Instructions for Preparing for Class V

In our fifth class period I hope we will confront Social Darwinism and Eugenics in 19th and 20th century America. Herbert Spencer, a founder of the field of sociology proposed a harsh “survival of the fittest” philosophy. He is attributed with coining the phrase “survival of the fittest.” According to Spencer, it selection applied to people. Spencer applied to society the same principles that Charles Darwin saw in biological life- hence the name, Social Darwinism. The application of selective processes to humans took hold of America. How do you respond to our practice of Eugenics?

In preparation for the class please read the Khan Academy document on Social Darwinism in the Gilded Age. Glance at PowerPoint.

Outline for the Class Period

a. Social Darwinism and Eugenics (Fixing and selecting humans for perfection)

b. The US
c. Immigration
d. Eugenics
e. Racism genocide
f. IBM and Germany
g. Discussion