

Professor Curtis Marez
ETHN 289

Ethnic Studies and Critical University Studies

The term “Critical University Studies” (CUS) was coined in a 2012 essay by Jeffrey J. Williams and “focuses on the consequences of corporate methods and goals, like corrupting research and increasing managerial over academic control, cutting labor through reducing regular faculty positions (while increasing adjunct positions), and exploiting students by requiring them to work more and take on more debt.” At the same time recent work in Ethnic Studies has taken the university as its object of analysis, investigating universities as important sites of contestation over race, class, gender and sexual difference, or what Roderick Ferguson has called struggles over representation and redistribution.

This course will examine the intersection of ES and CUS, foregrounding the university as a terrain of struggle over forms of racialized and gendered settler colonial capitalism based on the incorporation of disposable low-wage workers and complicity in the occupation of indigenous lands. We will study university domination of land and labor not only structurally but also ideologically, in cultural forms such as film and other media representing campus life. Topics will include women of color feminism and queer of color critique as CUS optics; slavery, settler colonialism, and the early history of U.S. universities; research and knowledge production about race and other forms of difference; university privatization; the history and organization of Ethnic Studies; universities in the Middle East and the global south; student debt; racism, empire, and constructions of “academic freedom”; UCSD and the “Compton Cookout.”

READINGS

The following books are required and for sale in the UCSD bookstore.

Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (on order)

Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*

Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. González, and Angela P. Harris, *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*

Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*

Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*

Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class*

Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery and the Troubled History of America's Universities*

Noliwe Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race and Higher Education*

Additional readings are available as PDFs in a Dropbox folder titled "Readings" I've set up for the course:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/at3fl011wgpvz14/vdPdh0Cina>

ASSIGNMENTS

--Paper

Everyone will write a 12 page paper, on a topic developed in consultation with me, due on April 7.

--Responses

Over the course of the quarter you will craft a total of 6 responses to the assigned readings, due to me by midnight the day before class. Responses should be approximately 900 words and can be uploaded the Dropbox folder titled "Responses" at the above link. These critical commentaries will serve to organize seminar conversation and debate (see guidelines below). Please include at least two discussion questions that put the assigned texts—and, if appropriate, readings from prior weeks—into dialogue, and be prepared to raise the questions in class discussion.

--Presentation

All seminar members will make a presentation

RESPONSE AND PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

In your presentations and response papers, don't just summarize the content of the readings; reflect critically on the author(s)'s intellectual project, using 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 the text relate to issues raised in previous discussions?
- Taken together, what conversation(s) can you trace between the assigned texts in your reading responses, or between assigned texts and suggested texts in your presentations? How do these conversations challenge or extend formulations outlined in prior readings?

APRIL

2 **The genealogy of this course**

9 **Women of Color Feminism and Critical University Studies**

Introduction, Part 1 and 2, and Chapter 30, *Presumed Incompetent*

Grace Hong, "The Future of Our Worlds: Black Feminism and the Politics of Knowledge in the University Under Globalization"

Recommended: Jeffrey J. Williams, "Deconstructing Academe: The Birth of Critical University Studies," <https://chronicle.com/article/An-Emerging-Field-Deconstructs/130791/>

Presentation reading: Grace Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and The Culture of Immigrant Labor*

16 **Incorporating Difference**

Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*

Presentation reading: Noliwe Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race and Higher Education*

23 **Universities and Global Financial Crisis**

"The Double Crisis," *Edufactory Web Journal*, Issue 0 (Dropbox)

Presentation reading: Edufactory Collective, *Toward a Global Autonomous University*, <http://www.edu-factory.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/edufactory-book-en.pdf>

30 Debt

Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, <http://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf>

Marez, “Seeing in the Red: Looking at Student Debt” (Dropbox)

Presentation reading: David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5000 Years*

MAY

7 Culture Wars

Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University* (read the entire book but focus on the Introduction and Parts I and II)

14 Cultural Studies

Melamed, “Counterinsurgent Canon Wars and Surviving Liberal Multiculturalism,” and “Making Global Citizens: Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Literary Value,” *Represent and Destroy*

Cedric J. Robinson, “Resistance and Imitation in Early Black Cinema,” *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning: Black and the Regimes of race in American Theater and Film Before World War II* (Dropbox)

Presentation reading: Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*

21 Militarism

The Introduction and essays by Gonzalez, Oparah, Godrek, Gumbs, in *The Imperial University*

Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education*

28 Slavery, Settler Colonialism, Imperialism

Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*

Bascara, "New Empire, Same University? Education in the American Tropics after 1898," in *The Imperial University*

Presentation Readings: Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice web site, http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/; Gauri Viswanathan, "The Naming of Yale College: British Imperialism and American Higher Education," *Cultures of United States Imperialism*

JUNE

4 Academic Freedom

Essays by Salaita, Puar, Prashad in *The Imperial University*

Boycott documents, American Studies Association,
http://www.theasa.net/from_the_editors/item/asa_members_vote_to_endorse_academic_boycott/

Robin D.G. Kelley, "Defending Zionism Under the Clock of Academic Freedom,"
<http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/defending-zionism-academic.html>

Presentation reading: Special Issue on Academic Boycotts, *Academic Freedom 4* (2013), <http://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/journal-academic-freedom/volume-4>

6 Wrap Party at my house