GALLATIN SCHOOL, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Transfer Student Research Seminar:
Identity and the Cultural Constructions of Race and Ethnicity
FIRST-UG 804-001
(14964)

Fall 2014
Day and Time: Monday and Wednesday, 4:55pm-6:10pm
Classroom: 1 Washington Place, room 401
Office Location: 1 Washington Place, room 604
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:30pm-4:30pm and by appointment
Email: law12@nyu.edu
Phone: 917) 609-3918
Mailbox: 1 Washington Place, 6th floor

Description:
Identity: the ways in which we see ourselves; 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 the 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 Tuesday. 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 identity, race, and ethnicity in a final 12-page research paper. Prior to submitting the final paper, students will present their research to the class.

**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.

**Class Policies**

**BE ON TIME.**

**ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.**

Unexcused absences will impact your final grade. If you have a compelling reason for missing class, talk to me in advance and complete make-up work.

**HARD COPIES OF ALL PAPERS.**

**GRADES FOR LATE PAPERS WILL BE REDUCED BY 1/3 OF A LETTER GRADE PER DAY.**

**PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES. NO CALLS. NO TEXTING.**

**YOU DO NOT NEED A LAPTOP.**

**Plagiarism**

All written work must be the original creation of the student. Nothing may be copied from other publications, the Internet, or another student’s work. Please be very careful to avoid plagiarism – intentional or inadvertent. Err on the side of caution: it is definitely better to over-cite than oversight. If you are unsure consult Turabian, the On-line Writing Lab, or ask me.

NYU’s policies on plagiarism:

The Instructor will uphold the University’s code of academic and personal conduct for all instances of plagiarism. You may find this code in your NYU Gallatin Bulletin, page 100. You can download the bulletin at: http://www.nyu.edu/gallatin/pdf/GallatinBulletin.pdf

**Evaluation/Grading**

Attendance, class participation, extra short assignments, and discussion questions 20%

Analytical Essay 15%

Historiographical Essay/Literature Review 15%

Prospectus 15%

Presentation of class text 5%

Presentation of Research 5%

Final Essay 25%
Texts (available at the NYU Book Store):
Diaz, Junot, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
Haddon, Mark, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
Eggars, Dave, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*
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*
Prasad, Chandra, *Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience*
Said, Edward, *Orientalism*
Yoshikawa, Mako, *One Hundred and One Ways*

Texts (available from Prof. Woodard)
Woodard, Leslie, *The Silver Crescent*

Electronic Texts (available on NYU Classes - resources)
Morton, Carlos, “Nuyorican Theatre”
Piñero, Miguel, “Short Eyes” and select poetry
Spickard, Paul, “Contemplating Multiraciality”

ON-LINE WRITING LAB: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
LIBRARY SUBJECTS GUIDE: [http://subjectguides.library.american.edu/citation](http://subjectguides.library.american.edu/citation)

Films
Basir, Quasim “Q,” Dir., *Mooz-lum*
Spottiswood, Roger, Dir., *And the Band Played On*

Recommended Texts:
Turabian, Kate L., *Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers*

WEEK 1:
Wednesday, September 3rd
Introduction
“What Are You?”

WEEK 2:
Monday, September 8th
What is Identity? Race? Ethnicity?

Wednesday, September 10th
Discuss: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
WEEK 3:
Monday, September 15th
  What is Research? What is a discipline? Interdisciplinary?
  The Process

Wednesday, September 17th
  Discuss: *Short Eyes*, select poetry, and “Nuyorican Theatre”

**HARD COPIES OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF YOUR FIRST ESSAY (ANALYTICAL) DUE IN CLASS.

WEEK 4:
Monday, September 22nd
  Workshop analytical essay

Wednesday, September 24th
  Discuss: *Memoires of a Geisha*

WEEK 5:
Monday, September 29th
  Beginning your research: Choosing a topic, selecting a methodology, & formulating research questions

Wednesday, October 1st
  Discuss: *One Hundred and One Ways*

**HARD COPIES OF FINAL REVISION OF FIRST ESSAY (ANALYTICAL) DUE IN CLASS

WEEK 6:
Monday, October 6th
  Primary Sources, Secondary Literature and the Historiographical Essay/Literature Review

  Discuss: “Contemplating Multiraciality”

**HARD COPIES OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS DUE IN CLASS

Wednesday, October 8th
  Discuss: *Mixed*

WEEK 7:
Monday, October 13th
  FALL RECESS! 😊

Wednesday, October 15th
  Discuss: *Angels in America, Part 1* and *And the Band Played On*
WEEK 8:
Monday, October 20th
Discuss: Whiteness Of A Different Color

Wednesday, October 22nd
Visit to Bobst Library, room619

WEEK 9:
Monday, October 27th
Annotated Bibliography
Discuss: Orientalism (Introduction)

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

Wednesday, October 29th
Discuss: Orientalism (chapters one and two)

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

WEEK 10:
Monday, November 3rd
Discuss: Orientalism (Chapter 3)

Wednesday, November 5th
Discuss: M Butterfly

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

WEEK 11:
Monday, November 10th
The Prospectus

Wednesday, November 12th
Discuss: The Silver Crescent

WEEK 11:
Monday, November 17th
The Introduction and thesis

**HARD COPIES OF YOUR PROSPECTUS ARE DUE IN CLASS

Wednesday, November 19th
Discuss: The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

WEEK 12:
Monday, November 24th
Discuss: A Heartbreaking Tale of Staggering Genius
**HARD COPIES OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF YOUR OPENING PARAGRAPH DUE IN CLASS**

Wednesday, November 26th
   Workshop opening paragraphs

WEEK 13:
Monday, December 1st
   Workshop opening paragraphs
   Revisions; So What?! And Trouble Shooting

Wednesday, December 3rd
   Discuss: Mooz-Lum

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

WEEK 14:
Monday, December 8th
   Presentation of Research

Wednesday, December 10th **CLASSES MEET ON A MONDAY SCHEDULE
   Final Class
   Presentation of Research & Wrap Up

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