Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2025 Volume II: History, Science, and Racism: The Long Shadow of Eugenics

Rethinking AP: Black Women, Anti-Eugenics, and Reproductive Justice

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This unit, designed for Advanced Placement African American Studies (APAAS) course will introduce students to a brief history of eugenics and its legacies, while centering Black women's histories and their fight for reproductive liberty. Students will learn about the history of eugenics as the foundation to identify eugenic behaviors and develop anti-eugenic practices engaging with the content and course itself. The content of this unit is divided into three historical time periods ranging from the 17th century to contemporary. In each of these time periods students will explore distinct ways eugenic logic manifests, evaluate changes and/or continuities regarding its function in regulating Black women's reproductive capacities. By engaging in both the content and course students will discover how eugenic ideologies have shaped dominant narratives and how it persists in educational practices; Ultimately developing a critical lens that empowers them to challenge and disrupt these legacies through anti-eugenic thought and action. While this unit is designed for APAAS it can be integrated in other AP courses, U.S. History, Ethnic Studies, and is easily adaptable for interdisciplinary teaching.

(Developed for AP African American Studies and U.S. History, grades 10-12; recommended for Biology and New Haven History, grades 10-12; and ELA and Journalism, grades 11-12)

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