Eugenics aims to ‘improve’ the genetic ‘quality’ of the human population through the control of reproduction and, at its extremes, through the elimination of those considered by eugenicists to be ‘inferior’.

Eugenics developed initially in Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century, but it became a globally influential movement by the 1920s. Eugenicists targeted people belonging to religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities, and those living with disabilities, leading to their institutional confinement and sterilization. In Nazi Germany, eugenic ideas of race improvement contributed directly to mass murder and the Holocaust.

This exhibition explores the origins, history and destructive legacies of eugenics, drawing upon the research of Professor Marius Turda. Today, eugenic thinking continues to see certain groups of people as less deserving of rights and respect, and forced sterilization remains an issue of public concern.

Continued education about and engagement with the history of eugenics, as well as its public condemnation, are essential components of our efforts to understand a hidden and tenebrous past, while at the same time, continuing work towards a fair and just society.