Professor E. Frances White

IDSEM-UA 1426
Fall 2012

Gallatin
NYU

Office Hours:
Social & Cultural Analysis, CAS
20 Cooper Square
SCA Room 433
Tuesdays 3:35pm-5pm

Gallatin
1 Washington Place
Room 503
Wednesdays 2pm-6pm

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The words we use to categorize people are proliferating, signaling the increasing instability of our cultural categories for describing race, gender, and sexuality. But is this instability and border crossing a new phenomenon or are we simply more aware of the tenuousness of identity? We will explore such questions from a historical perspective, beginning with the 17th century and ending in the mid-twentieth century. To further focus our discussions, we pay particular attention to racial and gender boundary crossing. Where possible, we will look for circumstances where these racial and gender boundaries intersect.
Required Texts
Books Available at the NYU Bookstore or On-line


All other readings can be found on Blackboard [Bb], the NYU library electronic databases—ebrary, JSTOR, and Project Muse, or the web. When possible, please bring books and articles to class.

Assignments

- Find a Thesis Statement:
  Choose a key passage that states the thesis or theme raised by one of the readings for that class. The passage should be from one sentence to one paragraph long. Then, in one paragraph, explain why you think this selection is key to understanding the reading. Post the selection and your paragraph on Blackboard and be prepared to discuss your selection in class; we will use these passages to collaborate in class. There are 13 possible Thesis Statements; you must complete 6.

- Compose 3 Discussion Questions:
  Post THREE clearly formulated questions about the assigned novel that will stimulate or enrich class discussion. Also bring your questions to class.

- Group Presentation:
  The class will be divided into small groups to report on a book about blackface minstrelsy. [The professor will provide a list of possible books.] The report should include a short biography of the author, the material covered in the book, including its sources, and the main argument about the meaning of blackface minstrelsy in U.S. society. Each student should post on Blackboard a paragraph self-evaluation describing his/her contribution to the presentation.

- Final Paper and Presentation:
  Choose a novel or film that gives you a chance to analyze ethnic and/or gender and/or sexual boundaries. Ideally at least two boundaries should be explored. The novel or film should have been
produced from the 1700s to the mid-20th century. Tell us who is the author, director, or filmmaker; explain the work’s narrative; explore what the work illuminates about boundary crossing. A 5 to 8 page paper should accompany the presentation.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the following point system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Statements</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Presentation and Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation*</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
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*Intelligent class participation may result in extra credit.

**Schedule of Readings, Assignments, and Screenings**

**September 5** | **Introduction**
What is this class about? Why is it helpful to study boundary crossing?

**September 10** | **New Worlds**

📝 Thesis Statement Due

**September 12**

### Thesis Statement Due

<table>
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<tr>
<th>September 17</th>
<th>Theoretical Interlude</th>
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### Thesis Statement Due

<table>
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<th>September 19</th>
<th>An “Inconvenient” Presence</th>
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### Thesis Statement Due

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<th>September 24</th>
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September 26


Screening: Blackface Minstrelsy Clip

October 1

Blackface/Whiteface


October 3, 8, & 10

Blackface Minstrelsy Presentations

October 15

No Class

October 17

Theoretical Interlude

[http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic464958.files/DEmilioCapitalism and Gay Identity.pdf](http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic464958.files/DEmilioCapitalism and Gay Identity.pdf)

**Thesis Statement Due**

### October 22


**Thesis Statement Due**

### October 24

*Queering Race*


**Thesis Statement Due**

### October 29


**Thesis Statement Due**

### October 31


❖ Post on Blackboard and bring to class 3 discussion questions

### November 5

Johnson, *The Autobiography* [con’t.]
Somerville, Chapter 4 and Conclusion.


November 7
Larsen, Nella. Passing.

Post on Blackboard and bring to class 3 discussion questions

November 12

November 14 Optional Meeting with the Professor
Students may elect to sign up for a meeting time with the professor or work on their presentations. There will be no class.

November 19, 26, 28, December 3 and December 5: Final Class Presentations
NB: There will be no class on November 21.

December 10 Looking to the Future

December 12 Wrap-up