

The Modern Color Line
HIS /AFS 277

Satisfies: USA

Thematic Concentrations: “Law, Politics & Social Justice,”
“Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities”

M/W 2:00 – 3:20 pm

Professor Mark Chambers

This course examines the forethought to W. E. B. Du Bois’s groundbreaking work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). As Du Bois prophesied, “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.” During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in the wake of such natural and manmade disasters – such as The Mississippi Flood of 1927, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the BP Oil Spill in 2010, Du Bois might say that intertwined racial and ecological crises are the emergent problems of the twenty-first century. In the *Du Boisian* spirit, this course aims to explore how the “color line” and the “ecological line”—the line that runs between humans and their environment—parallel, intersect, and veer apart. Such an exploration requires examining African American actions during slavery, post-emancipation, the conservation movement, the rise of scientific racism and scientific ecology as race became more significant in nineteenth and twentieth century America.