

Monsters, Orphans, Robots (TEMP)

115

ETHN studies

Professor K. Wayne Yang

- Tuesdays 8-9p, location **Middle of Muir Café (MOM)**
- Thursdays noon – 1:30p, location **SSB 222**

Prerequisite: ethn 100 “Theories and Methods in Ethnic Studies”. More importantly, you should feel at ease with queer theory / queer of color critique, racial formation, and intersectionality.

This course considers dark agencies, queer threats, and how they seep through cracks in containers meant to disable them. The foundational framework is U.S. settler colonialism: how it structures race, gender, sexuality into a triad relationship of settler-native-slave with respect to land. This triad constructs intersections of murderability, enslavability, and governability, what we are calling: monsters, orphans, robots.

These terms work through raced, gendered, sexualized, dis/abled, classed, and de/human intersectionality without resorting to the usual categories of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, and citizenship. These analyses help us consider the differences between the normative, normative difference, and monstrous difference. I.e., how queerness and its monstrosity is different from gay/straight and other normative forms of difference recognized by settler sexuality; how some labor is chattel while other labor becomes settler; how the be/long-ing of the monster is different from the promise of a settler belonging; how blackness under settler colonialism is marked by its murderability, violability, enslavability, and desirability. We will also examine the possibilities: radical Elsewheres offered by Native sovereignty, feminisms, and black dispossession.

This class is writing intensive with an equally intensive artistic production component. Students must *perform theory* by crafting a musical production from concept to performance, for now called “UCSD, the musical”. This means considering:

- How UCSD is settler colonial, and how it conjures queer, monstrous threats.
- Where, when, and who the monster is at UCSD.
- What forms of monstrosity, wardship, and robot-assembly take place at UCSD.
- The desire of / for these monsters, orphans, robots.
- What it feels like to live and breath here.

Books – please purchase

Drowning in Fire by Craig S. Womack

Films/videos available on-line and through UCSD library reserves

- *Colma: The Musical*. Director: HP Mendoza. [reserves and Netflix instant]
- *Onibaba*. 1964. Director: Kaneto Shindō. FVLV 3309-1 [reserves, and open access on-line]
- *Set it Off*. 1996. Director: F. Gary Gray [reserves]
- *Oasis*. 2002. Director: Yi, Ch'ang-dong [reserves]
- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, "Once more with feeling" (season 6, episode 7) [reserves, and iTunes]
- Ima read. Zebra Katz featuring Njena Reddd Foxxx.
- *Taco Day*. Mr Len featuring Jean Grae. [youtube]
- Many Moons. Janelle Monae [youtube]
- Tightrope. Janelle Monae [youtube]

Articles & Book Chapters

Available on-line at ted.ucsd.edu or on-reserve at Geisel

Please print and bring current readings to class.

I recommend you make your own reader by printing and binding all the readings.

- What is needed is a glossary of haunting to combat a glossary of horrors. Eve Tuck and C. Ree
- a glossary of haunting. monsters, orphans, robots
- The viscera sucker and the politics of gender. Herminia Menez
- The Politics of Horror: the Aswang in Film. Bliss C. Lim
- Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities. Scott Lauria Morgensen
- *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense*. Kara Keeling.
- 'Ghetto Heaven': Set It Off and the Valorization of Black Lesbian Butch-Femme Sociality. Kara Keeling.
- A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. Donna J. Haraway
- Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: an American Grammar Book. Hortense Spillers
- Bollywood Spectacles: Queer Diasporic Critique in the Aftermath of 9/11. Gayatri Gopinath.

Additional poems, articles, videos, films, etc. may be assigned.

Assignments and grading - 25% each

- **UCSD: The Musical** – video and live performance
- **Final paper** – 5 pages
- **Mid-term Term**. To be included in "a glossary of hauntings".
- **Weekly writing**. 2 or 3 short writing prompts each week. These are meant to (1) help you think through the readings / lectures in order to develop a final paper, and (2) conceptualize and critique your musical.

Attendance & Participation – (up to negative 100%)

This course demands perfect attendance! In class discussion, I expect democratic participation that involves careful listening as well as speaking thoughtfully. Because everyone participates differently, it is fine if some people speak often, and others speak infrequently. Some people speak up more in small groups, others in large settings. However it is possible to over-participate, dominating the discussion without listening. It is also possible to be risk-averse, and not speak enough out of a sense of insecurity. Both of these will result in a lower participation grade.

My basic system:

0 = Student actively listens, and seeks to contribute to class discussion or group work.

-10% = Student often does not listen to others, or is often passive when opportunities arise to participate in class discussion and group work.

-2% per class = Student is late

-10% per class = Student is absent

+/- = In special circumstances, I may add or subtract additional percentage points.

Calendar

- The course calendar is available on-line on Google. I will email you an invite to add the calendar to your Google account (so you need a Google account – sorry).
- This calendar will be updated each week with the readings, writing assignments, and making the musical tasks.
- Look on TED or on Google calendar for the exact reading and writing assignments.
- Generally, writing responses are due Saturday at midnight, and Musical production assignments are due Sunday at midnight.

making the musical (overview)

The structure of the musical will be 3 main musical scenes, using existing songs that students will modify, sing, and record.

1. **Individually**, each student proposes a musical set at UC San Diego: description of plot, characters, 3 main songs and how they fit the arc of the story; cell phone photos of the locations for the 3 scenes; upload or provide a link to the song; lyrics; film artist / actor / producer / etc. bio.
 - 20 seconds audition video uploaded (optional)
 - request people you want to work with (optional)
 - nominate people for the stitching crew (event director, musical director, and marketing chief).

A jury will arrange students into small groups based on their proposals.

2. **Small groups of 4-5** students will share their ideas and develop a joint proposal for characters, plot, and songs. Jury members will comment on the proposals. Final musical (characters, plot, songs) will be selected by vote. Jury members will arrange students into production teams.

- Vote for event director, musical director, and chief of marketing & promotions.
 - Auditions for the lead characters.
3. 4th week – **Production teams of 8-10 will compete** for the best storyboard for each musical scene. Jury will comment, then production teams with best storyboards will be selected by vote. Event director, musical director, and marketing chief announced. Casting decisions for lead characters announced. Coaches assigned to each team. Production teams schedule rehearsals, shoots, studio recordings, and postproduction work.
 4. 5th week, 6th week, 7th week. **Final production teams.** Rehearse, record, shoot. Promote.
 5. 8th week. **Postproduction** Editing.
 6. 9th week. **Dress rehearsal**
 7. 10th week. **Rocky horror premier** of “UCSD, the musical” video with ensemble cast.

Cast

3 Leads. (probably 1 lead singer for 1 scene and backup singers for other 2)

Actors. Do not have to be in the class. Do not have to be students.

Extras. Ditto

3 Production Crews (one for each musical scene)

Director

Editor

Producer (make sure everything happens on time)

Art director (props, lighting, costumes)

Casting agent (all the cast except the leads)

Storyboard artist

Sound designer (special effects, etc)

Choreographer (if needed)

Camera person

Each role above has assistants

Grips (hold things, etc)

Lighting

Stitching Team (Smaller team that brings everything together. Makes transitional scenes)

Stitching directors (3 graduate students coaches)

Musical director (sound recording)

Promotion

Final show – event person (get audience to interact – imagine rocky horror – teach the audience the sing along).