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

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1 Washington Place
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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

Book Available at the NYU Bookstore or On-line


All other readings can be found on NYU CLASSES Resources, the NYU library electronic databases—ebrary, JSTOR, and Project Muse, at Black Thought and Culture or on the internet. When possible, please bring books and articles to class.

Assignments

- **Response Papers:**
  In these one to two page papers, I will be looking for evidence that you have reflected on and engaged with the reading. This is your opportunity to interact directly with me about the reading. These papers will be graded.

- **Find a Thesis Statement**
  Choose a key passage that states the thesis or theme raised by one of the readings (a chapter or an article). 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. This exercise will be marked pass or fail. Please bring your thesis statements to class.

- **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 NYU Classes 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. [The professor will provide a list of possible books and films.] 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 matrix:

- Response papers 15%
- Thesis statements 10%
- Discussion questions 10%
- Group presentation 20%
- Final presentation and paper 30%
- Class participation* 15%

*Intelligent class participation may result in extra credit.

Schedule of Readings, Assignments, and Screenings

**January 27**
Introduction
What is this class about? Why is it helpful to study boundary crossing?

**January 29**
Borderlands
“Captain John Smith is Saved by Pocahontas, 1608.” Available on line at [http://www.eyewitnesshistory.com/johnsmith.htm](http://www.eyewitnesshistory.com/johnsmith.htm)

Thomas Jefferson, Queries VIII, XI and XIV in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (1787) and Indian Addresses. Available online at [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/jeffpap.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/jeffpap.asp).

Response Paper Due

### February 3

**“Birth of a Nation”**


Post on NYU Classes and bring to class 3 discussion questions.

### February 5

**Theoretical Interlude**


Thesis Statement Due

### February 10

**An “Inconvenient” Presence**


Thesis Statement Due

February 12 | Blackface/Whiteface

Screening: Blackface Minstrelsy Clip

Response Paper Due

February 17, 19 & 24 | Minstrelsy Presentations

February 26 | Theoretical Interlude


Thesis Statement Due

March 3 | Sexology

1894. Available online at the Internet Archive: Open Source Books.


Three Questions Due

March 5


Response Paper Due

March 10 ‘Raceology’


Post on NYU Classes and bring to class 3 discussion questions

March 12 Queering Race

Screening: *Judith Butler* directed by Paule Zajdermann; produced by Anne-Françoise de Buzareingues, ARTE (Boston: Icarus Films, 2006).

**Thesis Statement Due**

**March 16-22**  
**Spring Break**

**March 24**  
**Thesis Statement Due**

**March 26**  
**Passing for White/Passing for Straight**  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Cheryl Clarke, poet and literary critic.


❖ Post on NYU Classes and bring to class 3 discussion questions

**March 31**  
Johnson. *The Autobiography* [con’t.]

Somerville. *Queering the Color Line*. Chapter 4.


**Response Paper Due**

**April 2**  
Somerville. *Queering the Color Line*, Chapter 2 and Conclusion.

**Thesis Statement Due**

**April 7**  
**Sexuality, and Race**  

❖ Post on NYU Classes and bring to class 3 discussion questions
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<td>Wilson, <em>Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies,</em> Chapters 4 through conclusion. Available online at Project Muse.</td>
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<td>April 21, 23, 28, 30 &amp; May 5</td>
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<td>May 7</td>
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<td>Final Paper Due</td>
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TOINK!

BITES!

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO CROSS A BOUNDARY TO KNOW WHERE IT IS!