**WGSS 8800/Fall 2014 – Transnational America**

Wednesdays 2.15-5pm, University Hall 286

Professor Jennifer Suchland: suchland.15@osu.edu; Hagerty Hall 420

Office Hours: T/Th 12-1 and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is inspired by the idea of transnational America. It invokes many geographies, histories and crossings. Our journey this semester will be one of many possible across the lands and imaginings of transnational America. This class will not be *the* story but an invitation for critical thinking and provocation for ongoing questioning.

The impetus for the class came from some of my questionings. One: why is the United States made exceptional to the global and what erasures happen when the ever-present transnational is externalized from the “domestic” United States? Two: how is settler colonialism erased in (even) critical engagements with U.S. Empire? Three: what stories emerge when we think through different identifications to, passages through, and histories of violence in transnational America?

These questions will be addressed in the class but they are only a part of it. Each week will be an invitation to engage the idea of transnational America in a new way. Major themes include: the transnational connections and roots of “domestic” U.S. activism, including Black internationalism and Chicana feminism; analyses of U.S. settler colonialism and indigenous critiques of empire and progressive liberalism; comparative racial formations across the Atlantic; and the transnational circuits of U.S. diaspora and consumer culture.

Course Goals:

A key goal for the class is to have students learn the content of the various authors’ works as part of a dynamic conversation about transnational America. In addition, as the instructor of this graduate seminar I take seriously the following goals: to push each student towards greater clarity and articulation in their verbal and written work; to ensure that students are reading and writing on a graduate level and appropriate to the rigorous standards of academia; and to nourish a passion for learning and commitment to the importance of intellectual work.

Course Access & Accommodation:

We all learn and process information in different ways and I would like to make this course as accessible as possible. If there is something I can do to facilitate your learning in this class, please communicate this to me. I will do my best to address your needs. If you have documentation from the Office for Disability Services (614-292-3307; Pomerene Hall 150) for specific accommodations, please let me know in advance of your needs. With or without documentation, we can also meet in person or communicate via email about how to improve your access to the course.

Requirements:

Weekly Participation (15%): Please come to the seminar prepared to engage and discuss the material with each other. As a graduate seminar, there is no formal instruction with the class. Therefore, we will all need to be present and ready to cover the readings as a collective project. Generally absences are not allowed – please contact me as soon as possible if you will be missing a class. To facilitate in-class discussion, there is a Carmen discussion link set-up for us. I encourage students who are more reluctant to speak in class to use the Carmen site to share their ideas. Please post your weekly comments by noon Wednesday so that the class skipper and instructor have time to read through them prior to class. I also encourage students who are reluctant to speak in class to meet with me to talk about participation strategies. Engaging in intellectual conversation is a major part of academic work, so learning how to do it and feel good about it is important.

University and Community Engagement (5%): Please attend two events over the course of the semester and write a brief (200-250 words) synopsis/response. The events can be in the WGSS department, on the OSU campus or in the community. This part of your grade is meant to encourage you to be connected to happenings and people on and off campus. There is a Carmen discussion link you can use to post events as well as your responses. Please post immediately after an event (within 48 hours).

Short Papers (2 x 15 = 30%): You will write two short papers during the semester. One will be a reflection/analysis of course readings (1400-1600 words). This is an opportunity for you to rigorously engage one aspect of a text or to put authors in conversation. You can choose which texts to discuss. The other paper will be a formal book review (1500-2000 words) of one of the books from the class. This exercise will give you the chance to practice writing a book review and sharpen your analytical skills. The format for the book review will be provided.

Class Skipper (20%): While I expect all students to have a grasp of the readings for each class, once during the semester you will be asked to make special preparations in order to serve as the class skipper. In addition to crafting a summary document (which I will detail on the first day of class – there are four components required), you are asked to take particular care in steering discussion towards a clear understanding and discussion of the author’s work.

Final Project (30%): In consultation with me, you will choose a final project that best fits your current intellectual trajectory and stage in graduate school. Possible projects include: conference paper; annotated bibliography; or research paper. Projects should engage course material in some fashion.

Course Readings and Plan

The following books should be purchased or borrowed:

Blackwell, Maylei.  2011.  *Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Briggs, Laura.  2002.  *Reproducing Empire: race, sex, science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Byrd, Jodi.  2011.  *The Transit of Empire: indigenous critiques of colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Grewal, Inderpal.  2005.  *Transnational America: feminisms, diasporas, neoliberalisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Higashida, Cheryl.  2011.  *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Morgensen, Scott Lauria.  2011.  *spaces between us: queer settler colonialism and indigenous decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ngai, Mae. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stam, Robert and Ella Shohat.  2012.  *Race in Translation: Culture Wars Around the Postcolonial Atlantic.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Von Eschen, Penny.  1997.  *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

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August 27 – introduction to the course and each other

September 3 – selection of essays available on Carmen

- Arif Dirlik (2004) “American Studies in the time of Empire.” *Comparative American Studies* 2(3):287-302.

- Lisa Kahaleole Hall (2008) “Strategies of Erasure: U.S. Colonialism and Native Hawaiian Feminism.” *American Quarterly* 60(2):273-280.

- Roderick Feruson (2011) “The Lateral Moves of African American Studies in a Period of Migration.” In, Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick Ferguson (eds). *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*.

- James Sweet (1997) “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54(1):143-166.

- Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein (1992) “Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system.” *International Social Science Journal* 29.

Recommended:

- Chandan Reddy (2014) “Critical Ethnic Studies.” *Kalfou* 1(1) [online]

- Ella Shohat and Robert Stam. 1994. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. Chapters 1-2.

-Ella Shohat (1992) “Notes on the ‘Post-Colonial’” *Social Text* 31/32

- Greg Grandin, "Your Americanism and Mine: Americanism and Anti-Americanism in the Americas" *The American Historical Review* 111 no. 4 (October 2006): 1042-1066.

September 10 – Jodi Byrd. *The Transit of Empire* (Intro; chapters 1; 4-6)

September 17 – Scott Lauria Morgensen. *spaces between us* (Intro; chapters 1-2)

September 24 – Scott Lauria Morgensen. *spaces between us* (chapters 3-6, epilogue)

October 1 – Mae Ngai. *Impossible Subjects*.

October 8 – Maylei Blackwell. *Chicana Power!*

October 15 – Penny Von Eschen. *Race against Empire*.

October 22 – Cheryl Higashida. *Black Internationalist Feminism*. **\*\* Paper #1 due Friday**

October 29 – Laura Briggs. *Reproducing Empire*.

November 5 – Robert Stam and Ella Shohat. *Race in Translation* (chapters 1-5)

November 12 – NWSA conference [no class] \*\* Final project plan finalized

November 19 – Robert Stam and Ella Shohat. *Race in Translation* (chapters 6-9)

November 26 – Thanksgiving Break **Paper #2 due Monday December 1**

December 3 – Inderpal Grewal. *Transnational America*.