ETHN 200A
Departures: A Genealogy of Critical Racial and Ethnic Studies

Fall 2015
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Course Description: Enacting UCSD Ethnic Studies Vision
Situated in a region where the US-Mexico border zone, indigenous national and tribal
governments, and the Asia-Pacific interact to produce a dynamic geopolitical location, UCSD’s
Ethnic Studies Department is a vibrant community of scholars committed to the interdisciplinary
study of race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, sexuality, class, and dis/ability. The department’s
innovative approach represents a commitment to transnational, relational, and intersectional
methods for producing critical knowledge about power and inequality, including systems of
knowledge that have emerged from racialized and indigenous communities in global contexts.

Course Expectations

NOTE: Please email all written assignments to me by the start of each class, using
“ETHN200A” as your subject heading. Papers will be marked “late” if submitted after this
weekly deadline.

1) Participation (15%)
Active participation in class discussions is essential. Do master the weekly readings and arrive to
seminar prepared to discuss them in detail. Prompt arrival and seminar attendance is mandatory.

2) Precis (20%)
Writing précis—a brief summary of essential points, statements or facts—forces you to
read purposefully. The goal is to distill the reading to its most essential argument, which will
make it easier to synthesize and compare it with other works at a later time. An effective précis
retains the core essence—the logic, development, and argument—of the original reading, but in
much shorter form. It addresses the followings:
- What is the piece’s main argument(s)?
- What are its methods?
- Into what debates is the piece intervening, how and why, and for what ends?
- Why is it important?
Your skill lies in selecting the most pertinent points and eliminating the inessential. Do not add
personal commentaries or opinions.
* For weeks 2 and 3, please turn in a one-page double-spaced précis of one article of your choice
(from the week’s assigned readings). I will give you comments.
* For weeks 4 and 5, please turn in two one-page double-spaced précis of two articles of your choice (from the week’s assigned readings). You will pair up and comment on each other’s works.

3) **Response Papers (30%)**

Writing response papers helps you to read and make connections and articulate larger ideas across texts. Response papers treat the week’s readings as a group and indicate what conversation(s) can be traced between the assigned texts, and how these conversations disrupt, challenge, or extend formulations outlined in prior readings.

For weeks 6, 7, 9, and 10, for each week, you will craft an 800-word response to the assigned readings. These critical commentaries will serve to organize seminar conversation and debate (see guidelines below). At the end of your paper, please include at least two discussion questions that put the assigned texts—and, if appropriate, readings from prior weeks—into dialogue.

I will grade your papers for weeks 6 & 7. You will pair up and grade each other’s papers for weeks 8 & 9.

4) **Student Presentations (15%)**

Each week one or two student(s) will be responsible for leading our weekly meeting. Rather than summarizing individual readings, please format your presentation in a manner that puts the assigned texts into conversation.

**Guidelines for Seminar Presentations and Response Papers**

In your presentations and response papers, do not merely summarize the content of the readings; rather, please reflect on how the key questions, frames, methods, arguments and evidence of each assigned text can be drawn into conversation. You may use the following questions as a point of departure:

- What are the central questions that each text aims to address?
- How is the text structured? Describe its theoretical framework, methodological approach(es), and its relation to (inter)disciplinary conventions.
- What kinds of evidence are used to support the text’s central arguments, and is this evidence persuasive?
- What are the theoretical and practical implications of the work?
- How do the central formulations of each text relate to each other and to assigned readings and/or previous discussions?

5) **Portfolio – (20%)**

You will be required to submit a portfolio of your work in the class, plus 4-5 pp. assessment of what you have learned in the course.

**Required Readings**

**Note: Please bring texts to class**


2) Gloria Anzaldua. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.*

4) Reader on E-Reserve.

**Reading Schedule**

**Note: * denotes available on E-Reserve**

**Week 1. Sept. 30 – What’s At Stake?: Ethnic Studies and Ghostly Matters**


**Week 3. Oct. 14 - Writing the “Racial Other”: The Social Scientific Toolbox:**

1) *The Liberal Paradigm: Race Relations, Ethnicity, and Assimilation*

2) *Race and Marxism*

3) *Race as Culture*

**Week 4. Oct. 21 — The Cultural Turn, Postmodernism and Interdisciplinarity**

Facilitators:

Week 5. Oct 28 — What is this “ethnic” in ethnic studies?


Facilitators:

Week 6. Nov 7 – Intersectionality and Assemblage


Facilitators:

Week 7. Nov. 7 — Queering Ethnic Studies


Facilitators:

Week 8. Nov. 11 – Veterans’ Holiday – No Class

Week 9. Nov. 18 — Race, Nation, and Indigeneity: Ethnic Studies Meets Native American Studies


Facilitators:

Week 10. Nov. 25 -- The Transnational Turn: Borderlands, Diaspora and Transnationalism

Gloria Anzaldúa. Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.
* John Carlos Rowe, “Transnationalism and American Studies.”
http://www.theasa.net/project_eas_online/page/project_eas_online_eas_featured_article/
* Mary Pat Brady. “Border” in Keywords for American Cultural Studies, Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler eds. New York: NYU Press, 2007

Facilitators:

Week Ten. Dec. 2– Race, Violence and the Human


Facilitators: