



University
of Basel

Department
of History



October 15, 2020
Basel History Lecture
**Skin Color and Race in
African History:
A Layered Approach**





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The Department of History cordially invites you to the

Basel History Lecture 2020*

Thursday, October 15, 2020, 6.15 pm (CEST)

Prof. Lynn M. Thomas
University of Washington, Seattle

Skin Color and Race in African History: A Layered Approach

At the height of apartheid in South Africa, cosmetic skin lighteners were popular and highly profitable commodities. During the 1980s, opposition to skin lighteners became a corollary of the anti-apartheid movement. That anti-racist activism ensured that today South Africa possesses – on the books, at least – the world’s most extensive prohibitions on skin lighteners. To explain how and why skin lighteners became such commonplace and contentious commodities in South Africa, Thomas takes a layered approach, an approach that reconstructs sedimented meanings and compounded politics. Understanding people’s everyday experiences of skin color requires attention to trans-regional histories of slavery, colonialism, and segregation as well as to the collateral development of consumer capitalism, visual media, techno-medical innovations, and protest politics.

***Due to the Covid-19 situation, the lecture will be streamed online. To access the lecture, please register on our website: <https://dg.philhst.unibas.ch/de/aktuelles/basel-history-lecture>**