

HIST/CLS 468: Popular Culture in the Multi-racial United States

Professor Nan Enstad
Office: 5113 Humanities Building
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Class: MWF 11:00-11:50
Office hours: M 2:30-4:30
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Course Description:

This course explores how popular culture over the past 170 years has been a location for racialization (that is, the formation of race identities and ideas) and exploitation as well as for community formation, new cultural formations, and resistance. The explosion of forms of media and leisure activities since about 1870 (popular theater and fiction, movies, radio, records, television, etc) means that popular culture increasingly defines people's daily routines, their ways of socializing and the ways they see the world and become who they are. Who we are as people can not entirely be separated from the media and products we use daily. In addition, virtually everyone participates in popular culture, unlike government politics or high finance or foreign policy, so when we study popular culture in history we study lots of people, not just elites. By looking closely at old popular culture forms and phenomenon we can see the traces of how people formed and challenged social hierarchies, especially race, class, gender and sexual hierarchies, and thereby better understand the world we inherited.

This is not a lecture class! Your participation will be required on a daily basis, as we discuss readings or popular culture examples in class. I will regularly talk for part of a session in order to set up themes or theories, but you will also be asked to contribute ideas, research findings, and responses to others. Readings and discussions tend to be concentrated on Mondays and Wednesdays. We will view or listen to media most days, but especially on Fridays.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required because so much of this course happens in class; each unexcused absence over three will lower your final semester grade by one third of a letter grade.

Required Texts

note: books are available on reserve at College Library and for purchase at the Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative at 426 W. Gilman Street. Turn right on Gilman from State when walking toward the capitol.

Adrian Burgos, Jr., *Playing America's Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line*

Catherine Ramírez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism and the Cultural Politics of Memory*

Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*

Suzanne Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*

Imani Perry, *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*

A required Course Packet, available on line through ereserves at College Library OR in hard copy at Student Print in the Student Activity Center, 333 E. Campus Mall, room 3301. To access ereserves: Login to MyUW portal: <http://my.wisc.edu/>. Click on your **Academic** tab. Note that in your list of current courses, those with library reserves available contain a link for "**library/reserve**". Click that link to go to your reserves.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation (10%)

You will be assigned a number grade (of possible 100) for your participation, based on the quality and quantity of your participation in small and large class discussions.

2. Learn@UW assignments (10%)

You will be asked to contribute thoughts or questions or other information related to the readings on Learn@UW on a weekly basis. You will receive the assignments via the email list. You must complete all of these brief assignments in order to receive full credit. Total number of possible points for all assignments is 100.

3. Position Paper (15%)

This paper will ask you to take a position on a question emerging from Unit 1. 4 pages.

4. Exam I (in class) (20%)

This in-class exam will consist of identifications, short answers, and a short essay. Covers everything in Unit 2, except for Avila. You will receive a study sheet in advance, and will be allowed to bring in one 3x5" index card with notes.

5. Exam II (take home) (20%)

This take-home exam will consist of identifications and an essay. Covers everything in Unit 3 and in Unit 4 through 11/13.

6. Final Paper (25%)

This final paper will be written in response to a question I provide. You will draw upon three sources in order to discuss the question: some aspect of rap; another popular culture form we have discussed in the class; and a "subcultural" popular culture form that you find interesting that we have not discussed in class. You will receive more detailed parameters near the end of the semester. 8 pages.

Course Schedule (note: complete readings before class. Please bring relevant readings to class.)

Unit One: Foundations-- Race as Performance

Week 1: *How is Race Performance?*

W 9/2 Introductions

F 9/4 Handout—song lyrics.

Week 2: *Love and Theft: Racialization in the era of Commercialized Recreation*

M 9/7 Labor Day—no class

W 9/9 Roediger, "White Skins, Black Masks" Packet

F 9/11 Sotiropoulos "Vaudeville Stages and Black Bohemia" Packet

Moon "Lee Tung Foo and the Making of a Chinese American Vaudevillian" Packet

Week 3: *Occupying Contradictions and Contradictory Occupations*

M 9/14 Kasson, "American Indian Performers in the Wild West" Packet

W 9/16 Garcia, "Just Put on that Padua Hills Smile" Packet

F 9/18 Discuss unit one as a whole—no new reading.

Unit Two: The Black/White Binary in a Multiracial Society

Week 4: *"America" and Sports as a Technology of Belonging*

M 9/21 **DUE: POSITION PAPER.** no new reading

W 9/23 Burgos, *Playing America's Game* pp. 17-67

F 9/25 No new reading.

Week 5: *Sports and Segregation's Contradictions*

M 9/28 Burgos *Playing America's Game* pp. 71-176

W 9/30 Streible, "Race and the Reception of Jack Johnson Films" Packet

España-Maram, "From the 'Living Doll' to the 'Bolo Puncher': Prizefighting..." Packet

F 10/2 Hamilton, "I'm the Queen of the Bitches" Packet

Week 6: *The Cultural Imaginary of Immigration Before WWII*

M 10/5 Beltrán, "Dolores Del Rio, the 1st 'Latin Invasion,' & Hollywood's Transition to Sound" Packet

Lim, "I Protest: Anna May Wong and the Performance of Modernity" Packet

W 10/7 Ramírez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit* pp. ix-xx;1-54

Cosgrove, "The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare" Packet

F 10/9 Ramírez, pp. 55-82.

Week 7: *War and Postwar Shifts in the Stakes of Racialization*

M 10/12 Ramírez, pp. 83-148.

W 10/14 Maira, "To Be Young, Brown and Hip: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Indian American Youth Culture" Packet

Lieu, "Remembering 'the Nation' Through Pageantry: Femininity and the Politics of Vietnamese Womanhood in the *Hoa Hau Ao Dai* Contest" Packet

F 10/16 Subcultures workshop—discuss Ramírez, Maira and Lieu together. No new reading.

Unit Three: Suburbanization, "Integration" and the New Geography of Race

Week 8 *How did Suburbanization affect Racialization?*

M 10/19 **IN-CLASS EXAM.** no new reading

W 10/21 Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, pp. 1-64

F 10/23 Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, pp. 65-105

Week 9: *Is This What Integration Looks Like?*

M 10/26 Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* pp. 106-184

W 10/28 Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, pp. 185-206

F 10/30 Burgos, *Playing America's Game*, pp. 179-226

Week 10: *"Integration" vs. Multiracial Spaces*

M 11/2 Garcia, "Memories of El Monte: Dance Halls and Youth Culture..."

Unit Four: Culture Industries and the Marketing of Oppositional (?) Voices

W 11/4 Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, pp. 54-93.

F 11/6 Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, pp. 94-138.

Week 11 *Social Movements and Consumer Markets*

M 11/9 Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, pp. 139-208

W 11/11 Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, pp. 209-246

F 11/13 Broyles-González, "El Teatro Campesino & the Mexican Popular Performance..." Packet

Week 12: *Social Movements and "Authentic" Voice*

M 11/16 **DUE: TAKE HOME EXAM** no new reading.

W 11/18 Habell-Pallán, "'No Cultural Icon: Marisela Norte and Spoken Word—East LA Noir and the US-Mexican Border" Packet

F 11/20 Chang, "The Culture Assassins" and "Becoming the Hip-Hop Generation" Packet

Week 13: *Who is Speaking in Rap Music?*

M 11/23 Perry, *Prophets of the Hood*, pp. 1-37;

Flores, “Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots and Amnesia” Packet

W 11/25 Final Project Research Day—no class

F 11/27 Thanksgiving Break—no class.

Week 14: *Personal Identities, Prophets and Profits*

M 11/30 Perry, *Prophets of the Hood*, pp. 38-116

W 12/2 Perry, *Prophets of the Hood*, pp. 117-190

F 12/4 Perry, *Prophets of the Hood*, pp. 191-204

Week 15: *Conclusions*

M 12/7 Workshop on Final Papers.

W 12/9 Last Class! No new reading.

Final Paper due December 16 3pm in my office (Humanities 5113) or mailbox ((Humanities #5002, 5th floor, by elevator in corner nearest Memorial Library).

PACKET CONTENTS:

Roediger, “White Skins, Black Masks”

Sotiropoulos “Vaudeville Stages and Black Bohemia”

Moon “Lee Tung Foo and the Making of a Chinese American Vaudevillian”

Kasson, “American Indian Performers in the Wild West”

Garcia, “Just Put on that Padua Hills Smile”

Streible, “Race and the Reception of Jack Johnson Films”

España-Maram, “From the ‘Living Doll’ to the ‘Bolo Puncher’: Prizefighting, Masculinity...”

Hamilton, “I’m the Queen of the Bitches”

Beltrán, “Dolores Del Rio, the 1st ‘Latin Invasion,’ & Hollywood’s Transition to Sound”

Lim, “‘I Protest: Anna May Wong and the Performance of Modernity”

Cosgrove, “The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare” Packet

Maira, “To Be Young, Brown and Hip: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Indian American Youth Culture”

Lieu, “Remembering ‘the Nation’ Through Pageantry: Femininity and the Politics of Vietnamese Womanhood in the *Hoa Hau Ao Dai* Contest”

Garcia, “Memories of El Monte: Dance Halls and Youth Culture...”

Broyles-González, “El Teatro Campesino & the Mexican Popular Performance Tradition”

Habell-Pallán, “‘No Cultural Icon: Marisela Norte and Spoken Word—East LA Noir and the US-Mexican Border.”

Chang, “The Culture Assassins” and “Becoming the Hip-Hop Generation”

Flores, “Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots and Amnesia”