GALLATIN SCHOOL, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Transfer Student Research Seminar:
Identity and the Cultural Constructions of Race and Ethnicity
FIRST-UG 804 1 001
(15752)

Spring 2013
Day and Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00pm-3:15pm
Classroom: 1 Washington Place, room 501
Office Location: 1 Washington Place, room 510
Office Hours: Thursday 3:30pm-6:30pm and by appointment
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Description:
Identity: the ways in which we see our selves; the ways in which others see us; the dynamic relationship between these two seemingly distinct and often irreconcilable poles is the underlying theme of this first-year research seminar. We will focus specifically on the ways in which we create, build, rebuild, and live our racial and ethnic identities in constant dialogue with contemporary American societal constructions of race and ethnicity. As students develop and hone their research skills, we will explore questions including: What is race? Is it immutable? How do we know it when we see it? How is it distinct from ethnicity? What is gained and/or lost by considering or not considering race today? In what ways do other facets of identity, for example gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, and class, inform, challenge, reconstruct, or deconstruct our racial identities? As we explore a variety of primary and secondary texts – fiction, nonfiction, essays, plays, film, and poetry – we will employ a number of methodological frameworks, including historical, sociological, and cultural lenses to enhance our understanding of race and ethnicity in America.

Objectives:
Identity and the Cultural Constructions of Race and Ethnicity will introduce students to a variety of texts that explore the formation of racial and ethnic identity. Students will develop a basic working knowledge of the discourse around the construction of racial identity while simultaneously enhancing their understanding of process of research and writing. Students will also work on building an argument, using primary and secondary materials effectively, honing their critical thinking and analytical skills, and mastering the mechanics of quoting, citing, and documenting evidence.

Requirements
Students are required to complete weekly reading and assignments and to be prepared to discuss them during class meetings. To facilitate discussion students will post 2 questions about the assignment on NYU Classes by 8:00pm each Wednesday. These questions can address the themes, style, argument, evidence, and/or technique of the primary text and should provide a point of engagement with the material. Students will also present select texts to the class.

Students will write one 4-page analytical essay, one 4-page historiographical essay/literature review, and a 2-page prospectus, with an annotated bibliography. Students will also complete very short take-home and in-class writing assignments, which will form the building blocks of the more substantial assignments, which, in turn, will help students formulate, research, and respond to questions about
racial identity in a final 12-page research paper. Prior to submitting the final paper, students will present their research to the class.

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism will result in no credit for the assignment. The University's code of academic and personal conduct applies in all instances of plagiarism. You may find this code in your NYU Gallatin Bulletin. You can download the bulletin at: http://www.nyu.edu/gallatin/pdf/GallatinBulletin.pdf.

If you feel you would like additional help with your writing, please contact the Gallatin Writing Center at 1 Washington Place, room 423. See www.nyu.edu/gallatin/writingschedule for instructions on how to make an appointment.

**Evaluation/Grading**
Attendance, class participation, extra short assignments, and discussion questions 20%
First Essay 15%
Second Essay 15%
Prospectus 15%
Presentation of class text 5%
Presentation of Research 5%
Final Essay 25%

**Texts (available at Shakespeare & Co.):**
Alvarez, Julia, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*
Alexander, Elizabeth, *American Sublime*
Diaz, Junot, *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
Hwang, David Henry, *M Butterfly*
Jacobsen, Matthew Frye, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*
Kushner, Tony, *Angels in America, Part 1: Millennium Approaches*
Morrison, Toni, *Beloved*
Orlandersmith, Dael, *Yellow Man*
Said, Edward, *Orientalism*

**Electronic Texts (available on NYU Classes):**
Acosta-Belén, Edna, “Beyond Island Boundaries: Ethnicity, Gender and Cultural Revitalization in Nuyorican Literature”
Algarin, Miguel, “Nuyorican Literature”
Aparicio, Ana, *Dominican-Americans and the Politics of Empowerment*
(excerpt: “Race, Identities, and the Second Generation”)
Bernstein, Mary and Marcie De La Cruz, “‘What are You?’: Explaining Identity as a Goal of the Multiracial Hapa Movement”
Cardona, Nancy K., “‘They Treated Me Like a Geography Lesson’: Beauty Culture and Ethnicity in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and Julia Alvarez’s *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*”
DeSipio, Louis, “Cuban Miami: Seeking Identity in a Political Borderland”
Fields, Barbara, J., “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America” and “Whiteness, Racism, and Identity”
Fields, Barbara J. and Karen Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*  
(excerpt: Introduction)

Fleetwood, Nicole, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*  
(excerpt: “Her Own Spook: Colorism, Vision, and the Dark Female Body”)


Morton, Carlos, “Nuyorican Theatre”

O’Meally, Robert and Geneviève Fabre, *History and Memory in African-American Culture*  
(excerpt: Introduction)

Pereira, Malin, “‘The Poet in the World, the World in the Poet’: Cyrus Cassells’s and Elizabeth Alexander’s Versions of Post-Soul Cosmopolitanism”

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*  

Sarsour, Linda, “Reflections of a Brooklyn-Based Arab American Activist”

Savran, David, “Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How *Angels in America* Reconstructs the Nation”

**Electronic Texts (available via Bobst Get It)**

Machado, Eduardo, *Broken Eggs*

Erdrich, Heid E. and Laura Tohe, eds., *Sister Nations: Native American Women Writers on Community*  
(excerpts: Introduction and Part 3: New Age Pocahontas)

**Film (date and time of screening TBA)**

Basir, Quasim “Q,” Dir., *Mooz-lum*

**WEEK 1:**

Tuesday, January 29th  
Introduction  
“What Are You?”

Thursday, January 31st  
What is Research?  
The Process  
What is Race? What is Ethnicity?  
Discuss “Whiteness, Racism, and Identity”

**WEEK 2:**

Tuesday, February 5th  
Beginning your research: choosing a topic – in class writing: topic brainstorming

Thursday, February 7th  
Discuss: *Paper Bullets* and “Explaining Identity”

**WEEK 3:**

**FIRST DRAFT OF FIRST ESSAY (ANALYTICAL) DUE ELECTRONICALLY ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11th BY 12:00 NOON**

Tuesday, February 12th
Workshop

Thursday, February 14th
Discuss: Outlaw and “Nuyorican Literature,” “Nuyorican Theatre,” and “Beyond Island Boundaries”

WEEK 4:
Tuesday, February 19th
Formulating Research Questions

Thursday, February 21st
Discuss: Angels in America, Part 1 and “Ambivalence, Utopia…”

WEEK 5:
Tuesday, February 26th
Primary Sources, Secondary Literature and the Historiographical Essay/Literature Review

**HARD COPIES OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS DUE IN CLASS**

Thursday, February 28th
Discuss: Broken Eggs and “Cuban Miami”
Special Guest: Eduardo Machado!

WEEK 6:
Tuesday, March 5th
Library Visit

**HARD COPIES OF A LIST OF 3 PIECES OF SECONDARY LITERATURE DUE IN CLASS**

Thursday, March 7th
Discuss: Beloved and “Slavery, Race, and Ideology”
and excerpts from Racecraft and History and Memory

**HARD COPIES OF A LIST OF 5 POSSIBLE PRIMARY SOURCES DUE IN CLASS**

WEEK 7:
Tuesday, March 12th
Annotated Bibliography and Prospectus

**HARD COPIES OF SECOND ESSAY (HISTORIOGRAPHICAL) DUE IN CLASS**

Thursday, March 14th
Discuss: How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents and “They Treated Me Like a Geography Lesson” and “A Search for Identity”

WEEK 8:
Tuesday, March 19th
SPRING BREAK!! 😎
Thursday, March 21st

**SPRING BREAK!! @**

**WEEK 9:**
Tuesday, March 26th
Methodology and Theoretical Lenses

Thursday, March 28th
Discuss: *Orientalism* (Introduction and chapters one and two)

**WEEK 10:**
Tuesday, April 2nd
The Thesis

**HARD COPIES OF YOUR PROSPECTUS ARE DUE IN CLASS**

Thursday, April 4th
Discuss: *M Butterfly* and *Orientalism* (Chapter 3)

**WEEK 11:**
Tuesday, April 9th
The Introduction

Thursday, April 11th
Discuss: *Whiteness of a Different Color*

**WEEK 12:**

**FIRST DRAFT OF FIRST PARAGRAPHS OF FINAL ESSAY DUE ELECTRONICALLY ON MONDAY, APRIL 15TH BY 12:00 NOON**

Tuesday, April 16th
Workshop

Thursday, April 18th
Discuss: *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and “Race, Identities, and the Second Generation”

**WEEK 13:**

**FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL ESSAY DUE ELECTRONICALLY ON MONDAY, APRIL 23RD BY 12:00 NOON**

Tuesday, April 23rd
Workshop and Revisions

**HARD COPIES OF FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**

Thursday, April 25th
Discuss: *Yellow Man* and “Her Own Spook”
WEEK 14:
Tuesday, April 30th
So What?! And Trouble Shooting

Thursday, May 2nd
Discuss: *American Sublime* and “The Poet in the World”
and excerpts from *Sister Nations* and *Decolonizing Methodologies*

WEEK 15:
**SCREENING OF MOOZ-LUM**

Tuesday, May 7th
Presentation of Research

Thursday, May 9th
Discuss: *Mooz-lum* and “Faith from the Fringes” and “Reflections of a... Activist”

**HARD COPIES OF FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS**