

**DECOLONIAL THEORY**  
**ETHN 189—Fall 2014**  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:20  
Center Hall 223

Professor: Daphne V. Taylor-García  
Office: Social Science Building 226  
Mailbox: Department of Ethnic Studies, SSB 201  
Email: dtg@ucsd.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 3:30pm-4:30pm and by appointment

**Course Description**

“Decolonial Theory” is a title coined to describe the intellectual work articulating a broad rejection of Western European supremacy by colonial/racial subjects. The roots of decolonization can be traced to the first responses made by colonial/racial subjects as early as 1492 to the violence wrought by Columbus' shipmates in the Caribbean and can be found consistently in revolts throughout the Americas for the next 450 years. An important turning point in the history of decolonization was the successful Haitian revolution carried out by enslaved people that led to Haiti's independence from the French in 1804. In the following century, particularly after WWII, decolonial theory and action took a definitive form as colonial/racial subjects from around the world fought for their liberation and made explicit connections between the experiences of different colonized groups. A rich intellectual tradition was developed that drew on local Indigenous knowledge bases, but simultaneously and explicitly engaged Marxist, existentialist, phenomenological and other modes of analysis; pointing out each discourses' respective limitations while furthering their applicability to the conditions at hand. The deep skepticism to European supremacy expressed by decolonial theorists extends to the economic and social promises of the "American Dream," to the intellectual production of Eurocentric theorists, to standards and themes of gendered difference and sexual desire: it is an ongoing project. Just as the “linguistic turn” was a significant shift in Western cultural theory that critiqued the universal subject and sought to account for difference, the “decolonial turn” is a significant shift that elaborates the colonial divide in theories of embodiment, knowledge production, and economic exploitation, etc., speaking to the specificities of the colonial/racial experience.

Decolonial theory is a very large body of intellectual work. Thus, this course will be neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. Instead, the course will focus on two key themes that have been of particular concern in the contemporary moment: the “coloniality of being” and the “national settler-colonial question.” The purpose of this course is twofold: to familiarize students with central concerns in contemporary debates of decolonization as well as to continue to think through possible futures.

## Course Requirements

### 1) Class Discussion and Attendance – 20%

Seminar style classes are discussion based. So while I will lecture to help elucidate, contextualize or elaborate a particular concept, it is also expected that students will come to class ready to engage in a discussion. Please arrive in class having completed the assigned readings for the day.

### 2) Assignment #1 and #2: Each paper is to be 4 - 5 pages long. Instructions: Identify and explain a key argument in each unit's readings. Draw your examples from the unit.

First paper due based on Unit 1: October 28<sup>th</sup> – 20%

Second paper due based on Unit 2: November 20<sup>th</sup> – 20%

### 3) Attend a special event hosted by Ethnic Studies, Critical Gender Studies, the Black Studies Project, or the Chicano/a~Latino/a Arts and Humanities Program – 10%

Write a 1pg report of what you learned or what questions were raised for you from the event. Assignment is due within one week of the event's date.

### 4) Assignment #3: This paper is to be 750 words long. Instructions: Write an op-ed based on Harsha Walia's book. Follow these guidelines on how to write an op-ed:

[http://newsoffice.duke.edu/duke\\_resources/oped](http://newsoffice.duke.edu/duke_resources/oped)

Due December 15<sup>th</sup> – 20%

3) Class Presentation can be based on any one, or a combination, of your written assignments, *OR* based on a relevant work with which you are already familiar. You will need to sign up for 8-10 min presentations on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> - 10%

*Papers should be written in a 12-point standard font (e.g., Times New Roman), double spaced, and paginated.*

**Required Books** (*Book can be purchased at UCSD bookstore. All articles available on TED*)  
Harsha Walia. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Oakland: AK Press, 2013.

-Please bring copies of the readings to class.

-Please note: Readings may be edited or added depending on class discussions.

## Accommodations:

I would like to ensure this class is accessible to everyone. Please contact me as soon as possible if you require any specific accommodations for a disability or medical reason.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

October 2

Introductions

Discussion of terminology

Film: *When Worlds Collide*

## **UNIT 1: The Coloniality Of Being**

### Week 1

Oct 7

Film: *When Worlds Collide* continued.

Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein. "Americanity as a Concept"

Oct 9

Anibal Quijano. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America"

### Week 2

Oct 14

Nelson Maldonado Torres. "The Coloniality of Being"

Oct 16

Sylvia Wynter. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom"

### Week 3

Oct 21

Wynter, continued.

Oct 23

Maria Lugones. "The Coloniality of Gender"

## **UNIT 2: The National Settler-Colonial Question**

### Week 4

Oct 28

Lorenzo Veracini. "Introduction: The Settler Colonial Situation" in *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

**Assignment #1 due in class**

Wednesday Oct. 29 **Special event:** Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* will be speaking. Details TBA.

Oct 30

Hegel – "Lordship and Bondage" from *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Frantz Fanon – "The Black Man and Hegel" and "By Way of Conclusion" from *Black Skin White Masks*.

### Week 5

Nov 4

Glen Coulthard. "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada." *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2007, 6, (437–460).

Nov 6

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Excerpt from "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination."

*Prosveshcheniye* Nos. 4, 5 and 6, 1914. [Marxists Internet Archive]

Andre Gunder Frank. "The Development of Underdevelopment" in *Latin America:*

*Underdevelopment or Revolution: Essays on the Development of Underdevelopment and the Immediate Enemy.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969.

Lee Maracle and Ray Bobb. "Natives Are Part Of The Third World," *Canadian Revolution* No. 6, October 1976.

Week 6

Nov 11 – Veterans Day

Nov 13

Jodi Byrd. "Been to the Nation, Lord, but I Couldn't Stay There': Cherokee Freedmen, Internal Colonialism, and the Racialization of Citizenship," in *The Transit of Empire*.

Week 7

Nov 18

Andrea Smith. "American Studies without America: Native Feminisms and the Nation-State."

**UNIT 3: Decolonizing Border Imperialism**

Nov 20

Harsha Walia. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Oakland: AK Press, 2013.

Pgs xviii – 78

**Assignment #2 due in class**

Week 8

Nov 25 – Film TBA

Nov 27 – Thanksgiving

Week 9

Dec 2

Walia. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Pgs 81-202

**Sign up for presentations**

Dec 4

Walia. 207 – 283

**UNIT 4: The Students Teach!**

Week 10

Dec 9

Presentations

Dec 11

Presentations

**Assignment #3 Due DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup> by 1pm**

Please drop off in box at SSB 226