Overview

There are two goals for this course: to focus attention on an area of research central to Ethnic Studies scholarship, and to conceptualize and plan student’s M. A. theses. Most Ethnic Studies scholars identify themselves in some ways as activists. Often they bring a background of involvement in social movements and community organizations to their intellectual projects; others place activist projects at the center of their research agendas; and still others scholars view their very existence in the academy as a radical act. We will spend the quarter reading studies of social movements for racial justice that represent a range of methodological and theoretical approaches. The readings offer a loose historical overview of numerous organizations and activists, while raising crucial questions about race, gender, sexuality, identity, community, and political strategies. It is hoped that students in the class will find ways in which this body of literature can serve their own research, regardless of whether the explicit focus is on activism. This course will also be structured to allow students opportunities to refine the topics for their M. A. thesis, discuss questions of method and approach, and prepare to embark on their independent research.

Required Texts

Books are available at Groundworks Bookstore
Supplementary readings are available on Electronic Reserves at the UCSD Library

Joy James, Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics (Palgrave 1999)

Julia Sudbury, Other Kinds of Dreams: Black Women’s Organisations and the Politics of Transformation (Routledge 1998)

Rumi Yasutake, Transnational Women’s Activism: The United States, Japan, and Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1859-1920 (NYU Press 2003)

Juana Maria Rodríguez, Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces (NYU Press 2003)

Dennis Banks, Ojibwa Warrior: Denise Banks and the American Indian Movement (University of Oklahoma Press, 2005)

Course Requirements

Students are required to read all materials prior to class and be prepared to contribute to a detailed, analytical discussion of the materials at hand. Twice during the quarter you will write a 3-5 page essay that links the main book to the supplementary articles/chapters for one week; you may choose any two weeks for your analysis. The essays are due at the end of the class for which the readings are assigned. Simultaneously, you will be working towards having a viable proposal for the M. A. thesis, which will culminate in a 15-20 page prospectus. Written assignments are as follows:

- Two short essays
- Project outline
- Project bibliography
- Project plan
- Prospectus

Schedule

March 29  Introduction; discussion of course theme
Overview of individual research projects

April 5  Early models of radical activism
R. Yasutake, Transnational Women’s Activism
J. Rhodes, “Emigration Furor and Notes of Canada West,” Mary Ann Shadd Cary, pp. 25-50
April 12 The culture of activism and its roots in the southern civil rights struggle  
C. Payne, I’ve Got the Light of Freedom  
**Assignment: Project Outline**

April 19 Translating civil rights activism for a Northern, urban terrain  
D. N. Pellow, Garbage Wars  

April 26 The politics of confrontation through Red Power  
D. Banks, Dennis Banks and the American Indian Movement  
T. Loo and C. Strange, “‘Rock Prison of Liberation’: Alcatraz Island and the American Imagination,” Radical History Review (Fall 2000) 78:27-56  
**Assignment: Project Bibliography**

May 3 Linking gender and race in activist movements  
J. James, Shadowboxing  

May 10 Race, gender and transnational women’s politics  
J. Sudbury, Other Kinds of Dreams  
**Assignment: Project Plan**

May 17 no class
May 24  “High Risk Activism”: The politics of racializing the queer subject
J. M. Rodriguez, Queer Latinidad
V. Taylor and N. Raeburn, “Identity Politics as High-Risk Activism:
Career Consequences for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Sociologists,” Social
C. Sandoval, “Dissident Globalizations, Emancipatory Methods, Social-
Erotics,” Queer Globalizations, pp. 20-32

May 31 Crossing the borders of race, sexuality, and politics
C. Cohen, The Boundaries of Blackness
Reading TBA

Prospectus Due Tuesday June 7