

CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF RACE AND ETHNICITY
American Studies 503

Dr. Mary Bloodsworth-Lugo
Spring 2009
W 6:00-9:00
CUE 218

Office: Wilson-Short 120
Hours: TTh 1:00-2:30
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Course Description:

This course will focus on major theoretical readings and key recent texts in U.S. and transnational ethnic studies scholarship. The following quotes will serve as guides for the semester:

Unfortunately, the U.S. government's policy on what it is that makes an Indian an Indian is a divide-and-conquer policy that involves blood quantum and whether or not a person is listed on tribal rolls.... It is a policy that pointedly ignores the tragic history of Turtle Island and why so many Indians are mixed-bloods, especially on the East Coast. (Susan Clements, "Five Arrows" in *American Mixed Race*)

The peculiar contract to which I am referring, though based on the social contract tradition that has been central to Western political theory, is not a contract between everybody ("we the people"), but between just the people who count, the people who really are people ("we the white people"). So it is a Racial Contract. (Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*)

According to definitions common in the United States, I am a light-skinned Latina with European features and hair texture. I was born and raised in New York City; my first language was Spanish; and I am today bilingual. I cannot remember when I first realized that the color of one's skin, the texture of one's hair, or the case of one's features determined how one was treated in both my Spanish-language and English-language worlds. I do know that it was before I understood that accents, surnames, residence, class, and clothing also determined how one was treated. (Clara E. Rodríguez, *Changing Race*)

As I have documented elsewhere, one of the most amazing things about the bibliographical work on philosophy published in English over the last decade or so is its utter silence about Latin American philosophy and philosophers. (Eduardo Mendieta, *Latin American Philosophy*)

Racial globalism, racial difference, and racial justice are among our most fundamental political challenges. The modern epoch was founded on European imperialism and African slavery. Both these systems were organized racially. The theft of labor and life, of land and resources, from millions of Africans and Native Americans, and from Asians and Pacific Islanders as well, financed the rise of Europe and made possible both its subsequent mercantilism and its later industrialism. (Howard Winant, *The New Politics of Race*)

The reality of identities often comes from the fact that they are visibly marked on the body itself, guiding if not determining the way we perceive and judge others and are perceived and judged by them. The road to freedom from the capriciousness of arbitrary identity designations lies not... in an attempt at a speedy dissolution of identity—a proposal that all too often conceals a willful ignorance about the real-world effects of identity—but through a careful exploration of identity, which can reveal its influence on what we can see and know, as well as its context dependence and its complex and fluid nature. (Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities*)

Texts:

- *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, edited by Naomi Zack. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 1995. (ISBN# 0-8476-8013-4)
- *The Racial Contract*, by Charles W. Mills. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1997. (ISBN# 0-8014-8463-4)
- *Changing Race: Latinos, the Census, and the History of Ethnicity in the United States*, by Clara E. Rodríguez. 2000. (ISBN# 0-8147-7547-0)

- *Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates*, edited by Eduardo Mendieta. 2003. (ISBN# 0-253-21563-3)
- *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice*, by Howard Winant. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 2004. (ISBN# 0-8166-4280-X)
- *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*, by Linda Martin Alcoff. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 2006. (ISBN# 0-19-513735-3)

Course Requirements (1000 possible points):

- *Class Participation and Response Papers:* It is expected that all members of the class will have completed readings prior to seminar time and will contribute to discussion of seminar material. Class members are asked to write weekly response papers of 1-2 pages on the assigned readings. I will collect response papers 5 times during the semester for 40 possible points each. **(200 points in total)**
- *Serving as Presenter:* Members of the class will be responsible for presenting readings at scheduled sessions twice during the semester. Presenters should be prepared with a summary, analysis, and/or critique of the readings, as well as ties between the readings and related course material, and knowledge of outside sources. Each seminar will be divided into two sections (A and B; before break and after break). Presentations for each section should be 25-30 minutes long. **(150 points each = 300 points)**
- *Acting as Discussant:* Members of the class will serve as discussants for two seminars during the semester. Discussants should take 5-10 minutes for each seminar section (A and B) to offer responses, critiques, and additions to the work of presenters. **(50 points each = 100 points)**
- *Research Paper:* Members of the class will write a final research paper. This assignment is open to allow students room to pursue research most relevant to thesis/dissertation interests. The paper should be related to the course content, but may take a variety of forms and foci. **(400 points)**

Disability Accommodation: Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodation to be unavailable. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center in the Administrative Annex 206, 335-1566 (voice or TDD).

SCHEDULE AND READINGS:

Seminar 1, January 14:

Introduction

Seminar 2, January 21:

***American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, edited by Naomi Zack**

A. 1. Autobiography

- “Five Arrows,” Susan Clements (3-11)
- “Color Fades Over Time,” Brunetta R. Wolfman (13-23)
- “Racelessness,” Cecile Ann Lawrence (25-37)
- “Check the Box that Best Describes You,” Zena Moore (39-51)
- “What Are They?,” Stephen Satris (53-60)

B. 2. Art

- “From Melodrama to the Movies,” Freda Scott Giles (63-78)
- “The Theater of Identity,” Teresa Kay Williams (79-96)
- “The Go-Between People,” Carol Roh Spaulding (97-112)

3. Social Science

- “The Hawaiian Alternative to the One-Drop Rule,” F. James Davis (115-131)
- “Some Kind of Indian,” M. Annette Jaimes (133-153)
- “Exploring the Social Construction of Race,” Abby L. Ferber (155-167)

“Therapeutic Perspectives on Biracial Identity Formation and Internalized Oppression,” Helena Jia Hershel (169-181)

Seminar 3, January 28:

American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity, edited by Naomi Zack

A. 4. Public Policy

- “Grassroots Advocacy,” Susan R. Graham (185-189)
- “Testimony of the Association of MultiEthnic Americans Before the Subcommittee on Census, Statistics, and Postal Personnel of the U.S. House of Representatives,” Carlos A. Fernández (191-210)
- “Multiracial Identity Assertion in the Sociopolitical Context of Primary Education,” Jennifer Clancy (211-220)
- “Yankee Imperialism and Imperialist Nostalgia,” Mariella Squire-Hakey (221-228)

B. 5. Identity Theory

- “The Multiracial Contribution to the Psychological Browning of America,” Maria P.P. Root (231-236)
- “Made in the USA,” David Theo Goldberg (237-255)
- “Mestizo Identity,” Linda Alcoff (257-278)
- “Race and Racism,” Debra A. Barruth (279-285)
- “Ethnic Transgressions,” Laurie Shrage (287-296)
- “Life After Race,” Naomi Zack (297-307)

Seminar 4, February 4:

The Racial Contract, Charles W. Mills

A. 1. Overview (9-40)

- “The Racial Contract is political, moral and epistemological”
- “The Racial Contract is a historical actuality”
- “The Racial Contract is an exploitation contract”

2. Details (41-90)

- “The Racial Contract norms (and races) space”
- “The Racial Contract norms (and races) the individual”
- “The Racial Contract underwrites the modern social contract”
- “The Racial Contract has to be enforced through violence and ideological conditioning”

B. 3. “Naturalized” Merits (91-133)

- “The Racial Contract historically tracks the actual moral/political consciousness of (most) white moral agents”
- “The Racial Contract has always been recognized by nonwhites as the real moral/political agreement to be challenged”
- “The ‘Racial Contract’ as a theory is explanatorily superior to the raceless social contract”

Seminar 5, February 11:

Changing Race: Latinos, the Census, and the History of Ethnicity in the United States, Clara E. Rodríguez

A. 1. The Fluidity of Race (3-62)

- “Latinos in the U.S. Race Structure”
- “The Idea of Race”
- “Stories of Self-Definition”

- B. 2. Historical Constructions (65-86)—Begin**
 “Whites and Other Social Races”

Seminar 6, February 18:

Changing Race: Latinos, the Census, and the History of Ethnicity in the United States, Clara E. Rodríguez

- A. 2. Historical Constructions (87-125)—Conclude**
 “The Shifting Color Line”
 “Race in the Americas”
- B. 3. Race and the Census (129-176)**
 “The ‘Other Race’ Option”
 “Redefining Race in 2000”

Seminar 7, February 25:

Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates, edited by Eduardo Mendieta

- A. 1. On the Historiography of Latin American Philosophy**
 “Philosophy in Latin America in the Twentieth Century,” Enrique Dussel (11-34)
- 2. Can or Should There Be a Latin American Philosophy?—Begin**
 “Ethnic Labels and Philosophy: The Case of Latin American Philosophy,” Jorge J.E. Gracia (57-66)
- B. 2. Can or Should There Be a Latin American Philosophy?—Continue**
 “Latin American Philosophy as Critical Ontology of the Present: Themes and Motifs for a ‘Critique of Latin American Reason,’” Santiago Castro-Gómez (68-77)
 “Philosophy and the Colonial Difference,” Walter D. Mignolo (80-85)

Seminar 8, March 4:

Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates, edited by Eduardo Mendieta

- A. 3. Neither Modern nor Postmodern: Postcolonial Globality—Begin**
 “Borges and Philosophy,” Alfonso de Toro (89-119)
 “Colonialism, Modernism, and Postmodernism in Brazil,” Amós Nascimento (124-144)
- B. 3. Neither Modern nor Postmodern: Postcolonial Globality—Continue**
 “Continental Philosophy and Postcolonial Subjects,” Ofelia Schutte (150-161)

Seminar 9, March 11:

Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates, edited by Eduardo Mendieta

- A. 4. (Re)Discovering the Political and Ethical in History**
 “On the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The Case of Chiapas,” María Herrera Lima (165-177)
 “Democratization in the Context of a Postmodern Culture,” Norbert Lechner (179-187)
 “On Citizenship: The Grammatology of the Body-Politic,” Beatriz González Stephan (188-203)
- B. Further Discussion of Issues to Date**

*****SPRING BREAK—MARCH 16-20*****

Seminar 10, March 25:*The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice, Howard Winant*

- A. 1. **U.S. Racial Politics (3-49)—Begin**
 - “One Hundred Years of Racial Politics”
 - “Dialectics of the Veil”
 - “Racism Today: Continuity and Change in the Post-Civil Rights United States”
- B. 1. **U.S. Racial Politics (50-77)—Continue**
 - “Behind Blue Eyes: Contemporary White Racial Politics”
 - “Teaching Race and Racism in the Twenty-first Century”

Seminar 11, April 1:*The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice, Howard Winant*

- A. 2. **Comparative Racial Studies (81-121)—Begin**
 - “Babylon System: The Continuity of Slavery”
 - “The Modern World Racial System”
 - “Reaching the Limits of Reform: Postapartheid South Africa and Post-Civil Rights United States”
- B. 2. **Comparative Racial Studies (122-149)—Continue**
 - “Durban, Globalization, and the World after 9/11: Toward a New Politics”
 - “The New Imperialism, Globalization, and Racism”

Seminar 12, April 8:*The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice, Howard Winant*

- A. 3. **Racial Theory (153-187)—Begin**
 - “One Hundred Years of Racial Theory”
 - “Racial Dualism at Century’s End”
- B. 3. **Racial Theory (188-216)—Continue**
 - “What Can Racial Theory Tell Us about Social Theory?”
 - “Conclusion: Racial Politics in the Twenty-first Century”

Seminar 13, April 15:*Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self, Linda Martín Alcoff*

- A. 1. **Identities Real and Imagined (11-83)—Begin**
 - “The Pathologizing of Identity”
 - “The Political Critique”
- B. 1. **Identities Real and Imagined (84-129)—Continue**
 - “The Philosophical Critique”
 - “Real Identities”

Seminar 14, April 22:*Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self, Linda Martín Alcoff*

- A. 2. **Gender Identity and Gender Differences (133-176)**
 - “The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory”
 - “The Metaphysics of Gender and Sexual Difference”
- B. 3. **Racialized Identities and Racist Subjects (179-223)**
 - “The Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment”
 - “Racism and Visible Race”
 - “The Whiteness Question:”

Seminar 15, April 29:

- A. 4. Latino/a Particularity (227-290)**
 “Latinos and the Categories of Race:
 “Latinos, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary”
 “On Being Mixed”
 “Conclusion”
- B. Conclusion (Seminar Papers Due)**
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FINAL GRADING SCALE:

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| A | 94% or above | C | 74-76.4% |
| A- | 90-93.4% | C- | 70-73.4% |
| B+ | 87-89.4% | D+ | 67-69.4% |
| B | 84-86.4% | D | 64-66.4% |
| B- | 80-83.4% | D- | 60-63.4% |
| C+ | 77-79.4% | F | below 60% |
