

Winter 2006

Ethnic Studies 200B - Theories of Ethnic Studies: A Critique of (Post)Modern Critical Projects

Prof.: Denise Ferreira da Silva

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30 – 3:00p & Thursdays 3:30 – 5:00p or by appointment

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Question:

How to locate the Ethnic Studies project? What sort of un-formulated questions and possible strategies of answering would constitute its particular modes of inquiry? The pieces discussed in this seminar challenge basic presuppositions informing modern constructions of the social (local, national, regional global) by excavating the grounds upon which modern projects and their discontents stand. This is not an exegetical exercise, though. Instead, we will tease these onto-epistemological fractures where the ghost of the racial (postcolonial/gender-sexual/economic) subaltern subject can be spotted.

TASK:

Our task in this seminar is to advance provisory formulations of few questions: What sort of critical interrogations of (im)possible strategies of power/knowledge this appearance inaugurates? Do these specters demarcate an epistemological corner from which Ethnic Studies can intervene as a critical interrogation of contemporary critical (onto-epistemological) projects? How?

EVALUATION:

Weekly e-mail comments (1,500 words)	40%
Discussion mediation	30%
Participation	30%

## Email Responses Guidelines

Each week you will email to everyone in the class a 1,500 word-long response to the assigned readings. In your response, you should: (a) identify the text(s)'s main concepts and formulations and (b) at least three questions (for discussion) which seek to clarify whether and how the conceptual framework developed by a given theorist informs our understanding of racial/global subjection.

## Discussion Mediation Guidelines

Each week two or three students will be responsible for leading the seminar: (A) week two through week six - they will prepare an itinerary which -- drawing from the questions raised in the email responses -- will guide in class discussion; and (B) week seven through week ten - the itinerary will also include a summary of four recent texts in the field of racial/ethnic and global/postcolonial studies, which implicitly or explicitly uses the concepts and formulations introduced in the given week's reading(s). Everyone will lead the seminar twice.

## Itinerary:

01/12 - Introduction

## Specters

01/19 - Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*

## Burial Grounds

01/26 - Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments*

02/02 - J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it)*

02/09 - Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*

## Hauntings

02/16 - Oyèrónké Oyěwùmi, *The Invention of Women*

02/23 - Laura Kang, *Compositional Subjects*

03/02 - Diane Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound*

## Horizons

03/09 - Denise Silva, *Homo Modernus*

03/16 - Octavia E. Butler, *Fledging*