

ETHN 120  
**RACE AND PERFORMANCE: THE POLITICS OF POPULAR CULTURE**  
Winter 2012

Professor: **Maria Teresa Ceseña, Ph.D.**  
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Classroom: **Sequoia Hall 147**  
Day/Time: **Tues 8:00 am-9:20 am**  
Office Hours: **9:30 am-11:00 am**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Using a performance studies analytic, this course specifically explores how racial categories and ideologies have been constructed through performance and displays of the body in the United States and other sites. Coerced displays, such as those found in world's fairs, museums, minstrelsy, film, ethnography, and tourist performances have all played a part in the objectification of racial subjects and the commodification of cultural practices. However, the subversive power of performance cannot be underestimated. We will look closely at the ways that racialized subjects utilize performances to not only deconstruct stereotypical understandings of racial and cultural difference, but as vehicles to enter social and political arenas.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- 1) Mary Beltrán and Camilla Fojas, Eds. *Mixed Race Hollywood*. (New York)
- 2) Stuart Hall. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Sage)
- 3) All other readings will be made available through **ted.ucsd.edu**.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance/Participation.....	25%
Leading Class Discussion.....	10%
Critical Analysis Paper.....	10%
Documenting Visibility Project.....	30%
Final Research Paper.....	25%

This course functions as a seminar where you will be expected to perform close readings of all texts and actively contribute to class discussions with your thoughts, questions, and analyses. Grading will be based on evidence that students have completed the week's readings and are prepared to engage with the material. Each student will be responsible for presenting and leading one week's discussion on the assigned readings, and must complete a 3-5 page critical analysis paper on the readings assigned for that day (due the same day). Students will work in small groups to complete the class project on "documenting visibility." Additionally, each student will prepare an 8-10 page research paper that delves more deeply into one or more of the major themes of this course (due at the end of the quarter). All students must submit a 1-2 page research proposal and a working bibliography to me by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the quarter in order to receive feedback and approval of your chosen topic.

**SCHEDULE: (*subject to change*)**

**WEEK 1: What “IS” Performance? What does it enable?**

**January 10** Introduction/Syllabus/Class Structure & Expectations

**January 12**

Diana Taylor. “Acts of Transfer” (1-52)

Richard Schechner. “What is Performance?” (28-51)

**WEEK 2: Representation and “Other” Signifying Practices**

**January 17**

Stuart Hall. “Introduction” (1-10)

— “Representation, Meaning, and Language” (15-30)

— “Saussure’s Legacy” (30-35)

**January 19**

Stuart Hall. “From Language to Culture: Linguistics to Semiotics” (36-41)

— “Discourse, Power and the Subject” (41-52)

— “Where is ‘the subject’?” (54-61)

— “Conclusion: Representation, Meaning and Language Reconsidered” (61-64)

**WEEK 3: The Spectacle of the Other**

**January 24**

Stuart Hall. “Introduction” (225-234)

— “Racializing the ‘Other’” (239-249)

**January 26**

Stuart Hall. “Staging Racial ‘Difference’: And the Melancholy Lingered On”  
(249-254)

— “Stereotyping as a Signifying Practice” (257-269)

— “Contesting a Racialized Regime of Representation” (269-276)

— “Conclusion” (276-277)

**WEEK 4: The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures**

**January 31**

Henrietta Lidchi. “Introduction” (153-154)

— “Establishing Definitions, Negotiating Meanings, Discerning Objects” (154-168)

**February 2**

— “Fashioning Cultures: The Poetics of Exhibiting” (168-184)

— “Captivating Cultures: The Politics of Exhibiting” (184-198)

— “The Future of Exhibiting” (199-208)

**WEEK 5: Subject to Display: Museums, Spectacles, and Reversing the Gaze**

**February 7**

Jennifer A. González. "Introduction: Subject to Display" (1-20)

**February 9**

Jennifer A. González "Lames Luna: Artifacts and Fictions" (23-62)

**WEEK 6: Performativity: Constructions of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation**

**February 14**

Camille Forbes. "Dancing with 'Racial Feet': Bert Williams and the Performance of Blackness" (603-625)

Maria Teresa Ceseña. "Creating Agency and Identity through Danza Azteca" (80-94)

**February 16**

Victoria Pitts "Visibly Queer: Body Technologies and Sexual Politics" (443-463).

David Román. "Acts of Intervention" (1-43)

**WEEK 7: Mixed Race Celebrities and the Pressure to E(race)**

**February 21**

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam. "Stereotype, Realism, and the Burden of Representation" (178-219)

**February 23**

Beltrán and Fojas. "Introduction: Mixed Race Hollywood Film and Media Culture" (1-20)

**WEEK 8: Contested Terrains: On the Borders and Boundaries of "Civilization"**

**February 28**

Melani McAlister. "Introduction: Middle East Interests" (1-42)

**March 1**

Camilla Fojas. "Mixed Race Frontiers: Border Westerns and the Limits of 'America'" (45-63)

**WEEK 9: EA Heroes: Signs of Progress or the Post-Racial Apocalypse?**

**March 6**

Jane Park. Ch. 8 "Virtual Race: The Racially Ambiguous Action Hero in *The Matrix* and *Pitch Black*" (182-202)

**March 8**

Mary Beltrán. "Mixed Race in Latinowood: Latino Stardom and Ethnic Ambiguity in the Era of *Dark Angels*" (248-268)

**WEEK 10: Are We Moving Toward a Post-Racial Colorblind Society?**

**March 13**

Adam Knee. Ch. 7 “ Race Mixing and the Fantastic: Lineages of Identity and Genre in Contemporary Hollywood” (157-181).

LeiLani Nashime. Ch. 13 “*The Matrix* Trilogy, Keanu Reeves, and Multiraciality at the End of Time” (290-312)

Charles Gallagher. “Color Blindness: An Obstacle to Racial Justice?” (103-116)

**March 15**      In-class presentation of “Documenting Visibility”

**FINAL PAPER DUE: Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> by 11:00 AM.**

**Any papers submitted after the 11:00 AM deadline will be marked down significantly.**

## **Documenting (In)Visibility on the UCSD Campus**

*“The concept and lived experience of race are intertwined in a discourse of visibility that enables subsequent forms of hierarchy or oppression to become naturalized, that enables membership in communities to be established, and facilitates the process by which categorical distinctions become unwritten laws” (Gonzalez, 5).*

### **Context:**

How do you experience race on this campus? What do those experiences look like, or how are they manifested visually? How have your experiences been rendered visible or invisible? While race may be our starting point, we cannot think about how we experience race, without also thinking about how we experience class, gender, sexuality, and nation. Think about the ways your identity has developed as a student at UC San Diego. If you were to tell the story of the UCSD campus community in a world's fair exhibition, how would you tell it? What events, feelings, and experiences would you try to convey? What types of material culture would you choose to represent either your perception of self and/or the wider campus community? How would you represent the racial history of the UCSD campus for students in the future? What would you want them to know?

### **Assignment:**

- As a class, we will decide how you would tell the story of the UCSD campus community.

### Questions to Consider:

- a) Will we focus our narrative on certain events, on geography, on the academic curriculum?
- b) What types of material objects shall we include?
- c) How should we design the exhibit?
- d) What represents our experiences?
- e) What represents us?

### **Exhibition/Presentation:**

TBA