

**Ethnic Studies 120**  
**Race and Performance: The Politics of Popular Culture**  
**Winter 2009**

Wednesday 5 – 7:50 PM  
SSB 103

Professor: Adria L. Imada  
Office: Social Science Building 230  
Mailbox: Department of Ethnic Studies, SSB 201  
Email: [alimada@ucsd.edu](mailto:alimada@ucsd.edu) (best method of contact)  
Phone: 858-534-8935  
Office Hours: Monday 1-2 pm, Wednesday 1-3 pm, or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How have racial categories and ideologies been constructed through performance and displays of the body in the United States and other sites? This course considers racial formation through popular performances such as world's fairs, minstrelsy, film, fashion, and political protests. Nineteenth-century colonial exhibits like museums and ethnographic entertainment contributed to the objectification and commodification of culture. However, we will pay particular attention to how racialized subjects use performance to deconstruct dominant ideologies of racial and cultural difference and engage in forms of social and political mobilization.

**Required Texts** (available at Groundwork Bookstore, 452-9625, and on reserve at SSH Library)

- 1) Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels : Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: Free Press, 1996.
- 2) John Leland. *Hip: The History*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2005.
- 3) Dick Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Routledge, 1979.

There are also several reserve readings, available for download through the library's e-reserves system (<http://reserves.ucsd.edu>) Each such reading has the notation “\*” in the syllabus. **NOTE:** remote access by proxy instructions:

<http://blink.ucsd.edu/Blink/External/Topics/Policy/0,1162,24528,00.html>

**Requirements**

**1) Reading:** Students are expected to complete and comprehend the material by the beginning of class. By this, you are required not only to read the material but to read *critically* and process it, whether that means taking notes, writing an outline, or reviewing with other classmates. Please bring assigned readings to class. When websites are listed in the syllabus, students should access them before the class meeting.

**2) Attendance and Participation:** Since the class meets once a week and is discussion-based, attendance is critical and mandatory (see attendance policy below). Quizzes and writing

assignments may be given and collected occasionally in class. Film and media shown in class will not be available for re-screening.

**3) Writing Assignments:** 2 short writing abstracts (Due in class week 3 and week 6)  
Performance Paper, 6-8 pages (Topic due week 5; Final paper due in class no later than week 10)

**4) Exam:**

Take-Home Final: Due in my box in SSB 201 on Monday, March 16, 3 PM.

Late exams will not be graded.

### **Grading**

Attendance, Participation, Quizzes, and In-Class Assignments and Presentation: 20%

*(Merely being present does not mean one automatically receives a passing grade. Moreover, I reward thoughtful and quality participation, not quantity.)*

Short Writing Abstracts (2) 15% each (30% total)

Performance Paper (6-8 pp) 20%

Take Home Final Exam: 30%

### **Course Policies**

- Classroom conduct: Please be respectful to other students and the professor. The use of laptops is not allowed in class. Phones and PDAs must be turned off in the classroom. Please do not arrive late or leave early, read unrelated material while in class, or converse about unrelated topics.
- No early or make-up quizzes and examinations will be scheduled, and no incompletes will be given in this course. All assignments must be submitted to receive a final grade.
- Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class and must be submitted as hard copies only; no e-mailed papers accepted. Late papers will receive one-half letter grade deduction for each day they are submitted past the due date, and no papers will be accepted more than one week after the due date. Professor reserves the right to make copies of student papers and assignments.
- After one unexcused absence (absences without a doctor's note or other documentation), your final grade will be reduced by one half-letter grade (e.g., B- will become a C+). For two unexcused absences, your final grade will go down two half-letter grades, and so on.
- If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please bring a notification letter from the Office for Students with Disabilities outlining your approved accommodations.
- Students are responsible for following all oral and written directions for assignments. Please keep in mind that your grade may be adversely affected for disregarding guidelines. Ask questions if you require clarification.
- Your grade is not an entitlement; it must be earned. Furthermore effort alone will not guarantee a high grade. If you submit careless and mediocre work, you will receive a grade that correlates with your submission. However, continual excellent work will be rewarded.

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

Plagiarism is a serious violation, whether intentional or inadvertent. Easily recognized, plagiarism is insulting to those who take the time to read your work, but an embarrassment to

you most of all. All work submitted in this course must be your own and original. You may not copy sentences or paragraphs from books, websites, or any other source. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about when and how to use citations, please refer to this guide: Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Each student is expected to be familiar with UCSD's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, available at <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm#AP14>.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1. January 7. Introduction

In-Class 🎬: "The Couple in the Cage: a Guatinaui Odyssey" (Coco Fusco, 1993, 31 min.)

### Week 2. January 14: Race and Representation

\*Stuart Hall. "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. ed. Stuart Hall. London: Sage, 1997. 223-290.

\*Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," in *English Is Broken Here: Notes On Cultural Fusion in The Americas*, (1999), 21-64.

\*Richard Schechner, "Guillermo Gomez-Pena: Border Wars," in *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (2002), 257 – 261.

In-Class 🎬: "Bontoc Eulogy" (Marlon E. Fuentes, 1995)

### Week 3. January 21. Colonialism and the Displays of the Body

#### Abstract #1 Due in Class

\*Stuart Hall. "The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures," in *Representation*. 153 – 168.

\*Curtis M. Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893." in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine. Washington : Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

\*David Barboza, "China Turns Out Mummified Bodies for Displays," *The New York Times* 8 August 2006, online ed.

Websites: [www.mjt.org](http://www.mjt.org) (Introduction, Museum of Jurassic Technology)

<http://www.bodiestheexhibition.com/> (**Bodies: The Exhibition**)

<http://www.bodyworlds.com/index.html> (**Body Worlds**)

### Week 4. January 28. Politics and Culture

Robin D.G. Kelley. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. Introduction, Ch. 1, 2.

\*George Lipsitz. *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden History of Popular Music*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. 154-183.

- \*Cho, Cynthia H. and Anna Gorman. "Massive Student Walkout Spreads Across Southland," *Los Angeles Times* 28 March 2006, online ed.
- \*Suarez-Kelly-Anne and J. Michael Kennedy. "Student Walkouts Continue: Officials Vow Crackdown." *Los Angeles Times* 28 March 2006, online ed.
- \*Gorman, Anna. "Flag's Meaning is in the Eye of the Beholder." *Los Angeles Times* 29 March 2006, online ed.
- \*Gold, Scott. "Student Protests Echo the '60s, But with a High-Tech Buzz," *Los Angeles Times* 31 March 2006, online ed.

### **Week 5. February 4: Politics and Culture, cont'd.**

#### **Paper Topic (2 paragraphs, typed) due in class**

- \*George Lipsitz. "But Is it Political? Self-activity and the State," in *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Poetics of Place*. New York: Verso, 1994.
- \*Momiala Kamahale. "Ilio'ulaokalani: Defending Native Hawaiian Culture." *Amerasia* 26.2 (2000). 38-65.
- \*Adria L. Imada "Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire." *American Quarterly* 56 (2004): 111-149.

In Class 📺: excerpts of Merrie Monarch hula festival

### **Week 6. February 11. Fashion and Commodity Culture**

#### **Abstract #2 Due in Class**

- Dick Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), part I.
- \*Angela McRobbie. *In the Culture Society: Art, Fashion and Popular Music*. London: Routledge, 1999. ch. 3, "Bridging the Gap: Feminism, Fashion and Consumption." 31-45.

### **Week 7. February 18. Fashion, part 2**

- Dick Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), part II.
- \*Marlon M. Bailey, "Rethinking the African Diaspora: Ballroom Culture and HIV/AIDS Prevention."

In Class 📺: "Paris is Burning" (dir. Jennie Livingston, 1992).

### **Week 8. February 25. Queer diasporic performance**

- \*Jose Esteban Munoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Introduction, 1-34
- \*Martin F. Manalansan IV. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. Chapter 5, "To Play with the World": The Pageantry of Identities, 126-151.
- \*Gayatri Gopinath. *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. 29 – 62.

In Class 📺: "Tongues Untied" (dir. Marlon Riggs, 1989)

**Week 9. March 4. Blackface Minstrelsy and Legacies**

John Leland. *Hip: The History* (2004), Introduction, Ch. 1, 5, 6.

\*Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. Chs. 1, 2, 3-44.

\*Jim Windolf. "Ali G for Real." *Vanity Fair*, August 2004.

In-Class 🎬: Selections from "White Chicks" (dir. Keenen Ivory Wayans, 2004); "Da Ali G Show" (2004-05)

**Week 10. March 11. – Playing Indian**

**In-class presentations; Last Day to Submit Performance Paper**

**Take-Home Final Exam Questions distributed in class**

Richard Slotkin. "The White City and the Wild West: Buffalo Bill and the Mythic Space of American History, 1880-1917." In *Gunfighter Nation: the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. 1992.

George Lipsitz. "Mardi Gras Indians: Carnival and Counter-Narrative in Black New Orleans," in *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture*, Ch. 10,

Drew Hayden Taylor. "Whacking the Indigenous Funny Bone: Political Correctness vs. Native Humour, Round One." in *Me Funny*.

In Class 🎬: James Luna, "Take a picture with a real Indian" (2001) and "Petroglyphs in Motion" (2000)

**Take Home Final Examination**

Due in my box in the Ethnic Studies Department (SSB 201) by 3:00 pm, Monday, March 16