Theorizing Race & Sexuality
WGSS 7710
Spring 2013

As a core course in the WGSS graduate curriculum, this course aims to offer a grounding in the rich field of scholarship theorizing race and sexuality. Given the wide variety of backgrounds in the seminar, I have developed this schematic: 1) so-called “foundational” texts from 1960s-1980s; 2) recent meta-accounts of the fields, including an examination of the concept of “intersectionality;” 3) recent scholarship from queer studies, critical ethnic studies, race theory, and sexuality studies. As we move through this trajectory, we will simultaneously explore the political, ethical and methodological dimensions of studying race and sexuality, particularly as historical and contemporary identity categories intersect and constitute one another.

Required Texts:
[All available at SBX]
Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (Grove: 2008)
Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality, Volume 1 (Vintage: 1990)
Robyn Wiegman, Object Lessons (Duke: 2012)
Roderick Ferguson, The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference (Minnesota: 2012)

Course Readings on Carmen

Course Requirements:
Class participation (25%)
Critical participation in this seminar is essential to the success of both the seminar and the individual student. This means I expect each of us to arrive at each class meeting fully prepared to enter our ongoing discussion. To be fully prepared means one has completed the reading, taken some time to reflect on it, and formulated some questions, themes, dynamics to discuss in the seminar. It also requires speaking up and engaging the conversation of the seminar. More than two unexcused absences will lower your participation score by a grade per absence.
Co-facilitate discussion (10%)
Beginning with readings for February 5th, please choose a date to co-lead the seminar. To do so effectively, you must collaborate with your co-leader to prepare a brief overview of the reading(s) that will generate the seminar’s discussion. This does not mean a simple summary of the arguments. Rather, facilitators should put the readings into dialogue with our ongoing discussion, offer some context for the specific readings, and focus on the most interesting, complex, and/or provocative aspects of the texts. Remember, the task here is facilitate, not dominate or direct, the discussion.

Essay #1 (25%)
In 2000-2500 beautifully written words, engage Weigman and Ferguson on the state of academic scholarship on “difference.” What about their arguments do you find most provocative? What is most problematic? And what might it mean for future scholarship in these fields?

Final Paper (35%) and Presentation (5%)
A 3250-3750 word analysis of what you find to be the most methodologically, epistemologically, and politically effective feminist strategy for conceptualizing difference. While you must engage positions developed in the course, I encourage you also to draw on material beyond it. You should also be as concrete and specific as possible, perhaps using a prolonged example/case-study to make your argument. I encourage, but do not require, you to discuss the topic with me before beginning research.

In addition to completing this written assignment, students must also give a short presentation (about 5-7 minutes) that offers the main arguments of her/his paper for critical discussion/feedback in class on April 16th.

Late Assignments: Any late assignment will be deducted 1/3 of a grade for every day or fraction of a day that it is late. For example, an otherwise “A” paper that is turned in after the due time but not more than one day late will be marked as “A-”; the paper will be marked as “B+” if it is up to two days late, and so on.

Academic Integrity:
As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” In accordance with university rules, I will report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Accessibility: I am committed to making the classroom accessible to all enrolled students and would like to be informed of any needs as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services offers services for students with documented disabilities. They are located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.
Schedule of Readings:

January
8   -   course introduction

*Early Important Texts in Race & Sexuality*
15   -   Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*
22   -   Foucault, “Discourse on Language”
        Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”
        Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume One*
29   -   Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex” (*Lesbian/Gay Studies Reader*)
        Joan Scott, “Evidence of Experience” (*Lesbian/Gay Studies Reader*)
        Gloria Anzaldúa, “La consciencia de mestiza/Towards a New
        Consciousness” (*Borderlands/La Frontera*)
        Norma Alarcón, “Theoretical Subject(s) of *This Bridge Called My Back*
        and Anglo-American Feminism” (*The Second Wave: A Reader in
        Feminist Theory*)
        Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers and Welfare Queens: The Radical
        Potential of Queer Politics?” (*Black Queer Studies Reader*)

February
5   -   Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection” & “Mapping the
        Margins”
        Judith Butler, “Against Proper Objects”
        Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality,” *Signs* 30:3 (Spring
        2005): 1771-800.
        Kathleen Guidroz and Michele Tracy Berger, “A Conversation with
        Founding Scholars on Intersectionality: Kimberle Crenshaw, Nira
        Yuval-Davis, and Michelle Fine,” in *The Intersectional Approach:*
        *Transforming the Academy through Race, Class & Gender* (UNC
        2009), pp. 61-78.
12   -   class canceled

*Recent Assessments of the Field*
19   -   Wiegman, *Object Lessons*: Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6
26   -   Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*
March

Essay #1 Due March 4th in my box in 286 University Hall

Recent Scholarship Across Methodologies
5  - Margot Canady, *The Straight State*
Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, “Imperial Desire/Sexual
Utopias: White Gay Capital and Transnational Tourism”

12  - Spring Break

19  - *Strange Affinities*: Introduction, Essays 2, 5, 12
Roderick Ferguson, “Race-ing Homonormativity: Citizenship, Sociology,
and Gay Identity”

25  - Cindy Weber: *I Am an American: Filming the Fear of Difference*
screening & discussion

26  - Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*: Introduction, Chapters 1-2,
Conclusion

April

2  - Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*: Introduction, Part II, Conclusion
(recommend Part I and Interlude)

9  - Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, Introduction, Chapters 1-3,
Epilogue

13  - Human Rights Conference

16  - final paper presentations

Final Paper due Friday, April 26th, 2 pm – as scheduled by OSU