

ETHN 115:

MONSTERS, ORPHANS, AND ROBOTS

INSTRUCTOR: Hina Shaikh

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 1-2:30pm in Social Sciences Building (SSB) 250

EMAIL: hishaikh@ucsd.edu

course description:

This class is about orphaned pasts, monstrous presents, and impossible robot futures. This class is heavy on feminist and queer-of-color critique because we are imagining a future while being attentive to the here and now. We spend some time recognizing the monstrous excess of categories of race, gender, sexuality, and class. While these identitarian categories become the basis of marking difference, we look at the markers of difference within and around these categories that often become abstracted or consciously unmarked: dis/ability, gender non-conforming folks, transgender folks, folks undergoing various forms of incarceration, queer folks of color, and folks in formerly colonized/imperialized spaces. Rather than trying to simply represent the lives of these monstrous excesses, we do the work of imagining that is necessary to think beyond the present confines of structural institutions. We do the seemingly impossible work of listening for a liberatory future.

key questions:

How do we listen or read for the stories and lives in between dominant representations of anti-blackness, settler colonialism, Orientalism, and patriarchal systems of power?

How do we read and listen for resilience in the face of intergenerational trauma and healing practices?

accommodations

If you would prefer to be called by a different name and/or gender pronoun than what appears on the enrollment record, please let me know and I'll be happy to oblige.

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

Contact the OSD for further information:

858.534.4382 (phone)

osd@ucsd.edu(email)

<http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>(website)

food insecurity

Food insecurity is an environmental justice issue affecting many students at UCSD. I encourage all students who have trouble accessing food regularly to use the Triton Food Pantry on campus (check basicneeds.ucsd.edu for updated hours and location). Please connect with the Basic Needs Student Services if you are having issues with the most essential resources required to thrive which includes access to nutritious food, stable housing, and financial resources (basicneeds.ucsd.edu).

grades:

Participation/Attendance	20%
Tumblr weekly Blogging	20%
Week 1/2 Assignments	10%
Midterm	20%
Final Project	30%

participation:

I expect you to participate in class discussions. This class is an experiment on imagining a justice-based future. Participation can take many forms: active listening, speaking out loud, yelling, screaming, jumping, please just do something! While some students may participate more than others, we should aim for neither too much nor too little participation as both create a non-productive classroom environment.

media lab training:

You must complete the media lab registration. See last page of syllabus for exact instructions from our fantastic media lab. There are many options to record, edit, and transfer the audio you need for this course:

AUDIO RECORDING TECHNOLOGY:

TASCAM checked out from the media lab OR
your phone OR
checking out a small audio recorder from Hina

AUDIO EDITING SOFTWARE:

audacity.com

SCRIPT WRITING SOFTWARE:

youmescript.com OR
honestly a simple Google Doc timing breakdown of dialogue and ambient sounds will do

TRANSFERING AUDIO TO TUMBLR:

In most cases, you should be able to email the recording to yourself if on a mobile device, transfer to your computer via a USB cable, or use an SD card reader. If you're having trouble, please don't hesitate to contact me.

assignments:

Due every week by 11:59pm on Friday on the week's readings

You will be creating a Tumblr blog and curating content on your blog once a week in accordance with the reading's themes. Welcome to the year 2011 when tumblr was the coolest thing on the earth dot com. Please create this account as soon as possible and follow everyone else in the class on top of other accounts to curate your own tumblr account content. I will send out a Google Doc link shortly after the first class so everyone can input their tumblr addresses for easy access.

Your tumblr blogs must include:

- an excerpted quote from each of the readings pinpointing what you believe is the argument
- one thing reblogged from hashtags appropriate to the weekly content.
- an addition to the glossary of haunting
- 5-6 paragraphs connecting the week's reading to the following questions:
 - What are the haunted power dynamics detailed this week (with regards to race/gender/class/sexuality) that create monstrous presents?
 - How do you think the concept of "orphaned beginnings" plays in the readings for this week?
 - How can you listen for liberatory [robot] futures in the pieces/readings for this week?
 - Can you imagine a just future that holds accountability for monstrous presents at the center?

final project:

The final project requires you to divide up into pairs or groups of 2 or 3 and consider the prompt introduced in week two below.

WEEK 1: AN AUDIO ATLAS

Use your phone or an audio recording device and narrate a three minute journey of your everyday life. Pick one scene and record as much sound as possible. Pay attention to capturing ambient sounds that enhance the listener's engagement with your chosen scene. I encourage you to create as much descriptive sound as possible so that I don't need a narration to explain the scene.

WEEK 2: UNINHABITABLE EARTH: a practice in scriptwriting

it's the year 5300. The sun/an incoming asteroid (or whatever this article says: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20150323-how-long-will-life-on-earth-last>) is making the earth uninhabitable. unlivable. write a 2 page script and narrate it on the TASCAM/your phone/audio recorder. who are the monsters in your story? what are the ruins of structures of power as we know them and are learning about them in this class?

WEEK 3: COLLABORATING FOR A JUSTICE-BASED FUTURE

form groups of 2 or 3. This week's task is to start thinking about a final assignment in this course. The final assignment will be a group audio piece with equal parts for each person and a final 15 page script due along with an audio piece (audio piece should be between 15-25

minutes). Begin brainstorming a script draft. Your midterm is to turn in a script draft with parts for everyone in the group. Each member of the group will submit a 2-3 page double-spaced explanation with the final project detailing your experience with the project.

WEEK 5 - FINAL SCRIPT DUE

create a script for the final project: must be 15 pages collaboratively written with groupmates or individually.

WEEK 7

First draft of audio due to me

WEEK 9

Final draft of audio due to me

WEEK 9-10

Presentations and 2-3 page write-up

readings schedule:

UNIT 1: ORPHANED BEGINNINGS AND READING FOR IMPOSSIBLE GHOSTS: a case study in black and indigenous feminist theories

WEEK 1

4/2 TUESDAY

introductions, reading syllabus, setting expectations

4/4 THURSDAY

reading: Saidiya Hartman. "Venus in Two Acts." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 26 (June 2008): 1-14.

reading: "Haunting: a glossary" by Eve Tuck and C. Ree

listening in class: Alice Isn't Dead, episode 2: Charlatan

due by Friday at midnight: your tumblr post for this week's readings

due by Sunday night at midnight: create your audio atlas and upload it to your tumblr page. upload instructions depend on your audio recorder format.

WEEK 2

4/9 TUESDAY

reading: "The 'Botanical Gardens of the Dispossessed' revisited: richness and significance of Old World crops grown by Suriname Maroons" by Tinde R. van Andel, Amber van der Velden, Minke Reijers

watching in class: Season 6 of Chef's Table, episode 1: Mashama Bailey

4/11 THURSDAY

reading: "plantation futures" by Katherine McKittrick

due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements

due by Sunday night at midnight: 2 page script and narration of script on audio device and emailed to me

WEEK 3

4/16 TUESDAY

reading: three pieces from This Bridge Called My Back uploaded to TED
bell hooks, "Is Paris Burning?"
watch: Paris is Burning (available through course reserves)

4/18 THURSDAY

reading: "Race for Theory" by Barbara Christian

UNIT 2: TERRORIST MONSTERS: reading against and with the grain of the past
due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements

WEEK 4

UNIT 2: TERRORIST MONSTERS: reading against and with the grain of the past

4/23 TUESDAY

reading: Oyeronke Oyewumi. The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses. Preface and Ch.1

4/25 THURSDAY

reading: Njambi, Wairimu N. "Irua Ria Atumia and Anticolonial Struggles among the Gikuyu of Kenya: A Counternarrative on "Female Genital Mutilation" pp179-99 ed Oyeronke Oyewumi
Gender Epistemologies in Africa
watch at home: Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai

due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements

WEEK 5

4/30 TUESDAY

reading: "Monster, Terrorist, Fag" by Jasbir Puar and Amrit Rai
Listen in class: "LOVE LESSONS" podcast episode on Snap Judgment

5/2 THURSDAY

reading: Naomi Klein, Introduction to Shock Doctrine

due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements
DUE by Sunday at midnight: Final script by group to my email

WEEK 6

5/7 TUESDAY

reading: chapter 4 "Hunted Homespace" by Nadera Shaloub-Kevorkian

5/9 THURSDAY

reading: Jose Rabasa. "Allegories of Atlas" pg 358 the postcolonial studies reader
reading: Parks, Lisa. "Zeroing In: Overhead Imagery, Infrastructure Ruins, and Datalands in Afghanistan and Iraq," in The Visual Culture Reader 3.0, Nicholas Mirzoeff, ed., Routledge, 2012.

Media: Not a bug splat drone project, Decolonial Atlas Project online, and drone visualizations

due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements

WEEK 7

UNIT 3: ROBOT FUTURES: ableism, the construction of "normal," and fugitive futures

5/14 TUESDAY

AUDACITY WORKSHOP with two amazing producers from NPR! 😊

5/16 THURSDAY

reading: Nirmala Erevelles, introduction to *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts*

reading: Mia Mingus blog post

due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements

DUE by Sunday at midnight: First draft of audio project with ambient sound to my email

WEEK 8

5/21 TUESDAY

reading: Donna J. Haraway "A Cyborg Manifesto"

media in class: janelle monae's emotion picture DIRTY COMPUTER

5/23 THURSDAY

reading over next two weeks: PARABLE OF THE SOWER by Octavia Butler

due by Friday at midnight: tumblr post with all components listed in requirements

WEEK 9-10: presentations at location TBD

UNIT 4: PRESENTATIONS

DUE by May 26th at midnight to my inbox: Final draft of project

Note: *syllabus readings and content subject to change*

IT SERVICES EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT POLICY
Media Lab Checkout Room 111
858-534-4635
<http://medialab.ucsd.edu>

The UCSD Media Teaching Lab offers select equipment to all UCSD students.

Policy Basics

- Checkout periods are 24 hours. Friday – Monday counts as one day
- Equipment borrowed at 11am Friday is due by 11am Monday.
- Equipment must be used for producing materials related to coursework at UCSD. It is only available when classes are in session.
- The full policy is available online at <http://ucsdmedialab.tumblr.com/policies>

The Equipment



Available to all students: Canon XA10 Camcorders, Tascam DR-05 Audio Recorders, Canon 5D mk3 and Canon T3i DSLRs, Samsung Gear 360° Cameras, Merge VR Headsets, and Lightweight Tripods.

Checking out Equipment:

1. Go to <http://medialab.ucsd.edu>, click "FIRST TIME REGISTRATION."
Allow 1 business day for processing.
2. Go to <http://medialab.ucsd.edu>, click "RESERVE EQUIPMENT" to place a reservation.
Reservations may be made up to 1 week in advance.
3. Pick up equipment at the Equipment Checkout Room (MCC 111).
4. Hours are Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm.

