ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES 297E
Critical and Multicultural Readings

Winter 2008 M 2:00- 4:50 pm
# 521-584-200 Humanities A56

Instructor: Kyeyoung Park Office hrs: W 1:00-2:00 &
by appointment

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Class Description: Social theory is in the midst of change. This course provides a foundation in those critical social theories most applicable to current debates regarding a multicultural society. Of necessity, the course juxtaposes standard, unorthodox, and emerging social theory. Emerging theory is best seen in the work of political actors (from Gandhi and Mao to the 3rd World Liberation Front) who perceive inequalities beyond those revealed by orthodox analysis. The reality of unanticipated political actions and new social movements leads engaged social scientists to unorthodox theory. Un-orthodox approaches include recent works by Anzaldua and Trinh, but reach as far back as Habermas and Benjamin.

For purposes of the class, we will consider how well social theory can be applied to the Asian American context. In that vein, we shall examine key post-colonial, post-structural, and post-modern writing. Additionally, we will take up transnational and multicultural works, as well as the work of feminists and critical race theoreticians. In the final section, we will deal with the power of resistance among people that conventional social theory regards as powerless.

This is a heavily theoretical course for Asian American / Ethnic Studies graduate students as well as other students interested in often-marginalized critical theory. Hence a steady investment of time and effort is required of students. The benefit will be a working knowledge of ways to connect social theory to the realities of everyday life.

Requirements/Grading: Class Participation and Oral Presentation(s) 40%
Analytical Essays 60%

Reading/Writing Assignments:
1) Class Participation: Students should come to class well prepared for the class discussion.
2) Weekly Discussion Questions: In order to facilitate quality discussion, students must prepare a set of questions and email them to all at least one day before our meeting.
3) Leading Discussion: organizing and leading discussion for one or two of our ten meetings
4) Analytical Essays: Each Student will write two short analytical essays (6-8 pages; double spaced) on issues relevant to their research (due, February 11; March 17). Your essays will cover the readings and ideas that we have covered up until that point in the seminar and I expect that ideas covered in previous weeks will inform your critical dialogue with whichever text(s) you choose to engage in the papers.

The following books are required and available at ASUCLA.
They are also on reserve at YRL:

- Fanon, Frantz, Black Skin, White Masks. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967 (1952)
- Anzaldua, Gloria, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza. San Francisco: Spinsters/ Aunt Lute, 1987

In addition to the above textbooks, the rest of readings will be posted on the class website.

Schedule of Classes

(Unless otherwise indicated, readings are from Lemert.)

Week 1: Introduction
Discussion of Readings, Presentation Schedules, etc.
- Lemert, Charles, Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures. 1-20
  Part One, Modernity’s Classical Age: 1848-1919. 21-27

Optional:
Week 2: Critical Theory
- Lukacs, Georg, The Irrational Chasm between Subject and Object. 202-204
- Horkheimer, Max, Notes on Science and the Crisis. 204-208
- Lenin, V.I., What is to be Done? 211-213
- Habermas, Jurgen, Emancipatory Knowledge. 380-381
- Social Analysis and Communicative Competence. 381-383
- Benjamin, Walter, Art, War, and Fascism. 255-256

Video, Mahatma Gandhi (or Mao Tse-tung)

Optional
Fromm, Erich, Psychoanalysis and Sociology.
Marcuse, Herbert, Repressive Desublimation.

Week 3: Structuralism and Its Discontent
- Barthes, Roland, Semiological Prospects. 314-317
- Althusser, Louis, Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses. 317-321
- De Beauvoir, Simone, Woman as Other. 339-342
- Friedan, Betty, The Problem that Has No Name. 355-358
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., The Power of Nonviolent Action. 373-378
- Students for a Democratic Society, Participatory Democracy, 352-355
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant, Racial Formation. In Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s, 53-76

Week 4: Post-Colonial Critiques

Video, Edward Said (DVD) or Frantz Fanon: black skin, white masks
- Fanon, Frantz, Black Skin, White Masks
- Cesaire, Aime, Between Colonizer and Colonized. 342-344
- Thiong’o, Ngugi wa, The Language of African Literature. 435-455 (Colonial Discourse)
• Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. 196-220 (Colonial Discourse)

Optional:

**Week 5: Poststructuralist Thought and Alternatives**
• Derrida, Jacques, The Decentering Event in Social Thought. 405-409
• Video, Derrida
  • Colin Gordon (ed.), Power/Knowledge (by Michel Foucault)
  • Bourdieu, Pierre, Structures, Habitus, Practices. 479-484
  • Hartsock, Nancy, Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women? 487-494

Optional:
Park, K. Foundations of Violence: Korean Vendors and Powerless Customers in South Central Los Angeles (forthcoming)

**Week 6: Postmodern Debate**
• Lyotard, Jean-Francois, The Postmodern Condition. 457-460
• Baudrillard, Jean, Simulacra and Simulations: Disneyland. 471-476
• Chang, Gordon, History and Postmodernism, Amerasia Journal 26 (1): 89-94

Video, Play it again, Nam!: Scenes from the life of Andy Warhol

Week 7: Multiculturalism and the Cultural Left
• Hall, Stuart, Cultural Studies and the New Left. Cultural Identity and Diaspora. 392-403 (Colonial Discourse)
• West, Cornel, The New Cultural Politics of Difference. 505-515
• Gates, Henry L., “Race” as the Trope of the World. 515-521
• Gilroy, Paul, Urban Social Movements, “Race,” and Community. 404-420 (Colonial Discourse)
• Kandiyoti, Deniz, Identity and Its discontents: Women and the Nation. 376-391 (Colonial Discourse)
• LaClau Ernesto & Chantal Mouffe, Radical Democracy: Alternative for a New Left, 484-487
• Zizek, Slavoj, Cynicism as a Form of Ideology. 662-665

Optional:
Mercer, Kobena, Black Hair/Style Politics. In Out There, 247-264.
Video, Stuart Hall: representation and the media

Week 8: The New Mestiza Theory
• Anzaldua, Gloria, Borderlands/La Frontera
• Rodriguez, Richard, Complexion. In Out There, 265-278
• Lorde, Audre, The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House. 440-443
• Haraway, Donna, The Cyborg Manifesto and Fractured Identities. 522-526
• Trinh T. Minh-ha, Infinite Layers/Third World? 526-531
• Spivak, Gayatri C., Can the Subalterns Speak? 531-535
• Collins, Patricia H., Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination. 535-546
• Allen, Paula G., Who is Your Mother? Red Roots of white Feminism. 568-572
• Butler, Judith, Imitation and Gender Ins subordination. 557-568
• *Eng, Daivd with Judith Halberstam & Jose Esteban Munoz, What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now? Social Text 84-85, 23 (3-4): 1-17, 2005
Video: Mutiny

Optional:
Video, Surname Viet given name nam (Trinh T. Min-ha)

Week 9: Global Uncertainties
- Harvey, David, New Imperialism
- Castells, Manuel, the Global Network. 614-619

Week 10: Resistance to Marginalization
- Julia Kristeva, Women’s Time. 647-651
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari, the Rhizomer/a Thousand Plateaus. 665-7

Optional:

*Article available on JSTOR or YRL online journals