

ETHN 100A: Theoretical Approaches

Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 9:30-10:30; Thursdays: 12:30-2; and by appointment

Course Description

This course investigates the relationship between racial knowledge and power, paying special attention to disciplinary constructions of the “racial subject.” We will identify how these different disciplinary formulations of race and ethnicity describe racial “problems” and prescribe racial “solutions.” At the same time, we will examine racial subaltern scholars’ critiques of these prescribed solutions, especially the strategies of “inclusion” and “visibility,” as well as their proposed strategies for racial emancipation. The objectives of the course are to elucidate the power of language and discourse, and to develop the tools to recognize and challenge “common sense” assumptions about and solutions to “race.”

Course Objectives

A major in Ethnic Studies is designed to impart fundamental skills in critical thinking, comparative analysis, social theory and research, and written expression. These skills will prepare students to meet the increasingly rigorous expectations of graduate and professional school admissions committees and prospective employers for a broad liberal arts perspective.

Learning goals for ETHN 100A:

1. Identify a book/article’s central argument/thesis and situate it within the larger theoretical and political discussions in which it makes an intervention.
2. Read across texts in order to identify the convergences, divergences and contradictions between different projects and approaches.
3. Produce a theoretical framework paper that will serve as a foundation for ETHN 100B and 100C.
4. Critically analyze power and inequality in a comparative, intersectional, and global manner.
5. Communicate complex ideas effectively, particularly in writing.

Required Readings

Note: Please bring texts to class.

- 1) Linda Tuhiwai Smith. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Second Edition). Zed Books.
- 2) Jasbir Puar. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Duke University Press.
- 3) Reader on E-Reserve.

Course Assignments & Expectations

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| 1) Attendance and active class participation --see Appendix A | 20% |
| 2) Précis Assignment --Due date: October 15 (3rd week) | 10% |

Writing précis forces you to read purposefully. The goal is to communicate the main thesis and the major points in the most succinct form, which will make it easier to synthesize and compare it with other works at a later time. An effective précis retains the logic, development, and argument of the original reading, but in much shorter form.

For this assignment, please turn in a 1-page double-spaced (250-300 words) précis of Chandra Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes" that addresses the followings:

- What is/are the piece's main argument(s)?
- Into what debates is the piece intervening, how and why, and for what ends?
- Which disciplinary or theoretical conventions does the author employ and why?

Be sure to write in direct, assertive language. It must be written entirely in your own words.

3) **Midterm:** Nov. 5 (6th week) 30%

4) **Progress Report** of Theoretical Framework Paper 10%
Due Nov. 19 (8th week)

Progress report should be 3-4pp and should include:

- Clearly-identified area of research interest
- Annotated bibliography of the 10 texts that you will reference in your paper.
- Précis of *three* readings that you will include in your paper. Be sure to apply the

generative argument to your area of research interest.

5) **Theoretical Framework Paper** – Due Dec 9 @ 2:30pm (Finals wk) 30%

The theoretical framework paper is *not* a research paper. Rather, it is a *critical analysis* of the existing published research on a specific topic of your choice, which will serve as a jumping off point for further research. Your topic should be an *area of research interest*, rather than a specific research question. Your task is to identify, summarize, synthesize, and assess the relationship among different projects and approaches, and relating this research to your topic. The purpose of the assignment is for you to familiarize yourself with the research published on your topic in order to position/situate your project relative to other work.

The total number of texts referenced should not be fewer than ten, although students may focus their paper on an in-depth examination of 4-6 key texts

Length: 2000-2400 words (8-10 pages double-spaced)

Reading and Lecture Schedule

Note: * denotes available on E-Reserve

Sept. 24: Introduction

Video: "On Strike!: Ethnic Studies, 1969-1999"

Week 1. Sept. 29 & Oct. 1 – Ethnic Studies and Ghostly Matters

Orienting questions: What is knowledge? What counts as knowledge? How do we come to know what we know? How have different academic disciplines produced the racial subject? What is positivism?

*Avery Gordon, "Her Shape and His Hand," pp. 3-28 in Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minnesota 1997)

* Lisa Cacho. "Introduction: The Violence of Value" in *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. (NYU Press, 2012).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Introduction and Chapter 1.

Week 2. Oct. 6 & 8 – Power and Knowledge: Writing the Racial Subject

Orienting questions: What is the relationship between power and the formation of knowledge? What is epistemic violence? How are Africa and Third World women constructed in the Western imaginary? What is discursive colonialism?

* Achille Mbembe, “Introduction: Time on the Move,” pp. 1-23 in *On the Postcolony* (UC Press 2001).

* Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse” pp. 51-80 in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Indiana)
Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Chs. 2-5.

Oct. 8 – Doing Research in Ethnic Studies—A Library Practicum

Alanna Aiko Moore, Ethnic Studies Librarian

Week 3. Oct. 13 & 15 – The Sociology of Race Relations

Orienting questions: What are the differences and similarities between scientific racism and cultural racism? What is the legacy of the “race relations cycle”? How is ethnic studies different from the sociology of race relations?

*Robert Park, “Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific,” pp. 138-151 in *Race and Culture* (Free Press, 1950)

*Robert Park, “The Bases of Racial Prejudice,” pp. 230-243 in *Race and Culture* (Free Press, 1950).

Yen Le Espiritu. 1999. “Disciplines Unbound: Notes on Sociology and Ethnic Studies.” *Contemporary Sociology* 28 (5): 510-514. http://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class_web/ES-200A/Week%201/Espiritu%20ContempSoc28-5.pdf

PRÉCIS ASSIGNMENT DUE -- OCT. 15

Week 4. Oct. 20 & 22 – Culture and Power

Orienting questions: How does social science research construct families of color as “the problem”? How are race, class, gender, and sexuality mutually constituted? What is the politics of pleasure and why does it matter? How is culture a terrain of struggle and resistance?

*Oscar Lewis, “Introduction,” pp. xi-liv, in *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (1996).

*Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,” pp. 126-159 in *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965).

*Robin Kelley, *Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional!*, Chapter 1 (pp. 15-42).

*Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, Ch. 6 (162-192)

Week 5. Oct. 27 & 29 – Structures of Racial Capitalism

Orienting questions: What is the relationship between race and capitalist labor relations? How are whiteness and property interrelated? How has capitalism emerged in conjunction with and

made more efficient by patriarchy, racism and colonialism? How have immigration laws helped to produce a racially segmented and gender-stratified labor force for capital's needs?

* Oliver Cox. 1948. "Race Relations—Its Meaning, Beginning, and Progress." Pp. 321-352 in *Caste, Class, & Race*. Doubleday.

*Cheryl Harris. 1996. "Whiteness as Property." Parts 1&2. *Critical Race Theory*. Kimberle Crenshaw *et al*, eds. New York: New Press. Pp. 276-283.

* Lisa Lowe. "Work, Immigration, Gender: New Subjects of Cultural Politics." Pp. 354-374 in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, edited by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Week 6. Nov. 3 & 5 –

Nov. 3 – Catch up and Review Day

Nov. 5 – Midterm

MIDTERM 11/5

Week 7. Nov. 10 & 12 – Race, Sexuality, and Nation(alism)

Orienting questions: What are decolonizing methodologies? What is the relationship between ethnic studies and indigenous studies? How have discourses of gay rights become mobilized as emblematic of Western freedoms?

*Andrea Smith. "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy." *Global Dialogue* 12: 2 (Summer/Autumn 2010).

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Chs. 6-9

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, Introduction and Ch. 1

Week 8. Nov. 17 & 19 – Critical Global/Transnational Approach to Ethnic Studies

Orienting questions: How has sexuality been deployed in the service of U.S nationalism, patriotism, and empire? What are identity-based rights? How does sexuality function as an optic of racialization?

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, *Decolonizing Methodologies*: Chs. 10-12

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, Chs. 2-3

PROGRESS REPORT DUE NOV 19

Week 9. Nov. 24 – Intersectionality and Assemblage

Orienting questions: How do race, class and gender interact on multiple and simultaneous levels? How does the theory of intersectionality differ from the theory of assemblage?

* Kimberle Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*. Kimberle Crenshaw *et al*, eds. New York: New Press, 1996, pp. 279-309.

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, Chs. 4 and Conclusion.

Nov. 26 - Thanksgiving

Week 10. Dec 1 & 3 – “Remaindered Life”: The *Human* Question

Orienting questions: What is the “logic of exclusion”? What is the politics of inclusion and invisibility? Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? What makes for a grievable life? What are “life-times”?

* Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*, Ch. 2 (pp. 19-49). (Verso 2004).

*Tadiar, Neferti X. M. "Life-Times of Becoming Human." *Occasion: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* v. 3 (March 15, 2012), <http://occasion.stanford.edu/node/75>.

Review and Conclusion

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PAPER DUE WEDS DEC. 9 @ 2:30
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Appendix A
Ethnic Studies 100A -- Espiritu

GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVE LEARNING

This course is designed to promote active participation, critical thinking, and intellectual advancement of *all* students. Toward this goal, I expect you to be active learners and to take responsibility to teach yourself and your classmates. This requires that you unlearn ways of learning that are passive, competitive, and uncollaborative. The American philosopher of education, John Dewey, believed that collaborative or cooperative learning, and the potential tensions that may arise in this interaction, are critical to the qualitative growth of individuals. In the same way, the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire equates education with a people's triumph over the attempted "domestication" of their intellect.

Suggestions for Active Learning:

- 1) Attendance (should weigh very heavily)
- 2) Participate in class discussion on a regular basis
- 3) Write and accumulate study notes on the readings
- 4) Volunteer (in advance) to take responsibility (as an individual or as a group) to initiate discussion in class (discussion questions must be prepared in advance in consultation with instructor)
- 5) Come to class with written questions on scheduled readings
- 6) Meet with a study group on a regular basis (once a week, once every two weeks; each student needs to document meeting)
- 7) Visit professor and/or TA during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and in the readings; bring one or two classmates with you.
- 8) Contribute possible exam questions.
- 9) Watch a documentary film or educational program that focus on communities of color and share your reaction and/or critical insights with your classmates and in a written commentary to instructor (one paragraph).
- 10) Organize a student panel to dramatize/illustrate the issues of the week (through spoken words, talk show format . . .)
- 11) Notify the class of events on- or off-campus that address the issues discussed in class.
- 12) Bring in your favorite piece of music that addresses the class themes and share with the class.
- 13) Attend a community/organizing event and share your reaction with your classmates and in a written commentary to instructor (one paragraph)
- 14) Volunteer at a local organization; document your experience
- 15) Any other creative way you can actively participate in class.

Self-Evaluation: You are encouraged to monitor your own participation level, and to evaluate your overall participation and engagement at the end of the course. Please submit a one page self-evaluation of your participation in the course, and to recommend a "participation grade" which will account for 20% of your final grade.

Due date: Please submit your self-evaluation when you submit your final exam.

Some Criteria to Use In Evaluating Your Own Active Learning:

- Attendance level
- Degree to which I made conscious connections between different theories and explanations covered in class
- Degree to which I made myself available to classmates who needed help
- Degree to which I sought help from classmate or professor/TA when I needed help.
- The percentage of time I came to class having done the reading
- The amount of time I invested in reading, studying, and reflecting on the material
- The degree to which I engaged my classmates or professors in thoughtful questions and comments (including in office hours)
- Degree to which I consciously and genuinely employed the participation methods above to advance my own and my classmates' learning and intellectual growth.
- Degree to which my motivation for following these suggestions was grounded in my desire to learn and to grow intellectually, to facilitate my classmates' learning experience, rather than in a desire to impress others.

LET'S HAVE A GREAT QUARTER!