> @ 2:30pm (14:30 hrs)**

**100 points**

*What sorts of insights, connections and questions have resulted from your participation in this course? In what ways has your thinking around democracy, equality, and race changed or been challenged?*

As you locate yourself within the texts and the instructor’s lectures it is our hope you will reflect upon the meaning of racial formation and its connections to American cultural history. As part of a larger discussion about the relationship between personal and social dimensions of identity, this exercise gives you an opportunity to understand, express, and analyze racial formation across different aspects of your lived experience and components of your cultural identity (personal, community, region, nation; race, class, gender, sexuality, ability) by asking you to contemplate

how this class added or modified your understanding of race and racism, social justice, and racial equality within the American cultural context.

Use this essay to reflect upon these aspects in an insightful, creative, and thought-provoking manner. To do so, first identify and describe two misconceptions you might have had prior to taking this course pertaining to the early history and development of race and ethnicity in the U.S. After taking the class, what do you think are the root of such misconceptions? Second, describe three key learnings you take from class that highlight the importance of social justice and racial equality to foment (visualize and materialize) an inclusive democracy. Think about how to best convey your reflection. Throughout the semester we have read examples of reflective essays. Feel free to model your own reflection upon one of these, or to compose something wholly unique. You are encouraged to draw upon your in-class free write/reaction journals and Canvas Discussions to ground your reflection within the themes and conversations of our course.

In order to motivate your reflection, think about the following guiding questions: What kind of experiences/learnings do you think have been the most significant in shaping your values for racial equality and social justice? What social experiences/learnings might have contributed to your misconceptions about the development of race and racism in the U.S.? What opportunities do you think you have been granted or denied based on your racial identity that either help you understand or not understand racial dynamics? What concepts have been most useful to your understanding of legal and economic ramifications of race and racism? To what extent have you changed how you think and act when you are confronted with issues of race and racism after taking the course?

You can answer all, some, or none of these questions in your essay. While we want you to approach this with the same care and consideration as you would a research project, this final assignment is more for you than for us, the instructors. Enjoy the journey!

### **DEADLINES AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

Your essay must be typewritten (12 pt. Times New Roman, double spaced, 1" margins) with references and quotations properly attributed consistent with MLA format. *Evidence of academic dishonesty on this exam will result in an automatic 0.* If in doubt, summarize, paraphrase, and cite. This essay should be no less than 4 pages long (in written form) + Work Cited page (5 pages total).

**Due Thursday, May 23 by 2:30 pm (14:30) via Canvas Assignments portal file upload.**

