Transfer Student Research Seminar:
Identity and the Cultural Constructions of Race and Ethnicity
FIRST-UG 804-001
(12588)
Fall 2015
Day and Time: Monday and Wednesday, 4:55pm-6:10pm
Classroom: 1 Washington Place, room 601
Office Location: 411 Lafayette, room 358
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2pm-4pm and by appointment
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Mailbox: 411 Lafayette, 3rd 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 of variety of primary and secondary texts – fiction, nonfiction, essays, plays, and film – we will employ a number of methodological frameworks, including historical, sociological, and cultural lenses to enhance our understanding of identity, 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 and representation of myriad aspects of identity. Students will develop a basic working knowledge of the discourse around the construction of 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 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 4-6-page historiographical essay/literature review, and a 4-6-page prospectus, plus 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 14-16-page research paper. Prior to submitting the final paper, students will present their research to the class.

*Because of holidays and other anomalies, you may be asked to submit discussion questions on Sunday by 8:00pm in preparation for Monday’s class meeting or on Monday by 8:00pm for Tuesday’s class meeting.

**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.**

If you have a compelling reason for missing class, talk to me in advance and complete make-up work. Three unexcused absences will result in a full letter grade reduction of your final grade.

**UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE ON THE SYLLABUS, 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](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):**
Akhtar, Ayad, *Disgraced*
Diaz, Junot, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
Haddon, Mark, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
Kushner, Tony, *Angels in America, Part 1: Millennium Approaches*
Prasad, Chandra, *Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience*
Roediger, David R., *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*
Said, Edward, *Orientalism*
Mineko Iwasaki, *Geisha, a Life*

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

**Electronic Texts (available on NYU Classes - resources)**
Butler, Judith, “Critically Queer” in Du Gay, Evans, and Redman, *Identity: A Reader*
Miller, Arthur, *Death of a Salesman*
Omi, Michael and Howard Winant, Introduction and chapters 1-4, *Racial Formation in the United States*
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
Spottiswood, Roger, Dir., *And the Band Played On*

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

**WEEK 1:**
Wednesday, September 2nd
  Introduction
WEEK 2:
Monday, September 7th

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY! 😊

Wednesday, September 9th
What is Research? What is a discipline? Interdisciplinary?
The Process
Assign analytical essay

Discuss: Butler, Cornell, Crenshaw, Hall, & Omi/Winant

WEEK 3:
Monday, September 14th
Beginning your research: Choosing a topic, selecting a methodology, & formulating Research questions
Brainstorming

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

Wednesday, September 16th
Discuss: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

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

WEEK 4:
Monday, September 21st
Primary Sources, Secondary Literature
Historiographical Essay/Literature Review

PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY! 😊

Wednesday, September 23rd
Discuss: “Contemplating Multiraciality”

WEEK 5:
Monday, September 28th
Discuss: Mixed

**HARD COPIES OF FINAL REVISION OF ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**

Wednesday, September 30th
Visit to Bobst Library, room TBA

WEEK 6:
Monday, October 5th
Evaluating Resources
**HARD COPIES OF A LIST OF 8-10 POSSIBLE PIECES OF SECONDARY LITERATURE AND 5 POSSIBLE PRIMARY SOURCES DUE IN CLASS DUE IN CLASS**

Wednesday, October 7th
Discuss: Memoires of a Geisha

WEEK 7:
Monday, October 12th
*COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY! 😊*

**HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY/LITERATURE REVIEW DUE ELECTRONICALLY BY 6:30PM (NO DRAFTS)**

Tuesday, October 13th
*MAKEUP CLASS*
Discuss: Geisha, a Life

Wednesday, October 14th
Discuss: Angels in America and The Band Played On

WEEK 8:
Monday, October 19th
The Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography
Discuss: Wages of Whiteness

Wednesday, October 21st
Discuss: Death of a Salesman

WEEK 9:
Monday, October 26th
Discuss: Orientalism (Introduction and chapter one)

Wednesday, October 28th
Discuss: Orientalism (chapter two)

WEEK 10:
Monday, November 2nd
Discuss: Orientalism (Chapter 3)

**HARD COPIES OF YOUR PROSPECTUS AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ARE DUE IN CLASS (NO DRAFTS)**

Wednesday, November 4th
Discuss: Disgraced

WEEK 11:
Monday, November 9th
The Introduction and thesis
Wednesday, November 11th
Discuss: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

**HARD COPIES OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF YOUR OPENING PARAGRAPH DUE IN CLASS**

WEEK 12:
Monday, November 16th
Workshop opening paragraphs

Wednesday, November 18th
Workshop opening paragraphs

WEEK 13:
Monday, November 23rd
Revisions, Citations, So What?! and Trouble Shooting

**HARD COPIES OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

Wednesday, November 25th
*THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY!* 😊

WEEK 14:
Monday, November 30th
Discuss: *The Silver Crescent*

Wednesday, December 2nd
Presentation of Research

WEEK 15:
Monday, December 7th
Presentation of Research

Wednesday, December 9th
Presentation of Research

Final Class
Presentation of Research & Wrap Up

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